

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

Human Rights Situation in Mon State, Karen State & Tanintharyi Region

OCTOBER
2023



SUMMARY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

The Military Junta Is Increasingly Manipulating the Rule of Law in Burma to Target Civilians and Pro-Democracy Forces

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Throughout October, the regime routinely targeted civilians in an ongoing campaign to undermine their fundamental freedoms. Despite the daily challenges, the people are resilient and have not given up their fight for democracy. The Burma Army knows that they are losing the war they have waged, and in response, they have scaled up attacks to try and instill terror and fear. The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) remains committed to documenting the assaults and attacks indicative of military impunity. Evidence is necessary to ensure justice for victims and survivors.

While carrying out these horrendous attacks, the junta is trying to present an illusion to the international community that the situation in the country is normal when, in reality, it is anything but the contrary. The junta invited government officials, diplomats, ethnic revolution organizations, and even NGOs to an event commemorating the eighth anniversary of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). The NCA is not a successful pathway or platform to peace in Burma, but in their attempts to appear legitimate and committed to 'peace,' the junta held a lavish ceremony.

Against these staged theatrics, the Burma Army continues to launch air and

ground attacks. During the second week of the month, a devastating airstrike claimed the lives of dozens of civilians, including women and children in Kachin State. The military was the perpetrator yet claimed no responsibility and no reparations. How the junta conducts itself reveals its genuine interest in profiting from the people's pain and suffering.

This is also evident in the junta's new, profoundly problematic policy regarding workers employed outside of the country. On September 1, 2023, the military declared that migrant workers abroad must transfer 25% of their salary to Burma via official transfer systems to domestic banks. If not, they would be banned from working abroad for three years.

After the attempted coup, many countries in the international community undertook economic sanctions to show their opposition to the junta. The World Bank also decided to halt loans to Burma. As a result, export income has declined, and economic sanctions of the international community are proving to have some impact.

Singapore recently decided to cut its dealings with two banks controlled by

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the military. These efforts make it more difficult for the junta to access US dollars. In response, the regime has turned to exploiting migrant workers abroad as a short-term remedy to access US dollars.

“We’ve worked hard for this money and must send 25% to the junta. It’s unfair. When we were in trouble abroad, no one came to help us,” said a Burmese migrant worker in Thailand.

When transferring their salary to their families, most migrant workers use a fast, simple, and illegal money transfer agency rather than the complicated and often delayed official banking system.

After declaring the new law targeting migrant workers, the junta began to arrest illegal money transfer agencies and their brokers in Mon State. From September 15 to 17, 2023, five dishonest money transfer brokers were arrested in Kyike Hto, Paung, and Thaton Townships and faced charges under section 171 of the Monetary Association Laws Act.

“They’ve arrested illegal money transfer brokers to increase the pressure on migrant workers to use the official banking system. If so, the regime will get 25% of their salary,” said a local source.

Critics of the new law note the junta already exploits income from natural resource extraction to kill its people. Migrant workers are unwilling to send their salaries back to banks controlled by the junta as they don’t want their salary to be a contribution to killing people in Burma. In addition, the military-controlled banks use an exchange rate much lower than the exchange rate used in the market.

On September 19, 2023, one Thai Baht was equivalent to 96.5 MMK in the actual market, but the junta-controlled banks say the Thai Baht equals 55 MMK. One US dollar is equivalent to more than 3,000 MMK in the market, but one US dollar is priced at more than 2,000 MMK in domestic banks.

After the attempted coup, the number of workers interested in working abroad sharply increased. Many go abroad via legal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) pathways with select countries or undocumented routes.

“Migrant workers who came under MOU agreements often have to do jobs different from the job classifications described in their contracts. Even though they came with an MOU, they couldn’t get a job when they arrived. They had to wait for months. It’s terrible,” said a migrant worker in Thailand.

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The junta is now pressuring foreign work agencies to ensure that migrant workers have signed documents agreeing to send 25% of their salary back to their native country before they leave: “I had to sign the document. But I don’t know how to transfer back my salary,” said a migrant worker who recently left Burma.

“One of my friends had gone to South Korea for work, and they had to sign a document agreeing to return 25% of their salary before departure. It’s compulsory,” said another local source.

The National Unity Government says this latest move by the junta is a breach of the 1999 Foreign Work Law and is abusive and oppresses migrant workers.

