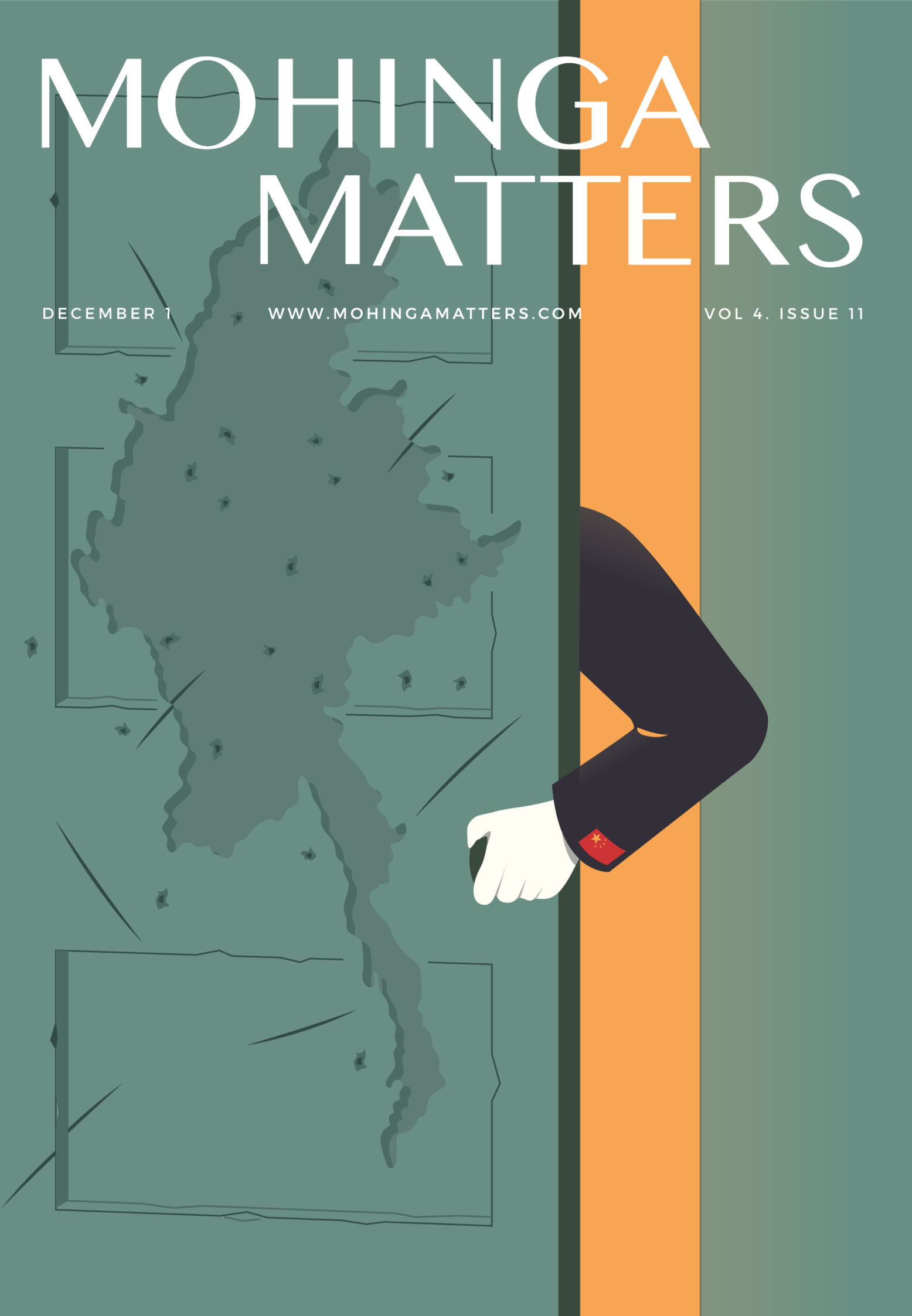


# MOHINGA MATTERS

DECEMBER 1

[WWW.MOHINGAMATTERS.COM](http://WWW.MOHINGAMATTERS.COM)

VOL 4. ISSUE 11



# Recap

Folks, good news came at the end of the month when ICC's Prosecutor announced his request to issue an arrest warrant to Min Aung Hlaing for crimes against Rohingyas that were committed in 2017. For us, this news serves as a glimpse of hope to bring justice. However, there are so many questions around it such as if the court actually would issue the arrest warrant or how the arrest could eventually take place if the coup leader remains in Myanmar or only travels to non-ICC member states. Regardless, this announcement is a baby step and a sign that the world hasn't forgotten us amid multiple crises that are unfortunately fighting to get international attention.

While we questioned how MAL would get arrested, he had made his way to China this month, meeting state leaders in the Mekong region, visiting a Chinese drone production factory, and making deals with China. A leaked document that Myanmar Now received revealed that China planned to provide about US\$550 million in aid to support. The aid would come in several project deals that probably have little to no benefit for the people of Myanmar.

Another interesting news related to China this month was that the regime brought in Chinese armed forces to secure the Kyauk Phyu SEZ in Rakhine State which remains one of the few locations that the Arakan Army (AA) had yet to seize. Rumor had it the regime was drafting an MoU to jointly establish a security company with China.

Speaking of, AA announced that November marked one year since its military campaign against the regime, and the ethnic armed group has successfully controlled

11 townships and is on the verge of capturing four more. With control over the state, news reported that the AA had been detaining Bangladesh citizens on fishing boats in its territorial waters for "security reasons" and released them later.

In the north, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) captured the Panwa region which is a key source of rare earth minerals, and shut down border access to China. As of late November, it was reported that various ethnic armed groups have controlled five border gates along the China-Myanmar border which are essential for trading. This news is not a surprise as we saw China openly pressuring ethnic armed groups on the border to halt their military operations against the regime. The regime also showed its keenness to have a dialogue with the actors of Operation 1027 with China's mediation.

Meanwhile in the southern part, Karen's KNLA said that the regime's use of drones for military operation had proliferated since October. In November, kamikaze drones and fixed wing drones flew about five to six times a day and dropped bombs. Revolutionary forces showed concern that more drone attacks would likely happen after the junta chief's visit to the drone factory in China.

On the front of the National Unity Government (NUG), interim president Duwa Lashi La warned his cabinet members to be on the ground alongside the people and that the NUG cannot become "an exile government". This news sparked quite a stir among the NUG critics. One good news came from the NUG representative office in South Korea that its office has been successfully extending expired Myanmar passports for two more years and authorities in South Korea accepted it, consequently, preventing the

Myanmar nationals from becoming stateless.

The military's conscription law remains a major threat to youth. Employment companies that sent migrant workers abroad have been ordered to add a clause in contracts that said the individuals were required to return to Myanmar to serve in the military after two years of employment abroad. The regime also allegedly threatened that Myanmar nationals abroad with expired passports would be denied passport extensions unless they went back to the country and completed the mandatory military service. Forceful recruitments were reported throughout the month, and those who attempted to leave the country were scrutinized and in some cases, even stopped at the airport from leaving.

This month, we lost another detained NLD cabinet member U Win Khaing in Mandalay. Similar to Dr. Zaw Myint Maung who passed away last month, he was also released from Mandalay's Obo prison and admitted to the hospital, but unfortunately passed away 11 days after his release. This is yet another proof of the regime's failure to provide adequate healthcare to the people who should not have been detained in the first place.

Despite the country falling apart, the coup leader continues to hold onto the little power he has. He announced that census collection, ahead of his sham election, has yet to be completed and it will continue till the end of 2024. Whatever he says, we must steadily keep fighting to achieve our ultimate win.

**November 1, 2024**

Multiple air strikes were launched by the regime forces in Naungcho Township, Shan State, under TNLA control. Six bombs were dropped on Sanma Sal Village, killing a new mother, a 70-year-old man, and a 50-year-old man.

**November 3, 2024**

Joint forces of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and People's Defense Force (PDF) captured two regime-controlled stations in Homalin Township, Sagaing Region.

**November 5, 2024**

During a meeting in Kunming, Chinese officials urged the junta chief Min Aung Hlaing to accelerate the implementation of joint China-Myanmar projects.

**November 7, 2024**

The United Nations issued a warning about the worsening humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State, stating that the ongoing fighting has severely impacted trade and agricultural production, leading to an impending famine.

Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra met privately with coup leader Min Aung Hlaing, during the Greater Mekong Subregion Summit in Kunming, China. According to the Bangkok Post, the Thai government offered its support to foster peace in Myanmar, where ongoing conflicts have created significant regional instability.

During a meeting of the central committee for conscription, General Tin Aung San, deputy prime minister of the regime, highlighted that several individuals had passed medical screenings and joined the military but later deserted or failed to report to training without explanation. He also warned of impending action against deserters.

