

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

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

DECEMBER
2023



SUMMARY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

Military Impunity Continues to Thrive as Increased Violence Shows No End of Attacks Perpetrated Against Civilians

DECEMBER 2023

Across the last twelve months, the human rights situation in Southeastern Burma and many parts of the country has remained unstable and uncertain. Every day, civilians are forced to make decisions that could impact their survival.

When conflict erupts, there is often no warning, and communities must take what little they can to seek shelter. In many scenarios, HURFOM has evidence which suggests that despite at times there being no active fighting, the junta does not hesitate to fire indiscriminately.

Scores of civilians have been killed and injured while going to work, to school or spending time with their loved ones. These patterns of targeted violence by the Burma Army are not new. Still, the increase in retaliatory abuses has been heightened as the junta is now closer than ever to defeat.

As noted by many rights groups, all of the attacks the junta perpetrates against civilians violate international rights, norms, principles and international laws. For many decades, the regime has evaded accountability and their behaviour on the battlefields and in local areas is indicative of their blatant disregard for civilian life and the rule of law - which domestically has been entirely de-legitimized by the junta's dictatorship.

Over the last year, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) has documented dozens of cases of torture, arbitrary arrest, abductions, sexual violence, indiscriminate firing, and more. Victims repeatedly expressed fear, uncertainty and a deep yearning for their lives post-coup.

Local service providers, including ethnic health organizations, civil society groups and ethnic revolution organizations, have worked to fill gaps in civilian protection, but the security situation continues to deteriorate.

Throughout November and December 2023, HURFOM noted a worrying increase in attacks by the junta in Mon State and the return of the 'four-cuts strategy.' The four-cuts strategy, designed to cut off food sources, funds, information and recruits, was created in the Karen state in the 1960s when the Myanmar Army started fighting the Communist Party and the Karen National Union (KNU).

It has been deployed repeatedly since in various military operations, including in Rakhine state in 2017 and is now being forcefully deployed in Mon state as one of the many tools used to demoralize communities supporting the resistance movement.

SUMMARY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

DECEMBER 2023

The military is also cutting off food and water supplies to people affected by conflict, shelling displacement camps and religious sites, and have targeted displaced people attempting to harvest rice from their villages. They have deliberately destroyed food stocks and medical relief supplies.

As further explored in an op-ed penned by the HURFOM Program Director this month:

“Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon state, has been the most affected by air strikes after the military coup. Since the second week of November, the People’s Defense Forces and the Karen armed joint forces began their military operation in the Kyaikmayaw, Kyainnseikyi, and Kawkareik areas in Brigade 6.

The junta has lost many of its bases in these locations. Since then, the military has scaled up their attacks by targeting civilians with aerial and ground bombardments, forcing them to seek refuge. Nearly 30,000 residents have been forced to flee as a result.

“The military is using the ‘four-cuts campaign’ against us. This is a scary fact,” a native of Kyaikmayaw Township and former member of the New Mon State Party (NMSPP) told HURFOM.

“They are oppressing and killing people during the operations. They cut the flow of information so that nearby townships would not know about the military activities and human rights violations taking place.”

The Burma Army has a long and brutal history of direct attacks on civilians. This speaks to their disregard for human life and, instead, act with their desire and ambition to be feared. Verbal and physical assaults taunt communities and threaten their humanity daily.

On 10 December 2023, with the theme of Consolidating and Sustaining Human Rights Culture into the Future. The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) launched a reactive report per the theme, **“Culture in the Crosshairs: How the Junta is Systematically Targeting Human Rights Culture with Military Impunity.”**

Our report analyzes the current human rights situation in Southeastern Burma and how quickly it is deteriorating, particularly in Mon State, Karen State and the Tanintharyi region. Viewed through a cultural lens, the report also exposes how the junta is targeting the culture of local people when they force them from their homes and destroy their sacred places of worship.

SUMMARY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

DECEMBER 2023

Despite all of the horrors that the people have gone through in Burma, their resilience and sense of community remain strong, and their spirits are unbroken.

HURFOM fieldworkers are actively responding to the plight of communities on the ground who desperately need urgent relief, including medicine and food.

The most vulnerable, notably women and children, are in a fragile situation where their overall well-being is at risk. HURFOM has repeatedly joined our communities in calling for local voices and solutions to be amplified as the junta's horrendous atrocity crimes continue to be perpetrated without consequences by the international community.

