

# MONTHLY OVERVIEW

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

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JANUARY  
2024



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## SUMMARY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

# Violence Against Civilians Sees No Signs of Abating as Homes are Destroyed and Indiscriminate Attacks Target Local Populations in Southeastern Burma

**JANUARY 2024**

The human rights situation in Southeastern Burma has continued to deteriorate. Civilians are routinely forced to flee as their villages have turned into battlegrounds. In addition, unmet needs on the ground are growing daily. In target areas of the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), including Mon State, Karen State and the Tanintharyi region, our documentation indicates that while the junta is losing significant battles and bases, they are retaliating by increasing their attacks against an unarmed, innocent population.

As the third anniversary of the failed coup is reflected upon on 1 February 2024, HURFOM is all the more concerned about the lack of accountability that the Burma Army has faced. For decades, the regime has acted under orders to kill, torture and detain people in pursuit of power and fear. While the conditions are becoming more challenging, the people of Burma have resisted with immense courage and conviction.

Civil society leaders and organizations have not slowed their activities, even in the wake of war zones. They are risking bullets with their bravery to ensure women, children, the elderly, and families

receive medical care, food and nutritional items, as well as hygiene kits. Many of these efforts are led by predominantly women and locally led and trusted organizations who have decades of experience responding to emergencies.

Among the most worrying observations across January 2024 was the ongoing intensification of violence in Mon State. HURFOM had previously released a **statement of concern** which noted the steady increase in attacks in this part of the country by the Burma Army in December 2023. Since 1 February 2021, HURFOM has reported that at least 67 people have been killed, 160 injured, and more than 90,000 have been forcibly displaced in Mon State. The lack of action and response by the international community prompted HURFOM Program Director Nai Aue Mon to call for urgent and immediate humanitarian assistance, adding: *“For too long, the military junta has evaded accountability for the widespread crimes against humanity. Justice is long overdue.”*

The military knows that they are losing and are attempting to appear compassionate and in the good graces of the international community. In

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commemoration of the 76th Independence Day, the military junta granted amnesty to 9,652 prisoners from prisons across the country, and 114 foreign prisoners were also pardoned and deported. In Mon State, 670 prisoners serving sentences were released, including only 31 prisoners of conscience:

There were 350 prisoners released from the Kyaikmayaw prison, 103 people from the Kyaikmayaw Central, 93 from Thaton, 35 people from Mu Pa Lin production camp, 41 from Inn Ga Bo and Taung Soon work camps, 20 from Yin Nyein camp, 17 from Zin Kyeik production camp, and 11 from In Pyaung work camp were freed. Most of the released prisoners are those who have been sentenced for gambling.

Following the release of political prisoners, there was a total of 31 people: 23 from Kyaikmayaw Central Prison and eight from Thaton Prison, and they are those who have one year left in their sentences under Section 505(a) of the Penal Code. Only 4.6 percent of political prisoners were among the prisoners granted amnesty by the military junta in Mon State.

***“If they are under political pressure, the junta will release more. This is not an act of sincerity. It is purely strategic,” said a person working to assist political prisoners.***

The military junta granted amnesty with the restriction that the released prisoners would have to serve both sentences and the remaining sentence if they committed a ‘crime’ again. As of recently, the junta no longer prosecutes those who were sued under political sections under Section 505(a) of the Penal Code, and they only charge under Section 50(j) of the Anti-Terrorism Act, which is punishable by up to life in prison, corresponding to people helping political prisoners.

The international community must not be fooled by the amnesty, as the growing number of political prisoners die in incarceration. According to the Political Prisoners Network in Myanmar (PPNM), a political prisoner who was serving a life sentence died at Kyaikmayaw Central Prison due to a lack of access to medical treatment.

The 43-year-old political prisoner Ko Yar Shin had been in poor health since November last year due to internal injuries from being beaten and tortured during interrogation. During this time, he failed to receive adequate medical treatment. His internal injuries did not heal, and he was taken to a hospital outside the prison for emergency treatment on 11 January, but he died on 12 January. Last year, Ko Yar Shin was sentenced to life imprisonment under Sections 54 and 52(a) of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

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According to PPNM's statement, critically ill patients are dying because the regiment has restricted the sending of foreign medicines in prisons, not providing enough access to medical treatment, and the prisoners are not allowed to be transported to outside hospitals promptly:

*“When he was tortured during the interrogation, his internal organs were damaged. He died because of this injury. The military junta is not allowing the prisoners to receive medical treatment, and they are making them die,” PPNM spokesperson Ko Theik Tun Oo said.*

Based on the records compiled by the PPNM, seventeen political prisoners died in 2023 due to insufficient medical treatment in prisons. Prison hospitals are not places where people who are ill are treated and lives are saved.