**November 2, 2024**

The regime's troops were deployed to Thantlang and carried out airstrikes in order to retaliate the resistance forces' attempt to capture the town in Chin State.

**November 4, 2024**

A total of 11 political parties that registered to participate in the junta's sham election, along with ethnic armed leaders involved in ceasefire agreements, attended a "Constitution and Federalism" dialogue taking place from November 4 to 7 in New Delhi, India.

**November 6, 2024**

The regime conducted an airstrike on Nhonebon Village in Mindat Township, Chin State, destroying at least 10 structures, including a school and a church. The area, inhabited only by locals and displaced people and no battles in the vicinity, saw a 500-lb bomb dropped.

**November 8, 2024**

The regime announced that junta chief Min Aung Hlaing visited Chongqing, China, and toured a drone manufacturing company, Zhongyue Aviation UAV Firefighting-Drone Co., Ltd.

**November 9, 2024**

The NLD's Electricity and Energy Minister U Win Khaing passed away at Mandalay General Hospital, 11 days after being released from the Obo prison by the regime.

The Myanmar regime's embassy in Seoul, South Korea, announced plans to pursue legal action against Myanmar nationals who renew expired passports through the National Unity Government (NUG) office. The NUG's Korean representative office began renewing expired passports in August.

#### **November 10, 2024**

The Spring Development Bank (SDB), operated by the NUG, has launched its second round of share sales, raising more than \$2 million in just 24 hours. The bank offered another 4 percent of its shares in the form of equity tokens.

#### **November 12, 2024**

U Bobo Nge, former vice-chairman of the Central Bank under the NLD government who had been detained since the coup, was taken to Mandalay Hospital due to severe stomach inflammation, according to political prisoners' support groups.

U Nay Phone Latt, spokesperson for the NUG Prime Minister's Office, stated that the beginning of the strategic offensive in the plain regions has created an opportunity for revolutionary forces that are not yet under the control of the NUG Ministry of Defense to cooperate.

#### **November 14, 2024**

Sources close to the Kamaryut District Court in Yangon said that, despite the formal request from her legal team, the regime had not allowed a meeting with State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who remains under arrest and imprisonment.

It was reported that a delegation from the Myanmar regime met with Chinese state-owned oil company executives in Beijing to discuss enhanced cooperation in the oil and natural gas sectors.

#### **November 17, 2024**

Leaked documents suggest that the Chinese government is preparing to provide over 4 billion yuan (approximately US\$550 million) in aid to support the Myanmar regime. The funding reportedly includes 20 confirmed projects costing around 1 billion yuan (\$130 million), with talks for an additional 77 projects underway.

#### **November 11, 2024**

Eighty civil organizations sent an open letter urging the exclusion of the regime's representatives from the upcoming ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and related meetings. The open letter was addressed to defense ministers and top officials from ASEAN member countries, as well as key partners.

#### **November 13, 2024**

In the one-year duration of their campaign, the Arakan Army (AA) announced that it captured 11 townships across Rakhine State and was now on the verge of capturing four more townships.

The Dhaka Tribune reported that the AA arrested six Bangladeshi nationals and seized two boats traveling across the Naf River in the Bay of Bengal.

#### **November 15, 2024**

A junta aircraft bombed Konlaw village, 17 miles north of Momauk town in Kachin State, striking a church and killing at least eight civilians, including children.

#### **November 16, 2024**

An airstrike by a military plane claimed the lives of two mothers and their young children in Thabeikkyin Township, Mandalay Region.

#### **November 18, 2024**

A convoy of passenger vehicles traveling near Kyi Kyin village in Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Region, was bombed by drones, leaving at least four people dead and eight injured, according to local resistance groups.

**November 19, 2024**

Coup leader Min Aung Hlaing announced that over 63% of the country's population has been counted in the ongoing census, with the remaining areas expected to be completed by the end of 2024.

**November 21, 2024**

A military source revealed that Chinese armed forces will join efforts to secure the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Rakhine State. Planned measures include installing advanced jammers, deploying surveillance drones, and laying high-intensity mines around the project area.

**November 23, 2024**

The KIA and its allied forces captured the border town of Kan Paik Ti in Kachin State, further consolidating the ethnic revolutionary groups' control over nearly all major China-Myanmar border posts, which are critical to the region's billion-dollar annual trade.

**November 25, 2024**

The regime has lifted restrictions on military spending, allowing for unlimited and continued increases in expenditures as needed. As a result, nearly 30% of the country's national budget is now allocated to military spending.

**November 27, 2024**

Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) sought an arrest warrant at the court on the coup leader Min Aung Hlaing for his crimes against Rohingyas in 2017. The court will decide to issue the arrest warrant and the decision will take about three months.

Ongoing armed conflicts, heavy weapon use, and airstrikes across the country have displaced a record 3.5 million people, according to a report by UNOCHA.

**November 20, 2024**

The World Food Programme (WFP) announced that one in four people in Myanmar—around 13.3 million individuals—are currently facing food insecurity.

**November 22, 2024**

The regime announced the arrest of three individuals, including the owner of a notary shop, for notarizing medical degree certificates from the Interim University Council (Mandalay).

According to the FE5 Tanintharyi research group, 5,449 Myanmar nationals were arrested for illegal border crossings from Myanmar to Thailand between January and October 2024.

**November 24, 2024**

As the KIA-led rebel forces captured Kan Paik Ti in Kachin State, 320 soldiers from the Myanmar military, who had fled the battle, were handed back to the Myanmar military through the Muse border gate by China.

**November 26, 2024**

Myanmar Ambassador U Kyaw Moe Tun has urged the UN and the international community to take decisive action against the Myanmar military's violence, including sexual violence, killing, and brutal oppression of women and young girls.

**November 28, 2024**

The regime rejected the ICC's request for an arrest warrant to the coup leader. Through its propaganda channels, the military regime declared that it had never acknowledged the ICC and its announcements.

Residents in Tachileik, Eastern Shan State, said that individuals with PV (Passport for Visit) documents are being denied entry into Thailand at the Tachilek border gate.

