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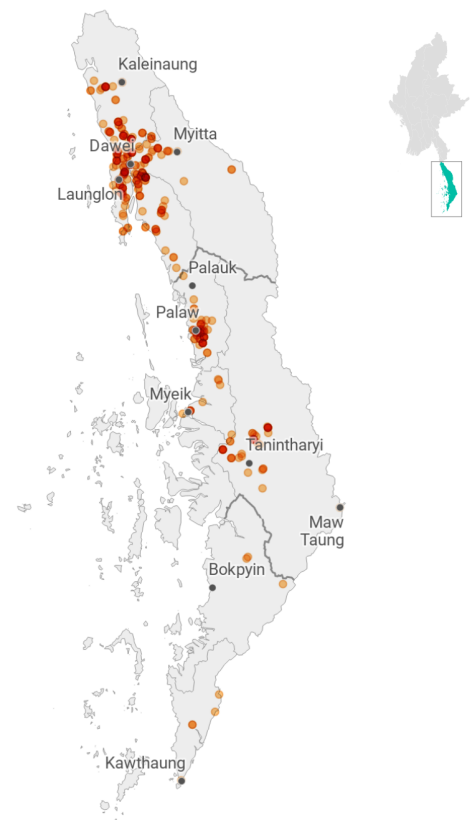
This regular update, covering non-violent movements, conflict trends, human rights violations, and humanitarian developments up to 30 June, is produced by Southern Monitor, a local research group. The next monthly situation update will be issued in July 2022.

HIGHLIGHTS & KEY MESSAGES

- A total of 18 armed clashes erupted in Tanintharyi Region in June 2022. The majority of clashes were between junta forces and the local people's defense forces in Dawei, Launglon, Thayetchaung, and Tanintharyi Townships. A total of 9 civilians were killed.
- Displacement fluctuated considerably from the previous month's figures, from 19,000 IDPs to an estimated 11,800 IDPs in June 2022, due to new displacement and returnees.
- Junta forces have continued using heavy weaponry and increased troop reinforcements in Launglon Township, where an additional 4,000 IDPs were reported.
- A total of 27 incidents involving attacks targeting civilians were reported. The majority of incidents occurred in Launglon, Thayetchaung, and Yebyu Townships.
- A total of 83 civilian houses were burned down by junta forces, as of 30 June.
- Tanintharyi Region saw a sustained presence of non-violent actions. The majority of street demonstrations and anti-coup resistance campaigns were in Dawei District.
- Tanintharyi Region saw an increase in search and raid operations carried out by Tatmadaw and pro-regime forces, specifically targeting anti-coup activists, civilians with alleged ties to National League for Democracy (NLD), and alleged members of people's defense forces and their family members. Movements of pro-regime forces have also caused further displacement of civilians.

Incident Map: Violent Incidents in Tanintharyi Region

The incidents include armed clashes, remote violence and attacks targeting to civilians that occurred between June 2021 to June 2022.



Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

KEY FIGURES¹

1781

Nonviolent actions mobilized by activist groups between June 2021 and June 2022

409

Violent incidents occurred in the region between June 2021 and June 2022

170

People killed by conflict actors between June 2021 and June 2022

12K

People currently displaced by clashes and insecurity since February 2021

¹ Displacement figures fluctuate during any given month. These figures represent the number of people currently displaced. Cumulative numbers for returns and displacement are not always available.

WHO WE ARE

Southern Monitor is an independent research group that monitors socio-economic, peace, and human rights issues in Tanintharyi Region of Myanmar. This report is based on primary data collection from the field and secondary data sources which include news from mainstream and local media. We also monitor social media pages of strike committees, student unions, civil society organizations, humanitarian support groups, and local people's defense forces operating in the regions. This report is prepared by a technical team, in consultation with local partners and field monitors.

BACKGROUND

Tanintharyi Region is located in Southeastern Myanmar, bounded by Mon State to the north, Thailand to the east and south, and the Andaman Sea to the west. Tanintharyi Region, formerly known as Tennasserim Division, is a long and narrow strip of land along Myanmar's coastline and has a distinct positioning among the regions in Myanmar due to its proximity to the border with Thailand. The region was previously divided into three districts: Dawei (Tavoy), Myeik, and Kawthoung. Dawei and Myeik are significant economic, political, and social hubs of the region.

According to government statistics, Tanintharyi Region has a population of 1,426,426, with 76% of the population living in rural areas.² The region is sparsely populated given that the land consists of mountainous terrain. Most rural populations live near the coast, or along one of the rivers and tributaries. The fishery sector is a main livelihood of the region, alongside rubber and palm oil plantations, and tourism. Despite the absence of frequent armed clashes in Tanintharyi Region, local populations have endured several decades of displacement as a result of military operations, land confiscation, and commercial investment projects. Land confiscation and arbitrary taxation allegedly carried out by both the Tatmadaw and the KNU were the major drivers of displacement in Tanintharyi Region. Despite the relative stability compared to other regions in Southeastern Myanmar, the large-scale rubber and oil plantations have prevented segments of the local population from residing in their desired locations.

A vast area of Tanintharyi Region is considered as Mergui-Tavoy (Myeik-Dawei) District, under the administration of KNU Brigade 4, although the map of the area endorsed by the KNU does not correspond directly with official government boundaries³. The KNU's territorial control has been historically scattered along areas bordering Thailand. The New Mon State Party (NMSP)'s operational area is limited to the northern parts of the region in Yebyu Township near the official border with Mon State. The Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO) are strategically significant, especially after the military coup on February 1, 2021. KNLA and KNDO territories have provided: refuge for political dissidents, a home for the influx of resistance groups, and safe passage for displaced populations.

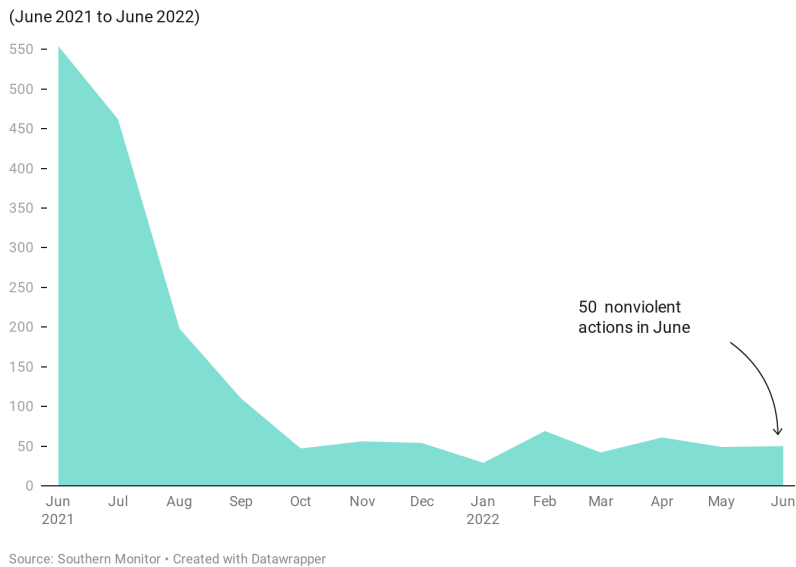
² https://www.dop.gov.mm/sites/dop.gov.mm/files/publication_docs/ics_report_eng_7012021.pdf

³ This refers to the official government boundaries recognized by the NLD government. The administrative divisions of Tanintharyi Region (Tenasserim Region) of the state government are made of Dawei District, Myeik District, and Kawthoung District. The State Administration Council designated Bokpyin to be a district after the coup.

NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENTS IN THE REGION

Following the coup staged by the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces) on 1 February, 2021, mass demonstrations took place in major cities and towns in Tanintharyi Region. The mass demonstrations started on 5 February in Dawei City. Myeik and Kawthoung also saw the emergence of mass demonstrations on 7 February, 2021. Non-violent resistance in the form of street demonstrations took place both in urban and rural settings on a daily basis across Tanintharyi Region. Hundreds of thousands of protesters joined the demonstrations in mid-February 2021.