On 15 January 2024, the PPNM reported that another political prisoner died due to a lack of proper medical treatment at the Central Prison in Kyaikmayaw Township.

The deceased, age 31, Ko Pyae Phyo Aung, was transferred from the prison dormitory to the prison hospital for treatment for a stomach problem at 10:00 PM. As the warden of the prison hospital was resting, the dentist on duty gave him one injection. An hour later, he lost consciousness with pus coming out of his mouth.

After the arrival of the prison hospital director, he was given two life-saving injections and was transported to Mawlamyine Hospital with emergency oxygen. He died at 1:00 a.m. on January 16th.

*“We are investigating exactly what was injected. I want to ask the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to investigate as well,”* said Ko Theik Tun Oo, spokesperson for PPNM.

A firefighter for the Civil Disobedience Movement, Ko Pyae Phyo Aung, a native of Insein, Yangon Region, was arrested on January 3, 2022, at the Thanlwin Bridge checkpoint in Hpa-An Township, Karen State, and was sentenced to 7 years in prison under Section 52(a) of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

The PPNM urged all international, domestic, and foreign organizations, including the ICRC, to provide adequate medical treatment to prisoners in prisons and to send critical patients to outside hospitals promptly.

Meanwhile, in the borderlands, fighting continues to escalate. Since December 19th, 2023, the junta battalions based in Thaton have been constantly firing artillery weapons into Kyone Mein village, where the revolutionary forces are active.

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More than 1,200 people live there, which has almost 200 houses. They were forced to leave their homes and flee to safe places due to the constant artillery weapons fired by the junta.

*“Now, no one dares to live in the village anymore. Weapons fire all day, almost every day. Our homes are damaged, and we have to run. Only a few people decided to stay behind,” said a resident of Kyone Mein village.*

As a result of the constant artillery weapons, Kyone Mein residents are hiding. They need health care assistance, and basic food. According to a statement from the Karen National Union (KNU) Thaton District, a 26-year-old pregnant woman, Naw Phaw Ta Mae, was killed, and a 2-year-old child was injured when the military launched fire in Kyone Mein village. Two houses, including the village monastery, were damaged by the explosion of artillery weapons.

The KNU (Thaton district) claimed that military junta No. 402 and No. 502 of the Artillery Battalion and No. 206 Infantry Battalions based in Thaton attack with artillery weapons at all hours of the day and night.

Landmines also continue to pose a seriously worrying risk to civilians. On December 30, 2023, a couple stepped on a

landmine in Ka Bo village, Kyike Hto Township, Mon State. The explosion killed the husband, and the wife was seriously injured.

The victims, 45-year-old U Nine Win and 40-year-old Daw Mi Mi went to a nearby pomelo plantation to collect wood about noon when they stepped on a landmine. The local rescue team sent the victims to Thaton District General Hospital, but the husband died that evening. According to Ka Bo villagers, the military junta and the joint revolutionary forces are active in the area.

*“Both of them were in critical condition. Their bodies were full of landmine debris. The husband died soon after reaching the hospital. His wife was sent to Yangon General Hospital. Her condition isn’t good,”* said an official from the local rescue team.

A landmine also injured another villager while he was cutting bamboo on the evening of 30 December 2023. The victim, Ko Naing, age 45, was hit by a mine located about 120 feet south of the No. 306 junta’s Artillery Battalion. His right leg was severely injured and had to be cut off on January 7.

In another landmine case, on January 9, 2024, at 6 PM, two women from the west bank of Nyaung Pin Kwin village, Tanintharyi Township, who were

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returning from a plantation, stepped on a landmine in a rubber farm in the east of the junta's Infantry Battalion IB No. 561, and one of them lost a leg. The victim was 67-year-old woman Daw Thwe. The other woman, 36-year-old Ma Mee Kang, who was accompanying her, was also injured.

According to a report by Radio Free Asia, landmines threaten more than half of the townships in Burma.