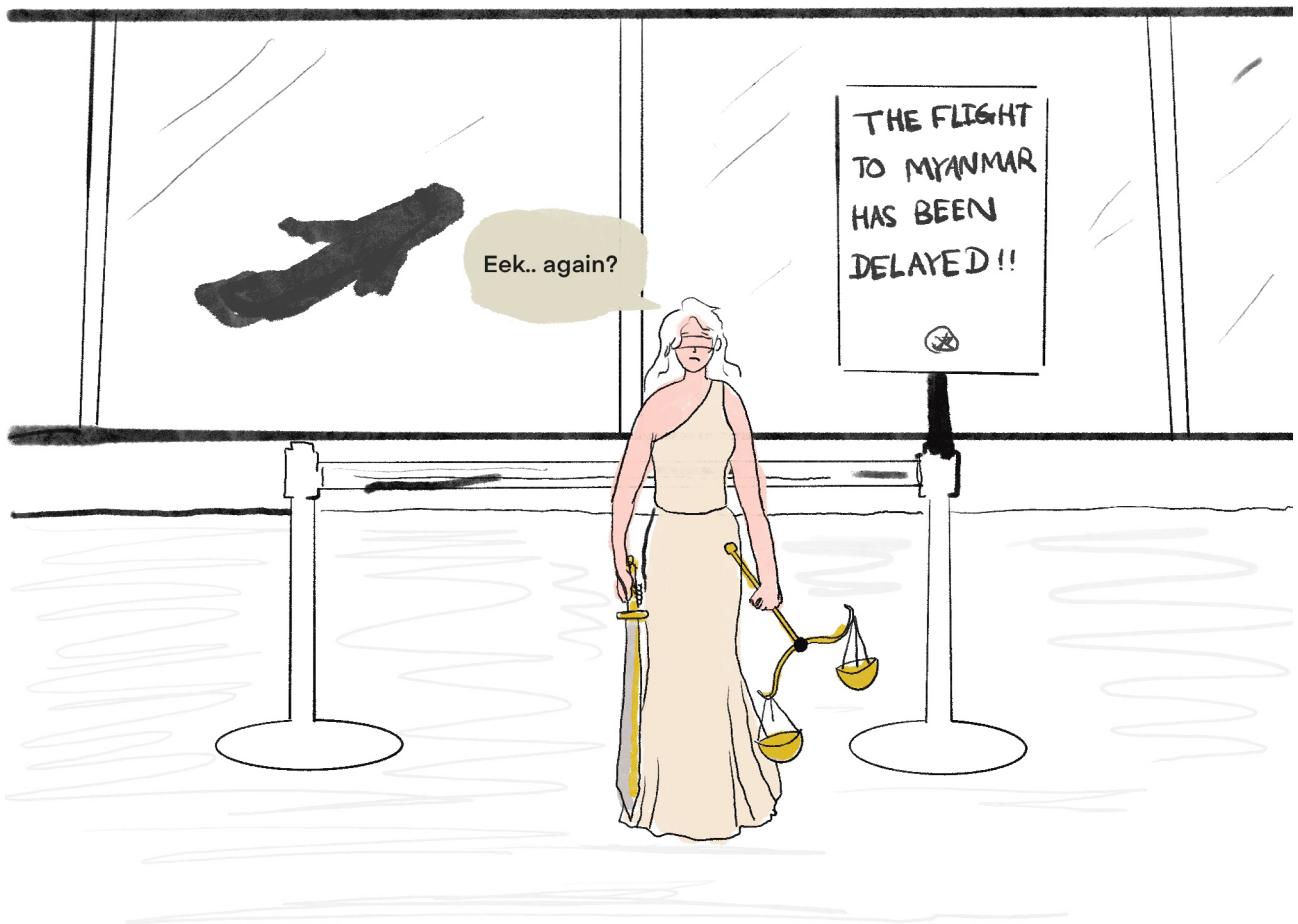
**November 29, 2024**

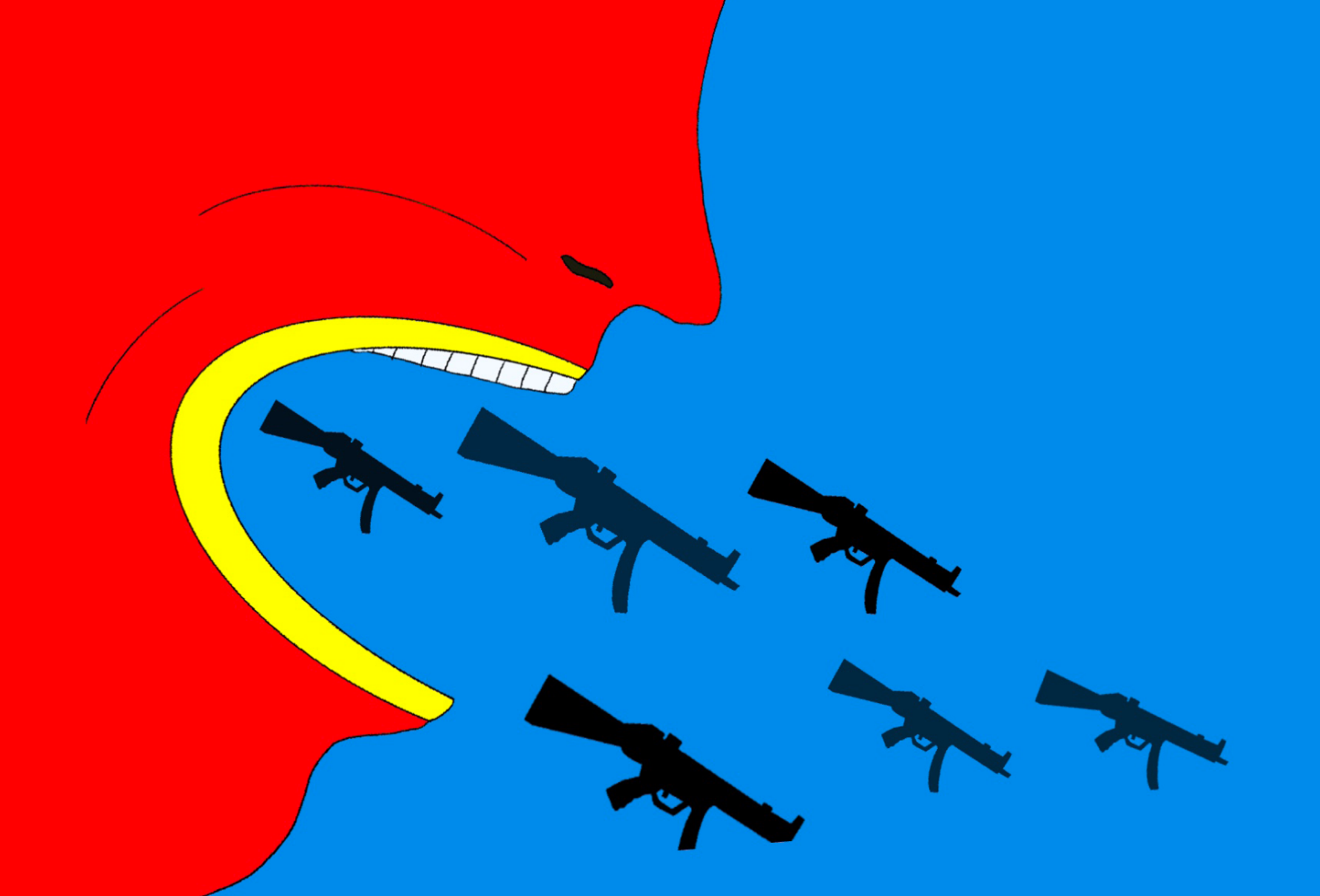
The regime planned to send migrant workers to Russia, and two employment companies close to the military had initiated the implementation with the cooperation of the regime's Ministry of Labour.

A military source in Nay Pyi Taw stated that nearly 500 new recruits sent to the Rakhine battlefields have been killed or gone missing, with over 100 others having lost contact entirely and remaining unaccounted for.

**November 30, 2024**

A regime's warship fired on three Thai fishing boats in the early morning while they were reportedly in Thai waters, killing one Thai crew member and capturing 31 others, including four Thais and 27 Myanmar nationals.





## China Comes, We Stand Firm! As One!

When it comes to Chinese involvement in Myanmar's conflict, it has been a hectic month. As an opening act, Min Aung Hlaing visited China for the first time since the coup to attend the Greater Mekong Subregion Summit. According to reports, topics agreed upon with China include the injection of a huge sum of funds to support the faltering junta and his administration, the State Administration Council (SAC), and military hardware (Min Aung Hlaing was seen visiting drone and other military manufacturing sites) among other things.

However, the two greatest shocks come in the form of 1) Chinese detaining the head of Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDA), a powerful Ko-

ng ethnic armed organization (EAO) that has expanded its territories massively post-coup, and 2) China and SAC agreeing on the operation of Chinese private military companies (PMC) in Myanmar.

Regarding the first issue, it has become even more problematic considering MNDA head, Mr. Peng Daxun, was in China under the invitation of the Chinese foreign ministry for a meeting with its East Asia Special Envoy, only to get reportedly detained after the meeting. We are not well-versed in diplomatic protocols and thus cannot comment whether such "detaining the invitee of a diplomatic talk" behavior is in accordance with present-day international norms. However, what we

see is China willingly throwing away its mediator position. Since the turn of the year, a few months from the first wave of Operation 1027, with town after town falling to the hands of Three Brotherhood Alliance forces, where MNDA is a key member, China has pressured them and other EAOs in Myanmar to sue for peace, to reject NUG and its armed wing PDF fighters, and to acknowledge the role of junta's military in present and future of Myanmar. Chinese pressure proved too great at times that The Brotherhood agreed to a ceasefire in Northern Shan State in January. While the tenuous ceasefire did not last China chose a blend of diplomacy and coercion before.

However, with the arrest of Peng

## **Since the coup, Chinese project sites that housed SAC troops have been launching pads for the junta's soldier's incursion into the nearby communities. Will the Chinese private security forces be posted there only for guard duty? or more?**

---

Daxun, China has clearly signaled its stance of forsaking diplomacy and going pure coercion. Such reckless action could backfire for China, however, the arrogant Chinese authorities seem to believe that they can overcome any resistance provided enough force is applied.

And that thinking gets to the next shock of Chinese private military companies (PMCs) to expand operations in Myanmar. Chinese PMCs operating in Myanmar is not a novel idea. News reports have long indicated the presence of these Chinese private armed soldiers guarding Chinese large-scale investment sites. However, the shift is its announcement and the unprecedentedly larger scale. The first of such assignments seems to be in Rakhine State, where the Arakan Army (AA), another Brotherhood member, is gaining ground rapidly at a place where major Chinese projects are under development. The Chinese PMCs planned operations will not stop in Rakhine alone, and the Chinese projects are spread across the country. Some observers correctly claim that allowing Chinese PMCs to operate within Myanmar is a shameful and cowardly behavior from the losing junta and unconstitutional, even according to the military-drafted 2008 constitution. However, the way we see is that the junta will not mind. At the current rate,

the junta risks losing everything, and if the regime could maintain power by inviting Chinese PMCs, they would do so. After all, losing face is way better than losing head. The biggest problem the junta is facing is that their soldiers are losing morale, unwilling to fight, and ready to surrender at the sight of a well-armed enemy. Having Chinese military contractors will help alleviate this problem in areas where major Chinese projects are running. There will still be huge coordination challenges between SAC troops and Chinese PMC troops, such as whether these Chinese private soldiers, who are presumably better compensated and have higher morale, would listen to SAC commanders. Or how much autonomy be allowed to the Chinese troops? However, the biggest complication and challenge lies not with SAC, but with the revolution side.

