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Regional Overview

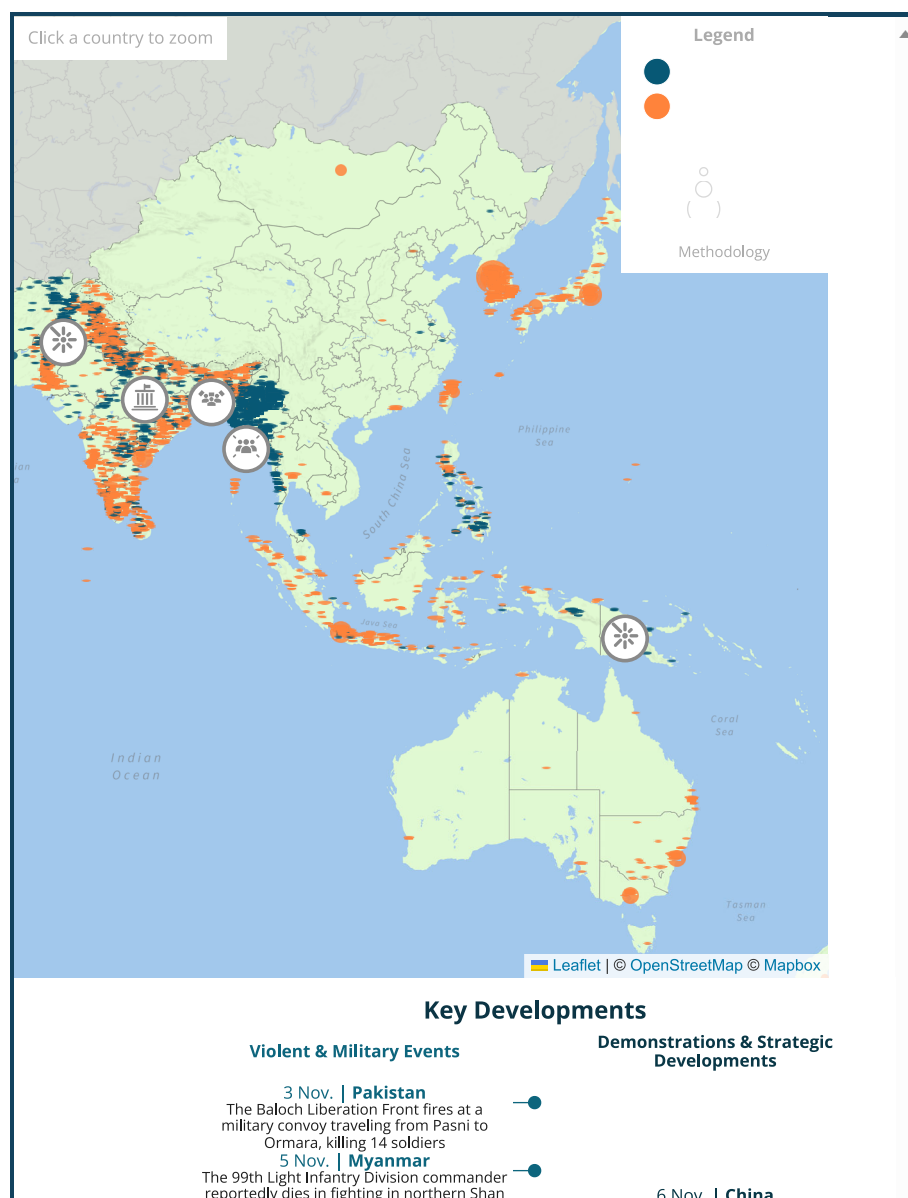
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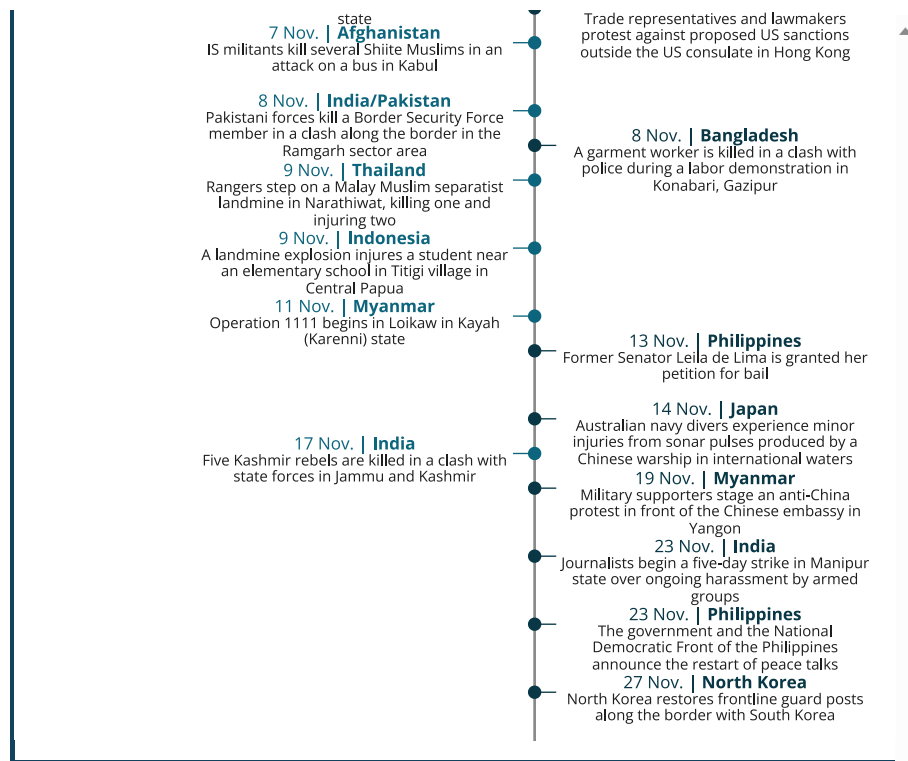
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Bangladesh: Pre-election BNP demonstrations become increasingly violent

