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Recap

October claimed several lives, including one of the most loved leaders, Dr. Zaw Myint Maung. Detained since the coup, Dr. Zaw had been fighting the military regime as well as cancer. He passed away on October 7 at the age of 73, and thousands of people attended his funeral despite tightened security. The scene was portrayed by a local that it was as if "almost the entire city came to say goodbye".

More innocent lives were claimed by the military's monstrous troops in Sipa village of Budalin Township in Sagaing. Troops from the regime's Northwestern Regional Command entered the village on October 17, stayed there for three days and committed an unthinkable level of cruelty. Photos released on social media depicted mutilated bodies, decapitated heads hanging on walls and fences, and dismembered body parts lying around. At least 20 people were killed including a 7-year-old child in Sipa and nearby villages. Budalin township had already suffered from the attacks of ground troops and airstrikes that forced over 10,000 residents to flee from their homes. The magnitude of violence taking place in Budalin left everyone in shock, but the regime's propaganda machine denied the responsibility.

One of the ways to avoid such gruesome atrocities is to limit the regime's weapon and aviation fuel imports. Myanmar's representative U Kyaw Moe Tun has repeatedly called on the international community to halt weapon imports and aviation fuel imports at several UN top level meetings. At the General Assembly this month, he requested the international bodies to investigate the regime's use of chemical weapons against the resistance troops and civilians.

On the international front, China has been putting pressure on ethnic armed groups in the northern part which have been fiercely taking one outpost after another of the regime as a part of Operation 1027. China imposed an ultimatum to MNDAA and TNLA to stop attacking the regime, or else they would face border trade closure and four-cut strategies. Later in the month, China closed border trade where MNDAA and TNLA were in control. KIA in Kachin State, although it is not part of the alliance but conducting military operations against the regime on its own, was also demanded by China to halt their operation, but Kachin leader General N Ban La reassured that the ethnic group is committed to fight against the regime alongside the people.

While our people are at war, the military tries its best to present the illusion of normalcy. Amidst international business leaving the country, the regime announced this month that it had approved USD 9.25 million worth of new investments in various sectors such as service industry, oil and gas, transportation, communication, and electric vehicle assembly. Some countries also support the regime's narrative of normalcy. It was reported that India will continue its two projects - Sittwe Port and Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport.

This month, the regime kicked off the census data collection in several parts of the country with over 42,000 personnel. Initially, it was planned to carry out from October 1 to 15, but it was later extended until the end of October. Throughout the month, news outlets reported that attacks took place against the data collection teams and caused disruption to the process.

Conscription law that was enforced in February remains an active threat to the people of Myanmar both inside and outside the country. Multiple news reports indicated that abled men in various parts of Myanmar faced forced recruitment under the conscription law. After the fall of Pinlebu town in Sagaing, deputy junta chief also ordered a rapid formation of a civilian unit to aid the military which is named "Public Security and Anti-Terrorism Team." This can only cause further forced recruitment for the military, posing continuous threats to abled individuals.

Meanwhile, the military regime does not spare people who left the country to avoid the forceful mandatory military service. This month, rumors surfaced on social media that when citizens abroad try to renew their passports in respective Myanmar embassies and if they are in the age-range for conscription, they will be recalled to the country.

On the 9th anniversary of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), junta chief Min Aung Hlaing declared that demands made via armed means would not be met, and accused that some signatories of NCA violated it by supporting the NUG. In our exclusive interview with the NUG's spokesperson U Kyaw Zaw, he reassured that the parallel government has cordial, friendly and strategic relationships with almost all ethnic and resistance groups. He said, "We are united against the military dictatorship". This is all we need to hear for now.

October Timeline

October 1, 2024

Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and joint forces of the Kachin People's Defense Forces (KPDF) successfully took control of Chipwi and Hsawlaw in northern Kachin State.

October 2, 2024

The regime announced that approximately 42,000 personnel are conducting a nationwide census from October 1 to 15. This audit covered population and household data across the country in Nay Pyi Taw territory, Kachin, Sagaing, Tanintharyi, and Yangon.

October 4, 2024

Local resistance forces bombed five military camps providing security for a regime-led census team in Pulaw Township, Tanintharyi Region in order to disrupt the forced census data collection. The camps, located near Infantry Division (285), were escorting the census team through the area.

October 5, 2024

Malaysian authorities detained over 600 foreigners, including 86 Myanmar nationals, for living in the country illegally in Shah Alam and Seremban. During the operation, a 30-year-old Myanmar woman, originally from Indagaw Township in Bago Region, died after fleeing authorities and being struck by a train in Seremban.

The regime's air and drone attacks in Htilin and Kyaukhtu Townships, Gantgaw District, Magway Region, killed eight civilians and injured at least 10 others.

October 6, 2024

Karen National Union (KNU) spokesperson Padoh Saw Taw Nee denied the reports of negotiations between the KNU, BGF, Myanmar's junta, and the Thai government to reopen the Asia Highway, a key trade route from Myawaddy Township to the rest of Myanmar. He said that these reports lack reliable verification.

October 7, 2024

Dr. Zaw Myint Maung, one of the NLD's top leaders, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's aide and Chief Minister of Mandalay, passed away after the news about his critical condition broke last weekend. Belovedly called by the people Sayar Zaw or Dr. Zaw passed away at 73 due to leukemia after being denied adequate medical care during his imprisonment.

October 8, 2024

Resistance forces, including the People's Defense Force (PDF), the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), and local groups, successfully captured Pinlebu, a town in the upper part of Sagaing Region with a population of about 7,000.

A 43-member Coordination and Drafting Working Committee was established to develop an interim political plan for the Mandalay Region. The committee includes representatives from six groups, including elected parliamentarians, political parties like the NLD and the Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS), civil society organizations, and minority groups.

NUG Deputy Foreign Minister U Moe Zaw Oo confirmed that China had blocked Myanmar's revolutionary forces, warning them to cease attacks on the military council following the leaked meeting minutes from a discussion held on August 27 in China's Yunnan Province which revealed that Chinese officials pressured the United Wa State Army (UWSA) not to sell weapons to anti-military forces and to lift the blockade on the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA).

October 9, 2024

Labor activists in Thailand reported that authorities seized tens of thousands of illegally imported Myanmar products in Samut Sakhon District, primarily intended for Myanmar nationals. A raid on two stores yielded over 16,000 items, including food and medicine, according to the Bangkok Post.

October 10, 2024

Singapore and several other ASEAN countries either opted out or downgraded their representation at a naval chiefs' meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw, led by the Myanmar regime.