On October 16, 2023, the military junta announced that Burmese people living and working overseas must show a recommendation letter from the Internal Revenue Department of the Ministry of Planning and Finance to prove they have paid their income tax before extending their passport validity.

The statement is intended for two passports – the passport for the job (PJ) and the passport for the seaman (PS). The military junta has tried to collect income tax from overseas workers and pressured them to transfer 25% of their income to domestic banks.

“The junta has used various ways to extort money from overseas workers. Now, they’ve threatened us with our passports, and it’s inevitable for overseas workers in Singapore. We can’t overstay here,” said a Burmese overseas worker in Singapore.

If an overseas worker fails to prove he/she has already paid their income tax, the junta threatens that they will not extend their passport validity.

“If we have to pay income tax and transfer 25% of our wages, we have nothing left. We had to spend millions of MMK to work in Singapore. Now, many people have come to work in Singapore, so it isn’t okay like before. It’s difficult to get a job, and we don’t have “over time,” said one overseas worker.

The military junta has instructed Burmese overseas workers to pay their income tax after October 1, 2023. “We have to overcome many challenges to work abroad. The junta doesn’t show any mercy and tries to get our hard-earned money. It’s unfair,” said an overseas worker.

For those living inside the country, the situation also remains volatile. During the first week of the month, more than 30 homes and nearly 20 vehicles were destroyed by the military junta, and five

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residents were shot in Pu Law, Tanintharyi Region. Burma Army troops who entered Latt Ku and Toe villages burned civilian properties, Myeik District. Seventeen houses were ruined in Latt Ku village, seven in Pyin Phyu village, four in Mya Dong village, and five in Pe Tud village in Toe village group.

A total of 33 houses were burnt, and almost 20 vehicles and equipment, such as motorcycles, cars, tricycles, and tractors, were also destroyed in fires deliberately set by the junta.

In addition, the residents reported that five civilians were shot and killed by the military junta troops. There are no less than ten houses that were damaged by artillery weapons and homes that were destroyed in the two villages. On the fourth day, when the military reinforced their troops, there were fierce battles with the People's Defense Forces (PDF) and eight casualties from the opposition side.

In a report released at the end of September 2023 by HURFOM, our findings indicated a worrying projection of worsening crimes committed by the junta. These numbers continue to rise week after week, month after month, and now, two and a half years after the failed coup, the junta continues to commit acts of senseless violence.

Throughout October, HURFOM repeatedly documented cases of the regime weaponizing the law to target the people. According to her close relatives, a woman from Dawei was sentenced to more than 40 years in prison by the military junta court. The imprisoned person is 34-year-old Ma Yin Yin Cho, and the court of Dawei District charged her with five Penal Code articles.

The 22-years-imprisonment was for two cases under Article 50 (j) of financing a designated terrorist group, violence involving explosives, 10 years imprisonment for Section 51 and Section 52 related to financial support, 12 years in prison for Article 54 for wanting to kill or hurt a victim of violence and a total of 44 years was ordered to sentence Ma Yin Yin Cho. A sentence of 12 years imprisonment was initially called in May of this year for section 50 (j) of the five sections indicted.

After that, the trial continued with the remaining four articles. According to the source, a final order has been issued with a total prison sentence of 44 years: "The charges are up to life imprisonment," a person close to her said.

On January 2, 2023, Ma Yin Yin Cho and her family members were arrested. The other family members were released

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days later, but Ma Yin Yin Cho and her brother were charged with the Anti-Terrorism Act. Thet Zaw Win, Ma Yin Yin Cho's brother, was sentenced to 22 years in prison with three charges of panel code of terrorism.

There are approximately 60 women in prison in Dawei, and almost all have been ordered to serve sentences of less than 15 years. However, Ma Yin Yin Cho has been sentenced to the most years of imprisonment. The military also seized her clothing store on Nate Ban Road shortly after.

In another case, on October 16, 2023, the Dawei District Court sentenced a 21-year-old university student from Dawei to 15 years imprisonment after accusing him of supporting the PDFs. Ko Linn Htet Phyo, a second-year philosophy major, was arrested at his home on July 26, 2023. The junta charged him under the Anti-Terrorist Act sections 50((J) and 52(A).

