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Document #2105548

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

January sees 23 landmine injuries in Myanmar

Mine-affected townships have increased by 68 since 2020, according to a new monitor report.

By RFA Burmese

Landmines have killed one and injured 22 others across Myanmar's north in January alone, locals told Radio Free Asia Thursday.

One woman is dead and most of the injured have lost limbs during the explosions in northern Shan state, social aid organizations said.

A 36-year-old man from Namtu township's Hko Hpeik village was sent to Lashio Hospital after being hit by a landmine on Tuesday. He was struck while cutting bamboo, said neighbors and residents who transported him to the hospital.

"He went to cut bamboo in the north of the village. One of his legs was amputated and he was sent to Lashio," he told RFA on Thursday, asking to remain anonymous to protect his identity.

On Monday, a 29-year-old man had his leg amputated after stepping on a landmine. He was cutting wood in a forest of Muse township, said a Muse resident who wished to remain anonymous for security reasons.

In Namhkam township, a woman was killed by a landmine on Jan.18 on her way to a farm, according to data compiled by RFA.

Five women and 17 men were injured by landmines across seven townships, including Lashio, Hsipaw, Manton, and Kokang region. The highest number of people injured were from Muse, according to compiled data.

The number of people injured by landmines was the highest in areas where the fighting between the military junta and the Three Brotherhood

Alliance was intense, those living in northern Shan state said. However, residents could not confirm which group had planted the mines.

Neither the military nor the Three Brotherhood Alliance has released any information regarding deaths and injuries from landmine blasts.

Nationwide, 168 out of 330 townships are at risk of death or injury by landmines, compared to 100 in 2020, according to the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor's report released on Dec. 28, 2023.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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ecoi.net description:

One person killed and 22 injured by landmines in January 2024; 168 out of 330 townships are mine-affected

Country:

Myanmar

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[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

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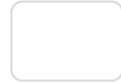
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Document #2106072

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Three years after coup, Myanmar crisis in 'freefall'

Rebel gains suggest conflict may be at a turning point, with junta soldiers resorting to 'indiscriminate' attacks on civilians.

By RFA Burmese

Myanmar's coup and ensuing civil war – now entering its fourth year – have torn apart Phyo Phyo Aung's family.

Her husband Lin Htet Naing – a longtime activist also known as Ko James – is in Yangon's notorious Insein Prison, where inmates are routinely tortured. He was sentenced to eight years for protesting against the military junta's takeover on Feb. 1, 2021.

Some 16 months ago, 36-year-old Ko James' mother was [killed in a bomb blast while waiting to visit him at the prison](#) – an attack that an anti-junta group claimed responsibility for.

Since then, Phyo Phyo Aung, 35, and her two young sons have fled Myanmar, where they get little news about Ko James' fate – and yet she hasn't given up hope that the junta will collapse.

"We will never accept the military coup. We will never accept military rule," she told RFA from an undisclosed location.

As Myanmar's bloody conflict drags into its fourth year, the fighting has taken an enormous toll on civilians like Phyo Phyo Aung's family – including children.

More than 2.6 million people have been displaced, the United Nations says, and at least 4,423 civilians have been killed since the coup – nearly

doubling the 2,826 deaths during the first two years, according to Thailand's Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma).

Some 459 of the dead were minors, up from 265 at the end of February last year, the group said, and 159 of them were under the age of 10.

Earlier this week, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk warned that Myanmar's human rights crisis is now in "freefall," noting that the abuses had "deteriorated even further" in recent months as the military has grown desperate amid a series of battlefield defeats.

Turning point?

Those rebel advances have put the military on its heels and suggest that the conflict may be at a turning point.

Since the end of October, the Three Brotherhood Alliance – a coalition of three ethnic armies in Shan and Rakhine states – has made rapid advances in the western and northern parts of the country, seizing control of more than 200 military camps, capturing 15 cities and prompting the surrender of about 4,000 junta troops, including a number of officers.

