

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

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

April
2024



Arbitrary Arrests on the Rise in Southeastern Burma as the Military Junta Targets Opposition Forces

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The Burma Army has continued to lose momentum, support and gains on the battlefield and beyond. The war against the people it once thought it could win has been spurred into question as the people make it increasingly clear that there is no place for authoritarian rulers in the future of the country being rebuilt.

Local organizations and their documentation efforts have been vital to ensuring the gains on the ground in Burma. Despite the presence of international human rights organizations and the United Nations, they need more access to areas that local groups are fully equipped to reach due to their decades of experience responding to emergencies. As stated in a new paper titled [***“From Humanitarian Resistance to Resilience: Nation-building in Active Conflict,”***](#) the authors correctly state that *“local organizations and administrative bodies are doing much more with less.”*

The localization of aid is critical to ensuring that emergency responses are rooted in maintaining the integrity of the beneficiaries. In target areas of the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), including Mon State, Karen State and the Tanintharyi region, fieldworkers face growing threats.

Yet, they remain steadfast and committed to documenting the evidence committed by the Burma Army to ensure accountability and justice for survivors.

As such, the international community must change its strategy and approach to Burma. The junta’s fall is inevitable as the opposition movement spearheads efforts to take back the country long at the helm of power-hungry rulers who acted in self-serving, profit-driven interests.

The rise of pro-democracy forces is an invitation for engagement to those seeking to see Burma transition peacefully into a federal nation. There must also be protection for the dozens who are repeatedly targeted every month by the junta for showing support for the People’s Revolution, either through social media posts, fundraising efforts, or even suspected allegiances.

On March 27th and 28th, the junta arrested a man and a woman from Kyar Inn village in Mon State for allegedly supporting the People’s Defense Forces (PDFs). A resident of Kha Shun Shan village, Nay Win Tun, was interrogated, and it was found that the couriers were communicating through Viber groups, and financing PDF via Wave and Kpay.

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On March 28, Ma Chit Su Htwe from Mawlamyine, was also abducted and questioned. The messages of financial support on Telegram were found on the Viber group chat, as claimed by the military press release.

Nay Win Tun and Ma Chit Su Htwe were charged with the Penal Code 45/2024 under Section 50(j)/52(a) of the Anti-Terrorism Act, and the junta carried out an investigation.

“Civilians living in the neighbourhood are being arrested continuously. The junta abducts people and covers their heads with a hood. I don’t know why they were arrested,” said a resident of Mawlamyine.

In Mawlamyine, the military forces conduct strict daily and night checks. Family members of disappeared victims are threatened not to share information about their abductions or risk the well-being of their loved ones in junta custody.

Due to increased security measures by troops in Mawlamyine, more people have been arrested. The troops are conducting inspections and patrols using military vehicles around critical areas such as the Mawlamyine city entrance intersection, government offices, and major roads, including Ngan Tay, Oak Phoe, Than Lwin Road, Taung Por Tan Road, Myain Thayar, and Taung Wain.

The thorough inspections cover cars, motorcycles, and individuals from morning to evening. The focus of these checks is primarily on young people and men. There have also been reports of individuals wearing civilian clothes observing the inspections from a distance. The identities of those arrested are still under investigation.

Motorcyclists carrying two or three passengers are subjected to detailed interrogations lasting over an hour, with their phones also being scrutinized. Some areas within the city are restricted, with roads frequently blocked. Junta police are also monitoring Taung Wain and Taung Paw Road.

These intensified security measures have led to the arrest of at least eight individuals, including women, who have been involved in writing and sharing news about the revolution or supporting revolutionary forces. Some of these detainees are facing prosecution under sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

In response to the rise in arbitrary arrests and surveillance, the New Rehmonnya Federated Force (NRFF) organized a protest against the military dictatorship on March 29th with the slogan *“No to Military Slavery. We must Stand in Resilience and Unity.”* The purpose of the protest was to challenge the failed coup and its corrupt

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administration. The NRFF spokesperson, Banyar Mehm, expressed that the organizers and participants wanted to expose the military's weakening grip on power and challenge its authority.

The NRFF's statement also highlighted the junta's arbitrary arrests and killings of youth over the past three years and the recent artillery attacks on Mon villages in Kyainnseikyi Township, Karen, which resulted in over 350 homes set on fire. The statement emphasized that these actions were an explicit intimidation of the Mon people by the military.

Mawlamyine has seen growing security measures, including CCTV cameras installed by junta-backed technology companies. Despite this, the NRFF managed to organize the protest to combine street demonstrations with military tactics, highlighting the need for such efforts due to the tightened security in the city.