“While pronouncing the sentence, the judge said they found the evidence of connection with the PDF on Ko Linn Htet's mobile phone. This decision was declared the final one,” said a witness.

He was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment for breaching section 50(J)

and four years of imprisonment with hard labor for contravening section 52(A). The total imprisonment time is 15 years. Before the attempted coup, Ko Lin Htet Phyo was a DJ.

During the second week of October, the junta took even more steps to increase their control and surveillance over the people. According to residents, the Township General Administration Department issued a local order to prevent two men from riding one motorcycle together in Paung Township, Mon State.

In September, the regional order for motorcycle passengers was issued after at least four people, including the junta policemen, intelligence, informants, and a former militiaman, were shot in Paung Township. Based on the order, two men now cannot ride on one motorcycle.

The order also stipulates that a man is not allowed to ride on the back of a motorbike driven by a woman. Still, a woman can be a passenger on a motorcycle driven by a man, and two women can ride a motorcycle together.

“Since the beginning of the October, there has been shouting with loudspeakers in the neighborhoods and villages. It was announced that if two men ride a

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motorcycle together, action will be taken. It has become difficult for everyone,” said a resident of Paung.

Due to the restrictions, the livelihoods of taxi drivers, rubber farmers, and the locals who ride motorcycles together and go to work for the day are affected:

“Working as a driver is no longer sustainable. People do not rent from us very often. It’s difficult for families to make a living because we cannot take men as passengers,” said a motorcycle taxi driver.

Those who fail to comply with the outrageous order are often arbitrarily arrested, questioned, and shot if they don’t stop their motorbike by the military.

Since the failed coup in Mon State, a local order was issued to prevent two men from riding a motorcycle together in Ye, Kyeik Hto, and Bilin Townships, and now Paung Township is also included.

At least ten people have been charged under the Anti-Terrorist Act of the locals arrested by the military Junta from Oak Ta Tar village in Paung Township, Mon State. On September 3, after police officer Ko Ko Lwin was shot and killed at the

Paung Police station, the junta arrested over twenty Oak Ta Tar village residents accused of communicating with the PDFs.

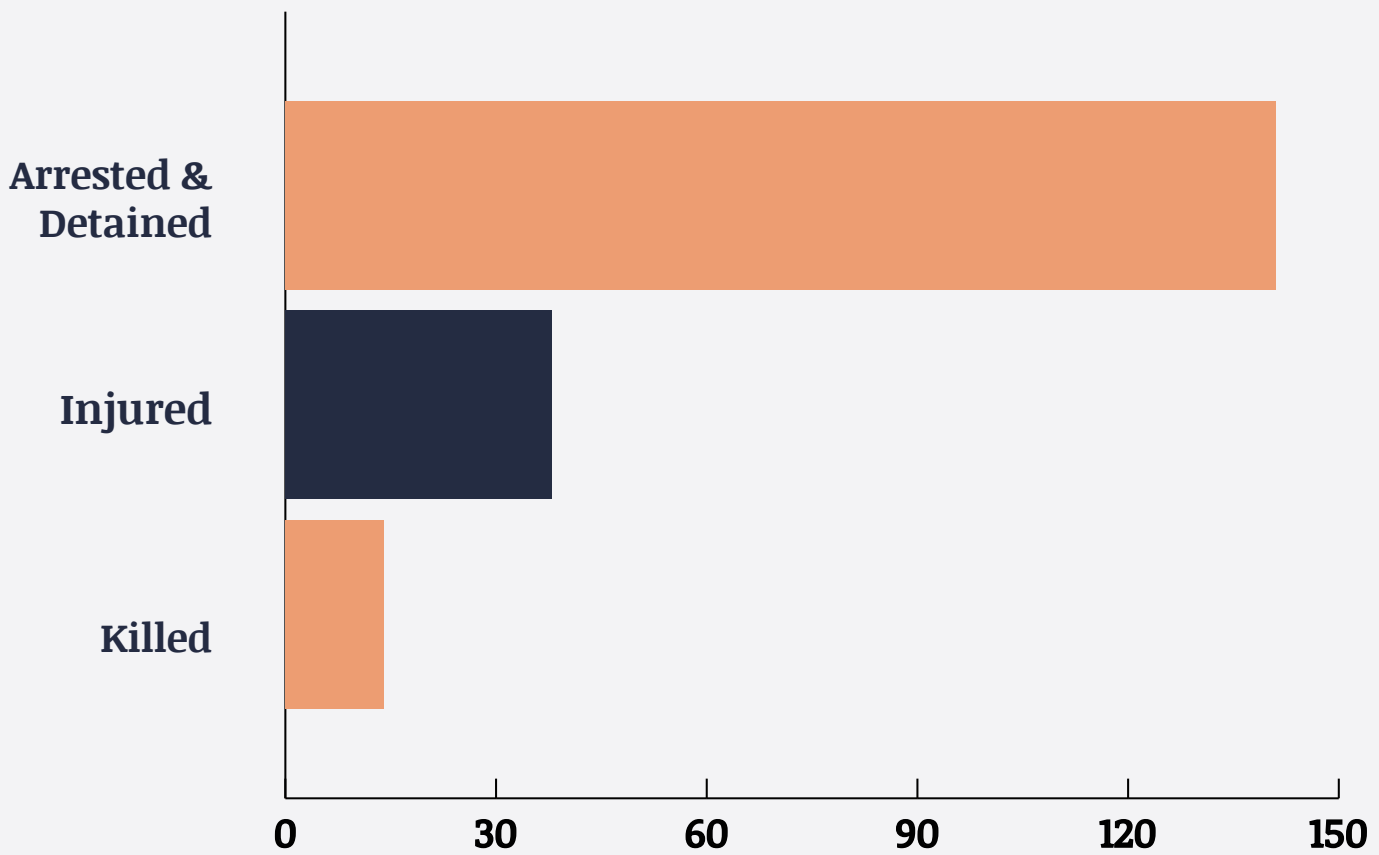
After nearly a month of interrogating those arrested, ten people were arrested and charged under Article 50(j) of the Anti-Terrorist Act, 52(a). The military opened each case. According to residents of Paung, nearly 30 local people were arrested by the junta forces for various reasons in September, and some of them are missing without contact with their families.