In November, junta chief Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing said the rebel offensive [could "break the country into pieces."](#)

The success of "Operation 1027," named for its Oct. 27 start date, is presenting "an existential threat" to the military, said Jason Tower, the Burma country director at the Washington-based U.S. Institute of Peace.

The defeats and large-scale surrenders of hundreds of troops at a time have led the military to "lose any legitimacy that it might have ever had within the ranks of its own people," Tower said.

The junta has responded with devastating raids on villages that include the use of airstrikes and heavy artillery. The U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, or OHCHR, said that more than 554 civilians have been killed since October alone.

The military also continued to use arson in raids on villages and towns during its third year in power. Junta troops have torched nearly 79,000 houses across the country, according to Data for Myanmar, an independent research firm that tracks the impact of conflict on civilians.

"Pitched battles between the military and armed opposition groups have resulted in mass displacement and civilian casualties," the U.N.'s Turk said in a statement ahead of the third anniversary of the takeover. "As the military have suffered setback after setback on the battlefield, they have

lashed out, launching waves of indiscriminate aerial bombardments and artillery strikes.”

No criticism allowed

As in the case of Phyto Phyto Aung and her family, the junta has also stepped up its response to any criticism of its rule.

Since the 2021 coup, junta authorities have arrested nearly 26,000 people on political grounds – of whom almost 20,000 remain in detention, where they face torture and few legal protections. In several cases where activists have evaded arrest, the military has detained relatives to use as leverage.

The OHCHR says at least 1,576 people have died in military custody over the past three years.

The military regime failed to hold elections in 2023 as planned as its control of the country slipped. Opponents had dismissed the planned election as a sham because it appeared likely to exclude parties ousted from power by the coup.

A fifth extension of emergency rule announced Wednesday would postpone the election. Myanmar’s Constitution mandates must be held within six months after a state of emergency is lifted.

In the meantime, experts say, junta mismanagement has decimated the economy, the value of the kyat has plummeted, and foreign investors have fled the country.

In April, the junta announced that it had increased military spending to 5.6 trillion kyats (US\$2.7 billion), or more than one-quarter of the 20 trillion kyats (US\$9.5 billion) allocated to the overall budget, for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, up from 3.7 trillion kyats (US\$1.7 billion) a year earlier.

By comparison, 2 trillion kyats were allocated for education (US\$953 million) and just over 800 billion kyats (US\$381 million) for health, while around 680 billion kyats (US\$324 million) were earmarked for electricity, despite Myanmar’s power grid suffering regular power cuts and calls by the junta for the public to save energy and fuel.

Turk, the U.N. rights czar, urged member states to consider imposing further targeted sanctions on the military to “constrain their ability to commit serious violations and disregard international law,” by limiting access to weapons, jet fuel, and foreign currency.

To that end, on Wednesday the U.S. Treasury announced sanctions against four individuals and two entities it said are linked to the military regime, to add to its growing list, while the Australian government

imposed additional sanctions on two banks it said enabled the junta's activities and three firms that supply it with jet fuel.

Fighting for democracy

For Phyo Phyo Aung, three years of military rule is three years too long. She told RFA that a return to civilian government can't come soon enough and vowed to keep fighting until the junta is removed from power.

She and Ko James have been activists going back to their youth and have been jailed several times and are accustomed to living in hiding. They met in 2005 as teenagers and later became members of the prominent All Burma Federation of Student Unions.

After joining the 2007 monk-led Saffron Revolution for democracy, the then-junta issued warrants for their arrests and they were forced to go into hiding. The following year, Cyclone Nargis devastated the country and they were jailed while taking part in student-led relief efforts. In 2015, they were again jailed for their role in protests of the National Education Law approved by Thein Sein's quasi-military government.