October 11, 2024

The NUG announced that it provided over 1,222 million kyats in humanitarian aid to more than 740,000 people affected by war and natural disasters in September 2024. The funds, collected through people-to-people donations, were distributed to those in need across various states and districts.

During the ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, Laos, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on ASEAN leaders to find an inclusive political solution to the Myanmar conflict and create a peaceful future for its people. He emphasized that Myanmar's citizens urgently need peace, with one-third of the population requiring humanitarian aid and the Rohingya crisis still far from Resolution.

October 12, 2024

The regime issued a statement rejecting the findings of the Independent Investigation Mechanism (IIMM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, claiming that their reports have hindered Myanmar's development and created misunderstandings internationally.

October 14, 2024

Following the fall of Pinlebu town in Sagaing Region to resistance forces, deputy junta chief General Soe Win ordered the rapid formation of a civilian unit to aid the military. On October 14, he made an urgent visit to the Northwestern Regional Military Headquarters in Monywa, instructing the establishment of the "Public Security and Anti-Terrorism Team."

October 15, 2024

On the ninth anniversary of the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), coup leader Min Aung Hlaing said that the demands made by armed means would not be settled as conflicts could only be resolved peacefully by coming to the political table. He claimed that some ethnic armed groups violated the NCA commitments and supported the NUG.

October 16, 2024

The regime announced that the 2024 census will be extended until October 31. Although the junta-controlled media announced the extension, they provided no information on the progress of data collection.

October 17, 2024

A Chinese government delegation led by Deng Xijun, the special representative for Asian affairs, met with the leadership of the Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (KIO/KIA) in Yingjiang, Yunnan province. The diplomats urged the KIA to halt its attacks on the military regime.

October 18, 2024

Over 10,000 residents from Pinlaung Township in the Pa-O self-administered region in southern Shan State fled their homes due to intense clashes between the regime's forces, militia groups and the Pa-O National Liberation Army (PNLA).

A small bomb blast took place at the Chinese consulate in Mandalay. No group claimed responsibility.

October 19, 2024

The Burmese Affairs and Conflict Studies Group (BACS) reported that over 21,000 recruits have joined the regime's forces across 23 military training centers. The report indicates that the regime successfully recruited 5,000 trainees for Military Training Batch 1, and more than 4,000 for Batches 2, 3, 4, and 5.

The NUG condemned the bombing of the Chinese Consulate in Mandalay on October 18, calling it a terrorist act that threatens diplomatic relations.

October 20, 2024

The regime announced that four Russian naval vessels arrived at Yangon's Thilawa Port for joint military exercises. The exercises will involve maritime security drills, including water-based, aerial, and underwater maneuvers, as well as live firing, taking place in the northern Kapali Sea from October 20 to 24.

October 21, 2024

Residents report that the regime threatened to evict over 20 villages along the Rakhine border this month, prompting many to flee. By October 21, more than 300 houses across these villages in Yay Kyi Township of Ayeyarwaddy Region and some areas in Gwa Township had been affected.

October 22, 2024

In Maungdaw and Buthidaung, border towns between Rakhine State and Bangladesh, the Arakan Army (AA) reported that it is engaged in clashes not only with the military council's forces but also with three armed Rohingya groups operating in Buthidaung Township.

October 23, 2024

Dr. Nay Soe Maung, the son-in-law of former dictator U Than Shwe, was arrested by the regime on charges of incitement for posting a tribute on Facebook honoring the late Dr. Zaw Myint Maung. In connection with his arrest, a total of 11 young doctors from Upper Myanmar, who were working alongside him in a health charity, have also been detained and are currently under investigation.

Myanmar's representative to the UN, U Kyaw Moe Tun, called on the international community, including the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its member states, to investigate alleged use of chemical weapons by the military regime in conflict zones at the 79th UN General Assembly.

October 24, 2024

The regime announced its intention to exert full control over the gold market, designating gold trading as a critical service. The regime established a Gold Reference Price Determination Committee which will hold daily online meetings to establish gold prices and aims to prevent market manipulation.

October 25 2024

MNDAA leader U Hpon Ta Shwin met with Mr. Teng Xiquan, China's Special Representative for Asian Affairs, in Yunnan Province, China, and sources close to the ethnic group said that discussions likely focused on pressuring the MNDAA to withdraw its forces from Lashio.

October 26, 2024

In Mandalay, Dr. Tayzar San led a protest urging citizens to intensify the "Buu" (Boycott) Movement, emphasizing widespread rejection of the military junta's influence.

October 27, 2024

The Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) issued a statement on its 36 th anniversary, urging that national issues should be resolved with minimal harm to civilians and condemning efforts to prolong military rule under the guise of stability.

October 28, 2024

Myanmar's Permanent Representative to the UN U Kyaw Moe Tun presented evidence of inhumane killings in Sagaing Region's Butalin Township, where military forces allegedly beheaded civilians and mutilated bodies, hanging them on fences. He urged the UN Security Council to take effective action, warning that such atrocities will continue if the military regime is not held accountable.

October 29, 2024

Initial reports claimed that the regime launched two aerial attacks on Lashio. MNDAA stated that one civilian injured and several civilian buildings including a monastery were destroyed.

October 30, 2024

Ko Shine Htet Aung who criticized on social media the production of films that discriminated against the population of South Asian descents in Myanmar was detained by the military in Hlaing Myoma Police Station.

October 31, 2024

The regime announced that industrial zones across the country will receive only four hours of electricity, distressing business owners.



China Steps Up Support to Junta, but to What End?

It has only been two months since we last talked about China's involvement and interference in Myanmar's ongoing struggle for democracy. However, recent developments from the Chinese government have prompted us to dig deeper on this issue once again. Since our last discussion, Chinese authorities have restricted flow of food, fuel, medicine and other essential items for war and daily lives, to ethnic armed organizations (EAOs)-controlled areas along their border, Chinese diplomats have been openly pressuring EAOs on their border to seek peace with the junta or face the consequences, and, in early November, the junta chief Min Aung Hlaing is now expected to visit China for the first time since the coup. We will spare the details because these are easily available in the media; the big picture is that China no longer tries to hide its support to the junta.

Here we see that the shift is in its intensity and bluntness of the support, not the direction of whether China supports the junta or not. Since Day 1 of the coup, China has consistently supported the junta. Even at times the junta show disregard to China and seek to secure Russia's support instead, China seems to treat junta as a delinquent kid who would come back running at the sight of troubles. As a loving parent, China is not above punishing the junta chief when he goes too far, as in the junta's refusal to hand over its allied warlords running online scams on the preset of Operation 1027. There is a general consensus among observers that China at least turned a blind eye to Operation 1027, in part to tackle scam operations. However, since the fall of Laukkai to MNDAA, China once again increased its support to the junta, and when Lashio falls a few months ago, China ramped up their support on junta once more and thus we are at the current state of openly reprimanding and sanctioning anti-junta forces.