Even during the celebratory Christmas and New Year holidays, the regime did not hesitate to launch attacks. The junta forces fired artillery weapons at midnight on New Year's Eve and damaged some houses in Tanintharyi Township.

On January 1st, at 1 AM, houses in the village were damaged by the explosion of artillery weapons fired by the junta troops based in Nyaung Pin Kwin village, Tanintharyi Township.

According to the locals, the junta first attacked with small arms, and the residents fled. After that, the artillery shells fell on the house, causing no casualties. The attack was carried out by the junta's Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 561, and a wooden house and a house in the center of the village were hit, and the roof and the interior of the house were damaged.

*“Since they heard the sound of weapons, the villagers fled their houses and ran away. It wasn't long after they ran away that more ammunition was fired,” said a villager.*

At least 20 artillery weapons were fired, and all the people in the village fled, the residents said. LIB No. 561 launched artillery weapons after being attacked by guerrillas from the revolutionary forces.

The same day, a local woman villager was hit by an artillery shell and suffered a head injury in Kyaung Ywar village of Ye Township at 11:30 AM. The victim was hit at a rubber plantation she was working at. The impact cracked her skull.

At 5:45 a.m. on the morning of December 31st, under the name of “New Year's Operation,” after the revolutionary forces attacked Light Infantry Battalion LIB No.591 and No.583 based in the village, the junta troops constantly launched artillery weapons around the town. The woman who was wounded by the gun was 39-year-old Mi Thidar Soe, a villager of Shay village in Kyaung Ywar village tract, Ye, Mon State.

According to locals, the artillery weapons were fired from LIB No. 591 and LIB No. 583 in Ye Township is an area controlled by the New Mon State Party.

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In Ye township, where the armed resistance is strong, the junta and the revolutionary forces are frequently fighting, and civilians are often injured due to the artillery weapons fired.

Since the military coup, almost 70 people were killed and injured in Mon State, and the situation is worsening. An estimated 400 residents have fled their homes due to artillery mortar shells launched by the junta in KNU Brigade 1, Thaton District's administrative area in Mon State on 10 January following an endless bombardment of artillery shells into Sue Inn and Kaw Hlaing villages by the No. 402 Artillery Battalion of the military junta.

The exploded shells damaged two local homes in Sue Inn village and another two in Kaw Hlaing village. As a result of the explosion, 382 people from 82 households in Sue Inn, Kyone Mein, Kaw Hlaing, and Ywar Lay Kone villages fled their homes and fled to safe places.

***“Now, there is no one left in the village. As if the village had been destroyed, it is now silent. The attacks with artillery mortars are getting worse every day,” said a Kyone Mein resident.***

Civil society organizations continue to fill essential gaps in providing aid and safety to displaced and conflict-affected communities. The delayed and distracted

