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Regional Overview

Asia-Pacific

September 2024

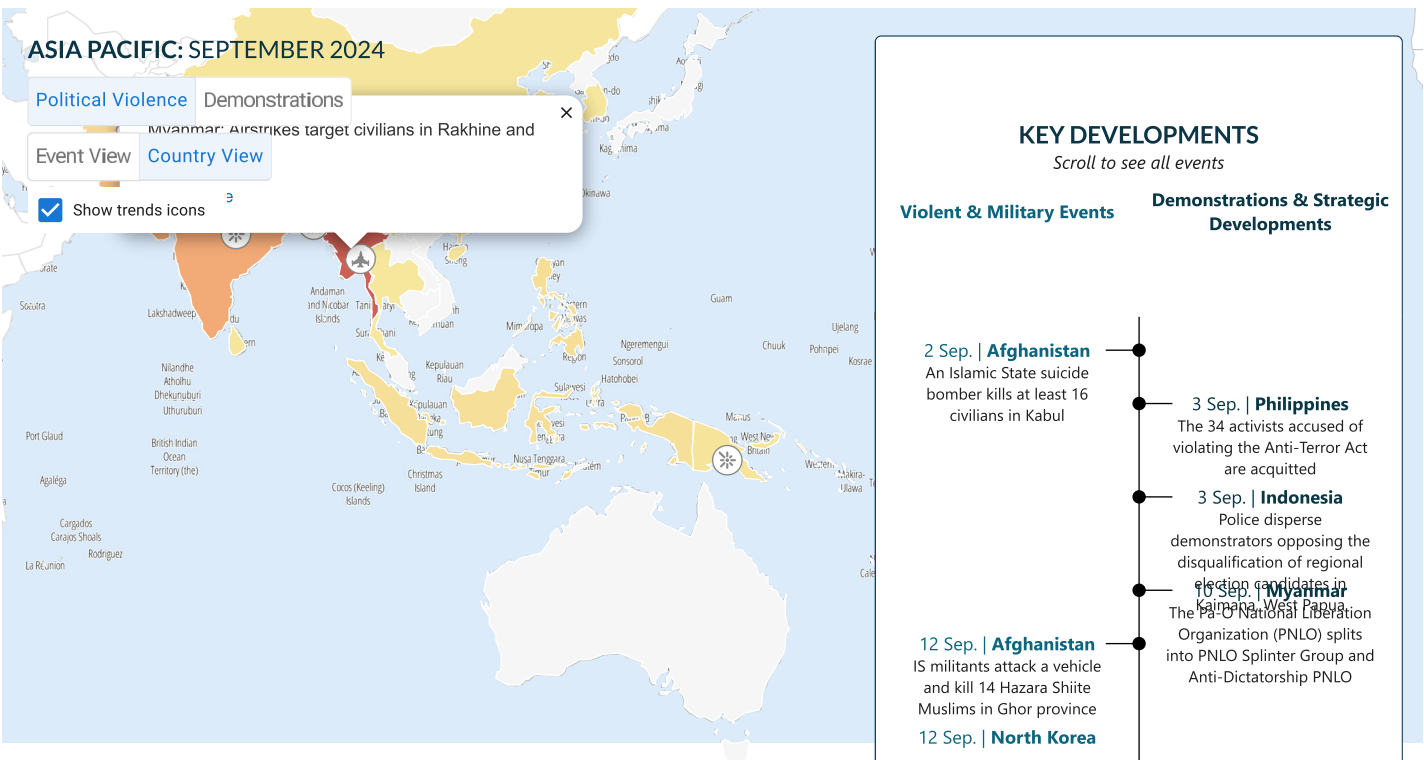
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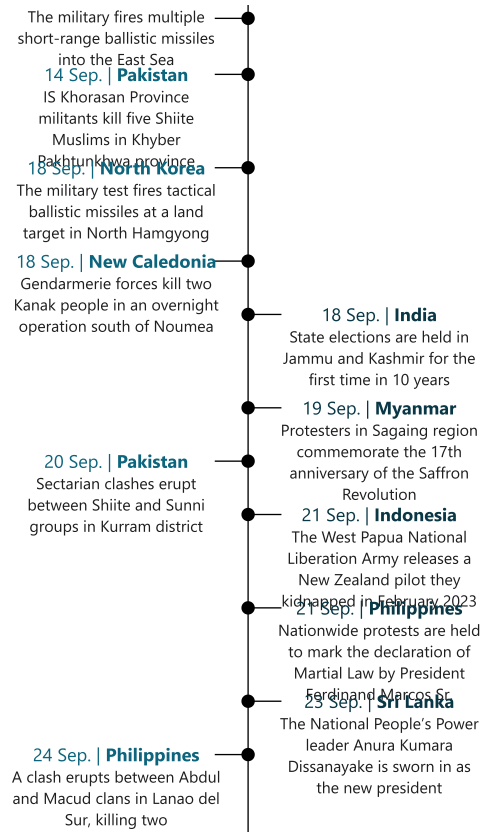
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Event Count