The disclaimer for this article is that we do not seek to blame China or any other country for their decision regarding how to respond in Myanmar. Many in

The NUG, for all its flaws, still commands support of the people of Myanmar, and has shown willingness to work with any factions, local or foreign, that would be of help in toppling the junta.

Myanmar blame the US of being hypocritical and not supporting Myanmar's pro-democracy fight beyond lip-service and China of supporting the junta. In our realist viewpoint bordering cynicism (in this article alone), despite our sympathy towards people sharing these views, we believe that both the US and China are acting out of their own national interest. The US is far away and Myanmar plays no significance in its economic or security concerns. On the contrary, China, being our immediate neighbor, has massive reasons to care and thus to get involved in Myanmar. In this article, we would not talk about those who are of no help. But when China supports the junta who is harming us, that calls our attention, and our view is that, while it is understandable that China wants to protect its national interests and fragmentation of Myanmar would be detrimental to these interests (thus China's open stance against fragmentation of the country), the means China is taking at the moment is leading to just that. It makes sense why China would want to avoid fragmentation. However, the mistake is in believing the military as the central authority and standing by it after repeated backfiring. The people across the country do not support the military and are willing to die and kill to get rid of it.

Since the early days of the coup, it is obvious that China only sees the junta's military as the hegemonic power which can keep all other factions in check. This could have been true back then. However, the landscape has shifted tremendously now. The junta and his military is losing every battle and territorial controls every week, without any sight of recovery. While the human suffering is massive and the "liberated areas" are yet to see peace and prosperity for the Myanmar side, for China, the outcome at the macro level is clear - their guys cannot win and what China fears the worst is getting closer to a reality. At this rate, the future of Myanmar will not provide stability and associated economic and security benefits to China.

The way we see from the realist (and cynical view), China now has two options to improve their chances of achieving a stable Myanmar under a government they can influence. The first is to lend direct military support to the junta in a manner Putin's Russia came to al-Assad's regime in the Syrian Civil War. At this rate, a protracted draw or more likely scenario of junta's eventual defeat would not do any good to China. Therefore, if China really sees the junta's military as the rightful ruler of Myanmar (as mentioned in the meeting between senior Chinese diplomats and United Wa State Army), and determined to support the junta, they might as well support the junta fully until its goals are achieved. Having the junta surrounded by different EAOs with each side keeping the other in-check might help China well. However, the junta's capability to achieve victory is highly doubtful and openly providing military and financial aid to the junta would not be without consequences on the global stage. We are already poor and dying, can China bear the reputation and financial costs of supporting the junta in a Putin-to-al-Assad style?

Or as an alternative, China can stop supporting the junta's military altogether and support the emergence of an authority who has the support of the people. In creating such an entity, China could even put mechanisms and leverages to ensure successive Myanmar central authorities would be under their influence. The junta's rival faction vying for national level government, i.e. the National Unity Government of Myanmar (NUG) is often accused of being American-backed by China and that accusation has been used liberally by China to justify its support to the junta. However, we take it that it is not that China really has evidence in the US supporting the NUG, but rather they are just claiming that way to legitimize support to the junta. The NUG, for all its flaws, still commands support of the people of Myanmar, and has shown willingness to work with any factions, local or foreign, that would be of help in toppling the junta. In the long-term, backing the NUG, instead of the junta, would help achieve the stability and protection to the Chinese security and economic interests in Myanmar.

China, for all its long history, would surely be aware that power alone cannot ensure stability, particularly when that power is weak and tyrannical. It's unfortunate that they are blinded by their arrogance.

Conversation with NUG on Myanmar's Urgent Issues

This month, we interviewed U Kyaw Zaw, spokesperson for the National Unity Government (NUG) of Myanmar, to gain insights into some of the pressing issues facing the country today. U Kyaw Zaw addressed a range of topics, from the NUG's stance on China relations and the implications of recent pressures on ethnic armed groups, to the military junta's response to natural disasters and its controversial census efforts. Amid the escalating humanitarian crisis, he shared the NUG's perspective on the challenges facing Myanmar and its hopes for continued international support and intervention.

[U Kyaw Zaw kindly answered our questions in a voicenote, therefore, we slightly edited some of his answers to adjust in the interview format while we ensured that the answers remained true to his original voicenote.]

MM: Given China's regional influence and reports of increased pressure on northern ethnic armed groups, how does the NUG view its relationship with China? What assurances can the NUG provide about the stability of foreign investments, particularly Chinese investments, during this revolutionary period?

I just want to reiterate what we have said in our Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement issued on January 1, 2024. It provides a detailed outline of our policy and stance on China, such as the friendly relationship between our two countries and the importance of people-to-people relations. We aim to maintain good neighborly relations and guarantee protection for legitimate Chinese investments—and, indeed, for all legitimate foreign investments. In particular, the statement highlights protection for Chinese investments made before the coup, and more importantly, our adherence to the One China policy, which we have clearly stated. These represent our policy and our position, and we stand firm on them as outlined in our January 2024 statement.

We recognize China as a regional superpower and continue to view China as a good neighbor. However, we have seen numerous media reports indicating that China is putting pressure on ethnic armed organizations, especially northern ethnic groups. I am concerned it could lead to public misunderstanding about China and may even stoke anti-China sentiment. I hope it won't, as we in the NUG are committed to maintaining a positive relationship with China as a good neighbor.

MM: How has the NUG engaged with ethnic armed groups and pro-democracy forces, including the Three Brotherhood Alliance, to build a united front against the military dictatorship?

Since the NUG was formed, we have reached out to all revolutionary forces and pro-democracy movements—not only the Three Brotherhoods but also all the ethnic armed organizations. We've engaged with nearly all armed revolutionary and political forces fighting against the



military dictatorship in Myanmar. I cannot reveal specifics about our relationship with each group, but I can say that we maintain a cordial friendly relationship with almost all ethnic organizations (EROs), and we have built strategic alliances.

All those committed to ending the military dictatorship in this people's revolution are united. We are united against the military dictatorship, united to end this brutal terrorist military junta that kills innocent civilians daily and increasingly targets vulnerable civilians. The recent inhumane, unspeakable killing in Budalin Township is beyond words—attacks on civilians, including the elderly, women, and children.

