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Myanmar civilians trapped in monastery as clashes intensify

Fighting in central Myanmar has trapped about 1,000 people in a monastery where they are running out of food and the sick and wounded face death without medical help, residents told Radio Free Asia on Wednesday.

Fighting across Myanmar has displaced about 3 million people, according to humanitarian agencies, with little prospect of relief as the military, which seized power in 2021, struggles against increasingly determined insurgent forces.

Some of the worst violence has been in the Sagaing region where the military often accuses civilians of supporting the insurgents, who launch guerrilla attacks and melt away. In response, junta forces take out their [anger](#) on villagers, rights groups and residents say.

In Indaw town, in the north of Sagaing, about 1,000 residents who did not flee earlier with most other residents have become cut off by junta blockades in a monastery with dwindling supplies of food and medical supplies, residents said.

A 28-year-old woman and 20-year-old man died last week from untreated battle wounds with prospects grim for others, said one Indaw resident who escaped.

“Although people tried to leave, the junta troops didn’t allow them to,” said the resident, who declined to be identified in fear of reprisals.

“Several children are suffering from head injuries. They’re being treated with whatever medicine they have to hand.”

Five civilians were killed and six were wounded on Aug. 16 in fighting between the junta forces and the Kachin Independence Army, or KIA, and

its allies, as they tried unsuccessfully to seize military positions, residents said.

More than 20,000 residents were able to flee Indaw, but Buddhist monks, children, elderly people, and civil servants aligned with the junta administration are among those trapped, the residents said.

RFA telephoned the Sagaing region's junta spokesperson, Nyunt Win Aung, to ask about the situation but he did not answer calls.

The KIA, which is fighting for self-determination for the ethnic minority Kachin people, has made significant gains in Kachin state and the Sagaing region since late last year.

A three-member alliance of rebel factions in Shan state, to the east, has captured major towns and military bases while the military has also lost ground to ethnic minority insurgents in Rakhine state in the west, and in Kayah and Kayin states in the east, as well as in parts of the deep south.

In southern Sagaing, thousands of villagers have fled from junta raids in Khin-U township, 215 km (134 miles) south of Indaw, since Tuesday, residents there said.

Junta troops burned homes in two villages and occupied eight others, said a relief worker.

"Residents are fleeing everywhere, especially to villages they know are safe. Others are going to urban areas," said the relief worker, who also declined to be named for security reasons.

On Friday, pro-democracy fighters in Khin-U township tried to capture a junta stronghold in Ma Daung Hla village but were forced to retreat due to airstrikes, which killed 10 members of the insurgent force, said an official from a rebel group who also declined to be identified.

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

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ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region, Indaw town: Around 1,000 people are trapped in a monastery amid heavy fighting, running out of food supplies and lacking medicines

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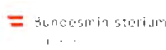
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Myanmar junta airstrike kills 11 civilians in northern town

Eleven people were wounded in the bombing of the insurgent-controlled town.

By RFA Burmese
2024.09.06



Residents survey damage following a junta airstrike on Namhkan town, Shan state, Sept. 6, 2024. (Citizen photo)



Myanmar junta forces launched an airstrike on an insurgent-controlled town in Shan state on the border with China in the early hours of Friday, killing 11 civilians and wounding 11, residents said.

A military aircraft dropped two bombs near the night market in the town of Namhkan, said a resident who wished to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals.

“At 1 a.m. the bombs fell to the north of the Pawng Pwe night market. About six houses were hit,” he said. “A child and a pregnant woman were killed, entire families were killed.”

Radio Free Asia telephoned Shan state’s junta spokesperson Khun Thein Maung to ask about the incident but he did not answer calls.

Residents said five women, four men, a four-year-old boy and a newborn girl were killed. Residents shared video with RFA showing people clawing through rubble to uncover lifeless bodies.

The border trade town of Namhkan is under the control of the ethnic minority Ta'ang National Liberation Army, or TNLA, a member of the Three Brotherhood Alliance of insurgent groups that has made unprecedented gains against junta forces since late last year.

China has intervened to protect its economic interests in Myanmar and brokered two short-lived ceasefires. Recently, China has been pressing the TNLA to agree to peace, insurgent sources said.