These Chinese armed soldiers are going to be posted in Myanmar to protect Chinese interests in Myanmar. While national interest is not a disagreeable concept, the likelihood that they act proactively or aggressively, rather than simply reacting to threats, is concerning. Worse, since the coup, Chinese project sites that housed SAC troops have been launching pads for the junta's soldier's incursion into the nearby communities. Will the Chinese private se-

curity forces be posted there only for guard duty? or more?

Russia's PMCs, such as the Wagner Group, have been important pillars supporting pro-Russian dictators in Africa and the Middle East, such as those in Syria, Mali, Central African Republic, etc. China, unlike Russia, has yet to take such a heavy-handed approach to the authoritarian regimes it supports. Then again, no authoritarian regime in the Chinese sphere of influence is under heavy siege like Min Aung Hlaing's. Now that the Chinese government has thrown its support blatantly and shamelessly behind Min Aung Hlaing, what could be the consequences if these Chinese private soldiers got killed under fire from the revolutionary side? Chances are that China would not mourn the deaths of its soldiers but use it as a justification to rump up support for Min Aung Hlaing. The alternative of giving in to all demands of Chinese private soldiers is not appealing to the revolution side either. The entry of Chinese troops in support of junta Min Aung Hlaing would prove to be the most delicate and complicated challenge pro-revolutionary fighters, be it EAOs or NUG or PDF, face yet.

However, that still does not mean there is no solution. When the external threats get real, we need to rise to the challenge, and right now we face the biggest threat to the success of the revolution.

In reflection of the revolutionary forces, despite military success and territorial expansion, our problem lies in our inability to achieve similar success in terms of political agreement. The claim of federal democracy has been in place since the first few months after the coup. However, upon wondering what it means



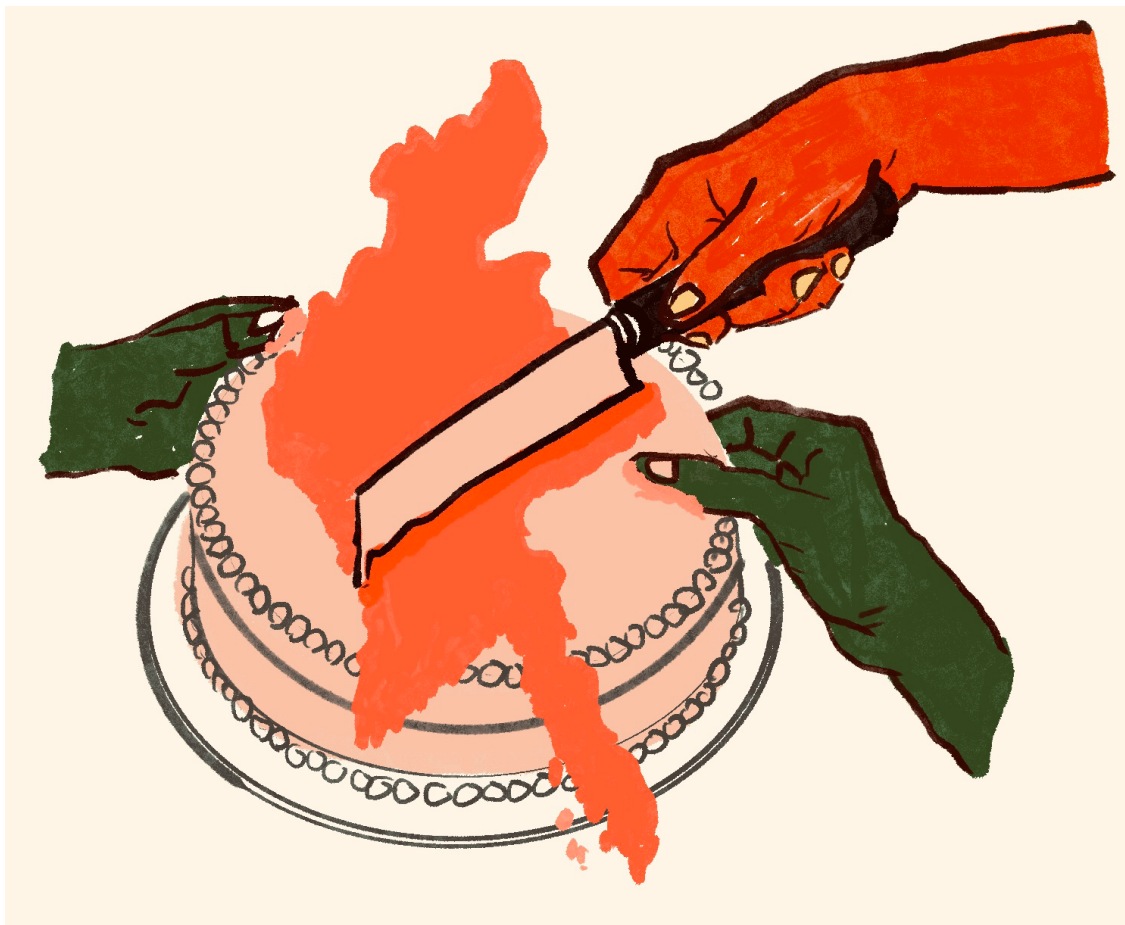
by federal democracy and how we are going to get there, it becomes vague. Worse, some EAOs later even talk about different arrangements. Sadly, from the way we see, the current coalition of pro-revolution is more akin to an alliance of convenience among different stakeholders rather than a fully committed and coordinated force. The fact that our revolution has gotten this far is a testament to the grit and determination of the people of Myanmar. The people are fueling the downfall of the junta with their lives and livelihoods. With China now throwing its support openly

and massively behind the junta, we simply cannot afford to continue that way. Back in 2015, Russia's support for the al-Assad regime in Syria proved to be a decisive factor in the Syrian dictator getting the upper hand in the civil war from the brink of defeat. Had a global superpower like China decided to support SAC enough, it would be very difficult for us to overcome.

Having said that, difficult is not impossible. We could still make China regret ever backing the junta. We could still make the cost of supporting the junta so

sky-high that the Chinese government will eventually find it unsustainable. We could still be true to the people of Myanmar who stand firm in the face of the onslaught.

However, the revolutionary leadership would need to get a political agreement first so that all pro-revolutionary actors would truly align as one. Min Aung Hlaing will be gone with or without Chinese support. But China is a force no actor can face alone. Heading towards federal democracy and staying true to it would be the only way out.





# Karani Medical College

20.11.2024



## Karenni Medical College : A New Hope for Healthcare in a Conflict Zone

In November, the Karenni Medical College was opened in Karenni State, marking a significant milestone as the seventh medical college established under the resistance and the second since the coup. Dr. Myo Khant Ko Ko, one of its founders, provides insights into the college's establishment and its aspirations for the future.

### **MM: Could you please introduce yourself and tell us about the college?**

My name is Dr. Myo Khant Ko Ko. I am actively involved in the resistance movement in Karenni State, serving as the chief surgeon and clinical director at Luke Hospital. I also served as the president of the Karenni Doctors Association, which was formed by

local doctors in the region.

While working in this role, I noticed the growing need for trained healthcare professionals. At the same time, we had begun establishing alternative education schools for young people whose right to education had been denied by the conflict. When attending their graduation ceremonies, I saw that many Karenni children were highly talented and capable. However, they had no opportunities for higher education after completing basic schooling because advanced education institutions were unavailable.

Another challenge we face is the collapse of the health system in Karenni State. The entire state is

at war, and even the SAC's health system has been completely dismantled. As a result, healthcare here is primarily managed by revolutionary groups, with doctors and medical students from other states stepping in. However, if these doctors leave once the resistance ends, we will face a significant gap in healthcare services.

Karenni State currently has only six local doctors, which is far too few to meet the needs of its population of 600,000 to 700,000 people. These two issues—the need for advanced education opportunities for young people and the critical shortage of healthcare workers—motivated us to act.

**Karenni State currently has only six local doctors, which is far too few to meet the needs of its population of 600,000 to 700,000 people. These two issues—the need for advanced education opportunities for young people and the critical shortage of healthcare workers—motivated us to act.**

---

Since 2022, we've been working to establish a medical college. On March 7, 2023, I formed the Karenni Medical College Establishment Committee to make this vision a reality.

**MM: How did you organize the process from the beginning to recruitment?**

We divided the responsibilities into six subcommittees and completed the recruitment process within a year. To be honest, we were very concerned about security since we were just starting out. Because of this, we didn't make a big announcement online. Instead, we distributed recruitment papers directly to relevant battalions, villages, and nearby educational institutions and groups.