The junta has targeted wealthier families in recent weeks and has faced interrogations and violent robberies. At least eight local rich people were arrested, including four houses and shops that were sealed off in Thanbyuzayat. After a man was charged with a gun in the Aung Zay Ya extension ward, the military came and captured at least eight wealthy local people from the city, and four houses and shops were sealed off.

On November 30, in the morning, while the military was inspecting U Mya Than, a 44-year-old of the Aung Zay Ya extension ward in the city, they found a pistol and arrested him: "Now, they are after the

wealthy people of Thanbyuzayat city. We are not sure about the reason," said a resident.

That evening, the military junta forces arrested Ko Ta Yout, the owner of Hay Ma Won construction materials, at his home. The following day, at least six owners of gold shops and grocery shops in Thanbyuzayat were arrested again.

"We think that the junta abducted people to extort money. About eight rich people from Thanbyuzayat city were arrested," said another resident of Thanbyuzayat. The junta alleges they were targeted because those with more substantial finances donated to the opposition movement in support of pro-democracy forces.

On December 1, Burma Army soldiers came to arrest the owner of Hay Ma Won construction materials, Ko Ta Yout and sealed his house and shops, including another four.

Those arrested were detained and interrogated at Thanbyuzayat Police Station. They are still being interrogated.

Freedom of expression is also under attack as the regime targets members of the press for truth-telling. Two Dawei Watch news agency journalists were arrested in Myeik, Southern Dawei. On December 11th, the Dawei Watch news agency reported

SUMMARY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

DECEMBER 2023

that the military junta raided the houses of the journalists and arrested them at midnight.

Ko Aung San Oo and Ko Myo Myint Oo, reporters from the Dawei Watch news agency, were detained and, at the time of writing, are being questioned at an interrogation center in Shwe Duu village: *“The journalists were arrested. Phones and laptops were also taken,”* said a person close to the victims.

Two laptops belonging to the news agency and the phones of the reporters and family members’ phones were also seized by the military junta, Dawei Watch reported. The Dawei Watch news agency stated that the regiment has no right to arrest journalists because writing news is not a crime.

Dawei Watch has also called for the immediate release of the two journalists who are being illegally detained and interrogated. After the military coup, a total of eight journalists were arrested in Tanintharyi, and six who were previously arrested were released.

Among those who have been arrested, some have been released after being imprisoned, and some have been freed within days of being arrested. According to Myeik residents, there were more arrests in December than in previous months.