All youth were encouraged to participate in the revolution. The NRFF campaigned on Mon National Day last month with the slogan *"Only Through Revolution Will We Gain Freedom,"* engaging the Mon youth communities in their strikes.

Arbitrary arrests are also on the rise in Dawei, where seven residents were arrested, including an administrator of

Kyauk Shup village, Yebyu. On March 29th, five men and one woman, including an administrator of Kyauk Shup village, were arrested and interrogated by the junta after two battalions of the Ka Lain Aung military junta were attacked at night.

The administrator was abducted while he was in his home by the junta troops, and some villagers were captured: *"Junta soldiers arrived immediately. They entered the house and tied his hands behind his back,"* said a witness.

Those close to the Kyauk Shup village administrator said that his role was well known as being involved in political affairs. He was democratically elected in the National League for Democracy government and had been arrested by the junta previously in 2023. In February last year, the military arrested 33 civilians from Yebyu Township.

Worryingly, there also continues to be a rise in the cases of political prisoners killed in military custody. According to prison sources from the Dawei Political Prisoners Network, political prisoners Ko Minn Thu and Ko Win Thiha were taken from their cells, tortured, and ultimately executed. Military intelligence members disposed of their bodies.

Accused of communicating with the People's Defense Forces (PDFs) from within

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the prison, they were taken out of their cells on the evening of March 17th with black hoods placed over their heads. Ko Minn Thu, a 25-year-old Islamic lecturer with poor health in prison, was serving a 10-year sentence for a terrorism charge and was under investigation for three additional charges. Another victim, Ko Win Thiha, was serving a 7-year sentence for a terrorism charge.

The prison authorities attempted to cover up their deaths by saying they were shot while trying to escape during an interrogation. It is unclear when Ko Minn Thu and Ko Win Thiha were executed, and their families have been unable to recover their bodies or further investigate the matter.

A New York Times article [published](#) this month included documentation from HURFOM on several cases showing evidence of the degrading treatment of political prisoners who are explicitly targeted by the junta with regular beatings and increasing cases of deaths behind bars:

“So much of this ill treatment happens in the interrogation centers even before they arrive at the prisons,” said Nai Aue Mon, the program director for HURFOM.

Based on our findings, political prisoners who are Muslim and religious instructors

are directly targeted. Many of these victims face religious persecution in prison and military training camps.

Women are also facing gender discrimination within the various jails. Prisoners in the women’s section of Dawei Prison are suffering due to the heat and overcrowding. The prison houses over 140 inmates, with only three rooms designated for resting. The current number of inmates far exceeds the available space.

“It is not possible to sleep properly at night. You have to sleep with your arms overlapping others. We can only sleep side by side, with our legs curled up. The current weather conditions are causing us a lot of difficulties,” said an anonymous source.

A former prison staff member stated that the women’s section is designed to accommodate around 80 inmates, but currently, it is nearly double that number. Southeast Asia is at the peak of its high season with scorching temperatures.

The heat and cramped conditions at night are causing inmates to sweat excessively, leading to dizziness, heat rash, itching, and even breathing difficulties, especially among older inmates.

“Many are not feeling well. The heat and overcrowding have made the situation

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completely unbearable,” said an inmate’s family member.

The women’s section of Dawei Prison is surrounded by high brick walls, resulting in poor ventilation. A local doctor in Dawei stated that in such weather conditions, the air quality inside the rooms deteriorates when people are crowded together, increasing the likelihood of heat-related illnesses.

“In the long run, excessive sweating, dehydration, and loss of electrolytes can lead to vomiting, dizziness, muscle cramps, and even rapid heart rate and fainting,” said the doctor.

Older individuals are particularly at risk as they cannot regulate their body temperature as quickly as younger people, leading to more severe conditions such as kidney damage and heart muscle damage, according to health physicians who spoke to HURFOM.

According to former prisoners, inmates at Dawei Prison are allowed to bathe once a day, but each person is only permitted to use 20 bowls of water.

Out of the over 140 female inmates currently in the female ward, approximately 75 are either serving sentences or are political prisoners awaiting trial, as reported by former

political prisoners. Among the political prisoners, at least six, require regular medical care at external hospitals.

Prison authorities have reportedly imposed stricter restrictions on political prisoners and inmates requiring medical treatment at external hospitals than on other inmates, according to a Dawei Prison nurse who participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). There are approximately 400 political prisoners in Dawei prison, including a total inmate population of over 1,200.