For the first batch, most people didn't know about the program due to the security situation. Applicants had to fill out a form and then come in for a three-stage selection process. It began with a written exam, which 160 people took. After passing the written exam, candidates moved on to the next stages: personal statement and interview rounds. The evaluation was divided into three parts: the written exam (40%), the personal statement (20%), and the interview (40%). Applicants needed a total score of at least 60% to be accepted.

In the end, 37 people were selected—6 males and 31 females. This group is now attending what we call the Foundation Year, and we are currently working with them during this initial phase of their education.

**MM: Can you tell us more about the backgrounds of the students and the criteria you used to select them?**

In the first year, due to security concerns, priority was given to those born in Karenni State or who had been residents of the state for at least three years. Applicants needed a letter of recommendation to verify this.

At this stage, we could not accept students from other states or regions due to safety concerns. However, in the future, we aim to reserve student quotas for those from other revolutionary areas. This would depend on the reliability and support of trusted revolutionary leaders from those regions. We plan to discuss and finalize this policy in upcoming meetings.

For now, the key criteria are: 1) residency in Karenni State for at least three years, and 2) age between 17 and 30.

These criteria will remain valid during the revolutionary period.

Once the revolution is over, we plan to lower the age limit.

Our admission policy is inclusive, regardless of race, religion, or physical disability. We are committed to providing opportunities for everyone who meets the basic requirements and has the potential to learn and teach medicine.

**MM: Please tell us about the curriculum you are using.**

Before the coup, all five medical schools in Myanmar were preparing for transition from the traditional curriculum to one aligned with WHO standards. However, after the coup, that plan was abandoned, and the updated curriculum was not implemented in those schools.

We connected with the specialist from the UK who was updating the curriculum for our Myanmar medical colleges. She helped reorganize and finalize the curriculum for us. We also collaborated with Myanmar-born experts and foreign supporters in the field, including specialists in Basic Medical Sciences and Anatomy.

The same curriculum is being used by seven revolutionary medical schools, including ours, with Kachin being one of the first adopters. We were the last to implement it, but the curriculum is consistent across all these schools. Students from any of these schools will graduate with the same degree, ensuring uniformity in their education.

Currently, the 37 students in our program are in the first semester of the Foundation Year. The Foundation Year is divided into two semesters. During the first semester, students focus on seven subjects, including Language and Basic Science.

We are committed to ensure the curriculum is comprehensive and consistently implemented to strengthen the quality of education across all revolutionary medical schools.

**MM: You mentioned seven revolutionary medical schools. Can you elaborate on that?**

The seven revolutionary medical schools consist of five pre-existing medical universities and two that were established during the revolution.

The five pre-existing universities are: Medical University 1 & 2 (Yangon), Medical University (Mandalay), Medical University (Magway), Medical University (Taunggyi). These universities already existed before the coup. When power was seized, some of these institutions became part of the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) while others did not. The CDM staff refused to recognize the regime-controlled institutions. As a result, the revolutionary side formed the Interim University

**Medical education is a continuous process, and we can't afford interruptions. Moreover, sustaining the school requires funding, and for that, people need to know we exist and understand our needs to support us.**

Council to oversee these five medical schools, allowing them to continue functioning under the revolutionary framework.

During the revolution, two additional medical schools were established: Kachin Polytechnic University in Kachin, which includes both a medical school and a nursing school. This was the first medical school established during the revolution and our Karenni Medical College, which was the second medical school to emerge during this period. In total, there are now seven revolutionary medical schools operating under the resistance movement.

**MM: What kind of funding does the school currently have, and how can it attract international support?**

To be honest, when we started, we didn't have any funds. But we saw the urgent need and decided to proceed. Initially, we raised about 10 million Myanmar kyats through community support.

After establishing the medical school, the Karenni Administrative Council was formed as the Interim Executive Council (IEC). We signed an MOU with them, ensuring our autonomy within the government structure. Autonomy is a common principle for universities and hospitals in democratic countries, and it aligns with our vision for a federal democracy.

The IEC contributed 50 million kyats, and the NUG's Ministry of Education contributed another 100 million, totaling 150 million kyats. With these funds, we started constructing the necessary buildings.

Fortunately, one of our donors pledged 100 million kyats an-

nually. We received the first installment for the initial year and have been using it gradually. Additionally, we've secured smaller project-based grants, such as 30 million kyats, through partnerships. However, these funds aren't entirely dedicated to education—they're split among various needs.

We've also received individual donations from the US and the UK, including scholarships for medical students. However, the reality is that most students and their families cannot afford any expenses. Many live in refugee camps and struggle to meet their basic needs, like food.

Our school operates completely tuition-free, and we often provide financial support to students for essentials like food, clothing, and supplies.

**MM: What's your vision for the graduates of this college? Will they continue working in the region, or pursue professions elsewhere?**

To be honest, this initiative was started because we urgently need human resources here. Therefore, graduates are required to work in this state for at least three years. After that, they're free to go wherever they choose. This three-year period allows us to build up the workforce to better serve the population. For context, in many countries, one doctor serves approximately 1,000 people. We aim to achieve that ratio here.

Once they complete their service and earn their M.B.B.S., graduates will have opportunities to pursue further education, like a Master's Degree, hopefully in the future.

Another goal for our school is to become internationally recog-

**Another goal for our school is to become internationally recognized. Take Chiang Mai in Thailand as an example—international students go there to study. Similarly, we aim to grow into a comprehensive university that attracts students from other countries.**

---

nized. Take Chiang Mai in Thailand as an example—international students go there to study. Similarly, we aim to grow into a comprehensive university that attracts students from other countries. With time, we plan to strengthen our foundation and reach a level where we can offer international-standard education and opportunities.

**MM: Alternative education is constantly facing dangers, and the regime is targeting hospitals and schools. How do you manage these risks while keeping the school open?**

Yes, these risks were a significant concern for us, which is why we didn't announce the school online initially. However, we realized that to continue admitting one batch after another, we couldn't stay completely hidden. Medical education is a continuous process, and we can't afford interruptions. Moreover, sustaining

the school requires funding, and for that, people need to know we exist and understand our needs to support us.

We remain highly vigilant about security. We don't allow visitors and take every precaution to keep our school safe. To further ensure safety, we've even built bomb shelters in our dormitories—perhaps making us one of the first medical colleges in the world to include bunkers as part of our infrastructure.

**MM: Are there air defense supported by the regional government to protect the college?**

When it comes to air defense, everyone understands the challenges we face. This revolution is different from previous ones, but technically, we all know our air defense capabilities are very limited. We are weak in this regard and not in a position to fully protect ourselves. The interim

government oversees security for the broader area, but there are no specific measures or support provided for our college.

**MM: Do you see any opportunity to open similar schools in other liberated areas, states, and regions? What message would you like to share with those who are trying to establish such schools?**

One of the main goals of establishing Karenni Medical College is to support a federal system. Once we achieve federalism, each state and region will have its own universities. This is the case internationally as well. According to this vision, every state should have its own medical university. If other states and regions want to follow our example, we will fully support them. As we move towards federalism, each area will have its own universities, colleges, medical schools, nursing schools, and so on. We have valuable experience in this process, and we are happy to share it. For example, a young man from Mon State asked me how we got started, and I shared our knowledge with him. If others need technical assistance, we are ready to help.

And we encourage everybody to join us in this mission, whether through support, collaboration, or simply by spreading awareness.



*Weekly Updates*

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

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



## Staying Connected Gets More and More Difficult

Historically, the Myanmar military is notorious for applying the “four-cut” strategy as a part of its military campaign in ethnic areas to defeat its opponents. The strategy is designed to disrupt the opponents’ supplies of 1) food, 2) funds, 3) communications and 4) recruitment. The military, under General Ne Win’s leadership in the 1960s, used the strategy during its operations against the Karen National Union (KNU), and there have been documents where ethnic civilians proved to be the collateral damage.

After the coup in 2021, analysts, observers and even citizens themselves have called attention

to the return of the four-cut strategy by the Myanmar military, under the leadership of Min Aung Hlaing. The coup itself on 1 February 2021 began with the blackout of telephone lines, the internet, and TV channels with the pure intention of disconnecting the people and opposition forces to prevent them from mobilizing any resistance effort. Ruling the country for more than 60 years, one thing the Myanmar generals know very well is that communication opens channels to create bonds among the oppressed that lead to solidarity. Disconnecting was one of the first few things that the new military regime did. We still remember the sched-

uled internet blackout at the beginning of the coup. With these blackouts, the regime wanted to keep the public disconnected, as well as, to show its power.