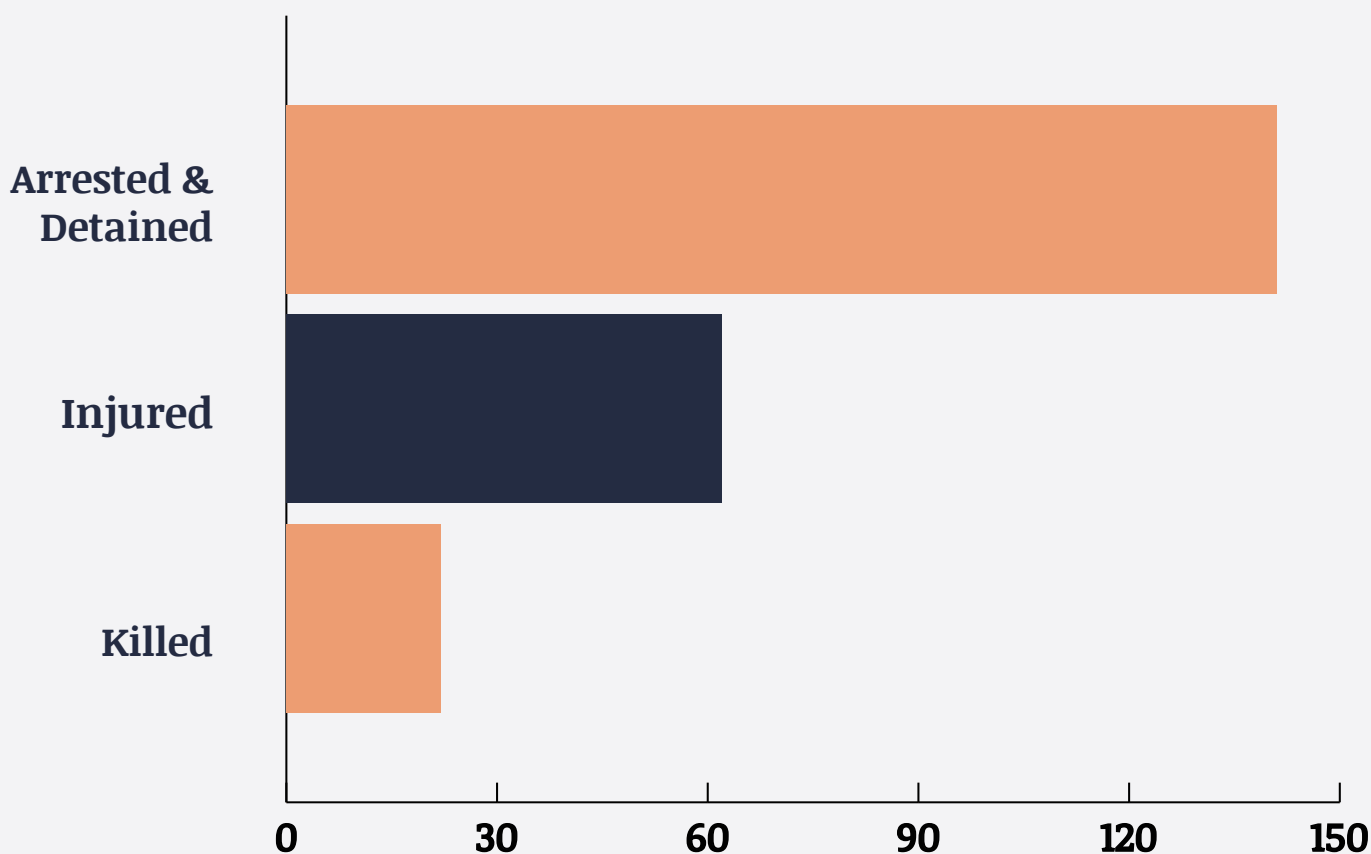
Thus, the ongoing human rights situation and the lack of international action in response is indicative of a larger failure by the global community to take seriously the plight of civilians. For too long, innocent people have been forced to suffer at the hands of a merciless regime who has no regard for its citizens, nor peace, or democratic principles.

The world must stand with the people on the ground who are responding to the crisis with the urgency it demands. They must also work towards supporting localized solutions and approaches which have been amplified and advocated for.

SCALED UP HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

HURFOM fieldworkers continue to take great risks to document the human rights violations being perpetrated in target areas of Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region. By the end of **December 2023**, HURFOM recorded at least **85 arrested**, **50 detained**, **80 injured**, and **25 killed** across all target areas.

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



6+

Pro-Democracy Activists Targeted by the Junta

8

PROTESTS ACROSS TARGET
AREAS IN DECEMBER 2023

4

TANINTHARYI
REGION

2

MON STATE

2

KAREN STATE



74,500+

CIVILIANS DISPLACED ACROSS TARGET AREAS

CIVILIANS TARGETED IN MON, KAREN STATE
& THE TANINTHARYI REGION

5+

DISMISSED FOR
INVOLVEMENT
IN THE CIVIL
DISOBEDIENCE
MOVEMENT

8+

PROTESTERS/
POLITICIANS
SENTENCED IN
JUNTA COURTS

3+

ENFORCED
DISAPPEARANCES
BY THE MILITARY

30+

VILLAGERS WERE CAPTURED AND USED AS
HUMAN SHIELDS IN KAWKAREIK, KAREN
STATE AND DAWEI

95+

DAMAGED HOMES



70+

CASES OF
MOTORCYCLE
CONFISCATION

5+

VEHICLES
CONFISCATED BY
THE JUNTA

2+

REPORTERS FROM
DAWEI WATCH WERE
ARRESTED & DETAINED

170+

Houses in Kyaikmayaw, Thanbyuzayat, Mawlamyine,
and Kawkareik were raided, and materials were stolen.
Four Buddhist monasteries were also raided.



Junta forces in all targeted areas cut **30+**
communities off the communication and internet.



KAREN STATE

32,000+ Newly Displaced

28 Injured, 8 Killed



Mon State



Tanintharyi Region

The persecution of activists continues. A young man, 28-year-old Karen Saw Saung Hnin Htoo Phaw, was arrested at the front entrance checkpoint of Dawei City on July 25, 2023. The military junta court sentenced him to 10 years in prison after he was detained for more than four months. His family has received hardly any information about his case. A friend of Saw Saung Hnin Htoo Phaw said that he was charged with Section 52(a) and 50(j) of the Anti-Terrorism Act regarding the information found in his mobile phone.