Number of Nonviolent Actions in Tanintharyi Region



On 27 February, the Tatmadaw security forces started arresting the protesters and tensions heightened. The following day, Tatmadaw forces used lethal force against the protesters to force the dispersal of the demonstrations in Myeik, Dawei, and Kawthoung towns, leading to casualties and injuries. Despite the Tatmadaw’s continued repression involving arbitrary arrest of the protest organizers and violent crackdowns on protests, the non-violent resistance has persisted in various forms. Strike committees have been systematically established across Tanintharyi Region, with anti-coup activists mobilizing support from local

protesters in both urban and rural settings across the region.

While the townships in Dawei District saw a strong presence of non-violent actions, the number of non-violent actions considerably dropped in townships in Myeik and Kawthoung District. In response to the sustained presence of non-violent resistance in Dawei District, Tatmadaw forces have specifically targeted local populations in these townships, arresting the protest organizers and violently cracking down on the protesters. Although the number of protesters has significantly dropped due to the ongoing repression, local anti-coup protesters continue to stage demonstrations almost daily.

Due to the rapid surge in COVID-19 cases and subsequent travel restrictions by the military regime across Tanintharyi Region in June, July, and August 2021, the number of protests significantly dropped. While a total of 550 protests and demonstrations was recorded in June 2021, the number fell to 200 in August 2021. The number dropped to just over 100 events in September 2021. From October 2021 to June 2022, the non-violent movements recorded each month did not exceed 100. Due to the arrest and imprisonment of protest leaders in Dawei Township in May and June 2022, the non-violent resistance has been weakened in the township. However, the momentum of non-violent movements has been sustained in Launglon, Thayetchaung, and Yebyu Townships.

Since the non-violent resistance has weakened, youth have relocated to peripheral areas of the country, commonly termed

Number of Non-violent Actions in Tanintharyi Region

(June 2021 to June 2022)

Township		Number of Actions
1	Launglon	1,015
2	Dawei	332
3	Thayetchaung	231
4	Yebyu	164
5	Myeik	13
6	Tanintharyi	11
7	Kawthoung	10
8	Palaw	4
9	Kyunsu	1
Total		1,781

Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

“liberated areas”, and started preparing to establish people’s defense forces (PDFs). In July 2021, the armed clashes between Tatmadaw forces and local people’s defense forces erupted in Dawei, Palaw, and Tanintharyi Townships. Starting from August 2021, violent incidents such as armed clashes, explosions, and assassinations committed by both sides (pro-regime forces and anti-coup resistance groups) and civilian casualties have been a rising trend across the region.

Despite the general trend of increased violence in Tanintharyi Region, the fact that non-violent actions have been consistently sustained in various forms has affirmed the perseverance and courage of local populations.

Non-violent Movements in June 2022

Tanintharyi Region saw a sustained presence of non-violent movements: in June 2022, a total of 50 non-violent actions, which is the same number of actions recorded in May 2022, took place in the region. The frequency and location of non-violent actions reported in June 2022 is broken down as follows: 5 non-violent actions in Dawei Township; 28 in Launglon Township; 11 in Thayetchaung Township, 5 in Yebyu Township, and one in Myeik Township respectively.

Despite the fact that Tatmadaw forces entered several villages in Launglon Township, reportedly firing shots at random and arresting civilians, the anti-coup activists in Launglon Township continued peaceful demonstrations in June 2022. In protest of the regime, the protesters held a placard which stated: “A New Nation Rising out of the Ashes” on 9 June.⁴

During the demonstrations, the protesters chanted anti-coup slogans and marked special occasions including: the day schools re-opened on 1 June, 2022; the 77th death anniversary of Independence Hero Colonel Ba Htoo on 2 June, 2022; the birthday of the ousted civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi on 19 June, 2022; and the death anniversary of Salai Tin Maung Oo, slain student activist on 26 June, 2022. In addition, the protesters showed solidarity with the victims of the recent atrocities committed by the junta in Launglon Township.

Despite the increased presence and intensified operations of Tatmadaw forces to crack down on local people’s defense forces in Launglon Township, on 16 June, 2022, the local chapter of Basic Education Students’ Union (BESU) staged an anti-coup protest in which protesters took to the hills, hanging a placard that stated “Revolutionary Launglon - breaking free from the chains”.⁵ The strike committee of Dawei District organized a flash mob rally in a village in Launglon Township on the same day, defying the looming threats of arrests by Tatmadaw forces. Local youth made up the majority of protesters in those demonstrations.⁶ Tatmadaw forces arrested the civil servants who refused to return to the workforce, and the local protesters who had been actively involved in a series of demonstrations in the township. That prompted the township-level “People’s Administration” to issue a statement that warned the striking civil servants and activists to evade arrest and move to safe locations as soon as possible.⁷

On the morning of 19 June, 2022 in several townships in Dawei District (Dawei, Launglon and Yebyu Townships), women held flower strikes at their respective homes to mark the 77th birthday of Myanmar’s ousted civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi.⁸ In Thayetchaung Township, a local PDF named Daung Min operations and locals staged a rally to mark the birthday of Aung San Suu Kyi.⁹

⁴ Burma VJ. 9 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100446442122984/posts/390094469824845>

⁵ The Tanintharyi Times. 16 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/108506238223647/posts/172015235206080>

⁶ Mekong News. 16 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/363715110955099/posts/1018757395450864>

⁷ People’s Spring. 16 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/103536671835794/posts/403761425146649>

⁸ Dawei Information Center. 19 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/374786154748842>

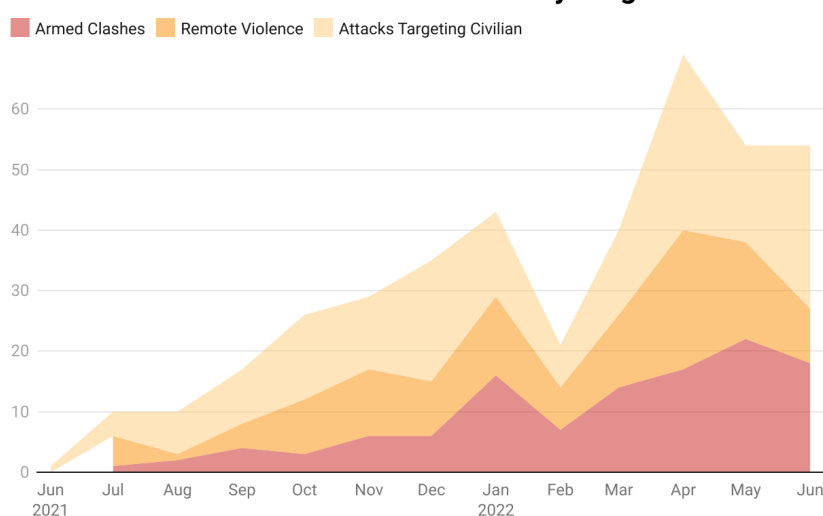
⁹ Dawei Information Center. 19 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/375062384721219>

A Dawei-based strike committee handed out pamphlets and hung a protest banner in downtown Dawei and called for the general public to continue defying the junta, following the atrocities committed by Tatmadaw forces in Launglon, Thayetchaung, and Yebu Townships during the month of June.¹⁰ A similar protest was staged by youth activists in Launglon town on 20 June, 2022; protesters chanted anti-coup slogans and demanded the immediate release of all political prisoners.

CONFLICT TRENDS

According to data collected by Southern Monitor, there are more than 35 local people's defense groups and dozens of anti-coup resistance groups that have emerged in the region. Under the guidance of the National Unity Government (NUG), People's Administrations and People's Defense Forces were established in almost all townships of Tanintharyi Region.¹¹

Number of Violent Incidents in Tanintharyi Region



Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

The conflict in Tanintharyi Region escalated when the clashes between Tatmadaw forces and local PDFs first broke out in Dawei, Palaw, and Tanintharyi Townships. Since August 2021, there were increasing accounts of armed fighting, explosions, assassinations from both sides, and attacks against civilians. The local PDFs urged the junta-appointed local administrators to resign from their positions and warned the alleged military informants to stop supporting the regime.