These constant attacks are rooted in the international community’s failure to act and hold the junta accountable. This has prompted frustration and impatience from civil society organizations, who have continued to call for more concerted, coordinated, and compassionate action. On 17 October 2023, more than 400 human rights groups called on the United Nations General Assembly and its Members to take swift action to hold the military junta to account through a United Nations Security resolution, which includes a referral to the International Criminal Court, a global arms embargo and coordinated sanctions.

SCALED UP HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

HURFOM fieldworkers continue to take great risks to document the human rights violations being perpetrated in target areas of Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region. By the end of **October 2023**, HURFOM recorded at least **68 arrested**, **52 detained**, **42 injured**, and **15 killed** across all target areas.

Civilians Arrested, Injured & Killed in October 2023 in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region



3+

Pro-Democracy Activists Targeted by the Junta

8

PROTESTS ACROSS TARGET
AREAS IN OCTOBER 2023

5

TANINTHARYI
REGION

2

MON STATE

1

KAREN STATE



17,000+

CIVILIANS DISPLACED ACROSS TARGET AREAS

CIVILIANS TARGETED IN MON, KAREN STATE
& THE TANINTHARYI REGION

7+

DISMISSED FOR
INVOLVEMENT
IN THE CIVIL
DISOBEDIENCE
MOVEMENT

3+

PROTESTERS/
ACTIVISTS
SENTENCED IN
JUNTA COURTS

9+

ENFORCED
DISAPPEARANCES
BY THE MILITARY

12+

VILLAGERS WERE CAPTURED AND USED AS HUMAN SHIELDS IN DAWEI

85+

DAMAGED HOMES



42+

CASES OF MOTORCYCLE CONFISCATION

5+

VEHICLES CONFISCATED BY THE JUNTA

5+

CDM ACTIVISTS & CIVIL SERVANTS WERE DETAINED IN MON STATE



AIRSTRIKES IN SOUTHEASTERN BURMA REMAIN AN ONGOING THREAT TO THE LIVES OF CIVILIANS AND THEIR SECURITY.



At least 13 civilians have been charged under the Anti-Terrorist Act in Paung Township, Mon State and seven were suspended and charged with accusations of having links to the People's Defense Forces.



KAREN STATE

7,700+ Newly Displaced

12 Injured, 6 Killed



Mon State



Tanintharyi Region

In Karen State, the military junta continues its assault on innocent people. According to residents and officials of the social relief organization, two civilians, including a 10-year-old child, were injured when the artillery weapons exploded in Kawkareik township.