Saw Saung Hnin Htoo Phaw holds a degree in computer technology from Dawei Computer University and works as a gardener with his parents, according to Kyauk Mee Laung village residents. Following the attempted coup, two people were jailed by the military under the Anti-Terrorism Act in Ka Lain Aung Town, Yebyu Dawei.

A local woman was killed, and two women were injured when the military launched artillery weapons into Taung Kyar Inn village in Kaw Ka Rate Township, Karen State, on December 18 at 11 AM. A 120-mm artillery weapon was fired from the No.12 Operation Command Headquarters of the military based in Kaw Ka Rate, killing 46-year-old Nan Mee Su.

In addition, on December 19, at around 5:30 p.m., 71-year-old Daw Khin Yi and 68-year-old Nan Mu La An from Taung Kyar Inn village were shot and injured by the No.230 Infantry Battalion based in Kaw Ka Rate.

“For two days in a row, weapons were launched into the village. No one is there anymore. People are running away,” said a Taung Kyar Inn village resident.

According to residents, after a battle between the junta and the joint forces of the armed opposition groups, the military retaliated by relentlessly firing artillery weapons.

More than 1,000 residents of Taung Kyar Inn and North Kyar Inn villages in Kaw Ka Rate Township were forced to flee to the nearby forests and safe places due to the artillery weapons fired by the military.

Due to the fighting that started on December 1, nearly 90,000 local people have fled to the area under the control of the Karen National Union (KNU) Hpa-An District Brigade No. 7. They urgently need humanitarian aid.



MON STATE

22,000+ Newly Displaced

22 Injured, 10 Killed



Karen State



Tanintharyi Region

The military junta has arrested nearly 70 residents in Thanbyuzayat Town, Mon State, after accusing them of supporting the People's Defense Forces. They also seized at least five homes and businesses. Among the detainees, U Mya Tha and Ko Min Min, who were both arrested, were killed in the military interrogation center of the Well Ka Lee Artillery Regiment. The junta did not allow either person to meet with their family members. It is believed that they were also not provided with food and water and were tortured:

“They were killed on December 9, but the junta has not informed their family members nor returned their bodies,” said a local source.

Another resident added, “They came to the houses of those who have opposed them every day and searched for the persons they wanted, but they had already run away.” Civilians in the area reported to HURFOM that the junta plans to arrest another 100 residents in Thanbyuzayat Town.

Violence in Mon State has also included indiscriminate firing. According to local people, a civilian was killed, and six houses were damaged due to the military junta launching artillery weapons into Shwe Yaung Pya village,

Bilin Township. The No. 314 Artillery Battalion of the military junta was attacked with a drone by the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the People's Defense Forces (PDF) on December 7th at around noon.

After that attack, the Artillery Battalion launched at least twenty artillery shells from their base into Ah Won Gyi, Shwe Yaung Pya, and Pan Aung Gone villages in Bilin Township. The explosion hit, and La Aw, 46, was seen riding a motorcycle. He was immediately killed.

“About ten artillery weapons fell into Shwe Yaung Pya village that day. The villagers entered the bomb shelter immediately, but unfortunately, a villager died. A motorcycle was also damaged,” said a local.

As a result of the explosion of artillery weapons, six homes of Naw Ma Nge, Naw Tay, Naw Mee Mee, Saw Tar Kha, Saw Maung Nu, and Saw Gee were damaged, and two cows were also hit and injured.

Shwe Yaung Pya, Ah Won Gyi, and Pan Aung Gone villages, where the military junta attacked with artillery weapons, are under the control of the Karen National Union (KNU) Thaton District.

On November 20th, 15-year-old Saw Htet Wai Yan was killed, and 17-year-old Naw San Htwe was injured by the military junta's artillery weapon attack in Shwe Laung Inn village in Bilin Township.

On Christmas Eve, local officials responded to news of an attack where one child was killed and two women were injured following artillery fire by the junta. The Burma Army's trucks were attacked by a mine near Tha Pyay Nee village, Bilin Township, Mon State.