One of the main reasons civilians are being unjustly arrested and detained is for their support of the pro-democracy movement. On April 4th, it was reported that U Zin Min Oo had been raising funds on social media to support the People’s Defence Forces and provided financial assistance through the Kpay platform.

Similarly, Ma Cho Cho Khaing is accused of providing financial support through the Wave Pay service. The junta alleges that both individuals have been actively collecting donations on social media.

The use of Section 50(j) of the Anti-Terrorism Act has had a significant impact on Burmese people since the coup. Many have been arrested, detained, and faced severe penalties, including lengthy prison sentences, for activities that the junta

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deems supportive of opposition forces. This has created a climate of fear and repression, severely limiting freedom of expression and association in the Mon State.

Former politicians have not been exempted or spared any amnesty, as the junta targets everyone who opposes their volatile and illegitimate rule. Deputy Speaker of the Mon State Parliament, Dr. Aung Naing Oo, who has been actively assisting civilians affected by conflict in Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, was reportedly detained and is under investigation by the Mon State junta.

On April 10, at 9 AM, Dr. Aung Naing Oo left his home by car to assist the remaining IDPs in Koh That and Koh Zwe, Kyaikmayaw Township villages. Shortly after, he and the group he was travelling with were arrested by military troops at the Ataran Bridge near the Mawlamyine Industrial Zone.

Dr. Aung Naing Oo, who was delivering necessary supplies and food, was arrested by the military on accusations of supporting revolutionary groups. After the attempted military coup on February 1, 2021, Dr. Aung Naing Oo resigned from his position in the central executive committee of the Mon Unity Party (MUP), which had aligned with the junta. Since then, he has been actively supporting Mon

national education, aiding natural disaster-affected civilians and collaborating with Mon monks.

There are ongoing clashes in the Kyaikmayaw area, heavy artillery fire, and aerial attacks by the junta forces, which is why Dr. Aung Naing Oo has been actively helping those impacted by the violence to the best of his abilities. Despite the accusations, sources who spoke to HURFOM declared that he has no connections with revolutionary organizations.

Dr. Aung Naing Oo has won three consecutive elections in 2010, 2015, and 2020 as a representative of Chaungzone Township Constituency No. 1 in Mon State. He served as the Deputy Speaker of the Mon State Parliament during the National League for Democracy government. Since his arrest, he has not been released, and his whereabouts and the status of the junta-probed investigation are still unknown.

April also marked the traditional Burmese New Year festivities (Thingyan), which the people continue to boycott in a bold refusal to adhere to the junta's claims that the situation in the country is anything but typical. While stages were set up across Yangon, photos showed empty chairs without participants. Against the backdrop of yet another attempted staged event, the

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regime bombed villages in Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, in the town of Kyun-Gone. Approximately 20 homes were destroyed due to indiscriminate artillery.

The sudden and violent assault forced nearly the entire town to flee, abandoning their homes. To date, over 400 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have had to escape without being able to carry any possessions with them. Kyun-Gone Village is a village neighbouring Tarana, which was also attacked during the first two weeks of the month. Both are located in Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State.

On April 17, the military junta granted amnesty to 3,303 prisoners nationwide in a profoundly disingenuous attempt to fool the international community. As part of this amnesty, 204 inmates from various prison camps in Mon State were released to mark the first day of the New Year.

The Department of Revenue ordered these releases under the military junta's command. However, among those pardoned in Mon State, only four were political prisoners specifically held under Section 505 of the penal code.

The breakdown of released prisoners from Mon State includes 95 men and 25 women from Kyaikmayaw Central Prison, 33 men and 11 women from Mawlamyine Prison, four men from Thaton Market Prison,

eight men from Anga Bo Work Camp, three men from Zin Kyaik Work Camp, 11 men from Yin Nyein Work Camp, six men from Inn Pyoung Work Camp, and eight individuals (three men and five women) from Mu Pa Lin Stone Extraction Camp, totalling 204 individuals.

Additionally, 36 foreign prisoners, including 15 Sri Lankans and 13 Indonesians, were pardoned and subsequently deported.

The political prisoners released should have never been arrested in the first place. Thus, their release signifies nothing more than a flawed attempt to distort the realities on the ground and the true intentions of the junta - which are far outside the bounds of the pro-democracy activities of prisoners of conscience.

While the junta attempted to distort the political situation, its battalions continued to bombard civilians.