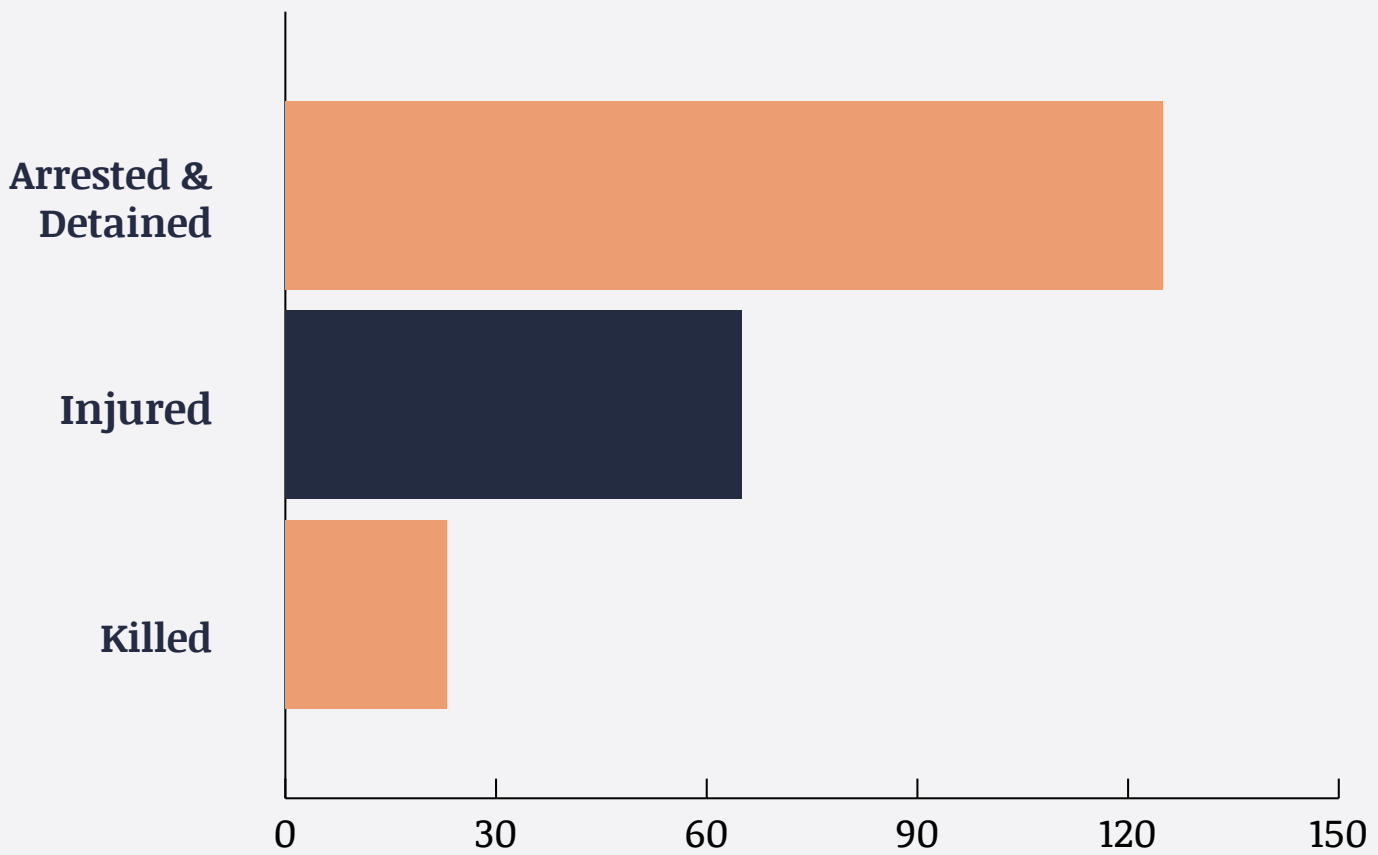
response to the humanitarian crisis in Burma by the international community suggests a lack of political will to intervene as well as a basic understanding of the most pressing challenges facing civilians.

As the third anniversary of the coup approaches on 1 February 2024, global actors must choose to stand on the right side of history, which is with the people in Myanmar who have made immense sacrifices in their spirited quest for democracy, peace and a future free from military rule.

## 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 **January 2024**, HURFOM recorded at least **70 arrested, 55 detained, 65 injured, and 23 killed** across all target areas.

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



6+

Pro-Democracy Protesters & Activists Targeted by the Junta



11

PROTESTS ACROSS TARGET  
AREAS IN JANUARY 2024

9

TANINTHARYI  
REGION

1

MON STATE

1

KAREN STATE



35,700+

CIVILIANS DISPLACED ACROSS TARGET AREAS

CIVILIANS TARGETED IN MON, KAREN STATE  
& THE TANINTHARYI REGION

4+

DISMISSED FOR  
INVOLVEMENT  
IN THE CIVIL  
DISOBEDIENCE  
MOVEMENT

5+

PROTESTERS/  
POLITICIANS  
SENTENCED IN  
JUNTA COURTS

9+

ENFORCED  
DISAPPEARANCES  
BY THE MILITARY

**40+**

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

**165+**

DAMAGED HOMES



**90+**

HOMES RAIDED

**70+**

CASES OF  
MOTORCYCLE  
CONFISCATION

**10+**

VEHICLES  
CONFISCATED BY  
THE JUNTA

**2+**

POLITICAL PRISONERS  
DIED FROM A LACK OF  
MEDICAL TREATMENT

**7+**

Civilians were suspended and charged with accusations  
of having links to the People's Defense Forces  
in Mon State.



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



## KAREN STATE

**13,000+ Newly Displaced**

**20 Injured, 8 Killed**



Mon State



Tanintharyi Region

The Kaw Ka Rate battle in Karen State, which has been going on for more than 40 days, began on January 9 between the military, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), and the joint forces of the People's Defense Forces (PDF).

During the battle, two men who had returned home to collect goods were killed, and another man who had evacuated from the fighting was also injured.