The TNLA and its allies in pro-democracy People's Defense Forces have this year attacked and captured Nawnghkio, Kyaukme, Hsipaw and Mongmit towns in Shan state and Mandalay region's Mogoke town.

On Sept. 4, a junta airstrike on Hsipaw town in northern Shan state killed a civilian and injured four.

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[[China launches military exercises on Myanmar border](#)]

[[Myanmar junta jets bomb town under rebel control, 6 killed](#)]

In southern Shan state, an airstrike on a camp for the internally displaced killed at least nine people late on Thursday, according to Banyar Khun Aung, a vice secretary of the anti-junta Karenni State Interim Executive Council.

"The plane dropped the bomb at around 10 p.m.," he said. "Nine bodies were found, including seven children and two women. There were also many injured and missing people. A teacher was among the dead."

The victims were two boys and five girls aged between 10 and 13, and two women in their 40s, he added.

Residents of the area in Pekon township said that more than 1,000 people displaced by the fighting are sheltering in the camp, including about 600 children.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

More MYANMAR



Myanmar junta airstrikes kill dozens, including prisoners, rebels say

The military has responded to a string of setbacks in Rakhine state with more intense air attacks.

By RFA Burmese
2024.09.10



A still picture from video of an Arakan Army detention facility near Maungdaw that was bombed by junta forces on Sept. 9, 2024 (AA Information Desk)

[[Read RFA coverage of this story in Burmese.](#)]

Myanmar's military has killed 70 people, including many of its troops in rebel captivity, in two airstrikes in Rakhine state where Arakan Army insurgents have been making [major gains](#) against junta forces, the group said.

The Arakan Army, or AA, has captured many members of the military and pro-junta militia in advances over recent months in which they have pushed junta forces back into just a few pockets of territory in Myanmar's western-most state.

The military has responded with airstrikes, taking an increasingly deadly toll of civilians in areas under AA control, the rebels and rights groups say.

Arakan Army video shows detention facility bombed by Myanmar junta forces | ...



On Sunday, an airstrike in Pauktaw township, just east of the state capital of Sittwe, killed at least 17 people, including seven prisoners, and wounded 10, the AA said in a statement.

“People didn’t have time to run because the plane flew in so quickly,” said one resident of the area, who declined to be identified for safety reasons.

On Monday, junta jets launched an airstrike in Maungdaw township, in the north of Rakhine state near the border with Bangladesh, killing more than 50 people, the AA said in another statement.

The junta has not released any information about the attacks and telephone calls to spokesperson Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun went unanswered.

Bombs dropped in Maungdaw hit a former military position captured by the AA, about five kilometers (three miles) east of Maungdaw town, where the insurgents have detained prisoners, including members of the mostly Muslim Rohingya community who joined a pro-junta militia.

The AA said a U.N. building in Wai Thar Li village was also bombed. Radio Free Asia RFA tried to contact the U.N. office in Myanmar Yangon but a staff member said the office could not respond outside working hours.

International humanitarian organizations have been helping civilians displaced by fighting in the region but most groups have withdrawn staff and suspended their work as the security situation has deteriorated.

The AA has warned against attacks in densely populated areas under its control. The junta denies targeting civilians.

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

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Civilians killed as Myanmar rebels attack junta forces in the north

Fighting for 5 days forces about 10,000 people to flee in jade-mining area.

By RFA Burmese
2024.09.12



Fires sparked by junta airstrikes burn in Hseng Taung village on Sept. 12, 2024. (Citizen Photo)

[[Read RFA coverage of this story in Burmese.](#)]

Thousands of people have fled from fighting between ethnic minority guerrillas and Myanmar junta troops that entered a fifth day on Thursday, and at least 10 civilians have been killed, residents told Radio Free Asia.

The autonomy-seeking Kachin Independence Army, or KIA, and allied militias loyal to a shadow civilian administration, have made significant gains in Myanmar's northernmost Kachin state since launching an [offensive](#) in March.

The insurgents have forced junta troops in the resource-rich region on the border with China into dwindling areas of control, mirroring setbacks elsewhere in Myanmar for the military that seized power in a 2021 coup.