In response, the State Administration Council (SAC) increased deployment of its security forces in each township

and armed the pro-regime militias such as the Pyu Saw Htee groups. The Tatmadaw forces launched offensives and deployment of troops into the areas where the ethnic armed organizations and local PDFs are based. In urban settings, Tatmadaw forces have tightened security in urban settings and enforced hefty punishment on detained members of local PDFs and alleged supporters of the National Unity Government (NUG) and the Committee Representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH).

In September 2021, armed fighting erupted in the Taung Pyauk area of Thayetchaung Township, and Pein Hne Taung village of Palaw Township, which falls within an area controlled by KNU Brigade-4. In the same month, the local PDFs warned the junta-appointed local administrators to resign from their positions and launched attacks and killings of alleged military informants. Local PDFs mainly use remote-detonated explosives devices to attack the Tatmadaw soldiers and police forces. In October 2021, an increasing number of clashes between Tatmadaw forces and local PDFs continuously broke out in Thayetchaung and Palaw Townships and assassinations committed by both pro-regime forces and anti-coup resistance groups were rampant. There were several incidents in which the offices of the local chapters of National League for Democracy (NLD) were destroyed with explosive devices, allegedly by members of the pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee group and members of the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). A member of the Dawei District administration of State

¹⁰ Dawei Information Center. 19 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/374804314747026>

¹¹ Interviews with local sources

Administration Council (SAC) was also assassinated. Tatmadaw forces arrested dozens of civilians in the incident areas on suspicion of involvement and incitement of the incidents.

From August 2021 - January 2022, the conflict in Tanintharyi Region significantly increased in scale. The conflict trends in 2021 suggested that the majority of armed clashes recorded were between Tatmadaw forces and people's defense forces, with very few clashes between Tatmadaw forces and ethnic armed organizations. According to the local news sources, PDFs and ethnic armed organizations jointly launched attacks on Tatmadaw forces. The junta also mobilized the formation of pro-regime groups named Pyu Saw Htee to counter the anti-regime armed resistance. The figures of displacement have also been increasing and there were several accounts of civilian casualties due to armed fighting. The local PDFs have also continued to target deadly attacks at Tatmadaw convoys and the office buildings of the junta's State Administration Council (SAC), mainly with the use of remote-detonated explosive devices. The distinction between combatants and non-combatants became blurred, and assassinations from both sides have resulted in civilian casualties. The number of violent incidents slightly dropped in February 2022.

The data collected by Southern Monitor indicated that during February-June 2022, the number of violent incidents in Tanintharyi Region have risen again. Compared to the number of armed clashes, a higher number of remote violence and assassinations have been reported.

Armed Clashes

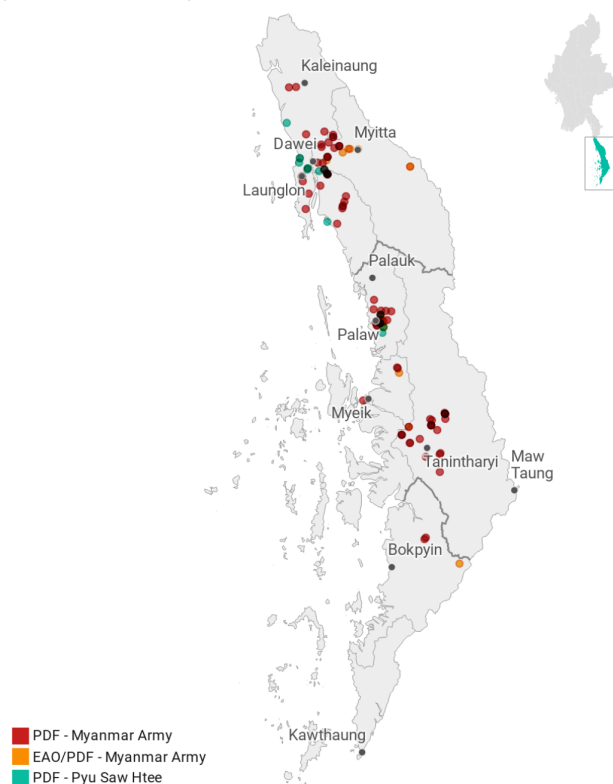
The general trends of armed conflict from August 2021 to June 2022 suggested that the majority of the events were clashes between Tatmadaw forces and local PDFs, making up more than 70% of the total armed clashes. Most armed fighting erupted in Dawei, Launglon, Thayetchaung, Palaw and Tanintharyi Townships, with very few clashes reported in other townships. The number of armed clashes between Tatmadaw forces and local PDFs continued to see a rising trend.

The armed fighting between Tatmadaw forces and the joint forces of ethnic armed organizations and people's defense forces accounted for 15 percent of the armed clashes in the region. Such events broke out in Dawei and Palaw Townships, with little or no armed clashes reported to involve the joint forces in other townships. The remaining armed clashes were between the PDFs and pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee groups, which took place in Launglon, Palaw and Thayetchaung Townships.

Tatmadaw forces have shifted deployment of troops and reinforcements from one area of operations to another and launched offensives, specifically within the bounds of Ah Shey Taw area in Dawei Township, Kyaung Neint area in Palaw township, and Taku-Tha Ra Bwin area in Tanintharyi Township each month. The Tatmadaw forces also launched artillery shelling to the aforementioned areas. The local PDFs

Incident Map: Armed Clashes in Tanintharyi Region

(June 2021 to June 2022)



Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

launched attacks at the Tatmadaw troops mobilized to the areas and engaged in skirmishes in villages in which Pyu Saw Htee groups were allegedly based. The skirmishes also erupted in local police stations and the security checkpoints guarded by Tatmadaw personnel.

An overwhelming 80% of the armed clashes resulted in casualties of the combatants. Since it is difficult to independently verify casualties of the combatants, Southern Monitor keeps a record of the figures. There were several accounts of civilian casualties, injuries, and arbitrary arrests. In an effort to prevent civilian casualties, a number of local PDFs warned civilians to refrain from unnecessary travel and comply with their nightly curfews, especially with regard to using major highway roads in Tanintharyi Region.

Tatmadaw forces established security checkpoints on routes to areas where there is an active presence of ethnic armed organizations and people's defense forces. Consequently, the junta's personnel restricted movements and transportation of food and medicine. The junta has also arbitrarily arrested and handed down hefty sentences to the supporters of local PDFs, as well as civilians with alleged ties to the National Unity Government (NUG).

The local resistance groups also carry out targeted killings against alleged military informants and military-appointed administrators which in most cases they claimed responsibility through their respective social media pages. Although the local PDFs provide statistical data on the casualties of Tatmadaw forces in the violent incidents, the number will not be mentioned in this update since it is difficult to independently verify the data.

Major Incidents in June 2022

A total of 18 armed clashes erupted in Tanintharyi Region in June 2022, with the overwhelming majority of the clashes between the junta forces and the local people's defense forces. The majority of the recorded armed clashes broke out in Dawei, Launglon, Palaw, Thayetchaung, and Tanintharyi Townships in Dawei and Myeik District. A total of 9 civilians were killed during the armed clashes.

Dawei Township

- Local PDFs attacked Tatmadaw convoys with the use of remote-detonated explosive devices along Dawei-Hteekhee Road on 13 June 2022¹². A total of 3 local PDFs¹³ claimed responsibility for the attacks on their social media pages.