However, the world has been operating at a fast pace, highly dependent on technology and social media, and Myanmar with its brief window of semi-democracy has also caught up. Despite the military’s desire to keep the people in the dark, people were crafty in hacking their way around the blackout. Almost the entire population of social media users used free virtual private networks (VPNs) to bypass the ban on Facebook and oth-

**Unfortunately in late 2024, it has become harder and harder to reach the families inside the country. Even though the VPN ban is somehow bypassed, electricity shortage still limits families' time online.**

er social media apps. Some also used Thai SIM cards and turned on data roaming from Yangon to access the internet. As such, the new regime had no choice but to ease up the rigid rules like internet blackouts on the mass population because even the institution itself is dependent on the internet and social media, just like any ordinary citizens. With the restoration of and limited access to internet use, the people's democracy struggle transcends, Myanmar people receive support from all over the world and diaspora groups show support which strengthen the people's revolution against the military to this day.

Nearly four years since the very unfortunate February, communication and connectivity in Myanmar have become a major issue once again. When the regime eased up the internet blackout and social media ban in May 2021, it did not seem to know how to prevent people from finding their ways to use the internet and social media. However, in June 2024, the regime with the

support of IT experts (and armed soldiers who checked people's phones on the streets) managed to restrict the use of VPNs in the country, which hindered the usage of social media. Evidently, internet usage was tremendously reduced in Myanmar as users struggled to get the right VPN to get connected.

In addition to the VPN ban, electricity shortage has become another challenge for Myanmar people to remain online. With the limited power that comes with a schedule each day, staying online becomes less important compared to completing other basic needs such as cooking. People try to get the work that requires power done as much as possible in a few hours a day, leaving little to no time to stay online.

Connectivity has become more crucial now in 2024 than in 2021. Due to the military's enactment of conscription law and forceful recruitment of abled young men into military training, the youth departed with their loved ones and fled to other countries or resistance-controlled territories for freedom and livelihood. The only way for these families to take a glimpse of the faces of their loved ones is dependent on communication devices and social media.

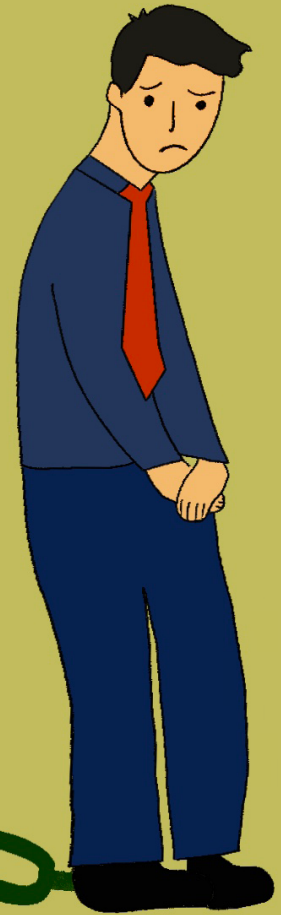
Unfortunately in late 2024, it has become harder and harder to reach the families inside the country. Youths abroad use applications like Viber and Telegram which do not require VPN to stay close to their families. Even though the VPN ban is somehow bypassed, electricity shortage still limits families' time online. A friend of Mohinga Matters shared that he and his family had not taken video calls for a while now as the family was rarely online. The new normal for

him is to leave a text message in the family group chat and expect a response the next day because real-time communication is no longer an option.

When residents from slightly more urban areas face these challenges, there are some conflict-prone parts in the country that have been in a complete internet shutdown such as Rakhine State. Staying close to one's family in those parts of the country requires an extra effort. A source who hailed from a remote part of the country and currently living outside said that he had not talked to his mother directly for months now. Occasionally, he would start a video call with his siblings in Yangon, and these siblings would, in turn, call his parents via mobile phone so that he could at least hear his mother's voice. It has taken a village to say a few lines to family members under military rule.

In the past, families were parted for various reasons and communication was not always seamless in Myanmar. Dispatching letters would take weeks just to say hello. Myanmar people had unlearned these communication struggles as the infrastructure and service provision improved during the brief window of democratization. Unfortunately, it seems that we have returned to the state of isolation in four years (equivalent to a US presidential term) of military rule. Regardless of our people's wittiness or might to overcome any struggle, it is a reality and a truth that the regime's intentional or unintentional effort to tear families apart is sadly succeeding.

# Conscription Law



## Regime Tightens Grip on Labor Migration

The Myanmar junta has recently issued a [new regulation](#) through its Ministry of Labor, placing the responsibility for conscripting migrant workers squarely on employment agencies. Over [500 registered employment agencies](#), which typically facilitate the migration of Myanmar workers seeking better economic opportunities abroad, are now tasked with ensuring that workers are informed about the possibility of being called back to serve in the military. The regulation also mandates that new contracts for workers explicitly state that foreign employers agree to the potential recall of their employees for conscription. The burden of enforcement now falls heavily on

these agencies.

Earlier this year, in February, the junta introduced forced military conscription to address a manpower shortage in its military, making men aged 18 to 35 and women 18 to 27 to serve. The need for conscripts arose as the military suffered significant losses in its ongoing battles with resistance forces. Within a year of enacting the conscription law, the mass exodus of young men and women reflects the devastating impact this policy has had on Myanmar's youth population. In addition to the conscription rules, the agencies are also burdened with enforcing the junta's [remittance policy](#), which re-

quires migrant workers to send a quarter of their salaries—either monthly or quarterly—back to Myanmar through the regime's banking system. Agencies are already struggling to meet the demands of remittance enforcement, adding yet another layer of pressure on their operations. The agencies are under immense pressure to comply with the military's demands, as failure to do so could result in severe penalties, including the revocation of their operating licenses. However, some workers report that the agency has not communicated the new obligation to them. Two trainees working in the elderly care sector in Japan shared that they had not been informed by



**For many migrant workers, the dream of finding a better life abroad is rapidly becoming a nightmare, as they are confronted with the constant threat of conscription, exploitation, and the loss of basic freedoms.**

their recruitment agency about returning for the conscription.

On the other hand, it has become increasingly difficult for men seeking manual labor jobs, such as in construction, to migrate to countries like Thailand. A source working in the recruitment sector for Myanmar migrant labor to Thailand explained, "It has become much harder for men in manual labor jobs to get work permits for Thailand and I heard the junta no longer allow the men for manual jobs in Thailand." As a result, the pool of eligible workers available for employment abroad is shrinking, and many are turning to increasingly dangerous and illegal routes to escape conscription and find work. Many reports also confirm that the military has been banning men from seeking employment abroad or even banning them from leaving the airport despite having all the required travel and employment documents. Reports from multiple sources [confirm](#) that the military has gone so far as [to ban young men from seeking](#)

[employment abroad](#), even preventing them from leaving the country altogether. Despite having all the necessary travel and employment documents, many are being stopped at airports and turned back.

This tightening of border controls further limits the ability of Myanmar's youth to escape the country's dire economic and political situation, forcing many to seek increasingly dangerous and illegal routes out. [News of Myanmar workers](#) being arrested for illegal entry and unauthorized employment in Thailand has been on the rise in recent months. As Myanmar's conscription laws tighten and border controls become more stringent, many young people have resorted to crossing the border illegally in an attempt to escape mandatory military service and seek better economic opportunities. However, these workers face an even greater risk of detention and deportation as Thai authorities increase efforts to crack down on illegal migrant labor. Reports indicate that many Myanmar nationals are being arrested at construction sites, factories, and other workplaces, where they are found to be working without proper documentation.

At the same time, the junta is actively seeking new employment destinations where it has stronger diplomatic ties. For instance, after signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Laos, Myanmar recently [sent 30,000 workers](#) there and is now considering [sending workers to Russia](#). These moves reflect the junta's growing involvement in managing labor migration, asserting greater control over both employment opportunities and the country's human resources in an effort to address its military and economic needs.

The junta's increasing desperation is evident in each new regulation and provision it enacts. As the military continues to face setbacks on the battlefield and struggles to maintain control, it is resorting to ever-more coercive measures to ensure its survival. These measures are not only taking a toll on the economy but are also further exacerbating the human rights crisis within Myanmar. The junta's growing involvement in regulating labor migration reflects its increasing desperation to manage both its military and economic crises. The new conscription rules, tighter border controls, and remittance requirements are pushing Myanmar's migrant workers into an ever more precarious position. As recruitment agencies become enforcers of the military's demands, they are faced with enormous pressure to comply or face severe consequences. For many migrant workers, the dream of finding a better life abroad is rapidly becoming a nightmare, as they are confronted with the constant threat of conscription, exploitation, and the loss of basic freedoms. In the face of these overwhelming challenges, many migrant workers are left with no choice but to risk their safety, their livelihoods, and their freedom in search of a better life. But with the junta's tightening grip on migration, the hope of a better future grows ever more elusive.

