

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

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

NOVEMBER
2022



Destruction of Property Rampant in Southeastern Burma, Ongoing Offensives Undermine Civilian Safety and Security

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With 2022 coming to an end, Burma's human rights landscape remains fractured due to the Burma Army's constant attacks. The targeting of the civilian population has been deliberate. Patterns of their systematic and widespread atrocities are evident through airstrikes and ground attacks intentionally deployed in areas without active conflict. Their acts are part of a broader strategy by the junta to replace the support of the opposition movement with fear.

However, even nearly two years after the attempted coup, the power of the people remains unstoppable. Protests are ongoing and calls for the immediate dismantling and delegitimizing of the junta have not slowed. The bravery of human rights defenders persists even amidst moments of great uncertainty.

Decades of military rule and economic turmoil have left Burma in shambles as a new generation refuses to inherit the junta's devastating policies and failure to adhere to basic human rights norms and principles.

Throughout November, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) observed an increase in the number of homes the Burma Army deliberately destroyed.

Extortion of local possessions and properties is being done systematically across the country. Junta forces threatened to burn villagers' homes and launch airstrikes following any attack that injured or killed their soldiers. They routinely attack villages near mix-controlled areas such as those in Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State. These villages are controlled by the Karen National Union (KNU).

Villagers told HURFOM that the military junta randomly shoots at nearby villages with small artillery shells daily: ***"We are living in between not two fires, but various fires."*** The junta army repeatedly threatened to launch artillery attacks and burn down the houses and villages of local people. Now, villagers dig holes and bunkers to hide from air assaults and heavy weapons attacks. Wherever the People's Defense Forces (PDFs) attack the junta troops, the junta soldiers arrest innocent villagers from nearby villages and extort money for their release. As a result, many villagers have had to flee their homes.

On 4 November, the joint forces of the junta battalion No. 408 and their backed militia forces entered the Mudoo village in Nabulae, Yebyu, Dawei, where they forced open the doors and shops in the town belonging to

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villagers. They seized items worth up to 10 million Myanmar kyat (approximately 4700 USD). A local villager who spoke with HURFOM reporters said junta soldiers kicked the locked doors with their boots and guns. Some stole items from ownerless homes and shops: ***“These incidents happened early morning, but the soldiers came to the village again at 10 AM, after one of their informants was shot. They destroyed the houses and properties of the villagers with anger. They took everything they saw,”*** residents said.

At around 8:30 AM the next day, another group of soldiers arrived. Again, they broke down four vendor shop doors and stole dry foods, canned foods, and bottles of alcohol. They destroyed two shops. In total, at least 12 houses and 4 shops were raided. Even internally displaced people (IDPs) who have abandoned their villages in fear have had their remaining possessions destroyed by the military. Junta forces destroyed the leftover homes and robbed the valuables left by the IDPs and local inhabitants affected by armed clashes in Dawei, according to those who fled the junta offensives in Tanintharyi Region, Southern Burma.

On 8 November, junta forces attacked four villages in Myeik District, Southern Tanintharyi Region, killing at least 16 civilians’ houses by setting a fire. The

indiscriminate gunfire seriously injured a woman villager from Sedawyar village while they entered, and she remains in critical condition. The villages attacked and burned down by the junta were Tapo village, Too-Ywa village, Sedawyar, and Kye-Ywa village, located under the administration of Pa Law township: ***“Sixteen houses in total turned into ashes, and a female villager was injured,”*** said a local.

On the evening of 10 November in Win-Sein village, Thaton Township, Mon State, villagers said that approximately 80 soldiers of the military junta raided homes and conducted an area-cleaning operation, resulting in more than 500 villagers fleeing. In addition to destroying homes, the soldiers continued to shoot indiscriminately. In a single day, the Burma Army forces were responsible for more than twenty cases of looting and theft of civilian belongings. An estimated 500 to 600 villagers, especially women, seniors, and teenagers, fled before the attacks once the junta arrived in the village. A 60-year-old woman who spoke to HURFOM expressed fear about the Burma Army’s presence: ***“I am worried that the junta will burn down my house again. Our home was rebuilt almost a year ago.”***

Raids are warrantless; in doing so, the junta steals possessions that they see as of value, including livestock. On 11 November 2022,

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the junta broke into at least 30 homes in Wakone village, Dawei. The soldiers, temporarily stationed in Wa-kone village for the night, seized valuables and livestock, including chickens, ducks, and goats. On 13 November, the junta left Wakone village. Residents said the troops had moved their army camps to the neighbouring town, Thin-Gan-Tone, Dawei, for about two days. They continue to break into civilian homes and steal from them in yet another act of lawlessness.