1 161 320 480



Afghanistan and Pakistan: Border clashes intensify along the Durand Line

Tensions between Taliban and Pakistan state forces intensified across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in September. Cross-border shelling and clashes between Khost province on the Afghanistan side of the Durand Line and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan resulted in at least eight fatalities, including at least three civilians. Fighting broke out on 4, 7, and 9 September after the Taliban attempted to build checkpoints in Jaji Maidan district in Khost province.¹ Further clashes broke out in Khost at the Ghulam Khan port border crossing of Gurbuz district on 19 September, leading to the death of a Taliban member, an Afghan civilian, and two Pakistani forces.² Reported fatalities in Khost province were the highest since April 2022. The fighting led to the displacement of nearly 2,000 families and the closure of Ghulam Khan, one of the most important border crossing points between the two countries.³ Toward the end of the month, additional clashes also erupted in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces, where the Taliban tried to build border posts, with the Pakistani military allegedly firing missiles at villages in the area of Goshta district in Nangarhar.⁴ Border tensions have renewed since March 2024 as the Taliban and Pakistan have attempted to construct fences and security checkpoints along the contested Durand Line.

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Bangladesh: Sectarian violence increases fears of rising Islamic fundamentalism

Sectarian and ethnic violence erupted in Bangladesh last month, renewing fears that the fall of the secular Awami League government has opened up space for Islamic fundamentalists.⁵ Much of this violence was targeted against the Sufi community, some of whose practices, such as singing devotional music, are

considered to be 'un-Islamic' by more orthodox sects.⁶ Over 50 Sufi shrines have been targeted since former [Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation on 5 August](#).⁷ ACLED data show attacks against Sufi places of worship and clashes between Sunni and Sufi Muslims occurring in around eight locations in September. At least one person died during such a clash on 16 September in Kishoreganj district.

Meanwhile, ethnic clashes erupted in the restive Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region after a mob comprising Indigenous people killed a Bengali Muslim settler on suspicion of theft on 18 September. Subsequently, Bengali Muslims, incited by loudspeaker announcements from mosques, carried out retributive attacks, reportedly killing at least four men from ethnic minority groups and vandalizing Buddhist temples. The CHT region has a longstanding history of conflict between the Indigenous communities and Bengali Muslim settlers, many of whom were relocated there by successive governments in alleged attempts to alter the ethnic makeup of CHT.⁸

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India: Ethnic clashes escalate in Manipur

Assailants from the Kuki ethnic group reportedly deployed drones to drop bombs over Koutruk village, which is primarily made up of people from the Meitei ethnic group, on 1 September. Both groups frequently use drones for surveillance purposes. If confirmed, however, the latest attack would be the first time since the conflict began in May 2023 that drones have been used in an offensive capacity. A few days after the attack, suspected Kuki assailants targeted another Meitei settlement with long-range rockets, killing a civilian. The violence continued for the rest of the month, resulting in at least 11 reported fatalities. ACLED data show that September was the deadliest month in Manipur since January 2024. Thousands of Meitei people took to the streets against government inaction in the face of the resurgence in violence, prompting the government to impose a brief curfew and internet shutdown.

Both communities live [in near-complete segregation](#). Thus, violence in Manipur has mainly been concentrated in the peripheral areas between districts primarily inhabited by people from the Meitei and Kuki ethnic groups.⁹ The use of drones and rockets, which are believed to have an operational range between 500 meters and 15 kilometers, indicates a potential for the violence to spread to other areas.¹⁰ Whether the Kuki assailants used weaponized drones remains in doubt: While the state police confirmed the drone attack, the army denied having found any evidence of drones being used to drop bombs. Police are currently investigating the bomb fragments found at the site of the contested attack.¹¹