In Tanintharyi Township, villagers from the Eastern Village of Maw Tone report that the Artillery Regiment No. 306 fired heavy weapons indiscriminately at their villages during the Thingyan festival period, even though no fighting was taking place.

The shelling began at 6:30 PM on the eve of Thingyan, hitting several homes.

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“It was lucky that none of the villagers were hurt. The shells did not hit the areas where people were present,” said a young male local from the Western Maw Tone Village.

According to villagers, on the eve of Thingyan, on the day of Thingyan itself, and the day marking the ascent of Thingyan, sounds of heavy artillery fire from Artillery Regiment No. 306 were heard daily, and the troops continued to fire towards nearby villages. The shelling typically occurs in the early mornings, afternoons, and evenings, villagers added.

Moreover, on the morning of the ascent of Thingyan, the regiment also fired heavy artillery towards Mayin Gyi Village. In addition, on the eve of Thingyan and the subsequent day, supply routes from Myeik City to Baan Lamoot Village in Tanintharyi were attacked by heavy weapons from a military convoy, according to members of the resistance group.

“They are firing to clear the paths,” said a member of the resistance based in Tanintharyi.

In Tanintharyi Township this year, during the first three months alone, over 40 civilians have been injured, and no fewer than five people have died due to the impact and explosion of heavy artillery shells.

Further evidence of the regime’s loss of control in Burma is evident through the intensification of clashes in Karen and Mon States. In response, the junta in Mon State has been reinforcing security around Mawlamyine Airport and nearby areas with a significant troop presence.

“On April 8, between 6 AM and 9 AM, a large military transport aircraft, painted white and blue, took off and landed seven times at Mawlamyine Airport. Another Cargo military aircraft, painted in army colours, also took off and landed twice during the same time frame on the morning of April 8. Additionally, an ATR 72-600 aircraft took off from Mawlamyine Airport at around 9:48 AM and returned at approximately 10:19 AM. They might be rushing for transportation troops and their belongings back and forth from and to Mae Sot to here,” a freelance reporter from HURFOM reported from Mawlamyine.

These military activities are believed to be connected to a request made by Myanmar’s military headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw to the Thai Foreign Minister seeking permission to use Mae Sot Airport in Thailand for 72 hours.

The request mentioned Mae Sot—Yangon flights, but another resident who lives close to the airport said Mawlamyine Airport is also being utilized.

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Following these movements, the fate of Myawaddy, which was recently controlled by the KNLA, remains uncertain. Military analysts speculate that the junta from Naypyidaw headquarters might be planning to bomb and eradicate Myawaddy, as they have lost control of the city. Many locals have already started relocating to safer areas to escape the situation.

On the early morning of April 20th, intense fighting near the No. 2 Friendship Bridge in Myawaddy Township, Karen State, forced residents to flee. Amidst the chaos, a vehicle transporting an internally displaced family from downtown Myawaddy was tragically attacked. Two young girls in the car were killed, and both parents were injured in the gunfire.

The family was desperately trying to escape the severe fighting near the bridge when their car was struck. At that time, the junta was conducting air strikes in the area, contributing to the peril faced by civilians.

This incident underscores the difficult conditions for civilians caught in the crossfire between junta forces and joint Revolutionary forces. Recent reports have revealed multiple civilian casualties due to air bombings and artillery fire. A local attempting to escape the violence remarked:

“The junta’s airstrikes are hitting civilians, and it’s impossible to enter the areas to determine the full extent of the casualties. There are reports of homes burning and bodies in the Ward No. 5 area, but access is currently blocked.”

As the conflict continues, residents near the No. 1 Friendship Bridge in Myawaddy are unable to cross into Mae Sot, leaving hundreds trapped on the Myawaddy side of the border. Many people are stranded along the banks of the Thaung Yin River, seeking refuge from the ongoing violence. The situation remains critical, with the local population facing severe risks.