Thayetchaung Township

- Fighting between local PDFs and the Tatmadaw forces erupted in Thae Chaung Gyi village in Taung Pyauk area on 3 June, 2022. The Tatmadaw forces, stationed in Thae Chaung Gyi village, launched shelling attacks towards Win Ka Hpaw and Kywel Chan village. Due to the clashes, some villagers fled their homes to the plantation near the affected villages. The troop reinforcements had reportedly been sent to Son Sin Hpyar village, which is a major gateway to other villages in the area and Thayetchaung Township Police Station.¹⁴
- On 3 June 2022, artillery shelling by the Tatmadaw forces killed two civilians: a 14 years old girl and a 30 years old man and injured three civilians in Son Sin Hpyar village. The Tatmadaw troops stationed on a hill in Son Sin Hpyar village launched the artillery attack after leaving the previous station in Thae Chaung Gyi village. The use of heavy weaponry by the Tatmadaw troops in the

¹² Mizzima Burmese. 13 June 2022. <https://web.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/5660601690641356>

¹³ Eastern Defense Force (EDF), Dawei Guerilla Revolutionary Force (DGRF)

¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/108506238223647/posts/169481972126073>

area led many villagers to flee from their homes in fear of potential escalation of violence.¹⁵ Troop reinforcements from the Myanmar Army and Myanmar Navy were reportedly sent to Son Sin Phyar village and Thayetchaung Township in anticipation of the local PDFs sparking a skirmish in the area in near future. The number of security forces have also increased in Thayetchaung town.

- The local PDF attacks against the Tatmadaw forces, mostly with the use of remote-detonated explosive devices, sparked clashes between the local PDFs and the Tatmadaw forces. Similar incident had been reported around Kin Shey and Maw Shee Ku village on 3 June 2022; a vehicle carrying the Tatmadaw soldiers who were sent to Son Sin Phyar village and the alleged members of Pyu Saw Htee groups were attacked by a local PDF.¹⁶

Palaw Township

- A Tatmadaw column of around 100 soldiers entered Gyint Gar Village in Nan Taung village tract in Palaw Township on the morning of 8 June 2022. Subsequently, the Tatmadaw column stationed themselves in Gyint Gar village and Pu Law Kone Village, where there has been, to some extent, a commonly known strong presence of the members of Pyu Saw Htee group. Villagers from Gyint Gar and nearby villages fled their homes to seek temporary shelters in the jungle and other safe locations in fear of potential clashes between the Tatmadaw forces and the local PDFs. Gyint Gar village is one of the villages controlled by the Karen Nation Union (KNU) and a number of clashes between the Tatmadaw forces and the local PDFs broke out frequently in the village and nearby areas. The Tatmadaw forces have also reportedly deployed surveillance with the use of military aircrafts in the area.¹⁷ On 1 and 8 June 2022, there were accounts of remote violence in which the Tatmadaw convoys were attacked by a number of local PDFs.¹⁸ The increased offensives of the Tatmadaw forces and arrests of the civilians were reported in the areas in which the Tatmadaw forces/convoys were attacked a few days prior.
- On 8 June 2022, approximately 100-150 Tatmadaw troops entered Du Yin Pin Shaung Village, commonly known to be controlled by the KNU, and where they were suspected to be harboring some local PDFs. The forces were seen to be traveling with a total of 7 military vehicles and reportedly fired shots at random. A light infantry unit-285 based in Ward (5) of Palaw Township also launched artillery shelling. The events did not develop into major armed clashes between Tatmadaw forces and local resistance groups as of 8 June, 2022.¹⁹
- In addition, according to local sources, Tatmadaw forces reportedly arbitrarily arrested the passersby commuting to Pu Law Kone and Shan Dut Village and largely restricted the transportation of food items to the villages. At times, the forces prohibited all access for the locals to the villages. Similarly in Gyint Gar and Du Yin Pin Shaung Village, Tatmadaw forces conducted security checks at the entry points to the villages at an increased scale and required the locals to return at a time specified by them. The transportation of food and hardware items to the villages have also been restricted by the security personnel at the checkpoints. Also, the security personnel of the light infantry unit-285 have often been seen to conduct security checks on the main roads in Palaw town, asking the civilians to show the proof of citizenship (national registration card), motorbike license and COVID-19 vaccination certificate. It can be seen that the vaccinated certificates were requested to show to the security personnel to distinguish between

¹⁵ The Tanintharyi Times. 4 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/108506238223647/posts/169612452113025>

¹⁶ The Tanintharyi Times. 3 June 2022

¹⁷ Than Lwin Times. 9 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/163055077152350/posts/3881299655327855>

¹⁸ King Cobra, Ghost Ranger and Tanintharyi Guerrilla

¹⁹ Field Monitor

civilians and suspected members of the local people's defense forces, who they presumed to have traveled from areas which are not under the administrative control of the regime.²⁰

- The armed clashes between Tatmadaw forces and local PDFs erupted in several villages in Shan Dut and Nan Taung village tract in Palaw township following the Tatmadaw forces's deployment of troop reinforcements and use of artillery shelling. On 10-13 June 2022, armed clashes between Tatmadaw forces and a combined force of people's defense forces, namely Palaw People's Defense Force (PPDF) and Palaw Regional Defense Force (PRDF) erupted in Shan Dut, Min Win and Kyaung Neint village. Tatmadaw forces burned down a total of 12 houses in Shan Dut and Kyaung Neint village (See Burning civilian houses section below).²¹
- From 27-30 June 2022, the combined force of Palaw-based PDFs carried out ambushes against Tatmadaw forces stationed in Nan Taung, Ma Gyi Kone and Kyaung Neint villages, which led to armed fighting between them and Tatmadaw forces. Due to the affected areas' relatively close proximity to the location of Tatmadaw's light infantry unit in Palaw town, Tatmadaw forces swiftly deployed enforcements and fired artillery shells, causing the local PDFs to withdraw their forces.²² Due to the increased presence of Tatmadaw troops as well as their artillery attacks towards the villages in Palaw township, more than 1000 civilians fled their homes.

Tanintharyi Township

- From 15-17 June 2022, a total of 3 armed clashes between Tatmadaw forces and local PDFs broke out in Lel Thit village, Tanintharyi Township. A total of 4 civilians were killed, and more than 400 villagers fled their homes amidst the fighting. On 16 June 2022, clashes between the Tatmadaw forces and the local people's defense forces erupted in Lel Thit Village in Tanintharyi Township. Tatmadaw forces launched artillery attacks against the village and the soldiers forced the displacement of the villagers to nearby villages. Soldiers raided the abandoned houses and looted the properties. Tatmadaw forces have also been conducting increasing search operations along the Tanintharyi-Kawthoung Highway road.²³

Remote Violence

There are now more than 35 local PDFs that operate in specific townships in the region. Given the scattered locations of local PDFs' respective operational areas, and less capacity (e.g. manpower and ammunition supply) of the local PDFs compared to the SAC forces, the main tactics employed by the resistance forces include the use of remote-detonated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and skirmishes targeted at the police stations.

Local PDFs employed the tactic of remote violence to attack at the convoys of Tatmadaw forces, troop columns, office buildings, and the commercial facilities of the military regime and its associates. During July 2021 to June 2022, there were a total of 118 remote violence incidents, with about half of the attacks were targeted at the Tatmadaw convoys, police forces, and pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee. About 20 percent of the remote violence incidents involved attacks targeted at the office buildings of the military regime, the telecommunication towers and showrooms of military-owned Mytel, and prisons. In addition, there were more than 7 incidents in which the residential houses of policemen, local administrators and alleged informants were attacked. The majority of the incidents took place around mid-2021. There were bomb blasts near the schools and the parties have been accusing each other to be responsible for the incidents. There were 3 incidents where the offices of the local National League for Democracy (NLD) chapters were destroyed with the use of explosive devices.

²⁰ Field Monitor

²¹ Mizzima Burmese. 14 June 2022. <https://web.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/5663315177036674>

²² Dawei Information Center. 27 June 2022 <https://web.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/380609524166505>

²³ The Tanintharyi Times.

Geographically, the trends acknowledged that the total number of incidents in the townships in Dawei District: Dawei, Yebyu, Launglon, and Thayetchaung accounted for more than 60 percent of the incidents. The rest of the incidents took place in Myeik, Palaw and Tanintharyi townships in Myeik District.