---

# Highlights of the Armed Resistance

Over a year since the launch of Operation 1027, notable changes have emerged among Myanmar's key armed groups. The MNDA and TNLA have shown signs of slowing their military campaigns and opening channels for dialogue, reportedly influenced by external pressures, particularly from China. Meanwhile, the Arakan Army (AA) continues to maintain active resistance, asserting near-total control over Rakhine State. In other regions, skirmishes persist, with the regime focusing on reclaiming territories in Karenni State and the Tanintharyi Region.

Here are the key developments in November:

## **Coup Leader Calls for Dialogue**

On November 25, coup leader Min Aung Hlaing marked National Day with a warning that armed conflict would not bring peace. He called for resolving political issues through dialogue, emphasizing risks to ethnic unity and national sovereignty. Despite these statements, regime forces continue their offensives and airstrikes in resistance-controlled areas, undermining calls for peace.

## **TNLA Open to Talks Amid Pressure**

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) expressed readiness to negotiate with the regime to ease public hardship and under pressure from China. TNLA spokesperson Lwe Ye Oo stated that dialogue could address longstanding crises while ensuring the safety of civilians remains a priority. Preparations for talks are underway, but no formal meetings have yet occurred.

## **MNDA Leader Under House Arrest in China**

The leader of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDA), Peng Daxun, was placed under house arrest by Chinese authorities. This move aims to pressure MNDA troops to withdraw from Lashio in northern Shan State, which the group seized in August. The arrest follows Peng's meeting with China's special envoy in Kunming last month.

## **Regime Escalates Drone Use**

In early November, junta chief Min Aung Hlaing visited a Chinese drone factory in Chongqing. In the past three months, the regime has intensified drone strikes, targeting civilians and resistance forces, following heavy losses in Operation 1027. With the coup leader's visit to China, observers speculate an even more significant increase in drone attacks from the regime.

## **AA's Advances in Rakhine State**

The Arakan Army (AA) marked one year of its military campaign in Rakhine State, controlling 11 townships, including key areas such as Mrauk-U and Ponnagyun. Fierce clashes continue in four more townships. Despite limited offensives near strategic locations like Kyauk Phyu, preparations for a deep-sea port project indicate the AA's growing dominance. AA concluded the month with the capture of Taungup Town after 17-day offensive on November 24.

## **KIA Captures Kan Paik Ti Town**

On November 20, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and allied forces seized control of Kan Paik Ti, a border town in Kachin State, after hours of fighting. The

victory secured the entire Kachin Special Region (I) under the wing of KIA. It also indicates the KIA's dedication to the resistance despite the strong influence from China.

## **Escalation in Karenni State**

The regime, supported by the Pa-O National Organization (PNO), has deployed over 700 troops to reclaim Karenni territory, including Moe Bwe Township. Despite resistance successes, such as Operation 1 by the Karenni National Defense Force (KNDF), the junta aims to solidify control over strategic areas ahead of next year's planned elections.

## **Regime Targets Tanintharyi Region**

In Tanintharyi Region, the military intensified efforts to control the Myeik-Dawei Union Road, deploying around 100 troops along the route. Unlike past operations, the junta has established permanent posts in villages, signaling a strategic move to curb resistance and secure trade routes with Thailand.

## **Resistance Prepares for Offensives Near Pyin Oo Lwin**

Clashes erupted in northern Shan State between the TNLA, MDY-PDF, and regime forces near Pyin Oo Lwin, home to key military academies. The regime has reportedly begun drone training and is expected to launch major offensives in the coming weeks, targeting resistance strongholds in the region.

## **BPLA Returns to Central Myanmar**

The Burma People's Liberation Army (BPLA), which has been active in Karen and northern Shan

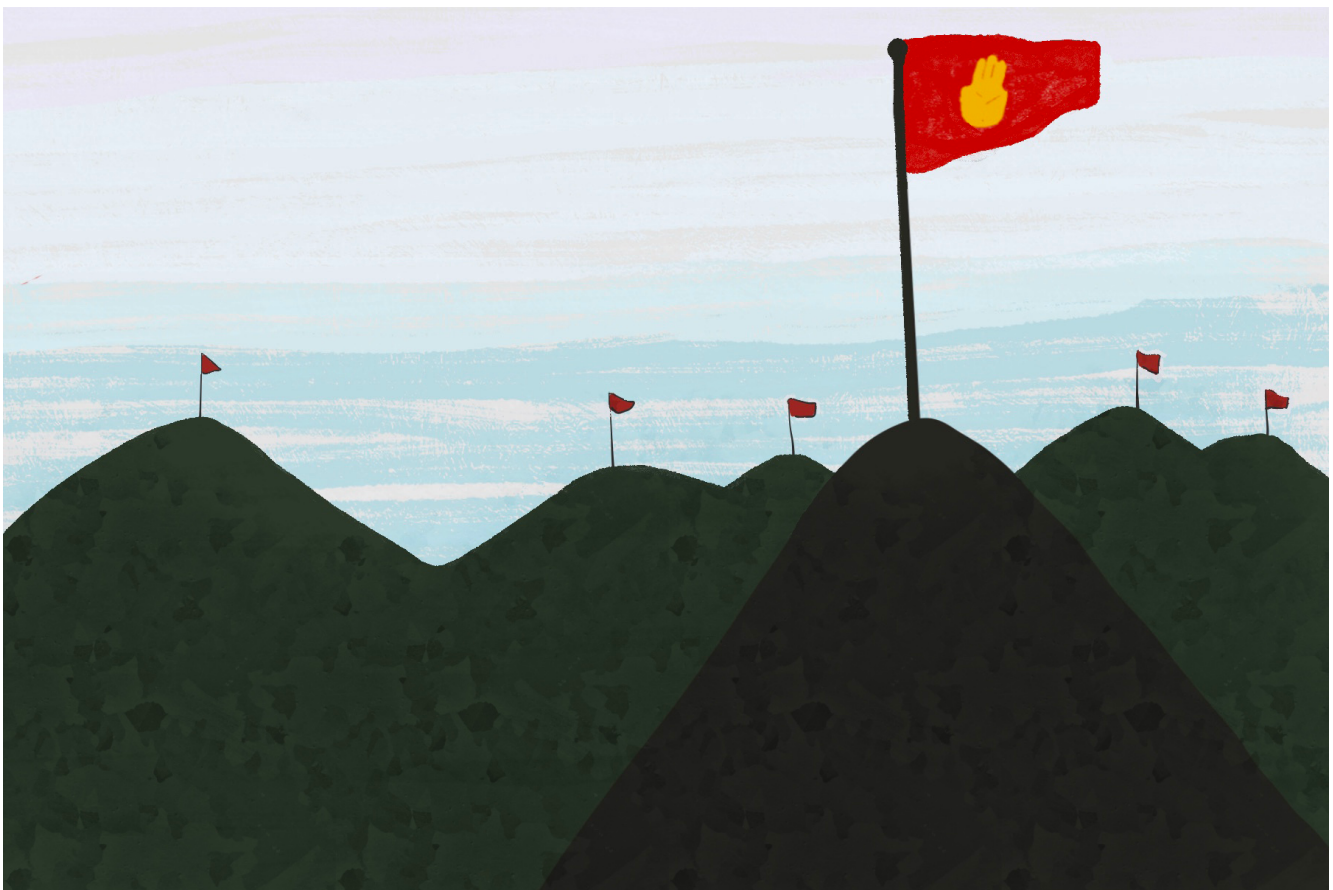
States alongside ethnic armed groups, is preparing to expand its operations into central Myanmar. According to an announcement by its leader, Maung Saung Kha, the move marks a strategic shift to intensify resistance efforts against the military junta.

The BPLA, which previously participated in Operation 1027, emphasized that this expansion is not merely opening a new front but a return to central Myanmar