“Once the mine hit them, they shot from the car. A girl who was hanging the plywood at the Tha Pyay Nee exit was hit in the neck and died. She was just about ten years old. It was so awful. Her mother was a widow. It only took 5 minutes after she was hit that she passed away,” said a resident of Tha Pyay Nee village.

During the incident, 55-year-old Daw Vo Mae and 44-year-old Daw San Aye received landmine injuries on their buttocks and eyes from the explosion of reckless artillery weapons launched by the military. Two local women who were injured by landmines were taken to Bilin Township Public Hospital with the help of the social relief group.

According to the locals, Ah Lu Lay village residents, including Tha Pyay Nee, fled due to the exchange of attacks between the two sides that day. As of December 26, they have returned to their homes. Bilin Township's residents are often injured and killed due to the almost daily

offensives being fired by the military junta. In Karen State, in particular, the military junta has lost dozens of bases, according to reporting by local civil society organizations.

According to reports from the KNU Brigade No. 1, Thaton District, more than 100 residents were killed, and at least 300 were injured due to the attacks and human rights violations by the military since 1 February 2021.

In addition to brutal war tactics, the military junta also conducts random inspections and checkpoints, and if the people fail to show their ID cards, they will be extorted. This often occurs at checkpoints in Mawlamyine and Kyaikmayaw, where soldiers demand 10,000 to 15,000 kyats if people fail to show their registration.

The military junta stopped people from checking and searching tricycles, cars, and motorcycles, doing phone searches, and questioning them, according to an inspected person: *“They checked the phone and looked at Facebook. They also looked at photos and videos, checked phone messages, and asked questions. Young men face harsher, more detailed interrogations,”* he added.

Similarly, in other places in Mawlamyine Township, there are demands for money if they cannot show their ID card during the inspection. According to the statements of the residents of Kyaikmayaw, there were

inspections by patrols of the military junta in Kyaikmayaw Township. If the people fail to show their registration during the inspection, they will be fined 5,000 Myanmar kyats.

There are requests for money from travellers, passenger vehicles, and trucks at every security checkpoint gate in Mon State.” There is no gate that doesn’t ask for it,” said a woman who travelled from Dawei to Mawlamyine to Yangon.

In Kyaikmayaw Township in Mon State and Kaw Ka Rate Township in Karen State, where the fighting occurred, the residents escaping the war could only bring valuable things while fleeing. Therefore, due to an emergency run, many could not get their ID cards and household lists and left them at home.

Inspections and searches are being conducted in the areas of Mawlamyine city entrances and exits, Say Kyo, Phat Khim, the upper main road, and the city bypass road after the PDFs posted online that people can enter and exit Mawlamyine township and Mudon town at any time.

Even religious figures are not spared the junta’s violence and discrimination. On the morning of December 5th, a monk from a monastery in Kyaik Hto was arrested by the military junta with the accusation of providing support to the PDF group and was charged under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

According to the press release of the military junta, it was found that U Oak Ta Ma participated in a campaign by NUG and the PDF group with Kpay. He was charged with (Pa) 106/2023, Section 50(j) of the 2014 Anti-Terrorism Act, at Kyaik Hto police station.

In addition, on December 4th, the military junta reported that Ma Thu Zar Win, a resident of Phal Doe village, Mudon Township, was arrested for allegedly providing financial support to the NUG and PDF through Wave Money (an online banking application)

The uptick in violence in Mon State has caused widespread fear and uncertainty. On the evening of December 13th, three more people, one woman and two men, were arrested in Aung Zay Ya extended ward, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mawlamyine District.

Those arrested are a man in front of a secondary school in the Aung Zay Ya extended ward, another man in front of the Aung Zay Ya comprehensive ward market, and a woman selling Ya Khaing Mouk Dee. The military junta took the valuable things from the house and the motorcycle when they arrested the three.

“They came to arrest them at night. An apology from the victim was also heard clearly. The whole house was stirred. The valuable things were seized. They took all of them.” Thanbyuzayat residents said.

The junta also sealed off homes and businesses related to those arrested victims. At least 100 other related people are still being detained. Some residents closed their houses and shops and fled to the city.

A total of two of those arrested, one male from the Aung Zay Ya ward and another male from the same area, were beaten to death while being interrogated by the junta. The bodies of the two victims have not been returned to their families.

At present, there is less traffic in Thanbyuzayat city. The junta blocked and searched the residents of the city, which worried the residents of the town that arrests and interrogations were being carried out.