A total of 60% of the remote violence engaged by the local PDFs to attack against the Tatmadaw convoys, police forces and Pyu Saw Htee groups resulted in the casualties. However, it is difficult to independently verify the exact figures. Following the incidents, Tatmadaw forces usually conducted security checks and arbitrarily arrested the local civilians and passerby in the affected areas.

In September 2021, a bomb exploded in front of the house of a village administrator of Thauk Kyar Pyin village, where the administrator's daughter was killed and his wife was injured. A total of 9 bomb explosions were reported to have taken place at gambling sites which were alleged to be backed by the junta-appointed administrators, resulting in the death of one civilian and sustained injuries of 4 civilians.

On 24 January 2022, a pregnant woman and a 6 years old child were killed due to a remote violence. There were several incidents in which the explosive devices were planted near Mytel telecommunications tower.

The incidents involving remote violence have been on a rise, with about half of the incidents taken place in the last four months.

Major Incidents in June 2022

A total of 9 remote violence incidents were reported in Tanintharyi Region; a total of 5 incidents had been claimed responsibility by local PDFs in Dawei District in June 2022. Tatmadaw convoys have been frequently targeted by the local resistance groups in Dawei, Launglon and Yebyu townships in Dawei District and Palaw Township in Myeik District.

On 14 June 2022, a member of "Kite Force", a pro-regime militia reportedly committed by the members of named "Kite Force" in Aye Ka Ni village, Yebyu Township where they planted an improvised explosive device to destroy the house of an alleged active supporter of National League for Democracy (NLD).²⁴ A bomb blast at a SAC-run Township Education Office in Yebyu township on 19 June 2022, with no casualties reported.²⁵

Number of Remote Violence by Target in Tanintharyi Region

(June 2021 to June 2022)

	Target	Number of Incidents
1	Myanmar Army	48
2	SAC's Offices	14
3	Mytel Tower/Showroom	12
4	Gambling Site	9
5	House of Pro-SAC Groups	7
6	School	7
7	Myanmar Police Force	6
8	Civilians	3
9	NLD Office	3
10	Pro-military Group	3
11	Crony's Business	2
12	Pyu Saw Htee	2
13	Prison	1
14	SAC's Ceremony	1
15	Unspecified	1
	Grand Total	119

Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

²⁴ Mizzima Burmese. 14 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/5666031270098398>

²⁵ Mizzima Burmese. 20 June 2022. <https://web.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/5681085711926287>

Attacks targeting civilians

The data suggested that during June 2021 - June 2022, the attacks targeting civilians have led to a total of 170 civilian casualties and another 47 civilians have sustained injuries. These figures are inclusive of other categories of individuals who are not affiliated with the Myanmar military, Police Force, People's Defense Forces, or Ethnic Armed Organizations. It is difficult to verify the following information: a) if the victims were in fact involved in an armed organization; b) if the victims were armed at the time of the incidents; c) to which organization and/or armed group the victims belong.

The number of monthly civilian casualties reached its peak in April and June 2022, with the general trends of civilian casualties rising in the region. The majority of the attacks targeting civilians were reported in Launglon and Yebyu Townships.

Some casualties were due to gunshots fired by the Tatmadaw personnel deployed at the security checkpoints. There were also some incidents in which the local PDFs fired shots at the vehicles which were traveling during the nightly curfew hours and injured a number of drivers and passengers. Some casualties reported were as a result from the use of force by Tatmadaw troops and columns during raid and arrest operations in townships in the region. The Tatmadaw forces often fired shots at civilians who were present at scenes of the remote violence, resulting in civilian casualties.

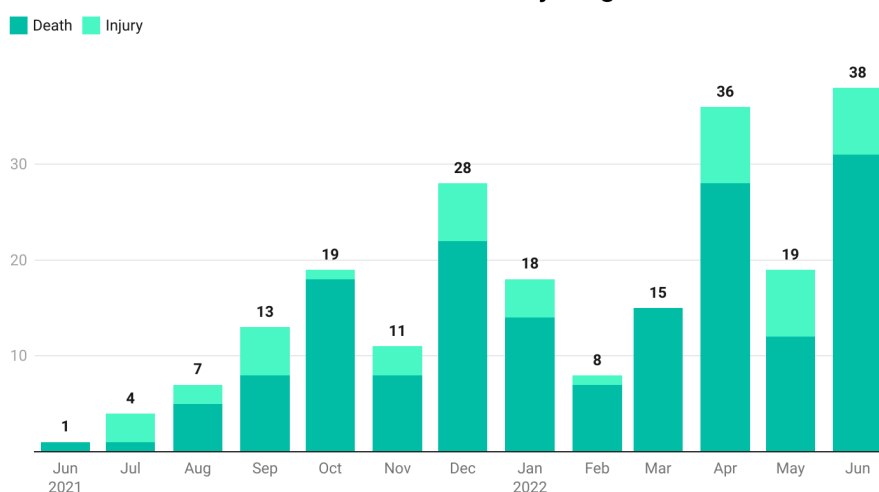
Pro-regime militias, such as Thway Thout Ah Pwe and Kite Force group also committed extrajudicial killings targeting members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and supporters of the people's defense forces. Local PDFs have also increasingly targeted the alleged military informants, members of pro-regime Pyu Saw Htee network, Tatmadaw veterans, members of the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and members of the junta's local

State Administration Council (SAC). A total of 60 alleged military informants and 34 members of the Pyu Saw Htee network were killed during the targeted killings by the local PDFs.

Local PDFs usually claimed responsibility for the incidents. There were some incidents in which no organizations claimed responsibility; the perpetrators cannot be verified. There were some incidents in which the local PDFs wrongfully executed the victims.

Analysing the data on the trend of attacks targeting civilians, during one year period between June 2021 - June 2022, the casualties caused by attacks targeting civilians in Dawei, Yebyu, Launglon and Thayetchaung townships was 163 individuals, accounting for more than 75% of the victims killed in attacks targeting civilians. The remaining figures of casualties were reported in Myeik, Palaw, and Kawthoung Townships.

Number of Civilian Casualties in Tanintharyi Region



Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

Major Incidents in June 2022

A record high number of 27 violent incidents in which civilians were targeted have been reported in the month of June 2022 alone in Tanintharyi Region, with the majority of such incidents taking place in Launglon, Yebyu and Thayetchaung townships in Dawei District. The victims involved alleged military informants, junta-appointed village administrators and government officials, alleged members of pro-regime militias Pyu Saw Htee and Thway Thouk groups. Notably, a local PDF had also been involved in attacks against civilians, as its members fired shots at a total of 3 vehicles including a passenger bus on Myeik-Dawei highway.

The pro-regime forces have also increasingly targeted their perceived opponents involving anti-coup activists, members and alleged supporters of the National League for Democracy (NLD), and family members of the members of the local PDFs.