MM: With the military regime initiating a census that may expose dissidents and CDM staff members to risk, what is the NUG's assessment of this process, and what message does it want to convey about the legitimacy of these efforts?

The military junta, the terrorist military junta, has initiated a sham census collection. Initially, they announced that they would collect data between October

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1 and October 15. According to their own media mouthpiece, fewer than 80 towns were able to participate in this collection. Now, the junta is advising the remaining households to contact their respective census committee. Field collections have clearly been unsuccessful.

As the junta's control over territories shrinks, even in areas they still control, they haven't achieved full public participation in the census collection. This census is purely a show—a sham census collection—and we will wait to see what numbers they announce, likely in December. We will then witness how they intend to lie again to the people and the international community. The census collection and its data release will undoubtedly be full of lies.

MM: For the public who feel compelled to participate in the census—either as data collectors or providers—what perspective does the NUG offer?

I don't need to advise the people on what to do; the people know what to do. The people of Myanmar are united against the brutal military dictatorship. We all know how to be part of the revolution to end this dictatorship in whatever way we can. Therefore, I don't have to advise the people of Myanmar. They understand what they are supposed to do, and they plan to act accordingly.

Despite the hardships created by both man-made and natural disasters, how does the NUG see the public's continued support for the revolution, and what message would it like to share with those who remain committed?

In our country, unfortunately, man-made disasters, such as those created by the terrorist military, have reached historically high levels. We have over four million internally displaced people, and more than 18 million people need humanitarian assistance, which is about the third of the population. The sole culprit, the sole responsible party, is the terrorist military. They are responsible for the violence and atrocities that destroy people's livelihoods and create a humanitarian crisis in Myanmar.

On the other hand, the people of Myanmar are also facing natural disasters, particularly the recent flood crisis. People are suffering even more because the terrorist military blocks humanitarian aid, using it as a weapon. The international community must put pressure on the terrorist military junta to allow unblocked and unrestricted humanitarian aid to flow to those in need. At the same time, the international community must find alternative ways to reach the most vulnerable populations, many of whom live in liberated areas not controlled by the military junta. International humanitarian aid organizations and the international community should coordinate with us—revolutionary forces, resistance authorities, and civil society organizations on the ground—to deliver aid effectively to those in need.



We write weekly to document the coup, to share our experience, and to contemplate. The daily entries can be read here:

https://mohingamatters.com/weekly-updates/



Silent Suffering : Right to medical care denied in junta's prisons

The Myanmar' military is notorious for violently suppressing political dissent, resorting to murder and prolonged imprisonment of dissidents. Even after being incarcerated, political prisoners continue to endure severe violations of their basic human rights and dignity.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), political prisoners are defined as "anyone arrested, detained, or imprisoned because of their perceived or known active role, perceived, or known supporting role, or in association with activities promoting freedom, justice, equality, human rights, including ethnic rights, in association with the pro-democracy movement." As of October 31, 2024, a staggering 27,612 individuals have been arrested for political reasons, with 21,062 still detained, including 4,065 women and 209 children. This alarming statistic underscores the scale of repression in Myanmar since the military coup in February 2021.

The conditions within military prisons are harrowing. Overcrowding, inadequate facilities, torture, arbitrary detention, denial of trial and even killings are all too common. Basic hygiene and medical care are often denied, leading to a further deterioration of health among inmates. Reports describe unsanitary conditions that foster the spread of disease, with limited access to clean water and food. International organizations and human rights groups have condemned these practices, calling for the release of political prisoners and accountability for the military's actions.

However, the victims of the military's treatment of political prisoners continue to rise. On October 7, 2024, 70-year-old Dr. Zaw Myint Maung, a staunch life-long leader of Myanmar's democracy movement and former Chief Minister of Mandalay Region, died in junta custody. Sources indicated that he was transferred to Mandalay General Hospital two weeks pri-

The plight of political prisoners in Myanmar serves as a grim reminder of the cost of democracy and the enduring struggle for human rights in the face of tyranny.

or due to a worsening condition that the prison infirmary could not manage; he died at 3 a.m. on Monday. His death highlights the severe neglect of prisoners' medical needs, and many argue that he died early due to the denial of timely treatment. Similarly, just last month, a documentary filmmaker and political activist, Pe Maung Same, son of a prominent cartoonist and political activist Pe Thein, died at the age of 50 due to complications from tuberculosis, three days after being granted a medical parole. While the deaths of prominent political prisoners receive some media attention, many more remain unrecorded within the junta's prisons. AAPP has verified a total of 1,944 deaths in detention, encompassing prisons, interrogation centers, military barracks and other forms of arbitrary arrest and confinement.

In an interview, a former female political prisoner, Theint (pseudonym), who spent two years in the junta's prison recounted the horrific conditions and neglect of medical care. Released in January 2024, she shared her harrowing experiences, revealing the inhumane treatment she and her fellow inmates endured. Overcrowding led to widespread skin diseases among inmates, exacerbated by a shortage of water and unsanitary conditions. Female prisoners, for instance, were forced to clean and carry buckets of feces, once filled in the toilets, with their bare hands, resulting in drug-resistant skin infections affecting over 97% of them. The prison houses more than 3,000 inmates but has only one 50-bed infirmary with no doctors. A male doctor, originally from the prison for men, comes to the female prison once a week, tasked with consultations with up to 200 prisoners in an hour. There are a total of seven nurses with no official nursing certificates. Only seven nurses, lacking formal training, are responsible for medical care, having received just a few weeks of instruction themselves. Among them, two seniors received short-term medical training and they provided the training to the younger ones for 2-3 weeks to work as medical workers for prisoners.

Sick prisoners seeking treatment must inform the medical staff in advance, then wait in line for hours with 100 to 200 others under the scorching sun. They are often only given basic medications, such as paracetamol, with no opportunity to ask about their prescriptions or request specific treatments. In one alarming incident, a prisoner muttering incomprehensible words as she was suffering from a high fever, was beaten with a belt because guards believed she was possessed. Care for sick prisoners is severely restricted, with no support allowed at night when many conditions worsen. In a brutal environment where survival is a daily struggle, the psychological toll on inmates is immense.

Those with pre-existing health conditions can request medication through family parcels, but these are limited to over-the-counter drugs and are often difficult to receive. Prisoners are allowed to receive over-the-counter drugs, such as paracetamol, along with traditional ointments and supplements, but only in limited quantities—one strip of each item twice a month. If prisoners request any other medications, they must obtain a prescription. However, receiving these parcels is extremely difficult, as many political prisoners find their family members are either on the run or detained elsewhere. Even when prescriptions are issued by the doctor, the lack of family support means that political prisoners often have no one to send them the necessary medicine. For emergencies, prisoners may be transferred to a hospital, but many have died due to neglect and delays in treatment for conditions like asthma, uterine cancer, and complications during pregnancy. Radio Free Asia reported that more than 100 political prisoners have died in junta custody since the 2021 February coup.