Again, on 12 November, further acts of property destruction occurred. Local villagers reported that the junta forces raided Chaung-Hna-Kwa village. They fled while soldiers fired indiscriminately at them, causing almost everyone in Kyaikmayaw township, Mon State, to escape. ***“They suddenly raided and attacked the whole village with indiscriminate firing. Around 9 AM, a military helicopter was hovering, and we were apprehensive about aerial fire,”*** said one of the villager committees following the attack.

HURFOM also documented cases of murder. At 11 PM, a 60-year-old man was shot and killed during the first week of the month. The soldiers cruelly disposed of his body along the side of a road. Residents believed they killed U Kyi Lwin because he is the

father of one of the area’s most well-known People’s Defense Force leaders. He was the second victim of his family. His wife was also shot to death by the junta six months ago. The body of U Kyi Lwin was found in the early morning of November 9th in Dawei by passers-by on the road.

Women have experienced worsening cases of harassment by the Burma Army soldiers. Security forces verbally abuse women at Kan Bauk, Yebyu, Dawei checkpoints. Since the attempted coup, the junta has increasingly established checkpoints in the Kan Bauk region of Yebyu Township, northern Tanintharyi Region. Security forces have routinely been harassing and verbally abusing women who cross these checkpoints. They stop women, ask for their phone numbers, and Facebook accounts details, and verbally abuse them. ***“They often let the boys go after being stopped, they stopped our motorbike, and I thought they were also going to check on us. But they said, ‘you’re beautiful. Where are you from?’ They verbally abused us. After checking our phones, they asked for our numbers and Facebook accounts,”*** said a woman who had experienced this type of harassment by the junta. When the security forces do not get what they want, they don’t let the women go on, preventing them from turning around and returning home.

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Against the junta's harrowing escalation of human rights towards civilians, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit took place. Civil society organizations, including HURFOM, called upon leaders to take clear and coordinated action on the situation in Burma. Past initiatives such as the '5-Point Consensus' have been unsuccessful, primarily due to the lack of accountability measures to hold the junta responsible.

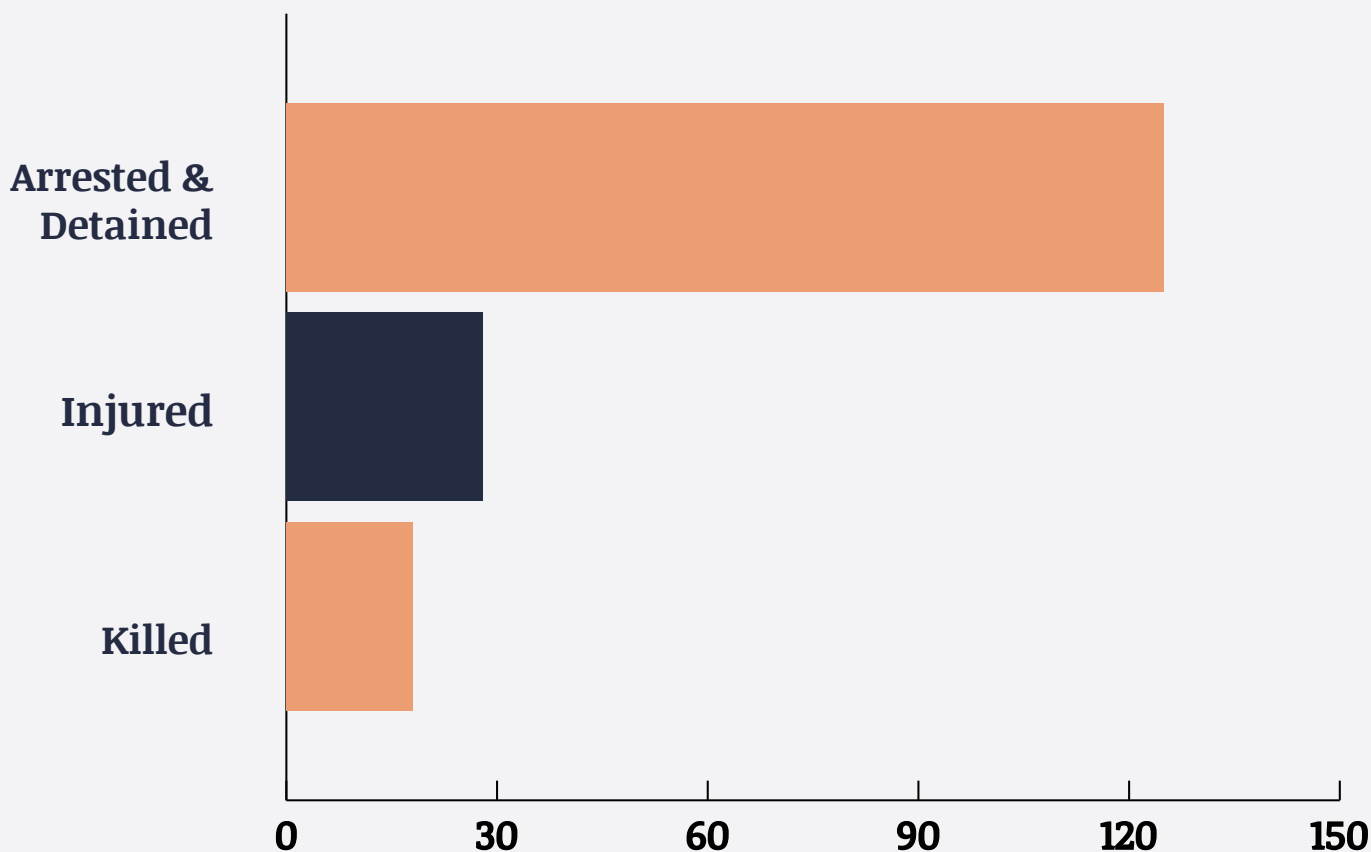
The Burma Army has acted in flagrant violation of the agreement and refused to cease attacks on civilians. ASEAN has been called on to recognize the National Unity Government and to revise the Special Envoy mandate. ASEAN can stop inviting the regime to any ASEAN-related meeting. De-legitimizing them and their unlawful coup must take priority.