In the afternoon of 6 October, two artillery shells exploded in ward No. 2 without any active conflict. As a result of the explosion, 10-year-old Mg Oak Kar Phyo and 46-year-old U Aung Ko Latt from ward No. 2 were wounded by the explosion of artillery shells.

“There was no active conflict, but still the artillery weapons fell. A child and an adult were injured. The child was not seriously injured, but Ko Aung Ko Latt was sent to Hpa-An Hospital. They said that there are many pieces of mine left in his body,” said a resident of Kawkareik.

It is reported that Mg Oak Kar Phyo, injured by the artillery weapon, was transported to Kaw Ka Rate Hospital by a social relief organization. At the same time, U Aung Ko Latt was transferred to Hpa-An Public Hospital for treatment.

After the incident, at around 5:00 PM, another artillery weapon exploded in ward No. 2 of Kawkareik, but no one was

injured. Due to the explosion of artillery weapons in the city, the residents are always worried and facing the problem of life insecurity and family sustenance.

On October 3, according to a statement by the Karen National Union (KNU), 56-year-old Daw Mae Tin Aye was injured by the artillery weapons in her abdomen due to a large-scale explosion in An Pha Gyi village in Kawkareik township. Kaw Ka Rate Township, Karen State, where the revolutionary forces tried to take over the city, was declared under martial law by the military on February 2, 2023.



MON STATE

2,950+ Newly Displaced

12 Injured, 3 Killed



Karen State



Tanintharyi Region

A growing concern in Mon State is the ongoing arbitrary arrests, followed by baseless charges. According to people close to the family, two locals arrested by the military in Mawlamyine and Thaton in Mon State have been charged under the Anti-Terrorist Act.

According to people close to the family, the two locals arrested by the military in Mon State Capital, Mawlamyine and Thaton in Mon State, have been charged under the Anti-Terrorist Act. On September 22, the joint forces of the military junta based in Bin Hlaing ward, Thaton-Ba An highway road in Thaton, inspected and arrested an 18-year-old Ma Aye Chan May for finding information related to PDFs on her phone. The junta police opened a case against her at the Thaton City police station on September 24 under Section 52(a) and (b) of the Anti-Terrorist Act.

In addition, on September 27, Ko Nyi Htet Aung, living in Shwe Myain Thiri ward, Mawlamyain city, was accused of sharing the news on the social network Facebook page about the National Unity Government and PDF, and the military junta force came and arrested him on his home. The military junta police have charged him at Zeya Thiri police station under Section 52(a) of the Anti-Terrorist Act.

“Locals of Mon State are being arrested more this month, one by one. Most of those arrested were charged with the Anti-Terrorist Act. The military commits more acts of violence in the areas where they can oppress more,” remarked a person working on the issue of political prisoners.

According to people close to the family, at least 40 residents have been arrested in Paung, Thaton, Kyaik Hto, Thanbyuzayat, and Mawlamyine townships, Mon State, this September, and nearly 20 of the detained victims are missing without contact with their families.

Nearly 30 local people were arrested by the military junta force for various reasons in September, and some of them are missing without contact with their families. It was announced on October 3 by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners that 820 people were arrested during the military coup in Mon State.

In a separate case, two people from Bilin and Paung townships were arrested and charged for criticizing the coup leader, Min Aung Hlaing, on Facebook. Ma Aye Ni Ni Aung, the owner of the Aye Ni Ni Aung account from Kywal Cham village, Paung Township, was arrested by the military at 9:00 PM on October 3.

Similarly, at 1:00 pm on October 2, the military junta force came and arrested Ko Min Tun Myat Aung, the account owner of Min Tun Myat Aung from Ah Luu village, Bilin Township, at his home for criticizing the leader of the coup.

According to those close to the military, those arrested repeatedly participated in protests and wrote and distributed posts on social networking sites that would disrespect the falsely promoted Heads of State:

“As far as we know, those who have participated in the protesta and those with famous names have been monitored. Both are from Bilin and Paung were arrested for posting posts criticizing Min Aung Hlaing,” said a witness.

The two people were arrested at the Paung City Police Station and Bilin City Police Station under Section 52(a) of the Anti-Terrorism Act. A case has been opened under Section 505(a) of the Penal Code.