The treatment of political prisoners in Myanmar is a stark violation of the minimum standards set forth by the First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1955, as well as subsequent resolutions. Beyond these breaches, political prisoners face intensified suffering due to decades of animosity and oppression directed at dissenters by the junta and its supporters. As the international community continues to grapple with how to respond to this ongoing crisis, calls for action grow louder. The plight of political prisoners in Myanmar serves as a grim reminder of the cost of democracy and the enduring struggle for human rights in the face of tyranny.

The situation in Myanmar remains

dire, with political prisoners enduring unimaginable hardships. The stories of those affected must not be forgotten; they serve as a powerful testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the urgent need for global solidarity in the fight for justice and freedom. After enduring such hardship inside the junta's prison for two years, Theint said she wished to see prisons as rehabilitation rather than punishment in the future.





Misuse of Air Power :
Relief Helicopters Turned into Killing Tools

Myanmar citizens were surprised to see a flood rescue mission by the military. In their entire lives, they have witnessed such visuals only in movies: the Air Force's helicopter buzzing around, providing aid and relief for civilians who suffered the most devastating flood in Southeast Asia's history. On social media, Myanmar netizens cheered for security personnel from the army, navy, and air force who were actively involved in search and rescue missions, with videos circulating among Myanmar Facebook and TikTok users. Every Myanmar praised the uniformed personnel's goodwill towards civilians, with comments on social media posts saying, "They (Thailand army) are so different from ours (Myanmar army)." Yes, it was Thailand's Royal Armed Forces helping their people, not the Myanmar army.

While Thailand was helping its citizens, just a few kilometers away, the Myanmar army was committing war crimes. Instead of relief packages, flood and war victims from Myanmar were hit with explosive ordinances. Like Thailand, the Myanmar Air Force was busy, but not with search and rescue missions—instead, they were hunting and killing their own civilians.

The Myanmar Air Force had been upgraded during the Than Shwe regime under the claim of "growing the army to defend the country from colonialism". Among Southeast Asian countries, the Myanmar Army is likely the only institution in the region that can manage the military budget on its own. In 2023, Min Aung Hlaing approved a military budget of around USD 2.7 billion for the 2023–2024 fiscal year. In the early 1990s, the Myanmar Army started a modernization plan for its Air Force, acquiring a wide range of fighter jets, radar, electronic warfare facilities, and helicopters. Reports suggest that the Myanmar Air Force has over 70 different helicopter models at its disposal. However, using them has been a privilege reserved even within the army's inner circle. Before the 2021 Spring Revolution, there was a specific rank required to have access to helicopter travel. Helicopters served mainly as VVIP transport and were showcased in simulations and parades to please

While Thailand was helping its citizens, just a few kilometers away, the Myanmar army was committing war crimes. Instead of relief packages, flood and war victims from Myanmar were hit with explosive ordinances.

Min Aung Hlaing. From the 1990s to today, the Myanmar Air Force acquired Bell 205/206, Mil Mi-2, Mi-17, Mil Mi-35 gunships, and a Eurocopter (commissioned in 2019), despite an arms embargo.

Even though the Myanmar Air Force owns such a large number of helicopters, it has already proven ineffective in many humanitarian missions, such as during the Cyclone Nargis that devastated the Ayeyarwaddy Region in 2008. The Myanmar military helicopter pilots are trained only to transport VIP personnel and put on a show during Armed Forces Day, not to conduct humanitarian missions. Dr. Win Myat Aye, Minister for Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management of the National Unity Government, told Mohinga Matters, "(Helicopters) should be used to serve the people as they were bought with taxpayer money. It shows a lack of humanitarian mindset, as the army has failed to use its air power to help people. It's clear that the people are not a priority."

What Dr. Win Myat Aye said is true. When Myanmar experienced a severe flood in 2015, local and international journalists were deployed to cover the story across regions. One of my friends, working for an international news agency, was onboard a military helicopter delivering food and supplies to flooded areas in Rakhine State. There were tons of rice packs, lunchboxes, and other essentials on that helicopter. Yet, when the pilot arrived at the scene, instead of systematically delivering the supplies, crew chiefs and soldiers onboard dropped everything freefall-style from the helicopter onto the rice fields below, destroying the supplies. The pilot explained, "Due to weather conditions, the helicopter was unable to hover long enough to rope the supplies". The journalist onboard claimed the reasoning was absurd. As journalists from Myanmar, we cover Armed Forces Day every year, where we see helicopters hovering for minutes to show off in front of the junta chief, no matter the wind or weather conditions. It shows that the Myanmar army only prepares for orders from its high command and has neither experience, training, nor the will to help its own civilians.

In my own experience covering the current 2024 flood, I headed to Nay Pyi Taw, their stronghold. On the road, I saw four or five trucks carrying boats, driving towards Nay Pyi Taw. It's not strange for us, as journalists. Every time Myanmar faces a flood, this is usually the only thing the Myanmar Army does: trucks carrying boats arrive, and soldiers lift the boats from the trucks. It's a familiar scene. Yet, about twenty to thirty miles past the first convoy, I saw another convoy from a different direction, also carrying boats. Apart from propaganda, under a truly effective disaster management plan, there should be no need for convoys traveling up and down along the highway. Imagine a military institution focused on propaganda while the country is suffering—how inhumane. As my journalist friend commented, "The Myanmar army always has an evil spirit toward its own people, with no sense of humanity."

Tactical Raptor, a social media page focused on weaponry used in Myanmar and international conflicts, told Mohinga Matters, "The AS365 Helicopter (aka Dolphin) is capable of attaching an electrical hoist, a technique used by most international navies, coast guards, and armies in search and rescue missions throughout history. It can also deliver aid to those affected by natural disasters on the ground". Tactical Raptor provided a picture of one of the Myanmar Air Force's Dolphin helicopters using such equipment in a military drill at sea in Rakhine State. However, they noted, "No evidence shows that the Myanmar Air Force practices such SAR missions in real life."