Those who support the pro-democracy movement, even officials, are still being detained and targeted. The Thanbyuzayat Township Mon, General Department deputy chief, was accused of reporting departmental news to the National Unity Government and armed defence groups.

A case was opened on December 18 against U Aung Ko Ko, a 40-year-old Kya Khaing Yay ward resident in Thanbyuzayat, a deputy chief in the general administration department. He was charged with PA 136/2023 under Section 52(a) of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

In addition, among those arrested, there are nearly 20 people who have been prosecuted. Some people work in the

construction industry, claiming to be affiliated with NUG and PDF.

The military has sealed off the homes of the five arrested, and arrests are ongoing.

Two residents, U Myint Than and Ko Min Min, from Thanbyuzayat town, were arrested and tortured to death at Wae Ka Lee military camp. There have been reports that the military has cremated the bodies of U Myint Than and Ko Min Min without the presence of their family members.

In a similar case, the chairman of the Social Assistance Association of Thaton Township, in Thu Dama Wati City, Thaton Township, Mon State, Daw Saw Su Su Htwe, was interrogated after the junta arrested her.

She was arrested by the junta at 10 AM on December 16 because she posted a comment on the People's Defense Force (PDF) social network page of Thaton Township.

"She said nothing serious. It was just a letter saying, "Hope to meet again soon." The junta came to arrest her because their lobbies reported," a person close to the family said.

In Daw Saw Su Su Htwe's comments, the military lobby telegram channels accused her of encouraging violence and being a major courier. The junta arrested her within hours.

She was interrogated at the junta's Thaton Township No. 9 Training Academy and has not seen her family. According to the association's officials, some social relief processes have been stopped after the arrest of the chairman of the Shin Than Chin Twal Latt Social Assistance Association.

The community of Thaton Township is also demanding the release of Daw Saw Su Su Htwe.

“Ma Su has done a lot for Thaton Township. During the pandemic period, they were the ones who led the assistance. In this period, we have to be careful. We want her to be released quickly,” said a Thaton Township Social Assistance Association official.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), it was announced on December 19 that more than 800 civilians were arrested due to various pretexts by the military junta in Mon State since the attempted coup.



Tanintharyi region

22, 500+ Newly Displaced

30 Injured, 7 Killed



Karen State



Mon State

In most areas of west Yebyu Township, Dawei villagers fled their villages due to the military operations. They dare not stay in their villages.

The military junta entered the west bank of Yebyu twice last October, and those troops burned 29 houses in five villages and shot seven residents dead. After the incidents, more people moved to the Na Buu Lal area on the west bank and the areas around it.

“We’re always listening to the news. Many people have moved, but it has increased obviously,” said a man living in the Na Buu Lal.

In November 2023, most of the Pa Ra Dud, Muu Duu, Ba War village, and Ba War coastal villages moved, mainly to Dawei. On the 25th of October, a military junta entered Pa Ra Dud village, where most of the residents had fled, and burned three houses and also shot three villagers and put them in the fire.

Similarly, in November 2023, in Muu Duu village, 20 homes were burned down, and two-thirds of the villagers are no longer staying in the town due to threats from the military junta to raze the entire village.

Ba War village and Bar War coastal village had no houses burned when the military junta troops entered. However, according to the village’s location, the exit was closed when the regiment arrived, and the military naval ship often closed it from the waterway, which caused half of the village residents to flee in advance. The military junta started its military operation from the east of Muu Duu village on November 18th.

On November 19th, after a clash between the military junta and the People’s Defense Forces (PDF), the military junta set fire to 18 houses in

Muu Duu village near Dawei Deep Sea Port. One villager was shot, and some of the villagers were arrested.

Field network members reported that almost all the Kha Maung Chaung and Aye Ka Ni villages stay in the town during the day and move to the nearby gardens in the evening. Most of the Yebyu and Tha Yat Chaung locals have fled and moved to the monasteries, relatives' houses, rental houses, and rooms in Dawei City.

There were many clashes in Dawei District in October, and Yebyu and Tha Yat Chaung Townships in Dawei District became the places where most people fled their homes due to intentional violence against civilians by the military junta. The villages on the west side of Yebyu, Dawei, where people are currently relocating, are connected to the Dawei Deep Sea Port area and are mainly engaged in fishing and agriculture. The Dawna Tanintharyi-Refugee Assistance Group reported that the number of people fleeing the war in Tanintharyi was more than 21,000 as of September.