HURFOM reinforces our calls for an immediate end to the violence, particularly the targeting of innocent civilians. Each month that HURFOM has reported on the atrocities in Southeastern Burma, the situation demands an urgent response. The lives of innocent people are on the line. They require humanitarian aid and assurance that their plight is not in vain. There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the military is committing these acts with impunity and in stark violation of international laws and treaties.

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 **November 2022**, HURFOM recorded **least 78 arrested, 60 detained, 60 injured and 17 killed.**

Civilians Arrested, Injured & Killed in November 2022 in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region



Members of Parliament and their families targeted by the military junta.

14

PROTESTS ACROSS TARGET
AREAS IN NOVEMBER 2022

9

TANINTHARYI
REGION

3

MON STATE

2

KAREN STATE



26 000+

CIVILIANS DISPLACED ACROSS TARGET AREAS

CIVILIANS TARGETED IN MON, KAREN STATE
& TANINTHARYI REGION

8+

DISMISSED FOR
INVOLVEMENT
IN THE CIVIL
DISOBEDIENCE
MOVEMENT

6+

PROTESTERS/
ACTIVISTS
SENTENCED IN
JUNTA COURTS

12+

ENFORCED
DISAPPEARANCES
BY THE MILITARY



KAREN STATE

9,700+ Newly Displaced

19 Injured, 6 Killed



Mon State



Tanintharyi Region

In retaliation for attacks on junta bases, the Burma Army has resorted to targeting civilian areas in Karen State. Their air forces attacked Bilin civilians with fighter jets. According to an emergency response member, several houses were burnt down, and a villager was injured. The Karen National Union (KNU)-Bilin Township Brigade committee members also confirmed that some residential homes were destroyed by the air strikes on November 7, 2022, at 12:30 PM in Baw Naw Wah Village, Bilin Township, KNU-Thaton District. The incident occurred around midnight when people were resting. One of the victims, Saw Kyaw Lay, age 27, was injured by mortar shells.

On November 16, at 1:40 AM, a junta fighter jet attacked with missiles targeting Tha Byu Lead Mining, located 18 miles from the border town of Three Pagodas, southern Kyainnseikyi, Karen State. The entire mine camp exploded, killing three civilians, and injuring eight people. Patients were taken to Three Pagoda Public Hospital.