When the National League for Democracy (NLD) was in power, the democratically elected government decided to buy Myanmar's first state-owned helicopter for disaster management, rescue, and emergency response. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement, tasked with implementing the National Disaster Management Committee's initiatives, signed a contract with Leonardo S.P.A Company on October 17, 2019, to purchase the helicopter. Dr. Win Myat Aye recalled State Counsellor Daw Aung

San Suu Kyi's directive to her cabinet: "It is not for luxury. It is for emergency response for the people". The state-owned AW-139 helicopter arrived at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport on November 1, 2020, and was inspected by the state counsellor herself and cabinet members. This was the first time in Myanmar's history that a helicopter with no military purpose landed on its soil. Myanmar citizens gladly shared the news, with pictures of DASSK onboard becoming a hit. For the first time, Myanmar felt ownership of a tool that was typically reserved for the military's privilege. Dr. Win Mya Aye added, "If the coup had not happened, this helicopter could play a major role for our people in this flood". His statement highlights the regime's lack of interest in using its air force to assist those affected by this historic disaster.

Between September 5th and 6th, over 21 civilians, including infants and pregnant women, were killed in Shan State and Karenni State due to the Junta's airstrikes.

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management of the NUG, stated that over one million people across ten states and regions, including military strongholds like Nay Pyi Taw, have been affected, with more than 600 fatalities reported. Caught by surprise by the flash flood, many victims had never seen currents this strong in over 60 years. Stranded on rooftops for over 24 hours, people were eventually rescued—not by sophisticated helicopters, but by local humanitarian workers risking their lives in small boats. In the affected areas, Nay Pyi Taw included, and even those close to the army suffered. The Min Aung Hlaing regime failed to save even its own people. This doesn't mean the Air Force was grounded.

Despite the country suffering the worst flood in its history, the regime continued aerial strikes using all available aircraft. The Institute for Strategy and Policy - Myanmar reported 71 airstrikes in July, 229 in August, and 152 in September in 2024. Between September 5th and 6th, over 21 civilians, including infants and pregnant women, were killed in Shan State and Karenni State due to the regime's airstrikes. Dr. Win Myat Aye noted, "Unlike other countries, the Myanmar Air Force neglected assisting its own citizens in the recent flood but continued its deadly missions." In September 2024 alone, the regime conducted over 40 airstrikes in 21 townships across the country, killing 65 civilians.

A recent report titled "Airbusted" by Justice for Myanmar highlighted the relationship between Airbus, one of Europe's largest aerospace companies, and the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), a state-owned company supplying military equipment to the Myanmar military. The report urges Airbus to use its influence to stop AVIC's military support to Myanmar and calls on France, Germany, and Spain, as Airbus shareholders, to pressure the company to act responsibly. It demands that Airbus ensure AVIC stops its military involvement or ends its partnership with them.

At first, Myanmar citizens hoped for international intervention against the dictatorship. Now, they simply want the international community to pressure the junta to stop killing civilians. They don't want to see Myanmar Air Force's killing machines taking over their skies. They want the brutal warplanes grounded, incapable of killing more innocent civilians through international effort. Like they chanted in peaceful protest demonstrations in early days of the coup, "How many dead bodies are needed for the international community to take action?"

Hightlights of the Armed Resistance

KIA & KPDF captured two towns in Kachin State (north)

On October 1 and 2, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and joint forces of the Kachin People's Defense Forces (KPDF) successfully took control of Chipwi and Hsawlaw in northern Kachin State. The assault on Chipwi began on the morning of September 30, targeting military camps and police stations approximately 75 miles northeast of the state capital, Myitkyina. Simultaneously, the regime's strategic hill in Hsawlaw, about 20 miles north of Chipwi, also came under attack. On the first day of the battle, joint forces advanced to capture the town police station, an inspection gate, along with several military posts to the east. Reports suggest that at least 10 regime camps have been seized, with weapons, ammunition, and prisoners taken, although the KIA has yet to confirm these details. KIA now has control of 10 towns, nine in Kachin State and one in Shan-north.

Resistance forces captured Pinlebu Town in Sagaing Region

On the morning of October 8, resistance forces, including the People's Defense Force (PDF), the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), and local groups, successfully captured Pinlebu, a town in the upper part of Sagaing Region with a population of about 7,000. Since mid-August, these forces have been launching attacks on junta camps in and around the town. After nearly seven weeks of intense fighting, the regime troops stationed in Pinlebu surrendered to the resistance forces. Local reports indicate that during the battle, approximately 70 regime soldiers were killed, with 102 captured. Additionally, 275 soldiers remain missing, 225 were injured, and 60 are in critical condition. It is also reported that 48 soldiers surrendered to the resistance.

Chin Defense Forces Chief Ram Zel killed in battle for Thantlang

It has been confirmed that Ram Zel, Chief of the Chin Defense Forces (CDF) of Thantlang, died on October 12 while engaged in the front lines of the Thantlang capture battle. He was approximately 30 years old. Chin forces were preparing to attack the National League for Democracy (NLD) office, where regime forces were stationed in Thantlang town when he was killed by enemy gunfire. His leadership on the front lines during the city capture battle represents a significant loss for the CDF. Earlier, on the evening of October 7, regime troops stationed at CB Bank in Thantlang were jointly captured by Chin resistance forces, including the CDF.

- **TNLA captured Hsipaw in Shan State (north)**

After more than two months of intense fighting and airstrikes, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) fully captured the town of Hsipaw in Northern Shan State on the afternoon of October 14. The regime's last standing camp, 23rd Infantry Battalion, located about a mile north of the town, was seized on that afternoon. The TNLA, along with allied forces, began their assault on Hsipaw and the nearby regime's Infantry Battalions (503) and (504) on August 9. Despite heavy resistance from the regime, which employed air support, the TNLA continued their advance and captured key positions, marking Hsipaw as the 12th city taken during the TNLA's Operation 1027. The capture of Hsipaw extends TNLA-controlled territory up to Mogok in Mandalay. The two-month long battle resulted in nearly 40 civilian deaths, with many homes destroyed by heavy artillery and airstrikes from the regime forces.

Junta bombed KNU headquarters for the first time in Karen State

The regime's forces bombed the headquarters of the Karen National Union (KNU) in Hpa-an District, Karen State with a drone at 11:30 am on October 22. A KNU Brigade (7) official reported that the attack occurred during a regular meeting attended by top KNU leaders, which forced the meeting to be canceled and attendees to disperse. This headquarters also serves as the base for the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the Karen National Defense Force (KNDO). A senior KNU official confirmed that this bombing marked the first attack on the headquarters since the coup nearly four years ago, and, no one was injured.

"This is the first time the regime has targeted our central headquarters. We are engaged in conflict with them, so we must prepare ourselves. If the army comes to fight, we will resist," the official stated. Since the military coup, fighting has escalated in KNU's active areas, although the 7th Brigade has experienced the least combat.

