

Crack down on call scam gangs creates serious consequences for locals



In order to crack down on call scam gangs and human trafficking along the Thai – Burma border, the Thai government has cut off the distribution of electricity. The cut affects five locations along the border and authorities have, without exceptions, banned the transportation of gasoline beginning at 9 am on February 5th, 2025.

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MILITARY COUP IN BURMA IS NOT JUST A DOMESTIC PROBLEM BUT INCREASINGLY A REGIONAL ONE

(Editorial for the Mon Forum February, 2025)

HURFOM has a long-standing history of documenting human rights violations in Mon, Karen and Tenasserim Regions in Southern Burma. This information is disseminated to the public via its website and social media platforms. HURFOM releases the Mon Forum on a monthly basis and issue No. 2, Vol. 10 was recently published.

HURFOM routinely reports on between 40 to 50 human rights violations each month. In January, 2025, there were more than 50 articles documenting human rights violations spread across 19 townships.

Burma's military coup is not a domestic problem but a regional one which has numerous negative impacts on neighboring countries. Illegal businesses and mass displacement followed by the coup is creating socio-economic problems for neighboring countries.

February 1st, 2025, marks 4 years since the infamous military coup took place. Burma remains unstable, and human rights violations are ongoing and worsening. This is most apparent with the military junta's efforts to conscript people into military service.

In the 4th year of the military coup, the junta is blocking young men from going abroad and forcing them to join the army. Many young men have fled to neighboring countries especially Thailand via illegal routes.

The rule of law is also getting weaker under the military council. Authorities are accepting bribes and there is widespread corruption throughout the country allowing illegal businesses to grow larger.

At least five major call scam gangs are operating along the Thai – Burma border. These illegal operations are linked to cross-border criminality including human trafficking, forced labor, torture and money laundering.

On January 29th, 2025, Thai police arrested 118 undocumented Burmese workers attempting entry via the "Sangkhlaburi" route which is connected to Three

Pagoda Pass, Kyarinnseiky Township, Karen State.

On January 31st, 2024, Thai police at the Thong Pha Pum security gate in Kanchanaburi Township arrested 169 undocumented Burmese migrant workers.

“Now, Thai police are conducting more and more arrests. In Burma, the junta is very strict on collecting conscripts and banned young men from leaving the country. So, many are attempting to enter Thailand via irregular routes. The brokers are manipulating the situation and demanding lots of money. But they’ll take no responsibility when their clients are arrested,” said a source who knows the matter.

According to the data collected, from January to October, 2024, 5,449 undocumented Burmese migrant workers entered Thailand via irregular routes.

HURFOM remains committed to documenting and disseminating human rights violations in the region, with the hope that this information will contribute to ending the impunity of the military junta, and can contribute to bringing about a genuine peace and federal democracy to Burma.

Editors’ Team

Human Rights Foundation of Monland

February, 2025



Crack down on call scam gangs creates serious consequences for locals



In order to crack down on call scam gangs and human trafficking along the Thai – Burma border, the Thai government has cut off the distribution of electricity. The cut affects five locations along the border and authorities have, without exceptions, banned the transportation of gasoline beginning at 9 am on February 5th, 2025.

The electricity blackout and gasoline ban has created serious consequences in Three Pagoda Pass Town, Kyarinnseiki Township, Karen State all of which are on the Thai – Burma border.

Shortage of drinking water

The lack of electricity has forced drinking water factories to cease operations leading to a shortage and a dramatic rise in the cost of drinking water throughout the towns.

Mya Pan – a local drinking water factory stopped their production and their prices rose significantly. A bottle of drinking water was priced at 10 Thai Baht before the blackout but now, local people must pay up to 25 Baht for a bottle



of drinking water. The cessation of the company’s operations has also led to a shortage.

“We have no electricity so we can’t operate our water pump. We have to buy water for our daily use,” said a Three Pagoda Pass resident.

High price and scarcity of gasoline

After experiencing a blackout for ten days in Three Pagoda Pass, the price of gasoline began to rise.

One liter of gasoline was priced at 35 Baht before the blackout but now, the price of the same amount of gasoline has risen to 60 Baht. Shortages are also now commonplace.



“At the moment, most of the gas stations in Three Pagoda Pass have put up a notice saying “no more gasoline to sell” and closed their operations,” said another resident.

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Mon national schools alongside the border

The students from the Mon national schools in Japanese Well and Kyan Taw villages which are under the control of the New Mon State Party and which are located on the Thai – Burma border have also suffered from a serious consequence of blackout by the Thai government.

“Now, we have no electricity so we have to go to the well to get water. The well is very far from our school. Instead of doing their studies, students have to spend all their time collecting water,” said a national school teacher.

The blackout has also created problems for students who are about to take their final exam.



“The final exam is about to come. But we don’t have electricity to print out the question papers. The children have to do their studies by candle light. They have to buy the candle with their pocket money,” said a schoolteacher from Japanese Well village.

The Mon national school in Japanese Well village has 150 students and the Mon national school in Kyan Taw village has 47 students.