Launglon Township

- On 16 June 2022, a 32 year old woman was found abandoned on the road after a violent arrest by Tatmadaw forces in Way Di village in Launglon Township. The house of the woman had also been forcibly broken open and entered by the junta's force during the scene of the arrest of the woman. Reportedly, the house had also been burned down by Tatmadaw forces.²⁶ Similar incidents that involved killings of the civilians and arson of the civilian's houses by Tatmadaw forces had been reported in the same week in Gawt Inn village in Auk Yae Hpyu village tract in Launglon Township. The Tatmadaw forces fired gunshots and raided a total of 6 houses in the village and killed a 41 years old woman, whose brother has been a striking civil servant who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement.²⁷ The fact that the villages in Launglon township has the highest number of peaceful demonstrations taking place every week have been speculated to be the reason of which Tatmadaw forces have been targeting the village communities there with deadly attacks and arrests. The violence was intended to threaten the local PDFs and the civilians as well as weaken the actions and movement of the anti-regime forces in the township.
- On 26 June 2022, Tatmadaw personnel shot and killed a married couple in their 60's in Ka Det Gyi Village in Launglon Township. In the photos released by a strike committee of Dawei District, it appears that the couple's hands were tied behind their backs, and then shot dead from several gunshot wounds. About a dozen Tatmadaw personnel also raided a total of 5 houses in the village and looted valuable possessions and money from the houses.²⁸ According to the strike committee's statement issued on 27 June, a similar incident in which a man had also been killed by Tatmadaw forces and his possessions such as cash, motorbikes and gold jewelries were looted took place in Gawt Inn village in Launglon township. The statement further iterated that such atrocities were committed by a combined force of military intelligence, the Myanmar Army forces and pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee chapter based in Pan Da Le village in Launglon township.²⁹ Previously in April and May 2022, Pan Da Le village has been home to some armed clashes between the Pyu Saw Htee groups and the local PDFs as well as attacks and killings targeted at civilians, with the majority being members/supporters of National League for Democracy (NLD) and having alleged ties to anti-coup resistance groups.
- On 12 June 2022, a male lecturer and a female clerk who serve in Dawei University were shot dead by a local PDF, Launglon People's Defense Force (LPDF) in Pan Det Inn village in

²⁶ Dawei Information Center. 16 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/373216508239140>

²⁷ Burma VJ. 16 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100446442122984/posts/395062832661342>

²⁸ BBC Burmese. 26 June 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/burmese/live/burma-61895284>

²⁹ Irrawaddy News. 27 June 2022.

Launglon Township. The victims were alleged to be the junta's informants and reportedly been coercing the striking civil servants to return to the workforce in SAC-run academic institutions.³⁰

Thayetchaung Township

- On 1 June 2022, a total of 3 vehicles including one passenger bus on Myeik-Dawei highway were shot and 3 civilians were reportedly injured. A local PDF, namely K-PDF, claimed responsibility for the incidents. The group stated that it shot the vehicles which were traveling on the road during the curfew hours, and the drivers refused to stop for the members of the group to conduct security checks. Many local PDFs released statements urging the civilians not to travel within the Dawei District from 6pm to 6am.³¹ An alleged military informant was shot and killed in Thu Ye Taung village in Kyar Inn village tract in Thayetchaung Township on 9 June.³²

Yebyu Township

- On 18 June 2022, an alleged military informant and his three family members were shot and killed in Kaleinaung sub-township. During the time of the incident, the informant and his family members had been reportedly hiding in the ward in Kaleinaung township after fleeing from their home in Kayin Gyi village in Kyauk Sin Village Tract, Launglon Township. A local armed group named Spring Dhamma PDF claimed responsibility for the incident on the following day stating that the alleged military informant had been involved in providing tip-offs to the military personnels which led to the arrests and imprisonment of many youth activists in the village tract.³³

Burning civilian houses

From September 2021 to June 2022, a total of 83 civilian houses were burned by the military and its affiliated groups. The incidents occurred when the security forces entered the villages and when they launched search and raid operations in the targeted villages. In June 2022, a total of 30 civilian houses were burned in the villages of Palaw, Thayetchaung, and Launglon Townships.

On 10 June 2022, Light Infantry Unit-258, based in Palaw town, entered into Min Win, Kyauk Leik, Chaung Hla Villages of KNU's Brigade 4 area. According to local sources, Palaw People's Defence Force (PPDF) launched attacks on the Tatmadaw forces for two hours. After the local PDFs retreated, due to the Tatmadaw's increased troop reinforcements, the Tatmadaw troops burned down a total of 4 houses, and 4 motorbikes in Shan Dut Village. The Tatmadaw forces retreated to Min Win Village and burned an additional 7 houses on 11 June 2022.³⁴



A burnt house in Shan Dut village

³⁰ The Tanintharyi Times. 13 June 2022. <https://web.facebook.com/108506238223647/posts/171494405258163>

³¹ Network Media Group. 2 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/382181045736248/posts/1081424699145209>

³² Network Media Group. 9 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/382181045736248/posts/1085366372084375>

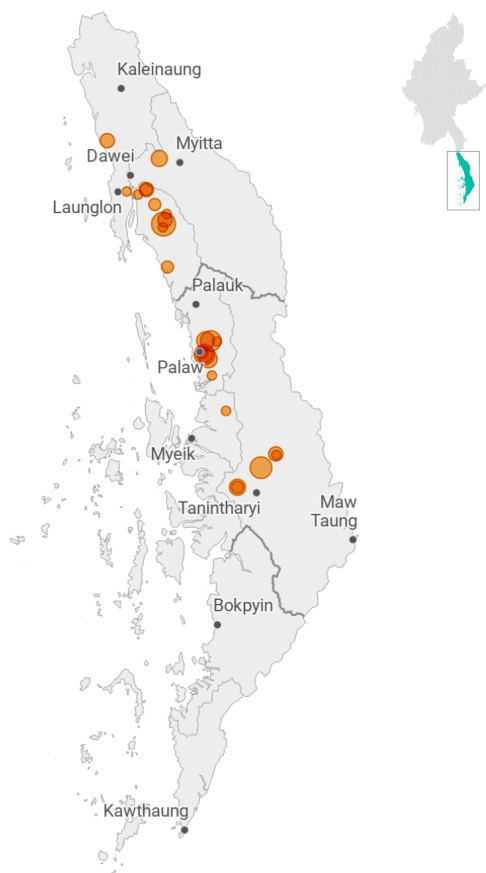
³³ Dawei Information Center. 18 June 2022. <https://web.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/374943701399754>

³⁴ Field Monitor, interview with local sources in Shan Dut village.

On 13 June 2022, a local PDF launched an attack on the Tatmadaw forces stationed in Saw Phyar village of Thayetchaung township. It is reported that two civilian houses in the villages were burned down by Tatmadaw forces.³⁵

Number of Houses Burned by Myanmar Military

As of 30 June 2022, a total of 83 civilian houses in Thanintharyi Region were burned by Myanmar military.



Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

On 14 June 2022, Tatmadaw forces burned down seven houses in Kyaung Neint village of Palaw township after armed clashes with EAO/PDF in the area.³⁶

On 16 June 2022 at 10 pm, Tatmadaw forces organized a search and raid operation in Way Di village, Launglon township. During the operation, a local person was injured and one house was burned down.³⁷

On 23 June 2022, 1 pm, a group of people came into the Maing Thet Tu village, Thein Daw Village Tract of Tanintharyi township, and burned three houses without any reason. Due to armed clashes in May 2022, most of the people in the villages were displaced to nearby locations.³⁸

³⁵ People's Spring, <https://www.facebook.com/103536671835794/posts/401755112013947>

³⁶ Mizzima Burmese. 14 June 2022. <https://web.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/5663315177036674>

³⁷ Dawei Information Center. 16 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/373216508239140>

³⁸ Technical Team, interview with local sources in Thein Daw area, Tanintharyi township

IMPACTS OF VIOLENT CONFLICT

Current Situation of Internally Displaced People (IDPs)

According to local sources, there are 11,800 IDPs in Tanintharyi Region in June 2022. The figure has significantly decreased from the previous month's figure of 19,000 IDPs.

In Dawei Township, more displacement occurred due to recent armed clashes near Thabya, Pa Khet, Wa Kone, Ramazu, Kyauk Me Tin Villages, and Myitta Town. In Launglon Township, the number of IDPs has significantly increased due to recent search and raid operations into villages by the military. According to a local source, the displacement in Thayetchaung Township was due to recent armed clashes in Kyauk Hle Kar, and Moe Shwe Ku Villages.³⁹

In May 2022, the figures of displacement in Tanintharyi township were more than 14,000. The majority of the displaced populations have been reported to have returned to their homes given the relative and temporary stability in the township.⁴⁰ According to the local sources, approximately 700 IDPs from Taku and Thein Daw villages remained displaced. Due to recent armed clashes in Let Thit village, a total of 490 IDPs were displaced in June. Two monasteries in Myeik city hosted the remaining 102 IDPs from Tanintharyi Township. In Palaw township, the figure normally reported around 1200 IDPs. In June, the number increased to 1400 due to armed clashes in the area.