Intense fighting continued in Ann tsp, Rakhine State

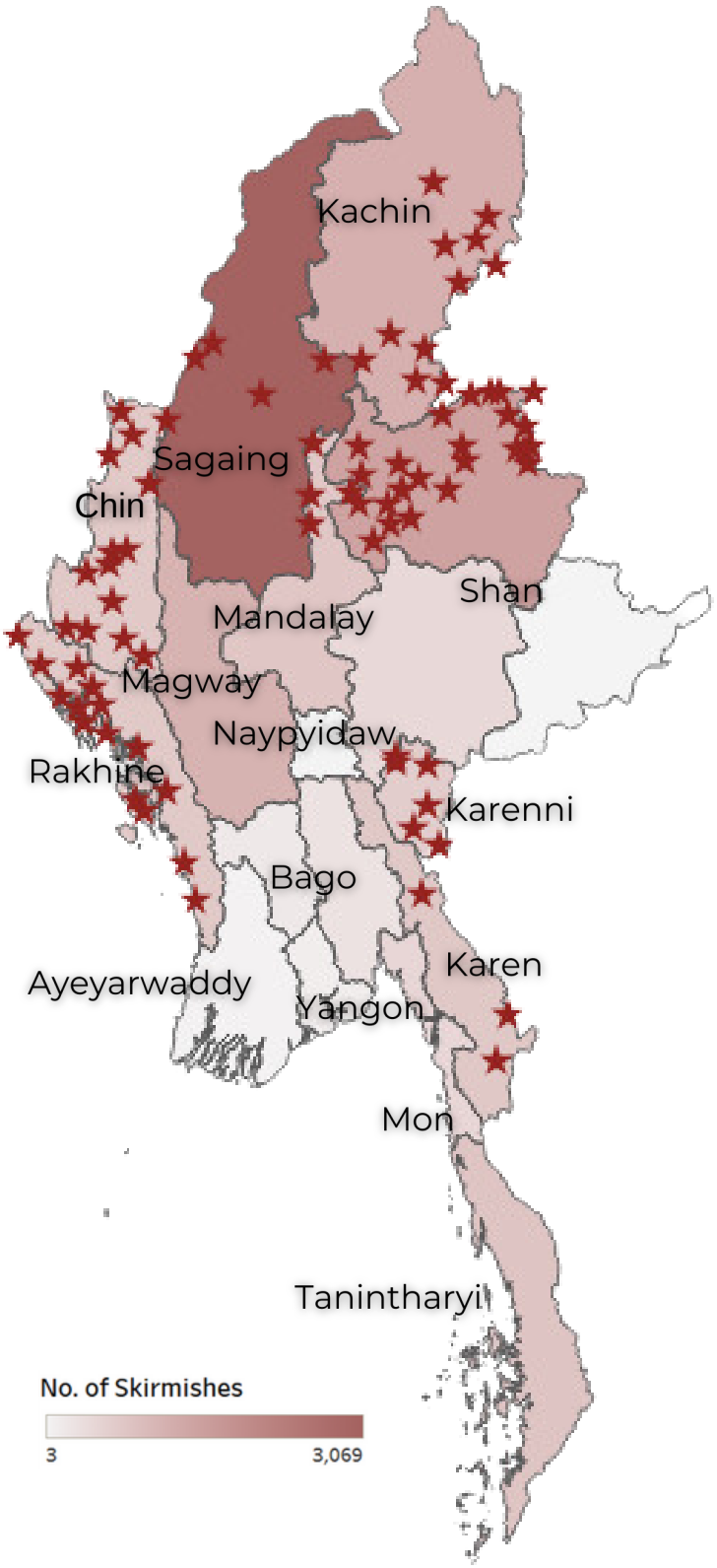
The Arakan Army (AA) reported on October 25 that intense fighting continues near the military base in Ann Township, which

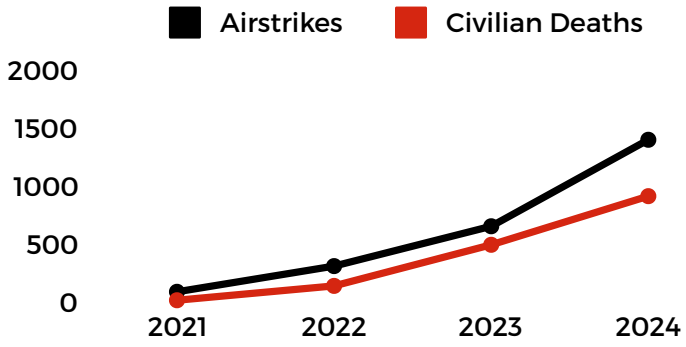
houses the Western Regional Military Headquarters. Fighting first erupted in Ann Township on September 26 and has since escalated to the point where the AA has occupied much of the area. AA spokesperson informed Myanmar Now that the battle for control of the Western Regional Military Headquarters is ongoing in Ann, with heavy fighting also reported in Gwa Township and the last remaining camp in Maungdaw. Local sources suggest that the regime is hesitant to use the nearby airstrip due to AA heavy weapon fire targeting the area. Additionally, the rivers in the region are narrow, complicating military vehicle movements. Fighting has also been reported in Magway Region, which borders Ann Township.



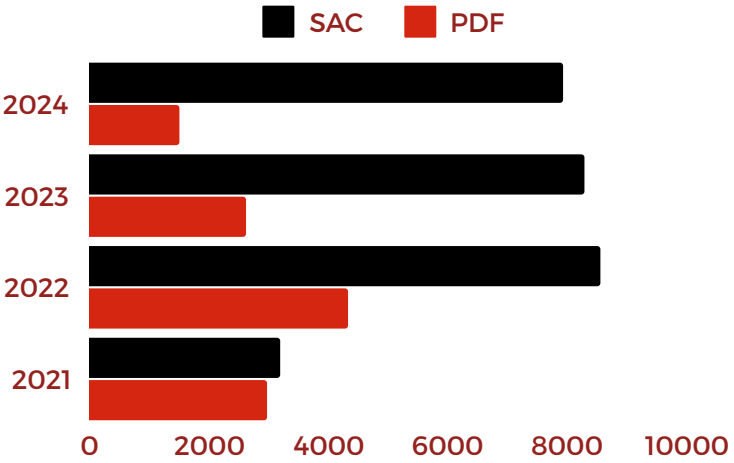
People's Resistance War Across Myanmar

★ **81** towns (approximately) have been captured and controlled by resistance forces across Myanmar.