The DKBA – Democratic Karen Benevolent Army which controls Three Pagoda Pass released a statement on February 9th, 2025 claiming they would try their best to get back electricity and gasoline from the Thai government.

Armed groups have also promised to crack down on call scam gangs and unlawful gambling centers, which are dominated by Chinese peoples in Three Pagoda Pass. The group issued an order urging Chinese citizens in Three Pagoda Pass Town to leave town no later than February 28th, 2025.



Junta's troops shoot and kill a local man who tried to escape arrest

On February 13th, 2025, the 96th Light Infantry Battalion attempted to arrest a local man at home in Ma Log Chaung village, Kyike Hto Township, Mon State.

The junta claimed 50-year-old U Kyaw Aung tried to run away and was shot and killed.

“U Aung Kyaw didn’t know why they came to arrest him. He did nothing wrong. He’s just a farmer. The junta’s troops just recklessly arrested and killed him. This type of incident occurs very frequently in Kyike Hto,” said a local source.

The junta took the dead body of U Aung Kyaw with them. Family members requested the body be returned, but the junta has ignored the request.

According to local people, the 96th Light Infantry Battalion has frequently launched indiscriminate artillery attacks despite there being no armed clashes in the area, and they often arbitrarily arrest villagers.

According to the report by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) as of February 13th, 2025, the junta has killed at least 6,278 civilians since the attempted coup began in February 2021.

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Landmine explosion kills one and injuries other four in Kyikemayaw

At about 2 pm on February 19th, 2025, five family members of migrant workers from Pauk Taw village, Kyikemayaw Township Mon State found a landmine on their way to the rubber plantation and picked up to their workplace.

The family members were afraid of informing about the landmine to the authorities and intended to destroy the landmine by themselves. Then, they hit the landmine with hammer and the landmine exploded. The explosion killed one of the family members and injured other four members.

“If they informed the junta about the landmine, they would be accused of having connection with the resistance forces. If they informed the resistance forces about the landmine, they would be accused of being military informants. So they didn’t tell anyone about the landmine and want to destroy it secretly. Then, they hit the landmine with hammer,” said a local villager.

The explosion killed 45-year-old man and injured two 43-year-old women and other two 20-year-old men.

“The deceased man was cremated today (on February 20th). Other injured family members have treated themselves at home. Currently, no one helps them,” said another villager.

Both military junta and resistance forces have been active around Pauk Taw village and the local villagers thought the landmine was planted by the military junta.

“The village is nearby the stream and the junta’s troops usually come to the village by boat. Some landmine dropped from the boat and sunk into the mud. The resistance forces rarely use landmine (in this area),” said a villager who lives nearby Pauk Taw village.

On January 11th, 2025, a couple stepped on landmine at the entrance road of Ma Yan Gone village, Kyikemayaw Township and the explosion killed the husband and injured the wife.

In January, 2025, the landmine explosion took place at least four times in the HURFOM’s project area and injured 12 innocent civilians.



Junta arrests 17 young men in Tenasserim and forces them to join army

On February 17th, 2025, the military junta has arrested 17 young men from Tenasserim Town, Myeik District, Tenasserim Division at night and forced them to join the military training for conscripts, local residents reported HURFOM.

The ward administrators and the junta's forces claimed they would check the "visitors' list" in Chaung Gyi and Chaung Ngae wards, Tenasserim Town but arrested young men during conducting the check.

"Those all arrested are native to Tenasserim. Some of them have been accused of dealing with drug. But most of them are innocent. The junta has recklessly arrested them," said a local man from Chaung Ngae ward.

The junta has accused six of the arrested of dealing with drug trade but the local residents have no idea with the arrest of other remaining young men.

Currently, the 17 arrested young men have been detained at the 557th light infantry battalion at the top of the Tenasserim Bridge in Out King village and the military has forced them to join the military training for conscripts, according to the sources close to the victims' families.

"When the families have made inquiries about them, (the junta replied) they have to join army. If they are convicted of drug crime, they must be transferred to the police station and face legal charges. But now, they all are detained at the military battalion," said the source.

The local residents told HURFOM it was the first time that a huge number of young men were arrested at once in Tenasserim Town after the approval of the legal procedures of the public conscription law.



“ When the families have made inquiries about them, (the junta replied) they have to join army. If they are convicted of drug crime, they must be transferred to the police station and face legal charges. But now, they all are detained at the military battalion ”

Junta arrests drug addicts and thieves: Forces them into military service

In Mudon Town, Mon State, ward Administrators and police controlled by the military junta have been arresting drug addicts and thieves and forcing them to become conscripts to earn extra money, local sources reported HURFOM.

“The arrest starts at 7 pm. There have been less and less young men in the town. So they target drug addicts and thieves and sell them as substitutes for conscripts,” said a local source from Mudon who wants to remain anonymous.

The arrested drug addicts and thieves who are substituted as conscripts are priced at up to 3.5 million MMK per person. The junta is also sending arrested addicts and thieves to military battalions in Kyikemayaw Township. “In Mudon, young men have to be cautious with their movements even in daylight. No one goes outside after 7 pm,” said a young man from Mudon.