A teacher who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement said to HURFOM, ***“We were safe because we did not stay at the plantation. After the armed conflicts intensified in the KNU Brigade 6 area, the junta continued carrying out airstrikes. The military council army’s camps and police stations were attacked and occupied by the Karen National Liberation Army and the People’s Defense Forces.”***



MON STATE

3,300+ Newly Displaced

9 Injured, 3 Killed



Karen State



Tanintharyi Region

Due to worsening clashes, the Burma Army and police have been conducting strict inspections at the Chang Hla Kwa Rion Bridge, located in Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State. Residents and travellers reported that they were ordered to leave their vehicles. On 13 November 2022, an eyewitness said that the Burma Army shot and killed a young Karen villager, who was forced to get off his motorcycle. The reason provided was that the victim ‘disobeyed’ the security troops’ order by refusing to get off and push his bike. The deceased was confirmed to be a young Karen villager from Yay-Lae village, Kyainnseiky Township. After witnessing what happened, most travellers who needed to cross the bridge did not dare continue their journey, so they turned back from the bridge. ***“Just before arriving to Mudon town, I heard the gunshots again. I had no idea what was happening to the motorcycle riders behind me,”*** reported a resident of Mudon township who witnessed the shooting.

On November 13, the junta shot and injured a 67-year-old Mon villager in Kyaikmayaw Township. Witnesses said

Burma Army soldiers passed by and then shot at him. The local team managed to transfer the patient to the hospital on the same day, where he remains in critical condition,” said a village committee member. The junta has injured five villagers between the two days that this incident was first reported.


Airstrikes by the military junta in Taung Kalay village, Kyaikmaw Township, led to the deaths of two civilians and injured eight others on 21 November at 5 AM. Locals who were already fleeing conflict reported a military helicopter began to fire. The aircraft bombed several shells from morning to afternoon. The military’s ground base Artillery Battalion located on Khuna-Khway hill, on the border of Mudon and Kyaikmayaw, also fired continuously with heavy weapons towards Taung Kalay village and around the villages.

Initially, HURFOM reporters received info that two civilians were killed, and at least eight individuals from Taung Kalay were injured due to the aerial bombardment. Residences have been damaged, and approximately 3,000 villagers from Taungkale, Hla-Ka-Zaing,

Pha-Nu, Ka-dar Thayet-Kone, Kyan-Daw, and Mee-Kwe-Kone villagers were immediately forced to flee the airstrikes and artillery fire.

Civilians continue to be suspected of allegiance to the People's Defense Forces (PDFs). Witnesses from Mawlamyine reported that more than 50 soldiers of the junta special forces and police officers arrived at the Zay-Cho market in six military vehicles and abducted at least five dealers in the area of the Zay-Cho station, accusing them of supporting the PDF. At least six individuals were arrested on 26 November. They were charged on the pretext of providing PDFs with financial support. When the soldiers arrested them, they covered the detainees' heads and took them to the military lorries.

Similarly, in Hpa-An Township, Karen State, on November 27, at 7 AM at least eight merchandisers were arrested for not paying taxes to the market authorities and the GAD of Karen State. Traders, and small, medium-scale sellers believed that paying taxes would help cover the junta's defense costs targeting innocent civilians in southern Burma. Since the coup, the military has increased taxes on vendors and traders. Thus, some sellers have not paid taxes and have been targeted and arrested.



“Just before arriving to Mudon town, I heard the gunshots again. I had no idea what was happening to the motorcycle riders behind me.”



Tanintharyi region

13,000+ Newly Displaced

32 Injured, 8 Killed



Karen State



Mon State

The military junta targets young people, particularly young men, who the regime suspects of being involved in or supporting armed opposition movements. This has created a worsening environment of fear for families. On November 14, at 3 AM, joint soldiers and pro-junta militia forces raided the Buddhist Monastery, locally known as 'Kyae-Taung Monastery,' and arbitrarily abducted two monks and three young men who lived there. A witness told HURFOM: ***“They broke the monastery doors, then arrested the Abbot of the Monastery, U Panyar Barsa, U Nanda Wara, and Win Htet, Nay Toe, and Eai Sann. All of them were accused of supporting the People’s Defense Forces. They arrested them by force and even took some belongings from the Monastery, including a van.”***

More local civilians were abducted and demanded ransoms for their families to release in Thayet-Chaung Township, Dawei. Families confirmed that two residents of Ale-Su village, Thayet Chaung, were arrested with no warrants by joint troops of junta-back militia forces. Ransoms were demanded to free the following victims: U Yun, age 50, a resident of Ale-Su village, Thayet Chaung, Dawei. Ko Thein Win, age 43, and a

resident of Ale-Su village, Thayet Chaung, Dawei. The number of demanded ransoms is unknown.