Number of IDPs in Tanintharyi Region

(as of 30 June 2022)

	Township	Number of IDPs
1	Dawei	4,650
2	Launglon	4,000
3	Thayetchaung	458
4	Tanintharyi	1,190
5	Palaw	1,400
6	Myeik	102
	Total	11,800

Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

IDP figures will fluctuate over time due to changing conflict dynamics on the ground. It is difficult to obtain reliable IDP figures due to limited capacity to track the new displacement and returnees. This implies that local and international organizations may face challenges in planning effective humanitarian interventions for the displaced populations in Tanintharyi Region.

The leading cause that triggers displacement in Tanintharyi Region is the ongoing armed conflict. The figures of displacement spiked significantly during the time of active fighting in specific areas of the region. When there was temporary stability in the affected villages, the displaced populations returned to their respective home villages. Local populations fled their homes to more urban settings and relatives' homes, which they deemed to be safer locations. Some sought refuge in plantations.

When there were offensives launched by the Tatmadaw involving artillery shelling and increased presence of their troops in the affected villages, the number of displaced populations spiked. When the artillery shelling stopped and the troops left the village premises, the majority of the displaced populations returned to their homes. Some continued to seek refuge in their relatives' homes and plantations, since they do not feel secure to return to their respective villages.

Humanitarian access to displaced populations remained largely impeded by the junta's restrictions on transportation of rations and other supplies along the roads connecting major cities and towns. The transportation of basic commodities such as rice and oil to the townships have been strictly restricted by Tatmadaw forces. These restrictions led to food shortages for IDPs in Palaw township.

³⁹ Interview with a local source.

⁴⁰ Interview with a local source. 26 June 2022. Tatmadaw forces continued stationing themselves in Thein Daw village and Nyaung Pin Kwin village as of the date of interview.

With the support of local donations, two local aid groups are providing humanitarian assistance to the IDPs. These local aid groups also have limited access to the conflict affected areas.

The number of security checkpoints by Tatmadaw forces, sometimes along with the pro-regime militias have increased along the roads connecting between conflict affected areas and major cities/towns. As a result, it led to increased sense of insecurity among the locals in transporting commodities or aid supplies to the areas where the IDP populations are currently residing.⁴¹

The restrictions not only affect the humanitarian access to the IDP populations in the villages but also made it difficult for the communities in other villages in the townships. Even in the villages where there were no offensives or active fighting between the Tatmadaw forces and the local people's defense forces, the villagers face looming threats of ration shortages as well as the rapid surge of basic commodities due to increased insecurity and tightened restrictions on transportation of food items and other supplies.

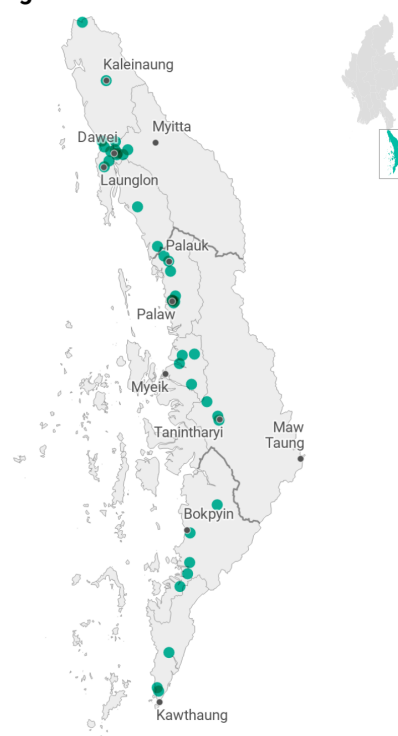
Access Restrictions

Local sources have observed that Tatmadaw forces established an increased number of checkpoints along the highways and major roads in Tanintharyi Region. The majority of the personnel deployed at the checkpoints were Tatmadaw soldiers, and they were tasked with conducting security checks of passenger vehicles, trucks, and private cars. The extent to which security is tightened varies considerably from one checkpoint to another in the region. At some checkpoints, the passengers were asked to alight their vehicles and walk through the checkpoint. The identification documents such as national registration cards and vaccination certificates were usually asked by the security personnel at the checkpoints. There were several accounts in which the security personnel extorted money from the passengers on the pretext of security surveillance.

According to the verified data Southern Monitor collected so far this month, there are around 40 checkpoints across Tanintharyi Region. The exact number of checkpoints on the ground may likely be higher, and some checkpoints were erected on a temporary basis.⁴²

In addition, the local people's defense forces have also released statements in which the restrictions on the road use and nightly curfews for certain roads in the region were iterated. The road users are not able to pass through some roads due to the nightly curfews and have to resume their trip only in the morning hours. Some road users were also reported to be lacking access to information regarding the travel and movement restrictions. That being said, the road users look into the security situation on the roads they wish to travel and practice exercise of care. According to a statement, the local people defense forces had allowed use of Dawei-Hteekhee road, which had been closed off for access.⁴³ Tatmadaw forces have

Reported Locations of Security Checkpoints in Tanintharyi Region



Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

⁴¹ Field Monitor, field report on 11 June 2022.

⁴² Technical Team, Interview with local bus drivers, 21 June 2022

⁴³ The statement of a local PDF

also established an increasing number of checkpoints along the roads connecting the areas in which there are active presence of local PDFs to other areas. Only a certain amount of ration and medicine were allowed to be transported to the areas.⁴⁴ In some checkpoints, members of the pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee group, were assigned to conduct security checks. An incident in which a checkpoint was ambushed by a local PDF in Nan Taung village, Palaw Township took place on [date].

A local driver acknowledged that the drivers and passengers do not feel safe traveling from one place to another. Due to extortion of money by the security personnel on the pretext of security surveillance, the flow of goods has been largely disrupted and a rapid surge in transportation fees has been resulted. The existing movement restrictions hamper the travel in times of medical emergencies. Since the Tatmadaw security personnel have strictly restricted the transportation of food items, fuel and medicines to certain areas, the local populations have been struggling with the rapid surge in the prices of the commodities and shortages of medicines and other basic items.

Access to Public Services

Healthcare

Compared to the access to healthcare services before the military coup, the quality of the services provided by the public hospitals have deteriorated due to inadequate human resources and shortages of medical supplies. In Dawei and Myeik towns, the number of locals receiving medical treatment at the privately-owned hospitals are reportedly higher than those at the public hospitals. The public hospitals do not admit emergency patients after 6:00 pm and refer to the nearest military-run hospitals.⁴⁵

Education

Some of the Basic Education schools, especially those in urban settings in Myeik and Dawei town were opened in June, with a stark increase in the number of students returning to their classrooms compared to the figures in the last academic year. However, concerns for the safety of the children remained elevated. In Dawei town, only the schools which are located in downtown Dawei were noted to open as usual and the presence of the junta's security personnel on the school campuses have been observed. The attendance in the schools in which the majority of the students travel from outside of Dawei town is lower than those in downtown. The reason is that the roads to and from other nearby townships such as Thayetchaung Townships are still considered to be unsafe for the students to commute daily.⁴⁶ Furthermore, several schools in rural villages of the areas severely affected by the recent atrocities in Tanintharyi region have not been opened.

Across the townships, it has been reported that there were inadequate human resources to run the classrooms in the schools that have been opened. Many of the teachers who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) since last year have continued to refuse to return to the workforce despite the looming threats involving arrests and imprisonment. As an alternative to formal schooling run by the regime, there have been initiatives in which hundreds of many out-of-school children received lessons delivered by the CDM teachers. Due to increased activities of Tatmadaw forces that targeted the CDM civil servants and activists, many teachers evaded their homes to other townships in the region or outside of the region in fear of the arrests, leading to a suspension of the delivery of the online classes to the student populations who also refused to return to the classrooms.

⁴⁴ Field Monitor, Interview with a local aid group in Palaw township

⁴⁵ Field Monitor, field report on 21 June 2022

⁴⁶ Field Monitor field report on 24 June 2022.