After the 2021 coup, they were involved in anti-junta protests. Living in hiding in Yangon, authorities arrested Ko James and one of their two young sons on June 18, 2022. Authorities tried to use the child as bait to get Phyo Phyo Aung to turn herself in, but she refused – and the child was released about a day later, to her great relief.

Now in hiding in a safe, undisclosed location with her two boys, Phyo Phyo Aung says she needs to keep a low profile for their safety. "We cannot live our lives conspicuously."

She worries about her husband, but is deeply proud: "He is a defender of democracy no matter which government is in power."

Translated by Ye Kaung Myint Maung. Edited by Joshua Lipes and Malcolm Foster.

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Article on impact of civil war on civilians

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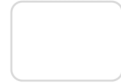
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Document #2106076

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Myanmar's junta storms 3 townships in bid for northern town

About 15 civilians are missing and 6 are dead after junta land and aerial attacks, residents said.

By RFA Burmese

Six civilians are dead after junta air raids and maneuvers in several townships in Myanmar's Sagaing region, residents told Radio Free Asia on Friday.

At least 10 were injured and 15 people were arrested in Pale, Kanbalu, and Khin-U townships during two days of military operations on Wednesday and Thursday.

In Pale, two women were killed and five others were injured when junta fighter jets bombarded Kan Gyi village, a member of Pale People's Defense Forces said.

"Kan Gyi village was bombarded without a fight. A woman died on the spot at home and another woman died at the hospital," he said, declining to be named for security reasons. "The other five were critically injured. One had to have his hand amputated."

Resistance fighters told RFA the aerial attack was likely retaliation after the Pale People's Defense Forces attacked a military camp.

On Wednesday, Pale People's Defense Forces launched an assault on a joint junta and Pyu Saw Htee militia camp in the township's Zee Phyu Kone village. The following day, the junta retaliated, bombarding Zee Phyu Kone and Kan Gyi villages with airstrikes.

North of Pale, junta forces simultaneously launched eight more airstrikes across Kanbalu township's Thin Taw, Zaw Chaung, and Ma Gyi Kone

villages on Thursday. The attack killed a 40-year-old man and injured five other residents, locals said.

The military attacked the villages bordering Kawlin and Kanbalu townships in Sagaing's east in order to recapture Kawlin town, said Kanbalu People's Defense Forces' information officer, who declined to give his name for fear of reprisals. Myanmar's shadow National Unity Government and its armed wing of People's Defense Forces [captured Kawlin](#) in November.

"The junta council wants to regain Kawlin, so it is clearing the route its forces are going to take," he told RFA on Friday. "The junta air force is continuously shooting at places where there is no battle – where not even a single bullet was shot."

A woman from Ma Gyi Kone village, and two men and three women from Zaw Chaung villages were seriously injured in Thursday's assault on Kanbalu township. However, their injuries were not life-threatening, the information officer added. Another man from Zaw Chaung village bled to death while receiving medical treatment.

Regime troops also stormed Khin-U township's Tha Yet Kone and Kin Pyit villages on Wednesday. The following morning, villagers found the bodies of three civilians, residents and defense force officials said.

The victims were 31-year-old Ye Aung from Tha Yet Kone village and 51-year-old Than Tun and 42-year-old Than Lwin Gyi, both from Kin Pyit village. Another 15 people are missing and may have been arrested, a defense force official said.

After junta troops captured the three victims, they were killed near Ka Lon village, said defense force spokesperson Ah Lin Yaung.

"The column entered Tha Yet Kone village at night and arrested Ko Ye Aung, who was sleeping at home. The other two men were caught while fleeing in the forest. The people who have been arrested are yet to be identified and counted," he said.

"There are many people who are still missing. We are still investigating whether they are in other villages or not. There are approximately 15 people [we can't find]. But it could be more than that."