On January 10, at 1 PM, a man who lived as a housekeeper with his cattle was hit by a landmine when ammunition exploded in Ward No. 6 of Kaw Ka Rate City. At least six houses were burned down due to the explosions that fell on homes in the neighbourhood due to the junta's artillery weaponry and drone attacks.

Based on the 2014 census, the city of Kaw Ka Rate, which has a population of more than 40,000, has been forced to flee due to the fighting between the two sides. Nearly 90 percent of its residents have fled their homes and have not yet returned to their homes.

As a result of the Kaw Ka Rate battle, the Thai-Burma border trade route, the Kaw Ka Rate-Myawaddy Asian Highway, has

been blocked, and the local people are suffering the effects of the increasing price of goods in the area.

On the morning of January 27, there was a clash between the KNLA and PDF joint forces and the military junta in ward No. 1, Chaung Taung side, and ward No. 2, Dhama Rama, Kawkareik City. Many residential buildings, including a school, were on fire in these neighbourhoods due to the junta firing artillery shells into the bridge controlled by the armed revolutionary groups.

From 1 PM to 5:30 PM, the junta troops attacked the areas around Kawkareik city with aerial bombardment. Houses in Ward No. 1, Bala Chaung, and Kawkareik are on fire, while fighting between the two sides, continued until nearly 4 PM.

***“Artillery weapons exploded on the bridge, and a basic education high school in the mountains, and the entire school was destroyed by fire. There are no people to put out the fire,” a resident continued.***

The fighting between the junta forces and the joint revolutionary forces in Kawkareik started on December 1, 2023, and continued until January 29.



## MON STATE

**9,700+ Newly Displaced**

**19 Injured, 8 Killed**



Karen State



Tanintharyi Region

Villagers have been subjected to cases of indiscriminate attacks and cruelty. On December 30, 2023, junta soldiers beat a 52-year-old Mell Ta Yo villager in Kyaikmayaw Township. Nai Maung Sa lost consciousness from the beating and was abandoned in a nearby rubber plantation. Villagers found him and, with the help of a local rescue team, arranged for him to get to Mawlamyine General Hospital.

*“The villagers who found him were using a shortcut to check for abandoned houses. The military closed all the main roads. Nai Aung Sa was found at the plantation. He could still breathe but couldn’t speak. His condition looked very bad, so he was sent to the hospital directly,” said a local source.*

The military junta has reinforced their troops to regain control of Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State:

*“Most villagers dare not stay in the village. We have been running away since last month. Only eight villagers remain in Mell Ta Yo. Armed clashes are happening daily. We don’t know why the military is angry with the villagers or why they beat and tortured him a lot. They abandoned him on a plantation, and he thought he was dead,” said a social worker.*

There are reports that at least two other villagers were also beaten and tortured by the military. The junta also arrested two 20-year-old young women for using a road blocked by the junta. They have been detained for at least a week and at the time of writing have not been released. Due to growing military tensions and the recent beatings and torture by the Burmese soldiers, residents from Mell Ta Yo and nearby villages dare not return to their homes.

The violence has also resulted in children being caught in the crossfire of attacks. A 9-year-old boy was injured, and two houses were damaged when the junta attacked with artillery weapons in Hton Bo Gyi village in Thaton Township, Mon State, according to a statement from KNU Thaton District.

At 10:30 AM on January 1st, at least eight artillery weapons were launched into Wee Yaw village and Hton Bo Gyi village from Light Infantry Battalion LIB No. 9, based in Thaton Township. One shell fired by the junta exploded in Hton Bo Gyi village, causing 9-year-old Saw Kaung Khat Kyaw to be hit in the left leg, and two homes of residents, Naw San Yi and Tee Maung Htay, were damaged.

*“The military is firing artillery weapons almost every day towards Wee Yaw. That day, an artillery weapon fell towards Hton Bo Gyi and hit a child. The KNU medical team gave the boy treatment, and now he has recovered,”* said a Hton Bo Gyi village resident.

Since January 20th, Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 588, Infantry Battalion (IB) No. 106, and the Artillery Battalion have been launching artillery mortar shells on the eastern side of Kone Du village and Ayu Taung village in Ye Township without any fighting for two consecutive days.

One of the people hit was only twelve years old. He was taken to the Ye hospital, and died in the hospital during treatment. In addition, two 10th-grade students from San Pya village were injured by the explosion of artillery shells fired by the military junta.