The victims who were arrested and opened a case may be sentenced to a minimum of three years imprisonment to a maximum of 6 years if found guilty, as charged by the military.

During the last week of September 2023, a male shop owner and two employees of Kyaw Kyar phone repair shop in Thanbyuzayat, Mon State, were arrested and charged at Thanbyuzayat Police

Station on the allegation that he shared the information and news of the National Unity Government and People’s Defense Forces.

On October 18, 2023, U Than Lwin, a former Administrator from Kha Ywel village, Kyike Hto Township, Mon State, was arrested. The junta came to his home in civilian clothes and accused him of sharing information and supporting the People’s Defense Force.

“The 310th artillery battalion arrested him, but we do not know where he has been detained,” said a local source close to the victim’s family.

After the attempted coup, about 100 residents, including business owners, have been arrested by the junta after being accused of having a connection with the PDF. Most were sentenced to imprisonment.

Enforced disappearances are also a regular occurrence. A taxi driver was arrested with his car at the Ye city exit checkpoint, Ye Township, Mon State, and his family has been unable to contact him for more than three weeks after the incident, according to people close to the driver’s family. The arrested person is 43-year-old U Kyu Win Thein, who was transporting passengers between Yangon and Dawei in a Probox car.

On October 2 at 9 AM, an armed group stopped the Probox car on the road and forced the four people, including the

driver, to get off. Other passengers saw the driver being taken away in his car with his head covered.

At 11:00 a.m., the three passengers were released and taken to Yangon in another car, and the driver was abducted along with his car.

“That gate is a multi-group checkpoint gate. There are DKBA (Democratic Karen Buddhist Army) and BGF (Border Guard Forces). There are also other troops. Also, that checkpoint has been closed for a long time. Now, the gate is reopened and rechecked. It is only two hundred yards away from - Light Infantry Battalion LIB No.586,” said a resident of Ye Township.

On October 2nd, U Kyu Win Thein was arrested at a checkpoint of the military partner DKBA unit near LIB No.586 on the way out of Ye City in his car to deliver the passengers to Yangon, the family member said.

“They checked carefully and took them. The three passengers were released” said a family member of U Kyu Win Thein.

On October 3rd, the family members went to where U Kyu Win Thein was arrested near where the armed group was inspecting. Still, the armed group replied that they did not detain anyone, according to the family.

At that gate, the family members said that some people were wearing DKBA uniforms, some plainclothes armed men, and some locals spoke the Burmese

language. Since the morning of the arrest, there was no news, so the family members went to the Ye Township police station to investigate, but the police denied that they had arrested him. U Kyu Win Thein moved from Long Lon Township to Dawei City, and he has been living in Wae Gyun Htain Lae ward for around five months and is driving a taxi with a Probox car.



Tanintharyi region

6,500+ Newly Displaced

18 Injured, 6 Killed



Karen State



Mon State

Violence in Southern Burma has been deteriorating rapidly since the coup. From September 15 to 18, the military junta troops that entered Latt Ku village and Toe village in a large force destroyed houses and vehicles in Pu Law Township, Myeik District, according to the residents.

Seventeen houses were in Latt Ku village, seven in Pyin Phyu village, four in Mya Dong village, and 5 in Pe Tud village in the Toe village group; a total of 33 houses were burnt, and almost twenty vehicles and equipment, such as motorcycles, car, tricycle (three wheels truck) and tractors were burnt. In addition, the residents reported that five civilians were shot dead by the military junta troops in Pyin Phyu and Pe Tud villages.

There are no less than ten houses that were damaged by artillery weapons and homes that were destroyed in the two villages. On the fourth day, when the military increased their troops, there were fierce battles with the PDFs, with eight casualties from the opposition side. Pu Law Township has been declared under martial law and is the township with the most fighting in Tanintharyi.

According to local sources, houses were set on fire after the transfer of top positions in Tanintharyi, the number of arrests and killings increased, and reckless attacks with artillery weapons often occurred.

On September 25, 2023, the 306th Artillery Battalion based in Eastern Maw Tone village, Tanintharyi Township, indiscriminately launched artillery attacks that killed a villager.

The battalion shot 81 mm artillery weapons at least ten times, targeting the Eastern Maw Tone village tract. One of the artillery shells dropped and exploded in a house. A 30-year-old man was killed.