Anti-government demonstrations organized by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) turned increasingly violent following a police crackdown in late October. Violent BNP demonstrations more than tripled in November compared to October. The BNP has held demonstrations and called general strikes to pressure the ruling Awami League (AL) to allow for the formation of a caretaker government that would oversee the elections scheduled for 7 January 2024. In response to the AL's refusal to meet the BNP's demands, the party announced a boycott of the elections and missed the 30 November filing date for candidates.¹ With only the AL and other smaller parties competing in the election, the AL will likely ensure its fourth consecutive term in power. BNP rallies are likely to continue amid rising political tensions in the run-up to the election.

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India: BJP wins in the Hindi heartland amid inter-party clashes

Legislative elections were held in November in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Mizoram. The results of the elections were announced on 3 December, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) winning in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan and the Indian National Congress (INC) winning in Telangana.² The success of the BJP in three states in the Hindi heartland – inclusive of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan – is seen as a precursor to the upcoming 2024 general elections,³ with Hindutva rhetoric playing a key role in the party's win in Madhya Pradesh.⁴ The elections in Madhya Pradesh were marked by clashes between the BJP and the INC, contributing to more than four times the number of political violence events reported in the region in November relative to October. Meanwhile, violence in Chhattisgarh was largely driven by Naxal-Maoist activity.⁵ Chhattisgarh, a stronghold for Naxal-Maoist rebels targeting the Indian government, has seen an increase in attacks on local officials this year, with events through November 2023 surpassing the number for all of 2022.

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Myanmar: Civilian targeting by the military increases

Faced with several defeats and declining troop morale, the Myanmar military resorted to increasingly targeting civilians, particularly in areas where resistance to its rule continues. Civilian targeting by the military increased by 51% across the country in November relative to October. Much of this violence involved airstrikes and shelling. Airstrikes in particular have become the military's default tactic when faced with losses on the battlefield, targeting resistance forces and civilians alike. ACLED records over 50 airstrike events targeting civilians in November, a monthly record high since the coup.

Approximately a third of civilian targeting events in November were reported in northern Shan state, where the Brotherhood Alliance launched Operation 1027 in late October. The success of Operation 1027 in seizing towns in addition to numerous military bases and outposts has given momentum to resistance forces in other parts of the country.⁶ Another round of intense fighting between the military and the United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA), a member of the Brotherhood Alliance, broke out in Rakhine state for the first time since November 2022. Resistance forces also announced the start of Operation 1111 as they aimed to seize control of Loikaw, the capital of Kayah (Karenni) state. The battle for Loikaw has continued into December.

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Pakistan: Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan attacks strategic air base in Punjab province

On 4 November, Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan (TJP), a militant group formed earlier this year with reported links to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP),⁷ attacked the M.M. Alam Air Base in Mianwali city, Punjab province, destroying at least three aircraft and a fuel bowser. While the attack was a first for the TJP in Punjab province, the TTP has been involved in over 10 attacks in the province this year, compared to none in 2022. This reflects the TTP's increasing activity in 2023 in areas outside of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), its traditional area of operation, with the majority of events outside of KPK happening in [Balochistan](#).⁸ The TJP's ability to target a high-security military facility in Punjab has raised concerns, particularly as the province is considered safer than other provinces in the country.⁹

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Papua New Guinea: Electoral violence reported in Lagaip Open

In Enga province, the Lagaip Open electorate supplementary elections, which were previously canceled due to an earlier outbreak of violence in July 2022, were held in early November.¹⁰ The elections drove an increase in violence in Enga province in November, with 11 events recorded in November compared to 2 in October. At least seven people were killed in election-related violence. Supporters of candidates and state forces clashed at the vote-counting center in the provincial capital of Wabag on 14 and 15 November.¹¹ The fighting was triggered by a decision to move the vote-counting process to another province, which was later reversed. Clashes were also reported on 20 November when armed men engaged in a shootout with state forces guarding the vote counting. Despite serious concerns around irregularities, including threats against polling officials¹² and ballot manipulation,¹³ the candidate for the Pangu Party, the party of Prime Minister James Marape, was declared the winner.¹⁴ Following the announcement of the winning candidate, a school was burned down and two people were shot dead by supporters of a losing candidate.¹⁵

Also in Enga province, outside of electoral violence, a domestic violence incident led to fighting between Pinain and Yatikin tribes in Wapenamanda, resulting in six deaths. The ongoing violence in Enga province in November prompted the authorities to declare both Wabag and Wapenamanda as 'fighting zones,' imposing a one-month lockdown to contain the conflicts and giving security forces expanded authority to carry out stop-and-search activities to look for firearms and make arrests.¹⁶

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Laura Sorica

Laura Sorica is a Research Manager at ACLED's East Asia Pacific desk and has been with the organization since August 2019. She is currently overseeing political violence and protests in the East Asia Pacific region, including in Japan, Taiwan, Mongolia, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, East Timor and throughout Oceania. Laura holds an MA in International and Advanced Japanese Studies and two BAs, one in Political Science and one in Linguistics. Her previous experiences include working in the private sector, the Romanian Embassy in Tokyo, and as an academic researcher in Japan working on security policy.

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