Calls by RFA to Sagaing region's junta spokesperson Sai Naing Naing Kyaw went unanswered.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a total of 4,477 people have died since the Feb. 1, 2021 coup.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region: 6 civilians killed, several others injured or arrested in attacks
by junta troops in several townships

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Myanmar

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[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

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Document #2106079

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Junta airstrike on school in Kayah state kills 4 children

As rebels gain ground, the military has increasingly turned to air attacks.

By RFA Burmese

A junta airstrike on an elementary school in eastern Myanmar's Kayah state left four children dead and 10 others injured on Monday, according to members of a local anti-junta People's Defense Force.

A military junta jet appeared to drop a 500-pound bomb while children were inside the school at about 10 a.m., several members of a People's Defense Force, or PDF, told Radio Free Asia.

The explosion took place in Daw Si Ei village of western Demoso township.

The four children killed were between 10 and 13 years old, a PDF member told RFA. The 10 who were injured were also children, he said.

Demoso township has seen increased fighting since ethnic Karenni forces and PDF paramilitaries began a coordinated offensive against the military on Nov. 11 in an attack that's been dubbed "Operation 1111."

ecoi.net description:

Kayah State: 4 children killed and 10 others injured in airstrike on school by junta troops

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

Original link:

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/junta-airstrike-school-02052024154037.html>

Document type:

Media Report

Junta-affiliated media outlets said on Monday that reports of an airstrike in Demoso township on Monday were false.

RFA's attempts to contact the junta's spokesperson for Kayah state, Zarni Maung, for his comments on the bombing of the school were unsuccessful.

Junta's ground losses

Monday's airstrike was the latest junta bombing that appeared to have targeted civilians.

Since the February 2021 military coup d'état until the end of last month, a total of 1,429 people have been killed and 2,641 injured by junta airstrikes and artillery attacks, according to data compiled by RFA.

The figures include 149 civilians killed and 267 injured in January.

Junta commanders have increasingly turned to air attacks as resistance forces see more success on the ground, according to Kyaw Zaw, the spokesperson of the shadow National Unity Government's President's Office.

"The army has suffered losses in the battles. Moreover, tens of thousands of their soldiers have deserted and fled," he told RFA. "At the same time, forces of the military council are committing more brutalities against civilians in accordance with the orders of a handful of senior generals."

During the first year of the coup – between Feb. 1, 2021, and Jan. 31, 2022 – 109 civilians were killed and 177 were injured by airstrikes and artillery attacks.

During the second year of the junta's post-coup regime, the number of civilian casualties increased almost four times to 328 killed and 768 injured.

In the third year – between Feb. 1, 2023, and Jan. 31, 2024 – 992 people were killed and 1,696 were injured.

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Region by region

The number of armed conflicts in northern Shan state with the junta fell last month after a China-brokered ceasefire was put in place. But junta air attacks in Rakhine state and the Sagaing, Magway and Bago regions significantly increased, PDF members and residents said.

The junta attacked villages in Seik Phyu township in Magway on Jan. 29, injuring three civilians, a local villager said.

“Four villages were bombed by airplanes,” the villager said. “Machine guns were used in the aerial attacks.”

The highest civilian death in January took place in Rakhine, where 35 civilians were killed and 76 were injured.

The second highest figures were in Sagaing, with 37 deaths and 55 injured, followed by Shan state with 27 civilians casualties and 36 injured.

RFA attempted to contact regime spokesperson Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun to ask about the aerial attacks, but he was unavailable.

Junta leader Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing said on Saturday that the aerial and artillery attacks are effective ways of defeating resistance forces. He made similar remarks on Dec. 15.

Last week, the junta extended emergency rule in Myanmar for another six months, thereby delaying the date by which elections must be held according to the country’s constitution.

A political analyst who asked for anonymity for security reasons predicted more bombings over the next six months as the junta becomes more aggressive in suppressing resistance forces with the aim of conducting a national census by the end of the year.

A census would be a first step toward holding a general election.

Translated by Aung Ning. Edited by Matt Reed and Malcolm Foster.