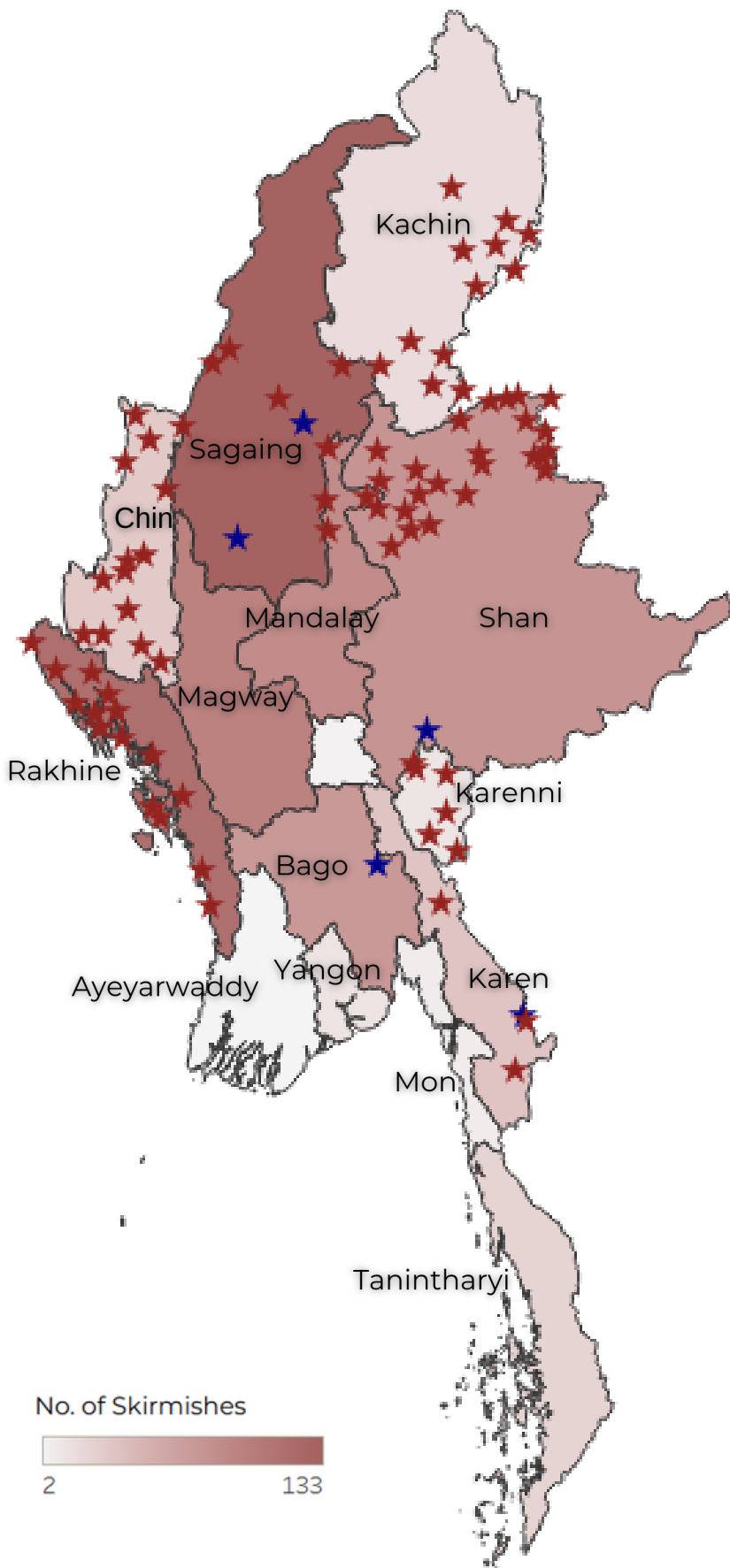
after securing positions in northern Shan and holding extensive negotiations with various stakeholders. While they have not yet reached a strong consensus with armed groups in the central region, they have expressed readiness to cooperate militarily and aim to achieve political alignment based on mutual understanding.

The BPLA stressed their independence, stating they are not under

the National Unity Government's command but have engaged in talks with the NUG and other groups before this move. Their priority remains the eradication of military dictatorship, though they also signaled a willingness to address challenges from other groups if necessary.



# People's Resistance War in November



## 82

towns (approximately) have been captured and controlled by resistance forces across Myanmar



Towns captured and controlled by resistance forces



Towns recaptured by the regime

Sources: ACLED, Khit Thit Media

Follow us on



@mohingamatters



@mohingamatters



@mattersmohinga

# Crimes Against Humanity

5

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

## Regime Airstrike Hits Church in Momauk, Kachin State, Killing Eight

On November 15, a junta aircraft bombed Konlaw village, 17 miles north of Momauk town in Kachin State, targeting a church and killing at least eight civilians, including children. The bombing occurred at around 3:40 p.m., according to a local source linked to the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). The victims, including at least five children, were reportedly near the church when the bomb hit. Locals confirmed there was no fighting in the area, with the nearest clashes reported 17 miles away near Momauk town. Many suspect the junta deliberately targeted the church.

## Regime's Airstrike Killed Six in Falam Tsp, Chin State

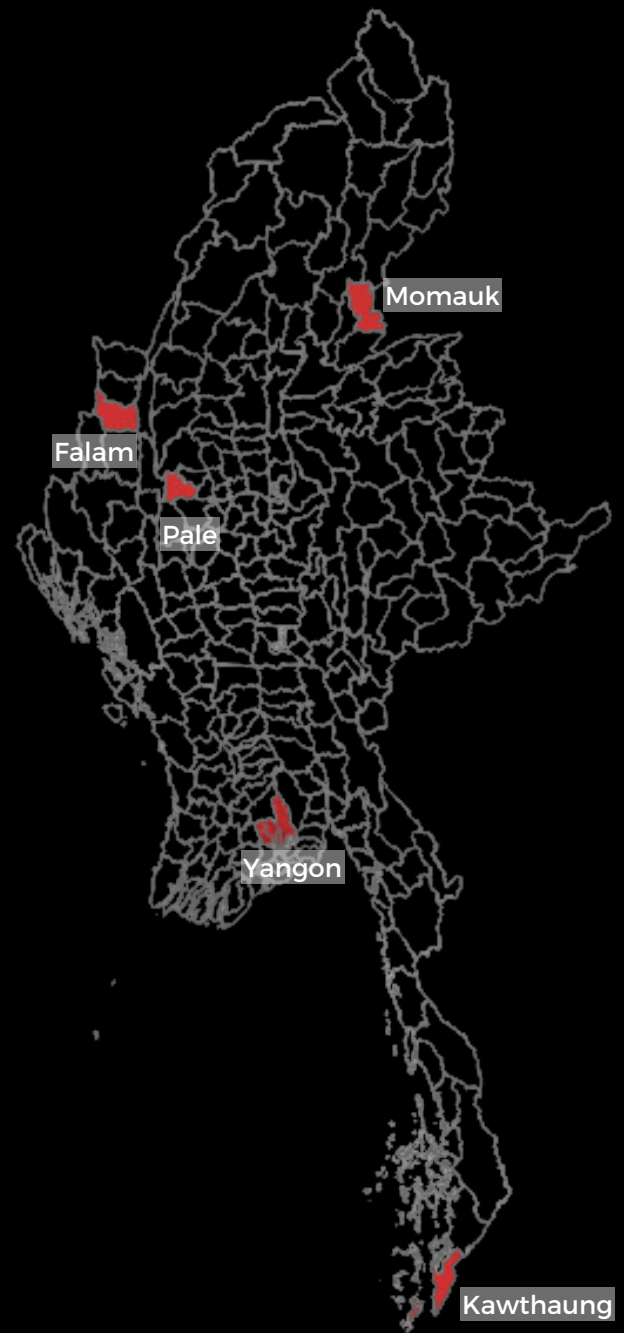
At least six people were killed by the regime's airstrike on Lumte village, Falam Township, Chin State, on Wednesday afternoon, November 26. Two bombs were dropped on the village dispensary, located about 20 miles east of Falam town. The attack reportedly killed a woman and five men, with five others injure. Locals also stated that the airstrikes destroyed six houses, including a health clinic and a church, in Longtham village, home to approximately 80 houses. There was no active battle nearby.

## Regime's Airstrike Kills Civilians at Religious Ceremony in Pale Tsp, Sagaing Region

On November 5, regime forces launched an airstrike during a religious donation ceremony (Ka-Htain Festival) in Eima Village, Pale Township, Sagaing Region. The attack, which occurred at around 3:15 p.m., killed four people, including a 1-year-old boy and an 80-year-old man, and injured five others. Five homes were also destroyed. Villagers suspect the regime mistakenly associated the gathering with PDF activities, but the PDF believes the attack was a deliberate attempt to harm civilians and disrupt religious traditions.

## Repats Forced into Military Service in Kawthaung, Tanintharyi

186 Myanmar nationals, recently released from a prison in Ranong, Thailand, are being detained by the military after their repatriation. Instead of being sent home, the returnees were taken to an infantry battalion after passing through a sports hall in Kawthaung. Men over 35 were reportedly required to provide census records, and bribe to be released. Younger men, subject to conscription laws, were coerced into mandatory military training.



## Arrest of Former Political Prisoner Monk in Yangon Raises Concerns

Sayadaw Baddanta Pyinnya Zawta, a 64-year-old monk and former political prisoner, was reportedly arrested by regime forces on November 19 near Sawbwa Gyi Kone in Yangon's Insein Township. Witnesses say plainclothes soldiers detained the monk while he was returning from a friend's house. Friends of Sayadaw Pyinnya Zawta have been unable to contact him since the arrest. He had recently returned to Myanmar on November 5 at the invitation of followers for a monastery construction ceremony in Nwe Kway village, Mingalardon Township. A veteran of the 1996 student movement and protests against the military regime, Sayadaw previously served time in Insein and Tharyawaddy prisons.

Follow us on



@mohingamatters



@mohingamatters



@mattersmohinga