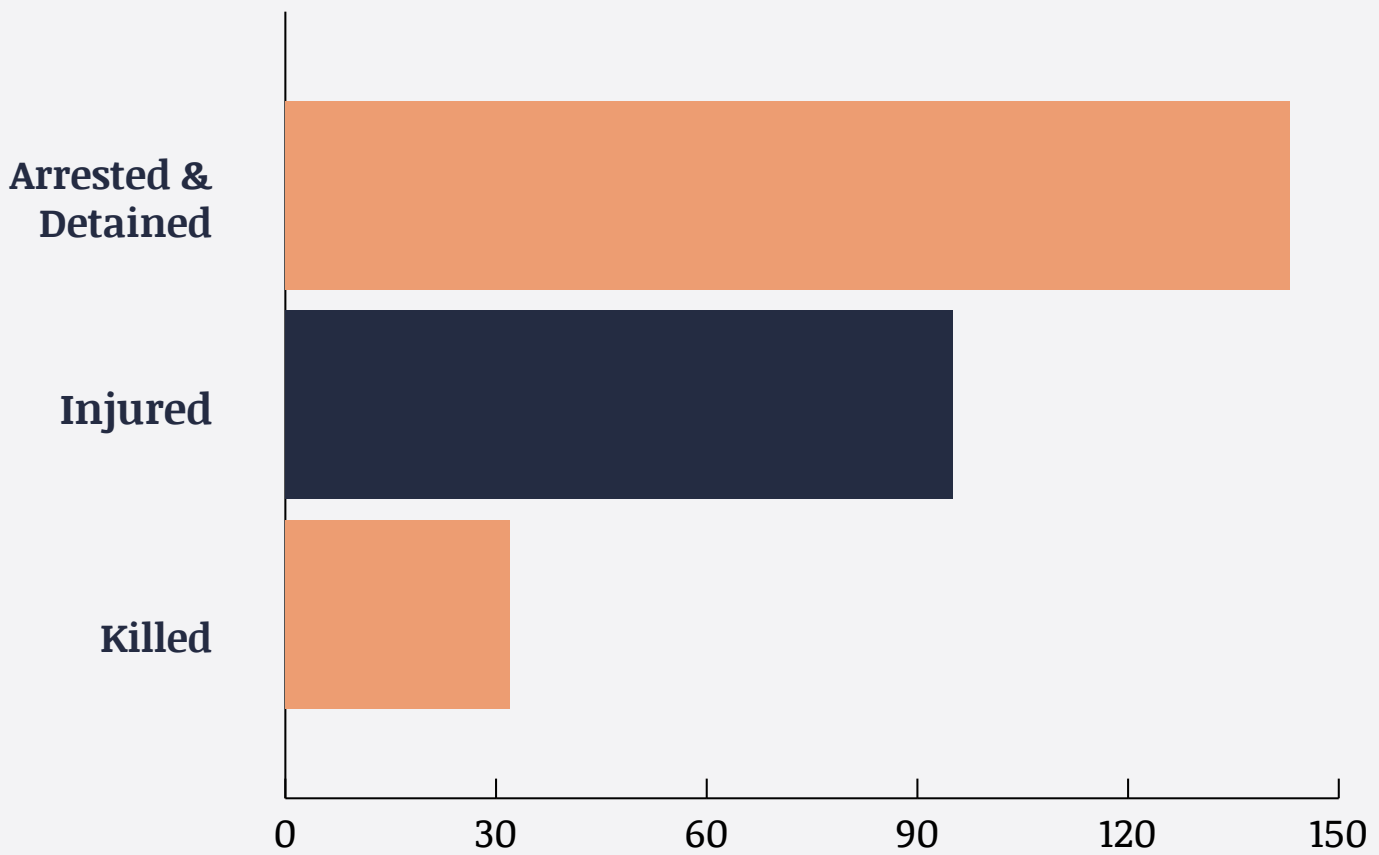
The military junta’s desperation is abundantly clear. Morale is low, and the enactment of forced conscription further proves that the military is trying to compensate for its losses.

The people’s power has prevailed and will continue to do so. The international community must recognize the immense sacrifices that have contributed to the historic and significant gains, all while defying gender norms and expectations that analysts once thought impossible in the days that followed that attempted coup. History is being made in Burma.

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 April 2024, HURFOM recorded at least 78 people arrested, 65 detained, 95 injured, and 32 killed across all target areas.

Civilians Arrested, Injured & Killed in April 2024 in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region



3+

Pro-Democracy Protesters & Activists
Sentenced by the Junta

12

PROTESTS ACROSS TARGET
AREAS IN APRIL 2024

6

TANINTHARYI
REGION

5

MON STATE

1

KAREN STATE



94,000+

CIVILIANS DISPLACED ACROSS TARGET AREAS

CIVILIANS TARGETED IN MON, KAREN STATE
& THE TANINTHARYI REGION

3+

PROTESTERS
SENTENCED IN
JUNTA COURTS

3+

ACTIVISTS
SENTENCED IN
JUNTA COURTS

11+

ENFORCED
DISAPPEARANCES
BY THE MILITARY

30+

VILLAGERS WERE CAPTURED AND USED AS
HUMAN SHIELDS IN ALL TARGET AREAS.