There was also a fire in a house building and on the roof of a house in Kone Du village when the shells exploded. Further details and information are still being collected.

The villagers of Kone Du village near the monastery and Taung Pyin village fled to Ayu Taung and returned to their homes on January 23.

Due to the junta’s attack with artillery weapons, the residents of Hton Bo Gyi are afraid to go to work, and they have dug bomb pits in almost every house.

Arbitrary arrests are also increasing. According to reports from residents, at least eight residents have been repeatedly arrested in Thanbyuzayat town in Mon State since January 10. The regiment forcibly arrested Ko Wa Tok, a former police officer from Aung Mingalar Ward, Thanbyuzayat, at his home.

On January 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th, seven residents of Thanbyuzayat town, including six road junctions, were arrested again on allegations that they were involved with the People’s Defense Forces (PDF).

Those who were detained by the junta were sent to Wea Ka Li for interrogation in Thanbyuzayat Township and have not been contacted:

*“They arrested them and threatened not to tell anyone. They covered their heads with a black cloth,” a person close to the family said.*

In Thanbyuzayat town, the junta troops are continuously firing artillery mortar shells toward the Sa Khan Gyi village, and the repeated pursuits and arrests by the regiment and the police are raising concerns among the residents.

On November 30, 2023, the regiment arrested U Mya Than, a member of the PDFs. Afterwards, they detained at least 100 local people related to the armed opposition groups. According to the people close to them, most of the wealthier people of Thanbyuzayat town

had to pay a ransom to get released after a day.

Among the arrested residents, more than 20 residents, including Deputy Chief U Aung Ko Ko of the General Administration Department of Thanbyuzayat Township, were sentenced to life imprisonment under Section 50(j) and 52(a) of the Anti-Terrorism Act. After the case was opened, they were transferred to the Central Prison.

Out of those who were arrested, U Mya Than and Ko Min Min, members of the PDFs of Thanbyuzayat Township, were beaten and tortured to death during interrogation. At least 800 people have been arrested in Mon State, and most of them have been sentenced to prison terms.

On January 16, at about 6:30 PM, five artillery shells, believed to be 88mm, were fired into Kyauk Bon Gyi Kwin village and Tone Khwa village from the No. 310 Artillery of the junta based in Thein Za Yat.

The victims, 17-year-old Mg Zaw Zaw Aung and 19-year-old Mg Hla Myo Htwe from Tone Khwa village were hit in their thighs and backsides due to the explosion.

*“The artillery shells were fired without any fighting taking place. On the east side of the village, the shell fell near our house. It hit two young men at their home,” said a Tone Khwa villager.*

Two local young men were taken to the Thein Za Yat District Hospital due to being hit by the explosion of mortar shells. The residents of Thein Za Yat are living in fear and facing the danger of artillery launches and landmines, and there are frequent casualties from the military junta.

The military junta is repeatedly targeting women. Three women were killed, and seven were injured in the explosion of the junta’s artillery shells in Bilin Township.

The regiment launched artillery mortar shells into Tet Too Gone village, Bilin Township, Mon State, on 9 January. Seven local women and three men—10 people in total—were injured by the explosion.

Tet Too Gone village, where the junta launched its attack, is in the control area of Karen National Union (KNU) Brigade 1 Thaton District, the administrative area of Bilin Township.

On January 18, due to an artillery attack by the junta between Kaw Hlaing and Kalar Gone villages in Thaton Township, the couple, Saw Than Myint and Naw Ku Ku, residents of Kaw Hlaing village, were injured.

Since the beginning of this year, as a consequence of the day and night artillery and weaponry attacks by the junta in the KNU control area in Bilin and Thaton Township, residents have

been killed, and thousands of civilians have fled.

Similar attacks occurred on 18 January at nearly midnight when junta forces fired artillery mortar shells into Kan Ni village in the area under the control of the New Mon State Party (NMSPP), Ye Township.

The Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No.59, based in Kyaung Ywar village, opened fire with artillery shells, and the explosion hit a betel nut farm near Kan Ni village. No one was hurt, but hundreds of betel nut trees were damaged.

Although no civilians were fleeing, the local people were in fear and frightened because of the shelling that exploded near the village, which made them feel that conflict was imminent.