On December 15th, 2024, a young man from Mudon who was returning from a festival was arrested by the 210th Light Infantry Battalion and forcefully collected as conscript.

The junta has been struggling to get enough conscripts, so they have forced village/ward Administrators to arrest young men and force them into conscription.

“The arrest starts at 7 pm. There have been less and less young men in the town. So they target drug addicts and thieves and sell them as substitutes for conscripts ”



Local authorities exploit weak rule of law and organize profit making gambling events

Since the attempted coup in 2021, the rule of law is getting weaker across Burma. This is equally evident in Mon State and Tenasserim Division. Local authorities are exploiting the situation by organizing gambling events in pagoda festivals, music and dance shows, traditional and spiritual events, all in order to extract profit for themselves.

These events occur daily in Mawlamyine, Mudon, Ye and Chaung Zone Townships, Mon State. The authorities have intentionally organized gambling events within the programs of festive events to make personal profits.

“There is no day without a festival in the Chaung Zone. If there is no festival in this village, other villages are organizing a festival. Every festive event has various gambling components.,” said a Chaung Zone resident.

The villages of Han Gam, Yin Dane, Yin Yell, Ka Byar Wa, Ka Byar Gyi and Ma Gyi in Northern Ye Township have organized a “traditional spiritual worship event” every year and the Kaw Zar based 31st Light Infantry Battalion granted permission to organize gambling events with these the traditional festivals.

Villagers told HURFOM that the military junta and the village Administrators are working together to organize gambling events in Lamine, Ah Sin and Zee Phyu Taung of Southern Ye Township.

“First, they organized a gambling event in Yin Yell for three days. But a Mon armed group forcefully closed down the event. Later, the local authority granted permission to organize other gambling events and more and more gambling events are re-emerging. The military junta has been collecting money from these events every day. They decide the amount each gambling event must pay them,” said a Ye resident.



Each festive event has hundreds of gambling events and each gambling event has to pay from 100,000 to 300,000 MMK to the military junta and the village Administrators. In Long Lone Township, Tenasserim Division, gambling events taking place in “traditional spiritual worship events” began in late 2024, local residents reported HURFOM.

“It is not only the junta, but the People’s Defense Forces have also allowed gambling events. As the gambling events need permission from them, there is a give and take,” said a local villager.

The Long Lone People’s Defense Force used to arrest and punish organizers of gambling events but that practice has changed.

Arbitrary arrests continue as acts of violence



Arbitrary Arrests

Arbitrary arrests remain an ongoing concern in targeted areas of HURFOM, especially as young men are abducted and made to serve in military training camps.

A 50-year-old barber from Bilin Township, Mon State, who was arrested by junta forces more than two months ago, died in detention, leaving his family devastated and searching for answers.

U Myint Naing, a barber from Taung Sone Village, Ba Yint Naung Ward, was arrested on November 29, 2024, when junta troops raided his barbershop and took him away without explanation. Since then, his family had no information about his whereabouts or condition. By January 31, 2025, after more than two months of detention, reports surfaced that U Myint Naing had died while under interrogation.

“There was no word about him at all. Now, we are hearing that he died in custody,” said a source close to the family.

After his arrest, his family desperately searched for him, going to the local police station, where they were told junta troops had taken him away. However, they were given no further information about his condition or location.

Before the coup, U Myint Naing was involved in charity work and dedicated his time to community service. After the coup, he became a barber. His family and residents still do not know why he was arrested or what happened to him in detention.

The lack of transparency surrounding his death has raised serious concerns about the junta's continued use of arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and torture in detention centers across Burma.

Three women from Thar Yet Chaung Township were also arrested by junta soldiers and plainclothes police while shopping in Dawei.

The incident occurred on the morning of February 4, near the well-known A Hla Thit shopping center in downtown Dawei, near the city's central police station.

The three women had been returning from a wedding ceremony when junta soldiers, accompanied by plainclothes police, arrived in a civilian vehicle and detained them.

The arrested women, identified as Ma Zin Mar Soe, Ma Mee Ei, and Ma Phyu Zin Phyo, are all between 20 and 25 years old and from Yan Taung village in Thar Yet Chaung Township.

“The arrest was carried out by plainclothes police and soldiers using a civilian vehicle,” a resident from Thar Yet Chaung said. Their two motorcycles were also confiscated during the arrest.

Following their detention, the women were initially taken to the Dawei District Police Station before being transferred to the Dawei City Police Station.

This incident is part of a disturbing pattern of arrests in the region. In January alone, junta forces arrested over 100 civilians, including children and pregnant women. Such actions continue to create fear and insecurity among the local population as residents struggle to cope with the worsening repression.

In another case of unlawful arrests, junta forces raided a slaughterhouse in Tat Pyin Ward, Myeik, Southern Tanintharyi Region. They arrested at least eight men, later sending them for military conscription, according to sources close to the detainees.

On February 2, at 8:30 PM, approximately 25 junta troops, accompanied by the ward administrator, entered the slaughterhouse under the pretense of conducting an inspection.

Around 20 male workers were checked for nearly 40 minutes before the troops accused 10 men of being involved in drug trafficking and arrested them. However, those familiar with the situation say the accusations were merely an excuse to recruit them into military service forcibly.