“He tried to close his front door as he heard artillery gunfire. The artillery shell dropped and exploded directly where he was. We tried to send him to hospital, but he died of excessive bleeding within minutes,” said a villager from Eastern Maw Tone.

Artillery explosions also took place in Eastern Maw Tone, Za Lone, Htone Nwe, and Ban La Mut villages, and two houses in Eastern Maw Tone were destroyed by the explosion. There were no armed clashes in the area before the indiscriminate artillery attacks.

Starting in the morning of October 9, thousands of residents fled from the villages west of Yebyu town and northwest of Long Lon town as military Junta forces raided the villages. The junta forces fired three artillery weapons. Most of the locals ran away.

The military junta troops repeatedly raided Yebyu and arrested the villagers from Tha Pyay Soon and Ba Gore Soon villages. Details of the number of locals arrested and the circumstances are still under investigation. From September 21 to October 3, the residents had to flee because the villages on the west bank of Yebyu City were attacked for 13 days.

The military junta troops split into two groups and reinforced their military operation at the junction of Long Lone and Yebyu Township. One Burma Army soldier raided the villages of Tha Pyay Soon, Min Dut, and Ba Gore Soon, and another was sent toward the Sa Khan Gyi village group in Long Lone Township.

Within 13 days of the military’s first raid, at least one civilian and two members of the local revolutionary force were killed, and at least four camps were seized. Pa La residents arrested by the Junta: No reasons were provided

On October 8, 2023, the military arrested a 55-year-old man from Ward #3, Pa La Town, Pu Law Township, Myike District, Tanintharyi Region. While driving his motorcycle taxi, U Thein Tan encountered the military patrol and was arrested.

“U Thein Tan served as Administrator of Ward #3 under the National League for Democracy (NLD) government. Now he is driving a

motorcycle taxi for his living,” said a source close to the victim’s family. U Thein Tan was arrested and detained at the Pa La Town Police Station.

On September 22, 42-year-old Ko Kyar Gyi, another Ward 3 resident, was arrested by the junta while at his workshop.

“They are both very calm and peaceful people. They were arrested on the street. We don’t know why they’re arrested,” said a Pa La resident.

According to the local people, the military Junta has been patrolling Wards 3 and 4 twice a day, once in the morning and again in the evening. As of October 8, the Junta arrested three residents from Ward #3.

Between October 7 and 9, 2023, the Junta’s artillery regiment arrested 24 Kyauk Ka Nyar village residents in Yebyu Township, Dawei. Only five detained were released at the time of writing, and 19 remain in custody.

“Some of those arrested during the military operation were released on the same day. But most have not been released yet. Just five were released,” said a local source.

Most of those arrested are young men and are being detained and interrogated at either the Kyauk Ka Nyar artillery regiment base or the Yebyu Township Police Station.

“The military initially arrested them to be used as a human shield. But we don’t know why the artillery regiment made the arrest,” said a local.

The Kyauk Ka Nyar-based artillery regiment has hidden themselves in nearby areas and is arresting villagers without cause. Local men are fleeing for safety and will not stay in the village.

On October 11, 2023, two local men from Tanintharyi Township were wounded by the artillery attacks launched by the military. The 557th Light Infantry Battalion (LIB), based in Out King village, Tenasserim Township, and the 558th LIB, in Kamma Line village, launched

indiscriminate and unprovoked artillery attacks. These attacks injured a 14-year-old boy from Lel Taung Yar village and another local man from Ta Moke Chone village.

“The injured teenager is a student. The artillery shell dropped and exploded beside their house. He suffered injuries to his arm and bottom,” said a Lel Taung Yar resident. The injured victims were sent to Myeik General Hospital for further treatment.

“Thoe military units targeted Chay Taw Yar Mount near Lel Taung Yar village. There was no house at the base of the Mount. Seven artillery shells dropped and exploded at the base of the Mount, but four shells dropped and exploded near houses,” said a local source.

In September 2023, the regime launched artillery attacks on Ma Ma Taung, Ban Law, Chauk Mile, East Maw Tone, and West Maw Tone villages of Tanintharyi, killing and injuring local villagers and damaging homes. According to residents, the houses in Mu Du Eastern village, located in the Dawei Special Economic Zone area in Yebyu Township, Dawei, are being set on fire. A resident of Mu Du village stated that the military junta troops have been burning the houses since the early morning of October 20th.