A resident of Hpakant township, a major jade-producing region, said at least 10 civilians were killed in crossfire between insurgents and the military in Hseng Taung village since the anti-junta forces surrounded it and launched an attack on Sunday.

“People died after being hit by both heavy and small weapons. There are a lot of wounded,” said the resident who declined to be identified for safety reasons.

“Many, many houses have been destroyed. Bullets were raining down.”

Junta airstrikes also sparked major fires in the town, witnesses said.

Most of those killed were men, he said, adding that a peace activist named Yup Zau Hkawng, who was wounded in shelling on Monday.

By Thursday, the KIA-led attackers had seized and burned down the Hseng Taung police station, sources close to an anti-junta People’s Defense Force, or PDF, allied with the KIA told RFA.

RFA telephoned Kachin state’s junta spokesperson, Moe Min Thein, for comment but he did not respond by the time of publication and a [telecommunications outage](#) in the area made it difficult to check accounts of the fighting.

About 60 soldiers were at the police station when the attack was launched, said another resident, who also asked to remain anonymous.

“The Hseng Taung police station was captured but fighting has been going on after they set it on fire,” he said. “Some junta soldiers are dead, others were caught alive, and the rest were able to flee.”

KIA fighters had sealed off all roads in and out of the village, said the KIA spokesman, Col. Naw Bu.

Residents said about 10,000 people had fled from the village over the five days of fighting, many seeking refuge in Nam Hmaw, Hseng Awng and Hpakant towns.

The KIA and allied forces control most roads in and out of Hpakant town and have captured all but five junta bases in the township, anti-junta forces say.

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[[China fires into Myanmar after junta airstrike on border, group says](#)]

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Kiana Duncan.



Myanmar junta airstrike kills civilians sheltering in rebel territory

Jets bombed a building where hundreds of internally displaced people were staying, rebels and residents said.

By RFA Burmese
2024.09.26



**Buildings in Rakhine state's Thandwe township destroyed by junta bombs on Sept. 26, 2024.
(Arakan Princess Media-Telegram)**

UPDATED at 3:41 P.M. ET on 09-26-2024

[[Read RFA coverage of this topic in Burmese.](#)]

Myanmar junta jets bombed a shelter for displaced people in a rebel-held town in Rakhine state on Thursday killing 14 civilians and wounding 25, an insurgent force official told Radio Free Asia.

The Arakan Army, or AA, has made significant gains in its battle for self-determination over the past year, capturing 10 of the 17 townships and major [military bases](#) in Myanmar's westernmost state but the junta has been hitting back, in particular with its air power.

Air force jets bombed the coastal town of Thandwe early on Thursday, hitting public administration offices where people displaced by the fighting have been staying, said AA spokesman Khaing Thu Kha.

“Two jets came in and dropped two bombs each on the city hall and the environmental preservation office. More than 200 displaced people were sheltering in the office,” he said.

“The injured were sent to hospital. Most were elderly people and children.”

The death toll would likely be higher because many displaced people who were seriously injured have not yet counted, said Khaing Thu Kha.

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[[Myanmar junta airstrike kills dozens, including prisoners](#)]

RFA tried to contact Rakhine state's junta spokesperson Hla Thein for information on the airstrikes but he did not answer telephone calls.

A Thandwe resident said he believed the jets had deliberately targeted civilians, though there was no particular evidence for that.

“The people sheltering there are mainly from Thandwe township and Gyeik Taw village,” said the resident who declined to be identified for safety reasons.

Residents and members of the AA say [junta attacks](#) in Rakhine state have increasingly targeted schools, monasteries, residential areas and government buildings that the AA has captured.

The junta has denied targeting civilians though human rights investigators also say civilians in rebel-held areas are increasingly being killed in airstrikes.

On Wednesday, junta attacks on nearby Myebon township's Kan Htaunt Gyi village killed two women villagers and wounded seven people, residents said.

The military has launched [an offensive in Shan state](#), on northeastern Myanmar's border with China, aiming to recapture lost territory there from two main insurgent forces allied with the AA.

On Sept. 2, the junta designated all three members of the alliance “terrorist groups.”

According to RFA data, junta airstrikes and heavy weapons attacks killed nearly 2,000 civilians and injured nearly 4,000 between the military's February 2021 coup d'état and May 2024.