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Document #2106078

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Two children injured by landmine blast in Myanmar

Locals claim the mine was planted by the junta.

By RFA Burmese

Two minors are in critical condition after stepping on a landmine, residents told Radio Free Asia on Monday.

The two were injured on Sunday while helping their families measure land they planned to sell, a resident said, declining to be named for fear of reprisals. The landmine was planted near Mindat-based junta Battalion 274 in southern Chin state.

“They live at the bottom of the Mee Thet Kone hill,” he said. “The girl stepped on a mine planted by the junta and lost one of her feet. The boy who came along with the girl was hit on his back by shrapnel.”

The boy is 12 years old and the girl is 14, but neither could be named for security reasons, residents said. The children are receiving medical treatment at military Battalion 274 in Mindat city.

ecoi.net description:

Chin State: 2 children injured by landmine

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

Original link:

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/chin-landmine-02052024034932.html>

Document type:

Media Report

Language:

Locals claimed the landmine was planted by junta forces, but RFA could not independently confirm this. RFA contacted Chin state's junta spokesperson Aung Cho for comment on the incident, but did not receive an answer by the time of publication.

Landmines have become an [increasing problem](#) in Chin state following the coup, especially for villagers performing agricultural tasks. Residents told RFA these blasts were never a problem before the military took power in 2021.

Both the junta and resistance groups have [denied planting landmines](#) that could harm villagers, with the junta telling RFA that “the military does not bury landmines in areas where civilians live.”

The Chin National Front spokesperson similarly claimed that its landmines are removed once fighting has ended, and that “there has never been any civilian hurt because of us.”

On Jan. 26, a man from Chin state's Taingen village in Tedim township stepped on a landmine while looking for his cattle, locals said. He later needed his leg amputated.

In January alone, landmines in northern Myanmar [killed one and injured 22](#), according to locals who said they could not determine which group planted them. People living in over half of Myanmar's 330 townships are at risk of injury or death from landmines, according to a December report from the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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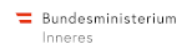
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Document #2106082

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Junta troops seize over 300 villagers in central Myanmar

During the raid, troops shot dead a woman fleeing the village, villagers said.

By RFA Burmese

One woman died and over 300 villagers were detained after a junta raid in central Myanmar, residents and an armed resistance member told Radio Free Asia on Wednesday.

Troops shot 21-year-old Khin Soe Wai while she fled her village in Mandalay township, locals said.

Over 50 soldiers stormed Kan Swei village following a clash with local resistance forces on Sunday. Mandalay and Myingyan People's Defense Forces attacked junta troops with drones only half a mile away.

After shooting Khin Soe Wai, villagers said the column occupied the village's monastery, interrogating more than 100 villagers on Tuesday and burning down three homes.

Troops took more than 30 of them to a village in nearby Natogyi township.

ecoi.net description:

Central Myanmar: One woman killed and over 300 civilians detained in raids by junta troops

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Media Report

After arriving in Na Nwin Taw Bo, soldiers arrested over 300 more villagers, who have not been released yet, Myingyan-based defense forces member Bo Moe Kyo told RFA on Wednesday.

"On the fifth, a woman from Kan Swei who ran away was shot dead," he said. "About 150 villagers in Kan Swei were detained in the monastery. They were beaten and tortured. About 30 of them were taken by the junta troops."

Since the raid, some 5,000 residents from eight villages in Myingyan township and Natogyi township have been forced to flee due to the junta column, he said.

"Na Nwin Taw Bo was raided by the column again. There were no casualties. But they arrested everyone they met: children, adults and women," he said. "More than 300 villagers were arrested. They are still being held as hostage."

Calls by RFA to Mandalay's junta spokesperson Thein Htay to learn more about the raid went unanswered on Wednesday.

In January, four women and five men from Mandalay region's Myingyan township were arrested and killed by junta troops.

As of Feb. 6, over 4,400 people across the country have been killed since the military seized power three years ago, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

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