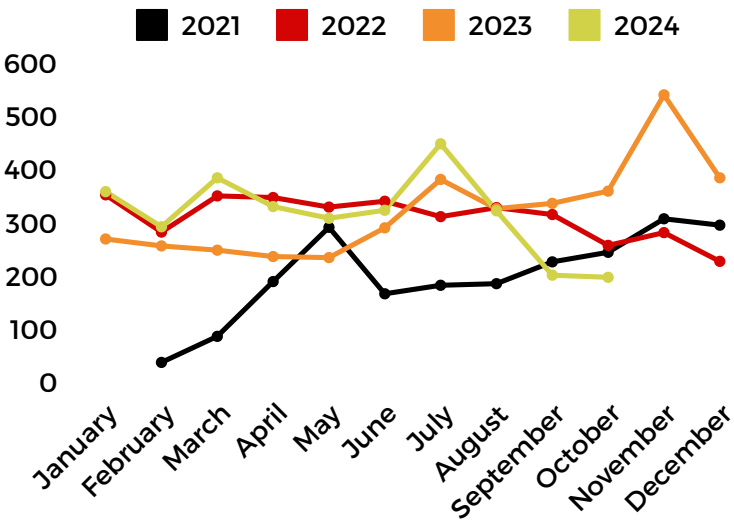




Casualties



Total Skirmishes



Sources: ACLED, BNI, Khit Thit Media

Crimes Against Humanity

4 cases of human rights violations among many committed by Min Aung Hlaing's soldiers in October are reported.

Gruesome mass killing in Budalin tsp, Sagaing

The regime's forces unleashed extensive violence in Budalin Township, Sagaing Region, targeting civilians and villages throughout October. The regime's military column reportedly killed at least 21 civilians, including children, and held over 50 individuals as human shields. The attacks began on October 11 with a deadly raid in Butalin town that left six family members dead, followed by an assault on Myauk Kyi Village on October 12, which claimed seven more lives. On October 18 and 19, the violence escalated further in Sipa and Selwa villages.

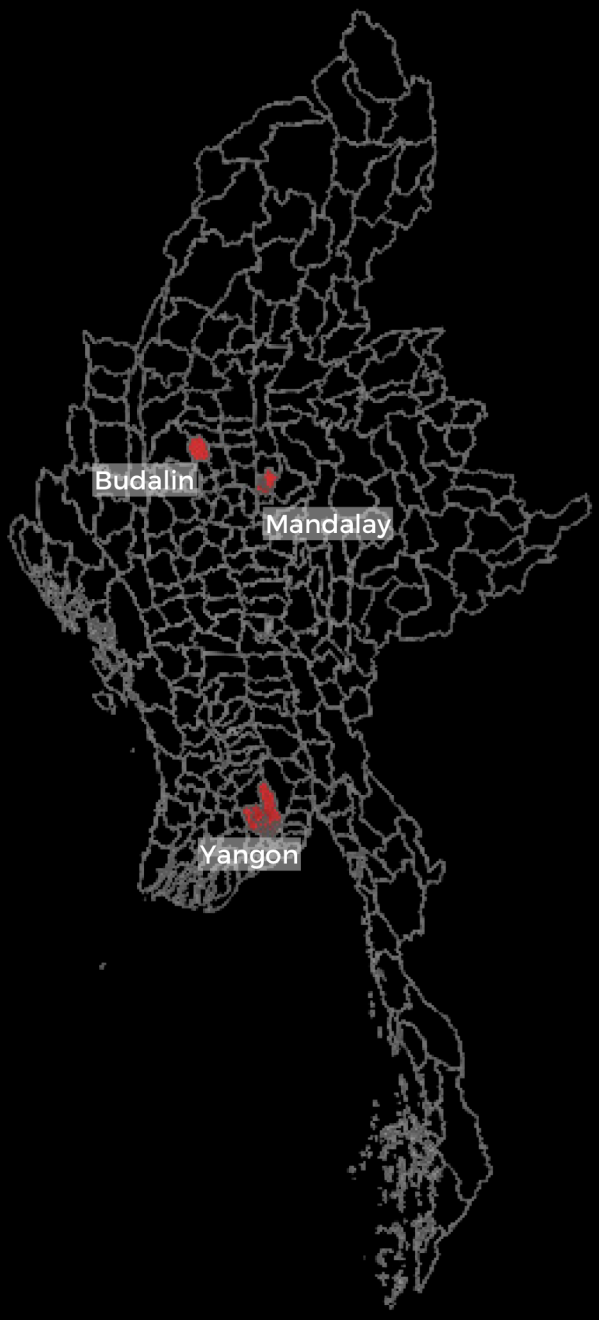
On October 19, locals reported finding six bodies in Sipa Village, including elderly men, showing signs of mutilation after a raid by around 100 troops from the 33rd Division. Photos circulating on social media reveal gruesome evidence of the brutality, with decapitated bodies and looted property. Additionally, during these offensives, over 500 homes across villages like Kyauk Oh, Sipa, Kywe Thay Chaung, Se Wa, and Sai Pyin Lay were set on fire.

Charity members involved in NLD minister arrested in Mandalay

The regime arrested eight members of a local charity association in Mandalay on the night of October 26. The arrests occurred after the association helped transport the body of former Mandalay Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung to the cemetery, who had died of leukemia at Mandalay General Hospital. The charity group, including its chairman U Khin Maung Thint, is believed to have been targeted for its involvement in the funeral arrangements. Family members have been unable to contact those detained.

Hindu Man in Yangon Arrested for Criticizing Film

U Shine Htet Aung, a 30-year-old Hindu man from Yangon's Hlaing Township, was arrested by the regime after criticizing a Myanmar movie poster and title he claimed oppressed people of South Asian origin. He posted his views about the film on Facebook before he went missing on October 27, The junta later confirmed his arrest at Hlaing Township Police Station, charging him with incitement. His family learned of his detention through a newspaper, as they had been unable to locate him.



Six anti-dictatorship activists in Yangon tortured during interrogation

Six young anti-dictatorship activists in Yangon, including Ko Zaw Lin Htut (aka Ko Phoe Thar), Ko Aung Min Khaing, Ma Mya Myintzu, Ma Hnin Ei Khaing, Ko Shein Wai Aung, and Ko Paing Phyo Min, were reportedly subjected to severe torture after their arrests. The first four were detained on September 19 following a protest against rising costs and conscription and endured intense torture before being transferred to Insein Prison on October 11. Ko Shein Wai Aung and Ko Paing Phyo Min were arrested on October 9 under the pretext of guest list checks and are still being tortured. Amnesty International has called for accountability, warning of the dangers they face amid ongoing interrogations. All six are in their early twenties and active in Yangon's anti-military flash movements.