The arrested men were first taken to an Air Force base in Myeik for further screening. Later that night, they were transferred to the administrative office in Dawei Su Ward before being sent to the conscript recruitment and military training school in Shwe Duu village, Myeik Township. Two of the 10 detainees were later released—one was a family member of a police officer, and the other was a disabled man who was granted bail.

“They come up with different excuses to arrest men and send them off for conscription. The ward officials are leading these arrests,” said a resident of Myeik.

Since late last year, the junta has intensified security measures in Myeik, carrying out nighttime raids and arrests. Under the pretense of guest list inspections, junta troops frequently raid homes and detain people, adding to the growing fear and uncertainty among residents.

Youth are also being targeted in sweeping arrests. A 17-year-old boy was arrested by Mawrawaddy Naval Command in Kan Bauk Sub-Town, Yebyu Township, Dawei District, on February 6, and has yet to be released or heard from.

The teenager, Ko Hein, a resident of Taung Yin Inn village, Hpa Chaung village tract, was travelling by motorcycle with two friends to Gangaw village when they were stopped and interrogated by junta soldiers from Mawrawaddy Naval Command who were patrolling the area in a military truck.

The two friends were allowed to leave during the inspection, but the soldiers took Ko Hein away.

“We don’t know what they found on his phone during the questioning, but ever since he was taken, there has been no news at all. His family has been desperately searching for information about him, but so far, nothing,” said a source close to the family.

As of February, 12, the family still has no information on his whereabouts or detention conditions. They continue to seek answers but have not received a response from authorities.

Residents say that since the military coup, many people arrested by Mawrawaddy Naval Command in the Kan Bauk area have disappeared, with no trace of where they were

taken or whether they are still alive.

In 2024, the navy also arrested an older man from the area. His family did not know his whereabouts until they were suddenly contacted and ordered to retrieve his body after he had died in custody. Incidents like these have left families in a constant state of fear and uncertainty, not knowing if their loved ones are still alive or if they will ever see them again.

In addition, a father and daughter who were arrested by the junta's Infantry Battalion 106 in northern Ye Township, Mon State, have been missing for over two months, leaving their family deeply concerned for their safety.

On December 13, 2024, at 5 PM, junta troops arrested 54-year-old Ko Soe and his wife, Mi Wu, near Mokbanin village. The following day, on December 14, their 23-year-old daughter, Ma Thin Thin Soe, was also arrested at their home.

About two weeks later, Mi Wu was released, but according to a close family friend, Ko Soe and Ma Thin Thin Soe remain in detention, with no direct contact allowed.

The arrests were made under accusations of supporting the People's Defense Force (PDF), and junta troops also raided and searched their home. "Ma Thin Thin Soe is currently detained at Infantry Battalion 588, while Ko Soe is being held at a military base in Mawlamyine. On the day of their arrests, all three family members were subjected to severe beatings, scalded with hot water, and left under the sun as a form of torture," said a close friend of the family.

There are reports that the father and daughter are being prepared for prosecution under the Anti-Terrorism Act, but no official confirmation has been made.