Increase in Illicit Activities

Due to low wages and increased unemployment in both rural and urban settings in Tanintharyi Region, the grassroots populations have been enduring the woes of the deteriorating economy. With the increased presence of drug dealing and gambling sites across the region, the crimes such as theft and robbery have been rising. The number of migrants to neighboring Thailand has also been surging recently.⁴⁷

The majority of locally owned small fuel stations have been closed amidst fear of being prosecuted by the military regime for selling oil without an authorized license. In Kawthoung Township, fuel has been imported from neighboring Thailand both legally and illegally. Since the accessibility of the fuel transported from Yangon has recently been reduced, the majority of the public has recently been relying more on the fuel imported from Thailand, which was also noted to be cheaper due to lower costs associated with transporting fuel. Since the news that legal action will be taken against the dealers and the shops, the fuel trade has largely been affected and the concerns that the fisheries and trade will soon be stopped have risen.⁴⁸

ANALYSIS

Tanintharyi Region has continued to see increasingly deadly offensives by the Tatmadaw forces, heightened insecurity, and deprivation of fundamental rights of civilians. Currently, there are thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs) and largely impeded access to humanitarian aid and basic services. Armed conflict in Tanintharyi Region continues to intensify between Tatmadaw forces and the local people's defense forces, with no signs of abating. Furthermore, the recent developments suggest that Tanintharyi Region will likely continue to be stifled by a climate of fear, as ordinary civilians have been widely subjected to threats and intimidation from the Tatmadaw and pro-regime forces. Attacks on civilians, on the grounds of being individuals who are perceived opponents, or belonging to a group of perceived opponents (by both the Tatmadaw forces and local PDFs) have also been a prominent feature of the conflict trends in Tanintharyi Region.

As of 30 June 2022, a total of 18 armed clashes between Tatmadaw forces and the local people's defense forces erupted in Tanintharyi Region. The clashes were reported in Thayetchaung, Launglon, Palaw, Dawei, and Tanintharyi Townships. The local groups of resistance fighters have mostly used remote-detonated explosive devices to launch attacks on the Tatmadaw convoys. The Tatmadaw forces have usually responded in the form of operations which involve raiding several villages, burning the houses in the villages, and arresting civilians whom they suspected to be members of (or have ties to) the local PDFs.

Since the second week of June 2022, the Tatmadaw forces' operations using increased troop reinforcements have spanned across both rural and urban settings in Launglon and Yebyu Townships. The Tatmadaw forces' operations involved raiding areas in which they suspected were harboring resistance fighters and anti-coup activists. Despite the ongoing repression of non-violent resistance, Launglon and Yebyu Townships were some of the longstanding grounds in which non-violent resistance has consistently persisted, mostly in the form of peaceful demonstrations. Notably, the operations have targeted not just the resistance fighters, but also other perceived opponents of the regime, especially the anti-coup protesters and the striking civil servants with an intent to weaken non-violent resistance in the region. The recent development in Tanintharyi Region entailed the junta's continued use of heavy artillery and increased troop reinforcements, as well as intensified search, raid, and arrest operations. In turn, this led to mass displacement of local populations.

⁴⁷ Field Monitor, field report on 22 June

⁴⁸ Ayeyarwaddy Times. 9 June 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/508784185946254/posts/2198754996949156>

The general increase in the presence of Tatmadaw troops, as well as their security checks jointly conducted with the pro-regime forces, have been one of the major culprits of increased insecurity and the climate of fear among local populations in Tanintharyi Region. As the established checkpoints increased in number, alongside reports of intensified security checks along the major roads connecting different townships in Tanintharyi Region, it affirmed that ordinary civilians live in constant fear of arbitrary arrest and intimidation, deprived of their right to free movement. Especially during the time of increased operations of the Tatmadaw forces in Launglon Township, ordinary civilians who hold the citizenship identification document (which explicitly states their code of origin and registered address in Launglon Township) were targeted with threats and intimidation during the security checks. This amounts to discrimination and abuse based on the grounds of one's origin. Similar cases are likely to happen to civilians traveling from areas in which the Tatmadaw forces have been intending to eliminate the presence of local armed groups and/or any anti-coup movements.

During this month, the climate of fear can also be attributed to an increased number of attacks targeted against civilians by both sides: Tatmadaw forces (in alliance with the pro-regime forces and local PDFs). The attacks targeting civilians have been executed on grounds of allegations and suspicion by both sides, potentially unleashing a more vicious cycle of tit-for-tat reprisals among the members of the same communities. Despite guidelines outlined in the Code of Conduct for all resistance fighters reiterated by the National Unity Government (NUG), some of the resistance groups have been involved in attacks that took a toll on the civilian populations: firing shots at civilian vehicles, as well as mounting attacks and assassinations against perceived opponents, often failing to properly verify their targets.

The restrictions on civilians' movement and increased sense of insecurity due to the Tatmadaw's intensified operations have taken a toll on the economy and access to basic services of the local populations in Tanintharyi Region. Due to nightly curfews, as well as an increasing number of security checkpoints along the major roads connecting different townships in Tanintharyi Region, the transportation of goods has been largely hampered. Alongside reports of the Tatmadaw forces extorting money from drivers and traders, local populations have raised concerns over the rapid surge in prices of basic commodities, especially essential items such as rice, cooking oil, and fuel.

Tatmadaw forces continue to fail to allow unimpeded humanitarian access to displaced populations. Their widespread restrictions on transporting food and medicine items to the townships which are most affected by the ongoing conflict in Tanintharyi Region has led to food ration shortages, and other essential items, for IDPs in temporary shelters. The security forces have also confiscated food and medicine items, depriving IDP populations of aid which they urgently need. Local aid groups and local individual donors, who are the main supporters of IDP populations, have been subjected to threats and intimidation along main roads. Other areas in the region, which largely remain unaffected by the armed conflict, are also facing looming threats of increased food insecurity due to the restrictions.

Against the backdrop of increased insecurity across Tanintharyi Region, access to basic services such as education and healthcare have been reduced in terms of both scale and quality. The recent hostilities committed by Tatmadaw forces have increased regional instability, and curtailed the delivery of lessons to the basic education students in established public schools, especially those in rural villages affected by Tatmadaw operations. Other modes of schooling offered by striking teachers have also been affected, since they have been increasingly targeted by Tatmadaw forces and pro-military actors. In addition, healthcare services have been falling short of the needs of local populations. As a result, local populations often opt to receive medical treatment in privately-owned facilities. If they require urgent care outside of admission hours, then they are referred to military-owned hospitals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Tatmadaw must cease attacks on civilians and must also allow unfettered humanitarian access to displaced populations.
- PDFs and local resistance groups should refrain from committing abuses, including killing of detainees, and attacks on civilians and civilian property. They must also refrain from targeting schools and medical facilities.
- The NUG should ensure that local resistance groups are following its military Code of Conduct.
- All armed actors and local groups should respect parents' choices regarding their children's education, and should not target teachers, students, or schools.
- The international community should advocate for the removal of the military's restrictions on the flow of trade and freedom of movement. These restrictions affect not only areas where armed clashes occur, but also surrounding areas. As a result, local communities suffer from significantly increased prices of food and essential medicines.
- In collaboration with local organizations, humanitarian partners should provide critical life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable people in conflict affected villages, despite challenges accessing these areas, and limited funding.
- Humanitarian partners should implement programs facilitating the delivery of cross-border aid to reach displaced populations in the region.
- Humanitarian partners should coordinate with ethnic armed organizations' respective departments to ensure the swift and effective provision of humanitarian assistance.
- International organizations should strengthen the capacity of local community-based organizations and civil society organizations in aid delivery, including data collection and monitoring.
- Local non-governmental organizations and international organizations should support the implementation of activities regarding mine risk reduction education, as well as first-aid trainings, and supplies to local communities.
- Local media should be aware of the local context and minimize the impact of rumors and misinformation as triggers of violence in the region.

For further information, please contact: southernmonitor@proton.me

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