580+

DAMAGED HOMES



75+

HOMES RAIDED

67+

MOTORCYCLES
CONFISCATED BY
THE JUNTA

4+

CASES OF LANDMINES
IN LOCAL AREAS

35+

VEHICLES
CONFISCATED BY
THE JUNTA

Since the enforcement of the flawed Conscription Law, at least **20** young individuals in April were detained in the townships of Mudon and Thanbyuzayat in Mon State as well as **12** arbitrary arrests in Mawlamyine.

140+

Bombs launched at civilians, despite there being no active fighting. In April, the military Junta attacked at least **40 times** in Mon and Karen States, using fighter jets and helicopters.



KAREN STATE

21,000+ Newly Displaced

20 Injured, 8 Killed



Mon State



Tanintharyi Region

The junta has been intensively bombing Thingan Nyi Naung and its nearby areas in Myawaddy Township, Karen State.

Reports from local news sources indicate that on April 3rd and 4th, as well as March 28 and March 31, the junta's Y-12 bombers targeted the villages of Wave Shan and Zayat Phyu Kone near Thingan Nyi Naung. The area also experienced heavy artillery fire.

The conflict between the junta and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) revolutionary joint forces began to intensify again on March 7 and has persisted for almost a month.

The KNLA and its allies captured Light Infantry Battalion LIB No. 355 on March 9. However, the Karen National Union (KNU) reported that from March 15 to 25, there was intense fighting to retake the camp, resulting in over 20 junta soldiers killed and one casualty from the revolutionary forces.

The ongoing battles have caused significant damage to local villages, with many homes destroyed by artillery and airstrikes. Residents have been injured,

and the extent of the damage is still being assessed. Locals of Myawaddy reported continuous bombardment and destruction of homes in Thingan Nyi Naung.

The 6th Brigade of the KNU in Dooplaya District stated that many houses were burned down due to junta troops setting fires and dropping incendiary bombs from drones.

The KNLA forces are engaging in heavy battles with the junta near Thingan Nyi Naung and Wave Shan village, with intense fighting around junta convoys sent as reinforcements.

The junta troops have been accused of burning houses near Byuhar Kone to obstruct the revolutionary forces' counterattacks. During the prolonged conflict in Thingan Nyi Naung, the KNLA seized two headquarters of Light Infantry Battalions LIB No. 355 and No. 356 and continued to attack the remaining battalions and Byuhar Kone.

The violence has had a devastating impact on civilians, with reports of deaths and injuries.

Over 10,000 people have been forced to flee their homes. Villagers claim that the junta's artillery fire has destroyed nearly all houses in Thingan Nyi Naung and Wave Shan, leaving them in ashes.

Two residents of Kaw Gu and Naung Khit villages in Kawkareik Township, Karen were injured, and several homes were damaged when the junta's 81 Infantry Battalion launched artillery attacks. The incident occurred mid-April, just after 12:30 PM, with artillery shells exploding in and around both villages.

Local sources report that six artillery shells landed in Kaw Gu village and three in Naung Khit village, causing damage to homes and a monastery. Although the injuries to the villagers were not severe, the impact on the community was significant, with four homes in Naung Khit village sustaining damage.

The shelling appears to have been unrelated to any immediate fighting

near these villages. However, ongoing conflicts in nearby Kaw Bain village within Kawkareik Township in Karen State prompted junta troops to advance into Kyaikmayaw Township in Mon.

This military movement has been accompanied by almost daily, indiscriminate artillery and air attacks, posing ongoing risks to local populations.

Airstrikes on 23 April at 9 AM in Karen State injured a 48-year old local woman and led to the destruction of at least seven homes. There was no active armed clashes in the area. The junta dropped 12 bombs from a fighter jet.

Local communities are bracing for a challenging season ahead, with urgent calls for increased aid and a durable solution to their displacement.



MON STATE

12,000+ Newly Displaced

22 Injured, 7 Killed



Karen State



Tanintharyi Region

Violence in Mon State has included targeted attacks against health workers and first responders.

At 8 PM on March 27th, 2024, an ambulance struck a landmine and was shot at while travelling on the Yangon–Mawlamyine Highway Road near Ka Mar Sai village, Thaton Township, Mon State. The driver and a patient sustained injuries.

“We struck a landmine and then were shot. The driver and the patient were injured, but others were safe. The gunshots damaged the whole body of the ambulance,” said an official from the Social and Rescue Team

A few days later, indiscriminate violence also led to the death of a civilian. On March 30, at 3 PM, the military stationed in Than Ka Laung village shot and killed a Mon man, a 60-year-old from Than Ka Laung village, Kyaikmayaw Township.