Even locals, including a month-old baby, were arrested after the junta was attacked in Kha Mauk Gyi. According to witnesses, seven residents, including a one-month-old baby, have been detained in Kha Mauk Gyi town, Kaw Thaung Township, Kaw Thaung District, Tenasserim Division, and have not yet been contacted by their families.

At around 10:30 in the morning of December 8th, the military junta hunted and arrested the locals after its troops were intercepted and attacked near the cemetery of Phaw Thout village.

In the evening, the junta burned down the house on the rubber farm belonging to U Thein Kyi and Daw O Thee in that area. Later that day, the junta forces entered and arrested a 28-year-old mother, Ma Aye Aye Mar, and her one-month-old baby from ward No. 4, Kha Mauk Gyi town. The junta took her to Kha Mauk Gyi-based Operations Command Headquarters No. 20 with 25 forces.

According to a resident of Kaw Thaung Township, they were arrested and taken away on the accusation of providing updates to opposition forces. Then, on the morning of December 9th, four local people were

arrested again from Aye Chan Thar and Phaw Thout villages in Kha Mauk Gyi township.

Ko Soe Lwin, 20 years, Ko Wat Gyi, 17-year-old, and another young man who is about 20 years old from Phaw Thout village were arrested by the junta force of some 30 troops, divided into two groups, blocking and conducting an inspection at the entrance and exit of Aye Chan Thar village.

“They all were arrested because they had certain information on their phones. The phones were checked and arrested because the junta found something suspicious,” said another local man.

In addition, 50-year-old U Chut, who is working in the rubber business in Aye Chan Thar village, was arrested at his home, and his rubber truck and sidecar were seized. Those who were arrested were detained by the military junta at the No. 20 Operations Command Headquarters based in Kha Mauk Gyi town and have not been in contact with their families.

According to the statement of the revolutionary forces, two members of the junta were killed, and a gun was seized during the battle of Phaw Thout village in Kha Mauk Gyi. About 100 members of the junta force are hiding in the intersection and the farms and clearing the area in Mar Yan, Aye Chan Thar, and Phaw Thout villages in Kha Mauk Gyi Township.

In the first week of November, two men from Mar Yan and Aye Chan Thar villages were arrested in Kha Mauk Gyi City and have not been released. Since 1 February 2021, more than 2,200 locals have been detained due to various reasons and accusations of a military junta.

Halfway through the month, four locals of Kanbauk were arrested at midnight by the Mawrawaddy Navy, Yebyu. On December 18, four local villagers of Kanbauk village group, Kanbauk area, Yebyu Township, Dawei District, Tenasserim Division, were arrested by the junta.

According to residents, the Mawrawaddy Navy military officers arrived in two cars, arrested them at their respective homes, and interrogated

them at the Mawrawaddy Navy Station headquarters based in the Ohm Pin Kwin village group. They were arrested at night, and the junta checked many houses in Mi Kyaung village.

“They checked everyone’s faces carefully to see if they matched the pictures they had. They told those taken away that they would be interrogated,” said a person close to the family.

Family members do not know the reason for the arrests. Most of the locals claimed that the military may have arrested the villagers because their camp was attacked. On December 15, the arrests were made after a drone attack by the PDFs (Dawna Division-4) on the Mawrawaddy Naval Station headquarters.

Ko Thar Gyi was driving a truck and working in the lead trading business at his home. Ma Than Than Soe is a grocery store seller. Ma Thae Su Moe is also a person who sells snacks at stalls. According to the locals, all of the phones were confiscated when the four villagers were arrested.

A person close to one of the victims reported that after checking the phone of truck driver Ko Thar Gyi, the gate manager of a car park in Mawlamyine City’s pre-market parking lot where trucks from the Kanbauk area used to park, he was also arrested by the Mawlamyine military junta. He was released later after being questioned, but his phone was seized. The military junta troops were reportedly doing patrols in the Kanbauk area.

In the last week of November, the junta arrested two men who opened a motorcycle repair shop in the Kanbauk area. Only one was released, and the owner is still detained. The military Mawrawaddy Navy has been arresting and investigating the residents of the Kanbauk area whenever there are shootings and explosions in the area.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

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

DECEMBER 2023