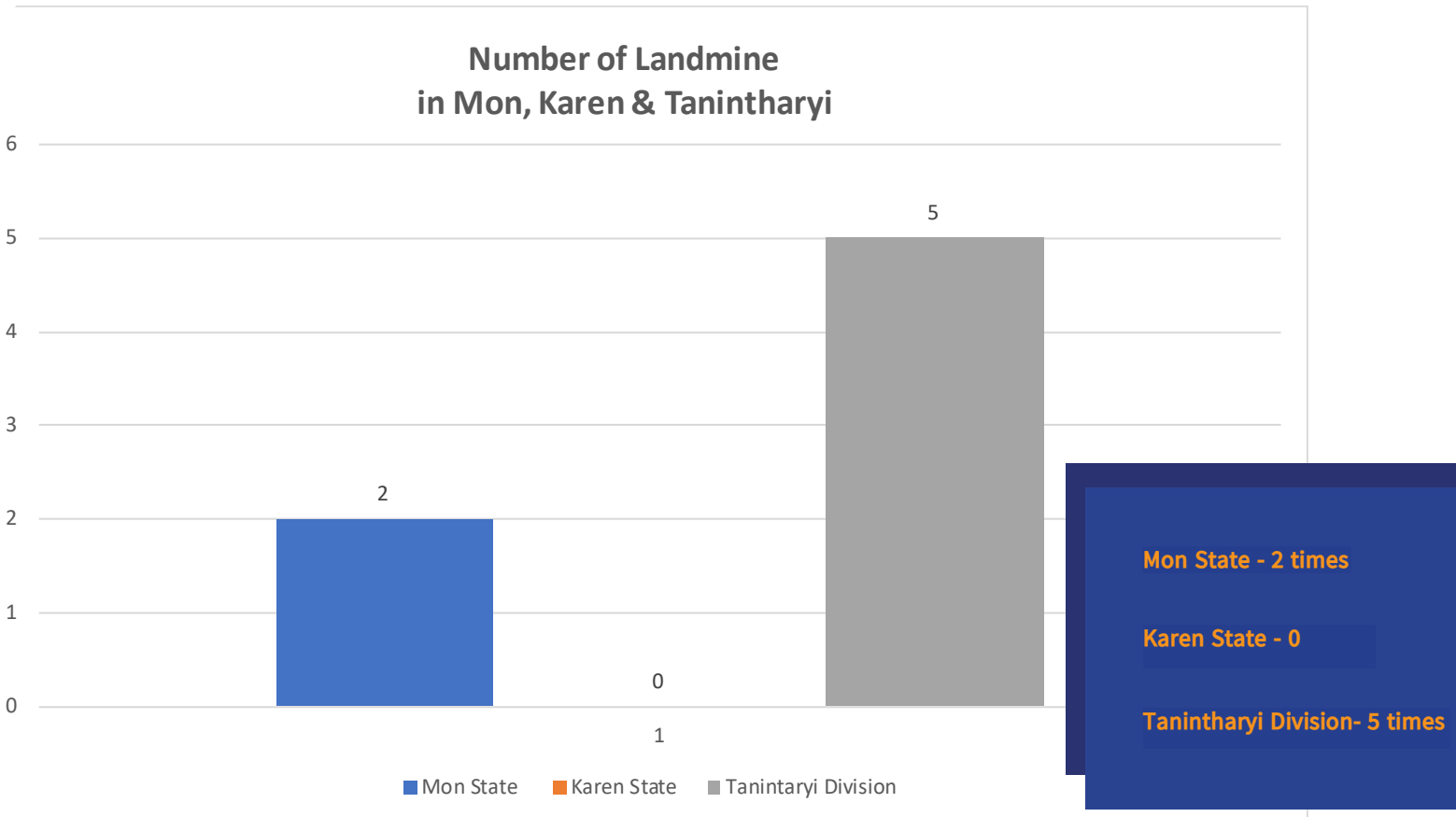
According to sources, their arrests were linked to a financial dispute rather than political involvement. Ko Soe's son had borrowed 20 million kyats from a woman close to the commander of Infantry Battalion 106 but failed to pay the daily interest. The woman then allegedly accused the family of supporting the PDF, leading to their arrest.

Despite these allegations, Ko Soe's family has no known political ties. They are businesspeople involved in betel nut trading, plantation work, and rubber plant sales.

As of January 2025, the military junta has arrested over 50 people across Mon State. Throughout December 2024, the junta reportedly arrested 17 locals in Ye Township, 11 of whom were later released.

NUMBER OF LANDMINE EXPLOSIONS, INJURIES, AND FATALITIES IN MON STATE, KAREN STATE, AND TANINTHARYI REGION

January & February 2025



Male- 6(4 injured/ 2 Killed) , Female – 6 (5 injured, 1 killed), Child - 1 injured