A patrolling military junta column shot Nai Ka Rone while watering vegetable plants on his farm in the southern part of Than Ka Laung village:

“The soldiers are still in the village. More people are fleeing because they are also afraid of being killed or injured in the fighting,” said a resident.

When the military junta soldiers saw Nai Ka Rone and called out to him, he was scared because he did not understand Burmese and did not know what to say or do. In a careless response indicative of the junta’s disregard for life, he was shot and died on the spot.

Children are also being targeted in the violence prolonged by the junta. At least six civilians, including a child, were injured due to artillery weapons fired by the junta troops into the villages of Thaton Township, Mon State.

Between March 27th and 30th, the Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 9 of the junta attacked villages such as Hton Bo Lay, Chaung Sout, and Htot Kaw Kyoe villages in Thaton Township, and at least 13 artillery shells were launched.

A young boy, 13-year-old Saw Phyo Phyo, was shot dead, and 16-year-old Saw Nay Lin, 23-year-old Chaw Ta Khu, 56-year-

old U Maung Htwe, 54-year-old Naw Nor Re, and 57-year-old Tee Pan Sein were hit by artillery mortar shells and injured.

“The Burma Army launched artillery weapons without fighting. Now, those who are in the village have run away. Those who didn’t run are staying in bomb shelters. There is not a single day when weapons are not fired,” said a Hton Bo Lay village resident.

The attacks and impact on local people forced the residents of six villages, Hton Bo Lay, Hton Bo Gyi, and Chaung Sout, including Htot Kaw Kyoe, to leave their homes and flee to safe places.

Since the attempted coup, those living in Thaton Township continue to be targeted by airstrikes and arrested and used as human shields. In addition to arbitrary arrests and killings, they suffer from various human rights violations.

On March 23, Min Saw villagers, located in Belin Township, Mon State, were hit by an airstrike by the junta, which destroyed three Kaw Thulay Secondary Schools, two religious buildings, twelve civilian homes, and one civilian who was injured, confirmed by the KNU Thaton District.

The junta in Mon State has been aggressively committing more attacks on the Dhamma Tha Mon village using heavy artillery and air bombs from both helicopters and ground artillery.

The town and surrounding areas have suffered extensive damage, with most houses destroyed. During the first two weeks of the month, the conflict resulted in the burning of over 300 homes and the displacement of approximately 5,000 individuals.

The Burma Army also targeted Tarana village, a neighbouring village of Dhamma Tha village in Mon State, with severe bombing. The intensity of the assault was evident from the heavy explosions observed. As a result, the majority of villagers have left their homes. The extent of the damage and casualties is yet to be determined.

As the situation leaves civilian lives at increasing risk, the desire to reach safety has become more high risk. In a tragic incident on April 14th, in Than-galaung village, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, a Senior Buddhist monk was fatally shot by the junta forces.

Local witnesses report that the attack occurred in the early afternoon. The Senior Monk, identified as U Wara, was

travelling by car with a lay disciple from the village school after their meal when ambushed near the entrance to Tarana village. The soldiers were stationed at that location and opened fire on the vehicle as it approached.

A witness stated, *“The soldiers had taken up positions there. They were targeted. The monk and the disciple who was also in the car both died instantly.”*

This incident is part of a troubling pattern of violence in the region. The HURFOM field team will continue to investigate and report on this distressing event, as tensions and violence in the area show no signs of abating.

In Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, in the village of Kyun-Gone, approximately 20 homes have been destroyed due to indiscriminate artillery fire by the military junta.

The area continues to burn as of this report. The attack started around 11 AM on the second day of Thingyan, the Burmese New Year festival. The sudden and violent assault forced nearly the entire village to flee, abandoning their homes. To date, over 400 IDPs have had to escape without being able to carry any possessions with them.

Local reports suggest a pervasive atmosphere of fear in Mawlamyine, with residents concerned about the arbitrary phone checks and detention.

From January to April, at least 30 local inhabitants have been arrested in Mawlamyine, Mon State with the majority facing charges under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

There have been frequent and intense battles between the junta and the New Mon State Party (AD – Anti Military Dictatorship) in Kyikemayaw Township, Mon State, with junta’s troops stationed in monasteries, schools and houses.

Many of the displaced have found temporary shelter in local monasteries, relying heavily on the support of monks, local organizations, and private donors for basic necessities. However, the impending rainy season threatens to complicate their already precarious living conditions further.