On November 5, at 5 PM, two innocent civilians were grabbed by junta security troops on accusations of being affiliated with local PDFs in Boke Pyin Township, Southern Tanintharyi Region. The victims were Ko Han Min Kyaw, a Manager of Yuzana Oil Palm Company, located in War-Chaung village, Boke Pyin Township and Ko Min Lwin, an ordinary villager of the same area. ***“They were accused of being affiliated with the People’s Defense Forces. They were beaten while the junta forces arrested them,”*** said a 40-year-old witness. All arrestees have disappeared.

According to the local villagers, arbitrary arrests and using local civilians as human shields in eastern Dawei continued. On November 2, local villagers reported that the junta forces arrested at least nine villagers, including women, and later used them as human shields. They did this while fighting the PDFs to prevent ambushes, shots, and potential landmine attacks. HURFOM received all nine cases of the junta forces arresting the villagers from three villages, and seven of them confirmed using as

human shields by the junta soldiers. The first seven were arrested on 2 November by military council soldiers in Dar-Twe-Kyauk and Nyang Chaung village, East Dawei Township. These arrests included two women from Nyaung Chaung village at 4 PM. All of them live as betel nut plantation workers. One of the reporters close to a village committee of Nyaung Chaung received the detainees' accounts. Those arrested are Aung Ko Htwe, Saw El Doh Htoo, U Hpaw Law, Hpa Su Karm, Ma Yin Htwe, Naw Phyoe, and Naw Hpaw Shee.

Between 18 and 19 November 2022, HURFOM reported that sixteen people were arrested at various checkpoints operated by the junta forces in northern Tanintharyi, according to the field records received by HURFOM. Sources confirmed that two female detainees were released after being forced to pay high ransoms. The junta arbitrarily arrests people through checkpoints, door-to-door inspections, and midnight raid operations. At 8:30 PM on November 15, a resident said junta troops raided some homes in Daung Ngu Ward and arrested six young men and two women on the pretext of a household registration list.

On November 16 at noon, an eyewitness said that two more men were arrested along with a cargo truck from Lei Shaung village Dawei that passed through the Kamyaw Kin Iron Bridge checkpoint. Later that day, at 2 PM, U Soe Thein and his wife from Wanpoe village were arrested again at the Kamyaw Kin Bridge police station. In the meantime, junta soldiers of the military council are patrolling every night, making arrests, and interrogating people's homes in the neighbourhood.

For no reason or just cause, the military junta targets civilians. On 22 November, the junta forces inspecting pedestrians in front of the Public Hospital in Long Lon, opened fire on two young men on a motorcycle. One was seriously injured, and the other was caught and arrested. They also shot at two other innocent teenagers walking on the road. The two victims are siblings. Residents stated that 15-year-old Maung Wei Yan Aung died from a gunshot wound at the hospital.

Another incident of murder took place on 25 November when joint troops of the junta forces and the pro-military armed group, Pyu Saw Htee, entered Nyaw Pyin village, Long Lon Township, Tanintharyi Region, where they then captured and killed two residents. The troops also stole valuable properties from the homes of the fleeing residents. More than 800 residents of Nyaw Pyin village have been forced to flee to safety as junta forces and their sponsored militias entered the area.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

1. Inflation across all target areas has had a devastating toll on civilians who are unable to have their most basic needs met.
2. Clashes have led to forced internal displacement in Burma as instability and tensions force people from their homes.
3. Concerns have spread as the military junta begins to make decisions which would bar competing, democratic parties from the next election in Burma. The military junta has been trying to change/ manipulate the numbers of constituencies.
4. Motorcycles, mobile devices, and money are regularly confiscated and extorted from civilians at checkpoints stationed by the junta deliberately along key-routes. Civilians were forced to pay excessive bribes to retrieve their possessions. However, very few were able to afford the high costs.
5. Torture remains rampant in Burma, and across target areas where innocent civilians are subjected to grueling, horrifying acts by the junta to extract information.
6. The international community including UN bodies and ASEAN are not responding swiftly enough to the situation on the ground in Burma, which demands urgent attention and consequences for the junta.
7. Military impunity remains deeply ingrained into the institutions representing the Tatmadaw, which only emboldens the junta to continue perpetrating human rights violations.
8. Children have been targeted by the military junta, and deprived of their basic needs including medical attention, food, education and the right to live safely.
9. The arbitrary arrests and unlawful detention by the junta are ongoing, as are warrantless raids and indiscriminate firing into civilian areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A referral of the situation on the ground in Burma 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, as well as their families, which puts holds on their financial assets and possessions and undercuts their ability to do corrupt business dealings abroad.
5. Strengthened and renewed protection mechanisms which grant civilians who are vulnerable and at risk of assault in a position where they are able to 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.

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