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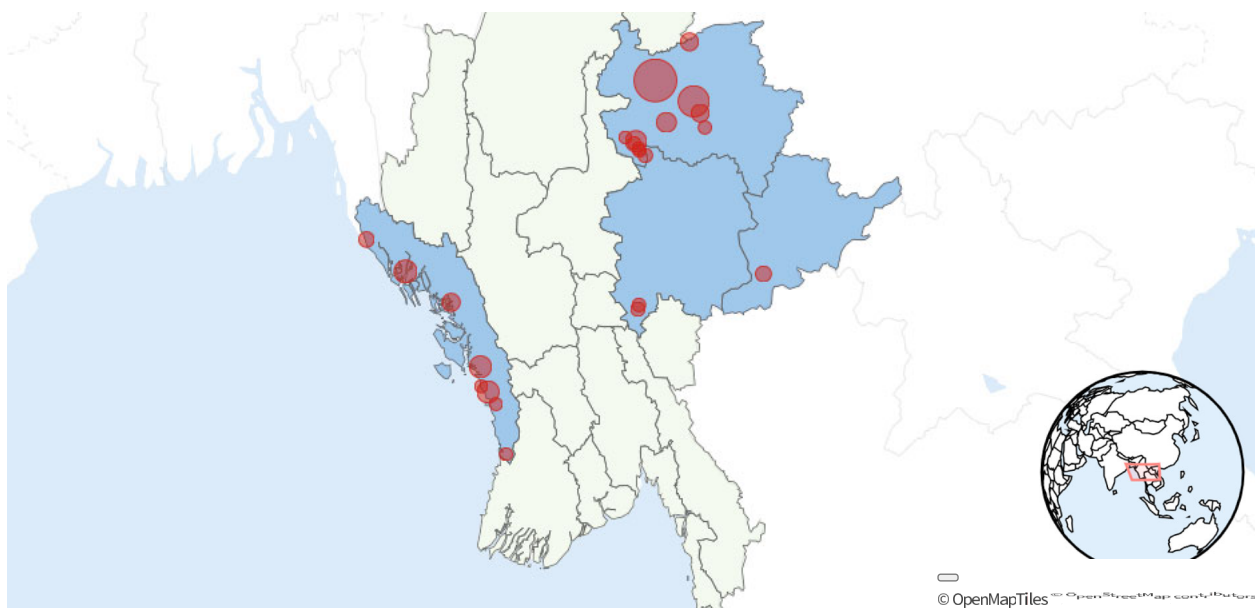
Myanmar: Airstrikes target civilians in Rakhine and Shan states

Civilians in Shan and Rakhine states were subject to a barrage of indiscriminate airstrikes in September. These strikes followed a junta warning in early September that they would launch a counterattack against resistance-held territories. This offensive came after the military declared the Brotherhood Alliance a "terrorist" group on 2 September and vowed to recapture the towns it lost to the group.¹² The Brotherhood Alliance includes the Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party/Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, the Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (PSLF/TNLA), and the United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA). On 6 September, the military launched an airstrike on Namhkan town near the Myanmar-China border in Shan state, held by PSLF/TNLA, killing at least 11 locals, including two children. This was followed by a deadly airstrike on 9 September in Maungdaw township — [where the Rohingya suffered high fatalities last month](#) — that hit a Border Guard Police Battalion captured by the ULA/AA and killed at least 50 people, including war prisoners. ACLED records over 60 military airstrike events targeting civilians this month, resulting in over 100 reported fatalities. Half the airstrike events targeting civilians occurred in Shan and Rakhine states. According to ACLED's [Conflict Exposure](#) estimates, at least 1,345,603 people were exposed to military airstrikes in Shan and Rakhine states between 1 and 27 September.

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Population exposed to military airstrikes in Rakhine and Shan

1 - 27 September 2024



Hover over the circles to see the number of people exposed to the airstrikes

* A Flourish map



Papua New Guinea: Tribal violence kills at least 32 people at the Porgera gold mine

The deadly tribal violence between the Sakar and Piande clans around the Porgera mine in Enga province displaced hundreds in a conflict over unauthorized mining. The five-day clash, which began on 11 September, followed a fight in August where a Piande clan landowner was severely injured during a clash with unauthorized miners from the Sakar clan. Since the crash, authorities have deployed additional security personnel and declared a two-month state of emergency in the area that grants police permission to use lethal force to quell violence.¹³ Aid delivery remains a challenge as the main road to Porgera continues to be inaccessible after a massive landslide in May.¹⁴

ACLED records [multiple spikes in violence](#) around the mine in recent years, including in early 2023 and mid-2022, when clashes between Nomali and Aiyala clans led to dozens of deaths. In 2022, Porgera was under a state of emergency for over six months after fierce fighting.¹⁵ Since January 2021, ACLED records at least 127 fatalities from political violence in Lagaip and Porgera districts. The population around the mine has grown considerably over the past decades, driven by the arrival of people migrating for work, many of whom have been involved in unauthorized mining.¹⁶ In April 2024, authorities issued an ultimatum to urge unauthorized miners and residents to leave the mine area.¹⁷

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