Social workers on the ground highlight additional challenges: *“With time, our worry grows that donor support may dwindle, and we heavily depend on this aid for our survival. If the support decreases, our problems with food and shelter will become immediate and more severe,”* explained a social worker.



Tanintharyi region

14,000+ Newly Displaced

25 Injured, 10 Killed



Karen State



Mon State

In Yebyu Township, Phaung Taw village, junta soldiers and local administration members arrested a father and son at their home on the night of April 18. U Win Bo and his son, Ko Ye Thwe Naung, were taken into custody. The junta-backed Navy Personnel carried out the arrests, but the specific reasons for their detention remain unclear.

During the arrest, all mobile phones in their residence were confiscated. This incident follows a prior event in February this year, when three villagers, including the former village administrator, were detained by the Junta's Mawrawaddy Navy, based in western Yebyu Township. Of those arrested in February, only the former administrator has been released, while the other two remain in custody. The community is still seeking clarity on the motivations behind these arrests.

Due to escalating military operations by the junta forces, significant conflict incidents have led to widespread displacement in Thayet Chaung Township in Dawei. Local villagers from Sin Ku, Bote Kai, Kywe Zart, Sin Kyan, Laba, Pi-Tai, Pyin Phyu Gyi, and Pyi Phyu Thar, totalling approximately 2,000 households, have been forced to flee the instability in their areas.

These cases of forced displacement have surged in response to the junta's aggressive tactics, including a recent incident on April 22, where soldiers arrived in Sin Ku village by vehicle and proceeded to torch several homes, causing fires that spread to neighbouring houses.

In addition to the direct attacks, there have been ongoing encroachments along the Dawei-Myeik highway road, affecting the

previously mentioned villages and extending toward Pyin Phyu Gyi and Chauk Char villages with a force of about 30 Junta soldiers. On April 23, around 2 pm, there were nearly two hours of exchange of gunfire between junta troops and local revolutionary forces in the area between Sin Kyan and Kywe Zart villages.

This heightened military presence and the frequent clashes along the Dawei-Myeik highway have led to road closures lasting hours each time a skirmish occurs. The situation has prompted an exodus from eight villages, severely affecting the locals.

“A lot of IDPs are arriving. They flee with what little they can carry, often arriving without any food supplies. We feed them whatever we have,” said a woman who spoke to HURFOM.

A student from Sin Ku village involved in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) reported, *“The village is deserted; everyone has fled because of the junta’s troops.”*

As of April 22, the region, particularly the eastern part of Thayet Chaung, Dawei District, continues to experience intense battles between the military junta and revolutionary forces, exacerbating the challenges faced by internally displaced persons who struggle with acute shortages of food and secure shelter.

The Mawrawaddy Navy, operated by the military in western Yebyu Township, Dawei, has been launching indiscriminate artillery fire from their warship stationed at the upper reaches of the Zadee River near Zadee village. This reckless shelling has been ongoing, causing significant distress among the local farm workers, who have been compelled to abandon their farmlands and flee for safety.

From April 19 to 24, the area experienced a brief period of calm each morning, but the Junta Navy subsequently fired at least nine artillery mortar shells daily. A resident from Zadee village Yebyu reported that

the continuous bombardment was directly impacting their farmland, with shells exploding on impact.

The fallout from these artillery attacks has been immediate and poses a lingering danger. Unexploded ordnance has been found in the farms and surrounding villages, including Zadee, Htot Wa, Diek Ta Kaw, and Kyauk Hta Yan, endangering lives even after the shelling ceases.

Additionally, the violence has driven gardeners and other workers from areas around Kyat Mouk Taw Monastery and Phyu Net to flee. This incident marks the first instance of such sustained and indiscriminate artillery firing by a warship in this region.

Local sources have also reported that as of April 22, the military Junta has extended its presence to the western bank of the Yebyu River area, intensifying the tension and fear among the local population.

On 25 April, an elderly woman was tragically killed in Long Lone, Western Dawei when junta troops stationed in the area launched an attack. Soldiers from the Office of the Chief of Military Security Affairs in Long Lone fired approximately five artillery mortar shells.

There was no ongoing combat at the time.

The victim, 75-year-old Daw Khin Aye, was fatally struck by shrapnel from an artillery shell that landed in the courtyard of her home. In the same incident, the explosion injured another older man nearby.

Over the past three months, artillery strikes in Tanintharyi have resulted in injuries to more than 37 civilians and the deaths of at least five individuals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

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

APRIL 2024