“A lot of smoke came out around 7:00 A.M. The exact number is unknown. Currently, we only know more than eight,” he said. A local man estimated that some houses are still on fire and the number of homes that have been burnt may be as high as ten houses.

Before the houses were set on fire, at least six local people were arrested from Mu Du West village, and some of them were released: “We heard the sound of fighting from both sides of Mu Du West village, and while the houses were being burned, locals said they heard small arms and artillery weapons fire.”

As a result, most Mu Du village residents have fled their homes, according to the residents: “There are no more villagers in the village,” a resident of Na Bu Lae said.

The military junta troops that were burning houses came from the side of Pan Tin Inn village early in the morning of October 19th, and

another troop that came with them arrived around Pan Shao village this morning. Another column has entered the west side of the sea in Yebyu Township.

The People's Defense Forces attacked those troops twice along the way, and some of the military junta soldiers had already reached the vicinity of Aye Ka Ni village.

About three troops launched their operation, and most of the residents from Mu Du, Ya Line, Ba Gore Soon, Wat Chaung, Kha Maung Chaung, Aye Ka Ni, Ya Ngae, Wa Zun Taw, Pain Shao, Daung Shao and Sin Bu Nit villages are fleeing the war.

The military junta has launched its troops in the villages on the west bank of the Yebyu three times between the last week of September and October 19th.

Between September 21st and October 12th, nearly thirty residents were arrested after the military junta troops raided the west bank of Yebyu City. More than 20 arrests were released, two civilians were killed, one was injured, at least two PDF soldiers were killed, and the military junta was still detaining two civilians.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

1. Inflation across all target areas has devastatingly affected civilians who cannot meet their basic needs.
2. Mon women's groups are warning of increased child sexual abuse incidents in villages across Mon State with no action being taken by the authorities.
3. Clashes have led to forced internal displacement in Burma as instability and tensions move people from their homes.
4. Police and junta-backed militias continue to initiate door-to-door checks and arrest those on their wanted lists.
5. Motorcycles, mobile devices, and money are confiscated and extorted from civilians at checkpoints stationed by the junta deliberately along critical routes. Civilians are forced to pay excessive bribes to retrieve their possessions. However, very few were able to afford the high costs.
6. Torture remains rampant in Burma and across target areas where innocent civilians are subjected to gruelling, horrifying acts by the junta to extract information.
7. The international community, including UN bodies and ASEAN, is not responding swiftly enough to the situation in Burma, which demands urgent attention and consequences for the junta.
8. Military impunity remains deeply ingrained in the institutions representing the Tatmadaw, which only encourages the junta to continue perpetrating human rights violations.
9. Children are targeted by the military junta and deprived of basic needs, including medical attention, food, education, and the right to live safely.
10. The junta's arbitrary arrests and unlawful detention are ongoing, as are warrantless raids and indiscriminate firing into civilian areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A referral of the situation on the ground in Burma is to be made immediately by the United Nations Security Council to the International Criminal Court.
2. Concerted and coordinated action by global actors for an urgently mandated global arms embargo which would prevent the free flow of weapons into the hands of the murderous junta.
3. Aviation fuel sanctions to put an effective end to the airstrikes in Burma, which have contributed to significant loss of life, particularly among innocent civilians.
4. Targeted sanctions on military junta officials and their families and holds on their financial assets and possessions undercut their ability to conduct corrupt business dealings abroad.
5. Strengthened and renewed protection mechanisms grant civilians who are vulnerable and at risk of assault a position where they can access justice referral and accountability pathways.
6. Renewed and continued funding support for local organizations responding to the needs of their communities on the ground. Cross-border aid pathways must be accessed, and all humanitarian aid in the hands of local actors.
7. Foreign investors in Burma must immediately cease their operations and withdraw their involvement from all development projects in the country, including but not limited to airports, seaports, and cement businesses.
8. An abrupt and immediate halt to the use of torture by the military junta, and further, we call for investigations to probe the unlawful deaths of civilians in Burma who have been tortured to death, as well as those who have been forced to endure trauma and long-term injuries as a result.

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

Human Rights Situation in Mon State, Karen State & Tanintharyi Region

OCTOBER 2023