In November 2023, the Ye Township-based junta No. 317 Artillery launched artillery shells for two consecutive days. They exploded in a rubber farm near Wae Paung, Kyone Lone, Kaing Taw, Baw Do, and Nat Taung villages.

The NMSPP, a signatory to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), attended the political dialogue held by the regiment at least six times after the military coup. However, they have since ended their political negotiations with the junta.

Military raids and accusations of affiliations to various pro-democracy forces remain ongoing. On January 16th,

Burma Army soldiers raided a house and arrested a man who is the husband of teacher Toe Myint, age 60. The junta detained him after the junta accused him of financing the People's Defense Forces (PDF), according to a resident of Aung Zay Ya ward.

He has been detained in the Wae Ka Li military camp and is being interrogated. On November 30, 2023, after the junta arrested U Mya Than, a member of the PDF, they continued to capture at least 100 local people with alleged ties to the armed opposition groups. Out of the arrested residents, over two dozen wealthy people in Thanbyuzayat town had to pay a ransom to be released after a day, according to people close to the victims.

Again, the regiment arrested five Ye Township, Mon State locals, including a restaurant owner, for allegedly providing money to the PDFs. On January 22, at 5:00 PM, the junta forces raided and captured the owner of Shwe Taung Gyi restaurant at the top of Asin village, Ko Nay Paing, and his two employees.

Then, at about 7:00 PM., they forcibly entered another house in Zee Phyu Taung village, arrested the wife when the husband was not home and also abducted another man who was nearby:

*“They have not released Ko Nay Paing yet. As for the two villagers of Zee Phyu Taung, they have released them overnight after the inspection,”* a local said.

The five arrested local people were taken to the police station for inspection by the junta at once, and they have not been allowed to see their families and have not been in contact with them.

There are growing concerns among villagers because the regiment used large forces to capture Ko Nay Paing, a car broker who runs a restaurant and other businesses in Asin and Zee Phyu Taung villages. After the militia and informers were often shot dead in Asin village, the junta commenced to arrest local civilians with various accusations.





## Tanintharyi region

14, 500+ Newly Displaced

16 Injured, 7 Killed



Karen State



Mon State

The military is increasingly targeting civilians. At 10 AM, on January 11th, Ko Kyaw Naing, 40 years old, was shot by soldiers as the junta set up its military operation in the village. When the troops entered, the residents fled, and they shot villagers who ran.

*“He was seriously injured and died,”* a local said.

Ko Naing Kyaw was an honest and calm person. He left behind his wife, a 6-year-old daughter, and a one-year-old daughter. The body of the deceased was cremated by the local people that evening. The junta that entered Oak Kyaut Wut village on December 28, 2023, also beheaded and killed one man at the exit of Sit Pyal village.

During the week of December 27 last year, the junta troops patrolling villages in Long Lone township burned down more than 150 local homes in 7 villages, including more than 100 homes in Nyaw Pyin village and Oak Kyaut Wut village.

It is also not uncommon for local people to disappear and not be found until many months later after being abducted by the junta. Those taken are rarely freed. Four corpses of villagers who the Burma Army killed were discovered in the border village of Kawthaung Township. Junta troops entered Aye Mya Mingalar village at the Thai-Myanmar border of Kawthaung Township and arrested four villagers, whose bodies were found, according to residents.

On December 25, the military from the side of Nam Tong village, with a strength of at least 100 people, entered Aye Mya Mingalar village and arrested the villagers three days after the houses were ransacked. On December 28, the regiment left.

On the 30th, two days after the regiment left, the villagers found the bodies of one woman and three men whom the junta soldiers near the village monastery had captured:

*“When the soldiers came, almost the whole village ran away. They found bodies because of the rotten smell. The bodies were already decomposing, so it can be assumed that they were killed a long time ago,” said a local man.*

The bodies were found on January 2, with their legs and hands tied and rotten. Those who were killed were U San Lin, aged around 40, from Aye Mya Mingalar village; 33-year-old Ko Wei Yan; U Maw, who is over 40 years old; and an unknown woman, who is around 40 years old.

Locals speculated that they might have been killed that night because they heard gunshots being fired from one side on the night the junta entered the village. Most of the residents who fled when the junta troops entered did not dare to return to the town, so the bodies have not been cremated yet.