LIST OF CASUALTIES AND INJURIES CAUSED BY ARTILLERY SHELLING

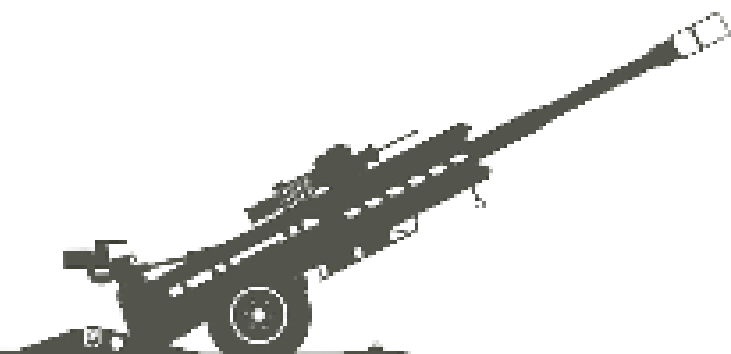
January & February 2025



Total injured – 21, Female- 11, Male- 5 and Child – 5

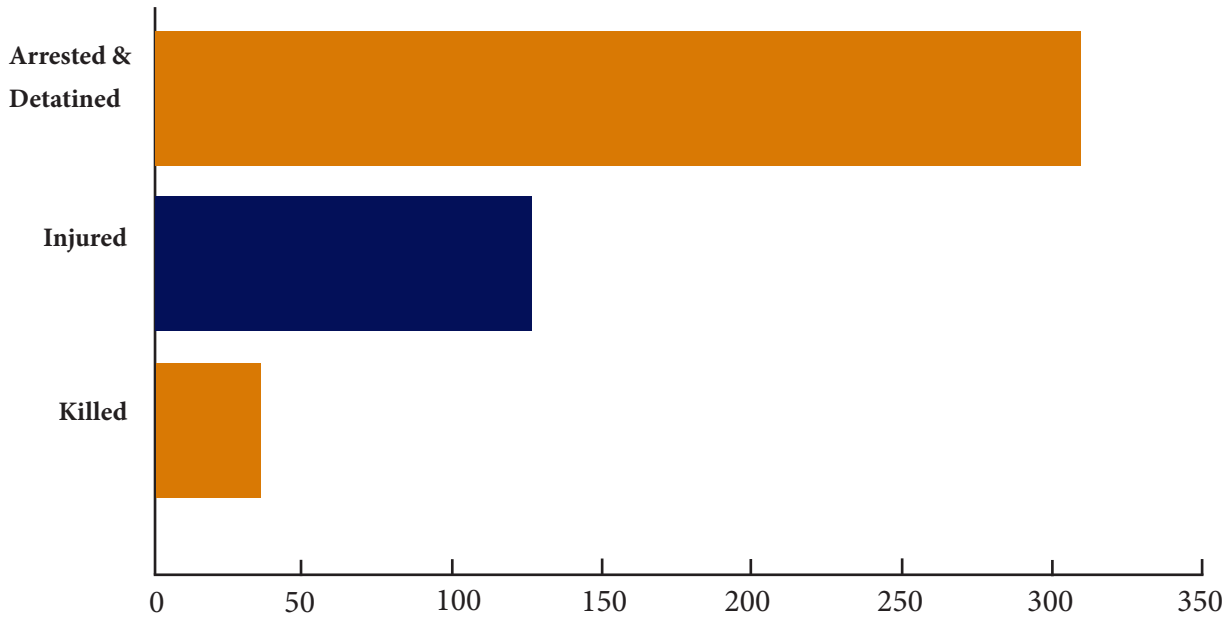


Total Killed – 8, Female- 6, Male- 2 and Child – 0



SCALED UP HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

HURFOM fieldworkers continue to take great risks to document the human rights violations being perpetrated in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region. By the end of February 2025, HURFOM recorded at least 182 people arrested, 135 detained, 125 injured, and 38 killed across all target areas.

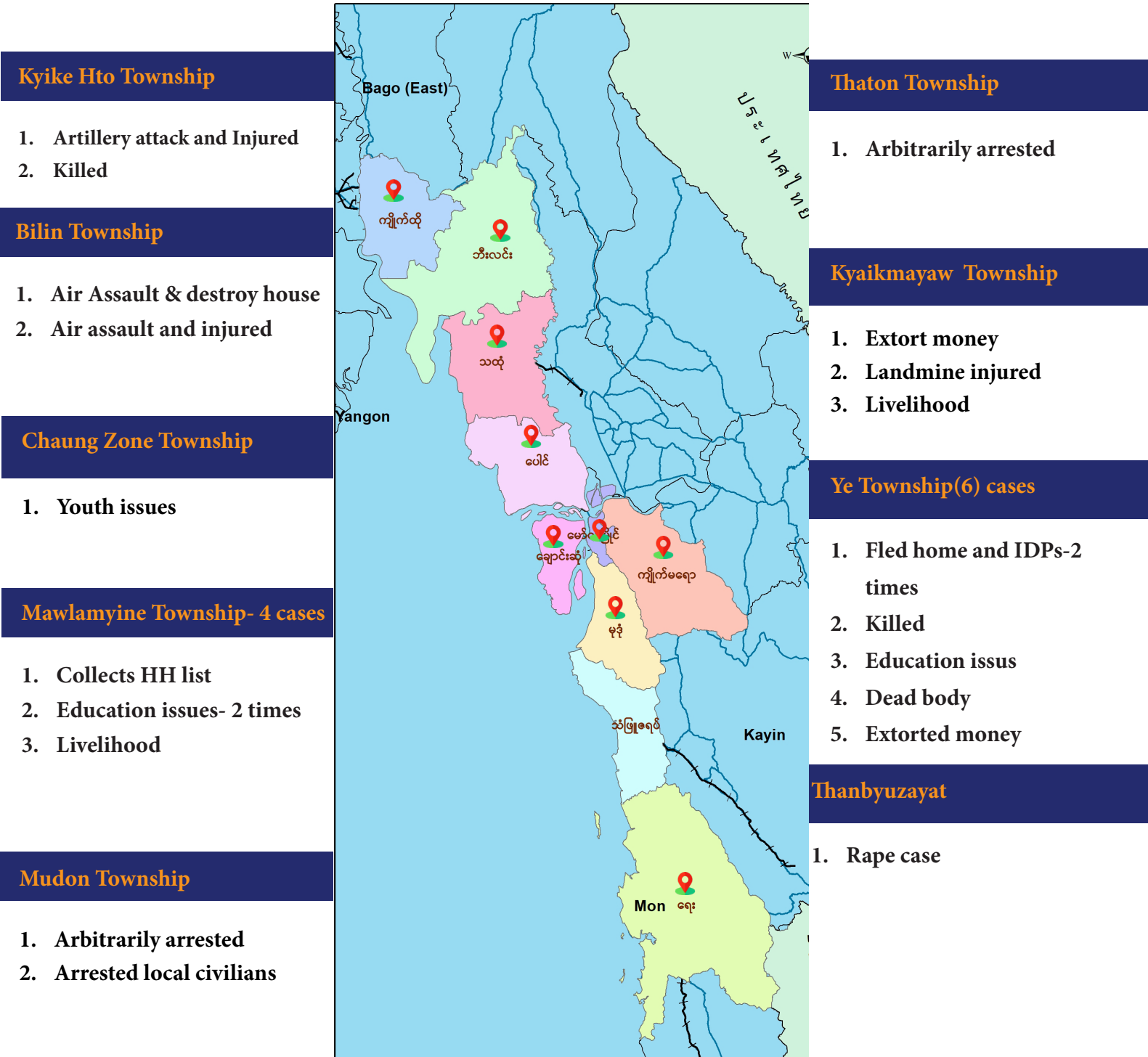


2+

Pro-Democracy Protesters, Politicians & Activists
Sentenced by the Junta

Human Rights Violation Data Records in Mon State

February 2025

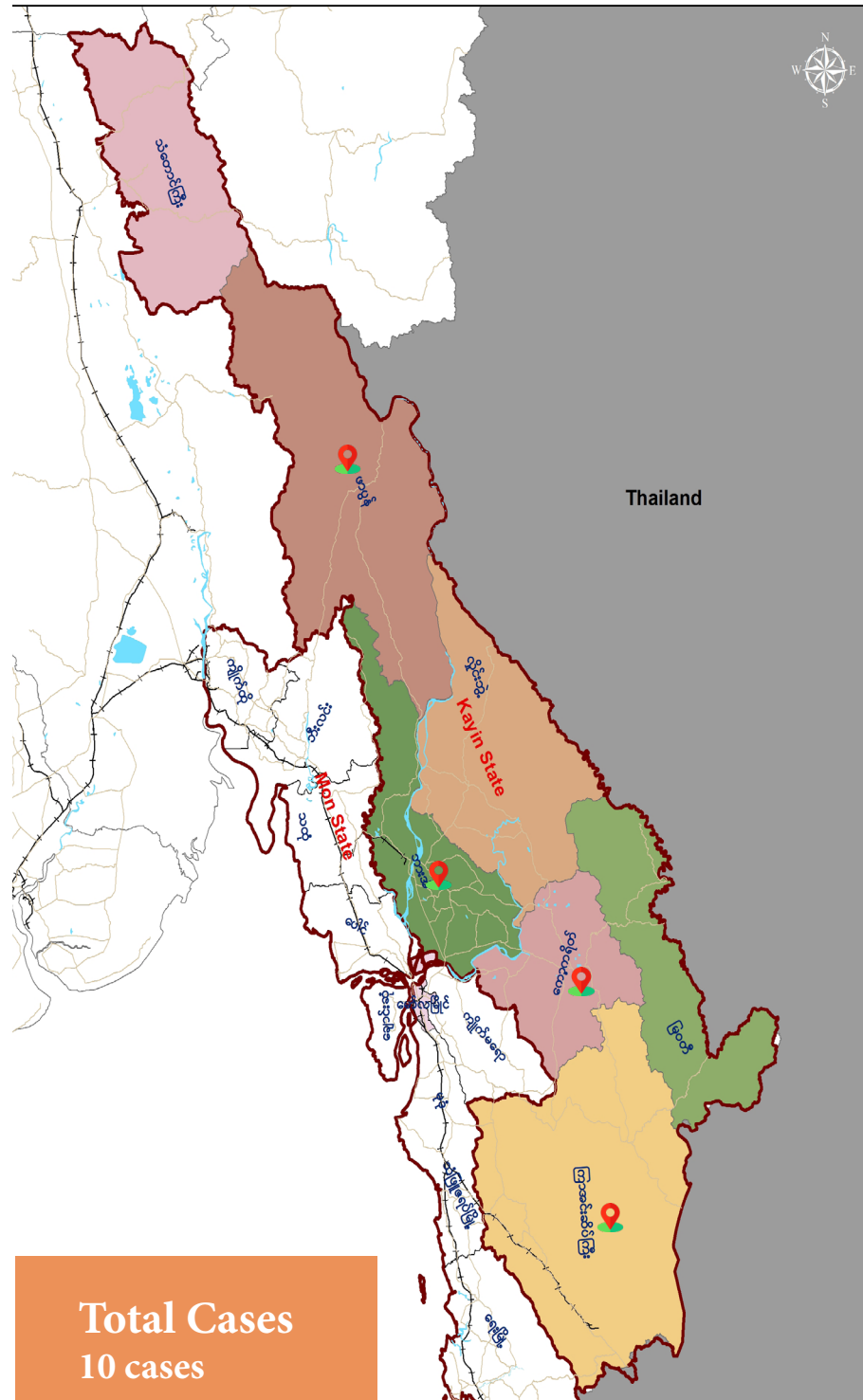


Total Cases in Mon State - 22 Cases

Human Rights Violation Data Records in Karen State

February 2025

Karen State



Kaw Ka Rate Township

1. Artillery attack and killed
2. Worry of armed clashes
3. Artillery Attack and injured

Kyarinnseiky Township

1. Burn down house
2. Arrested local civilians
3. Air assaults and burns house
4. Air assault injured

Hpa-An Township

1. Fled home & IDPs

Three Pagoda Pass Town

1. Livelihood

Phar Pon Township

1. Air Strike and Fled home



Human Rights Violation Data Records in Tanintharyi Division

February 2025

Yephyu Township

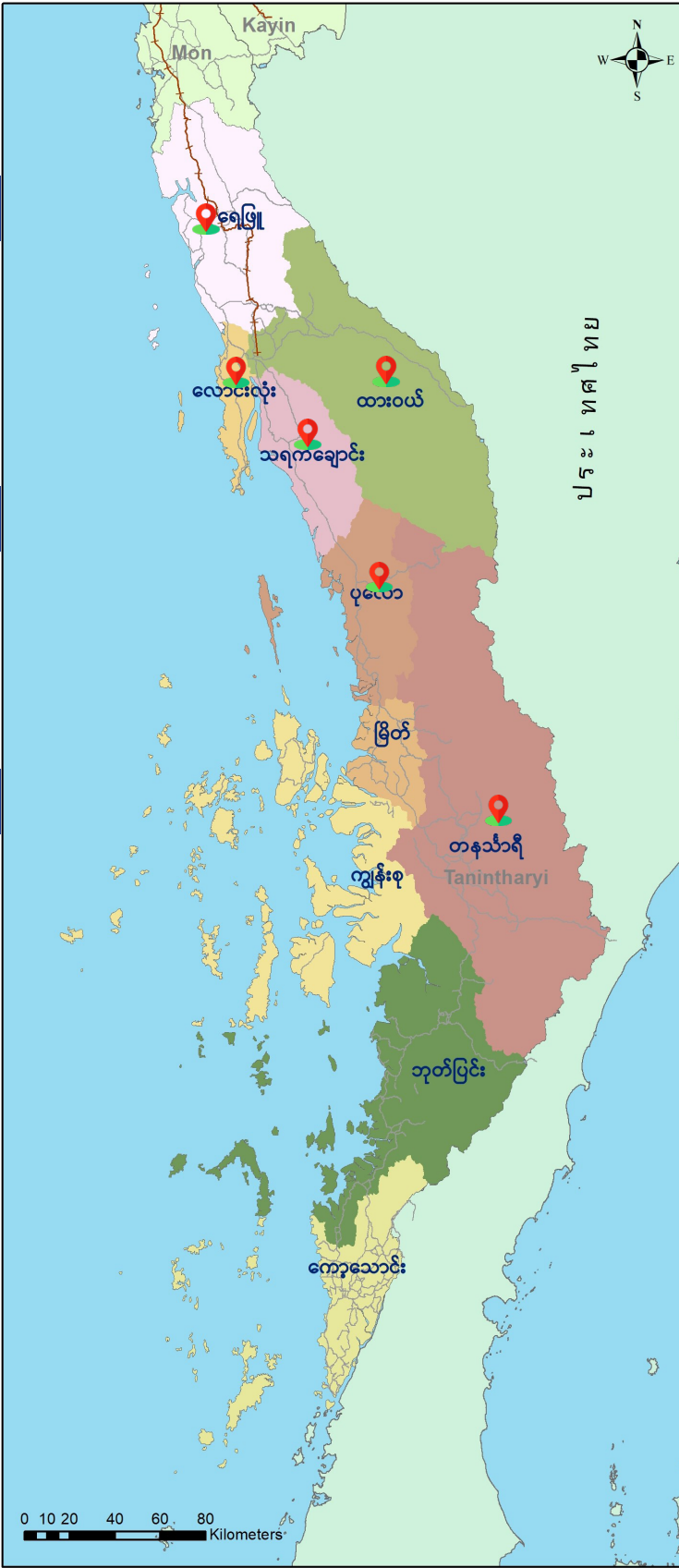
1. Arrested local's civilians
2. Artillery attack and killed

Lon Long Township

1. Property of Right
2. Arrested local civilians

Tha Yet Chaung

1. Artillery attack and killed
2. Burn down house



Dawei Township-3cases

1. Landmine and injure- 2 times
2. Arrested local civilians

Pulaw

1. Artillery Attack and injured

Tenasserim Township

1. Health issues
2. arbitrarily arrested
3. Shot and arrested
4. Air assaults and burns house

Total Cases - 14

Human Rights Violation Data Records in Mon State, Karen State, and Tanintharyi Region by the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) February 2025

Number of IDPs, Killed and Injured

Mon State



IDPs -28,000



Killed -10



Injured - 33

Karen State



IDPs -40,000



Killed -11



Injured -37

Tanintharyi Region



IDPs -57,000



Killed -17



Injured -55

INFORMATION ON HURFOM AND INVITATION FOR FEEDBACKS FROM READER

Dears Readers,

Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) was founded in 1995, by a group of young Mon people. The main objectives of HURFOM are:

- Monitoring the human rights situation in Mon territory and other areas in southern Burma.
- Protecting and promoting internationally recognized human rights in Burma.

In order to implement these objectives, HURFOM produces the monthly “Mon Forum” newsletters. If publication is delayed it is because we are waiting to confirm information, and it comes with our heartfelt apologies.

We encourage you to write to us if you have feedback or if you know someone who you think would you like to receive the newsletter.

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With regards,

Director

Human Rights Foundation of Monland



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OF MONLAND (HURFOM)**
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