When the soldiers left the village, they took motorcycles and valuables from the houses. Even though they are now gone, the residents of Aye Mya Mingalar, Wine Din Ywar Oo, and Thet Oo Myain Thayar villages are still fleeing instead of returning to the town as the regime has frequently raided Aye Mya Mingalar and Wine Din Ywar Oo, Thet Oo Myain Thayar villages, and the surrounding villages, including the cities of Shan Ko Ywar, and arrested residents.

Destruction of properties remains an ongoing concern in the region as well. Homes were reduced to ashes during a scorched campaign in which the junta set fire again to Nyaw Pyin village in Long Lone Township, where its troop is stationed. The military junta troops are burning houses again in Nyaw Pyin village, Out Kyauk Wut village tract, Long Lone Township, Dawei District, according to local sources. On January 8, around 5:00 PM, some residents reported that the junta troops entered the village of Nyaw Pyin and set fire to the houses in the western part of the village.

*“After the junta set fire to the village beach, they entered the village and destroyed it. There were more than 40. All the houses on the beach side of the village are gone,” said a resident.*

The locals are fleeing in advance due to the news of the incoming military operation in the area. The junta has been on the beaches of Nyaw Pyin and Pho Pho Kyauk since the evening of January 7. On January 6, at around 10 a.m., at least 30 houses were burned by the junta in Tha Kyat Taw village of Long Lone Township.

In addition, on January 4, at about 11:00 a.m., after a shop selling household medicine was set on fire in Hin Cho Taw village, Tha Pyay Shaung village, eight homes in Hin Cho Taw village and five houses in Yin Htae village were burned again. On January 3, the arriving junta burned 14 houses in Tha Pyay Shaung village in Long Lone Township.

In March of last year, Nyaw Pyin village was burned down by the junta and Pyu Saw Htee group, which destroyed more than 90 houses. After 14 long days, the junta troops are patrolling the villages south of Long Lone Township with massive force: 8 houses in Sit Pyal village, 12 houses in Toon Khan village, 13 houses in Hin Cho Taw and Yin Htae village in Tha Pyay Shaung village tract, four homes in Tha Kyat Taw village, and there are at least 40 villages in Nyaw Pyin, totalling at least 77 villages that were scorched.

Near the end of the month, more homes were set on fire by the junta, with at least 50 houses set ablaze in Kaw Ka Rait, Karen State, where the fighting between the two sides is fierce. On January 21st, houses on Yadana Road, Ward No. 5, were torched down after a clash between the regiment and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in Kaw Ka Rait.

*“Almost all of it was burned. Only three or four houses are left, and the firefighter didn’t come, so the situation worsened,”* said a Kaw Ka Rait resident.

Ward No. 5, where the house was burned down, is a neighbourhood where the majority of Muslims live, and according to the locals, the fire was arson. The junta troops and the revolutionary forces were active in Kaw Ka Rait city, and from January 21 until January 22, the two sides fought. However, which organization was responsible for the fire in Ward No. 5 remains unknown.

*“We learned that the house was burned. There is no home to return to. Approximately 50 people, including us, had our homes burned. There are no more words to say,” said one of the residents of Kaw Ka Rait who fled from war.*

Since December 1, 2023, two sides have fought fiercely in Kaw Ka Rait, and almost the entire city has fled because of that battle. Based on the 2014 census, the city of Kaw Ka Rait, which has nearly 8,000 houses, was destroyed by the explosion of artillery during the fighting, and at least 200 homes were destroyed by fire. More than 40,000 residents of the city have fled the city to nearby relative homes due to the fighting that has been going on for almost two months.

After a clash near Maung Mae Shaung village, Dawei, the Junta’s Artillery Regiment Command, they arrested more than 80 villagers, including children. On January 18, from 8:30 AM until 9:30 AM, fighting occurred for an hour on the main road leading out of the village in the eastern part of Maung Mae Shaung village. The junta troops and the People’s Defense Forces are fighting each other with small arms and artillery mortar shells.

Due to the fighting, the travelers were trapped for over an hour, and a civilian was also seriously injured. After the battle, the junta arrested more than eighty villagers, including children, the elderly, and women.

*“They also arrested the young people. They captured the villagers from the entrance of the village to the village. The victims were forced to gather and sit in front of Shin Det Wae Pagoda,” a local woman said.*

After being arrested, the victims were made to sit in front of Shin Det Wae Pagoda in the middle of the village, and they were all released at noon when the junta left the town. As a result of the clash, many of the residents have fled to safety.

# 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

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

JANUARY 2024

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