

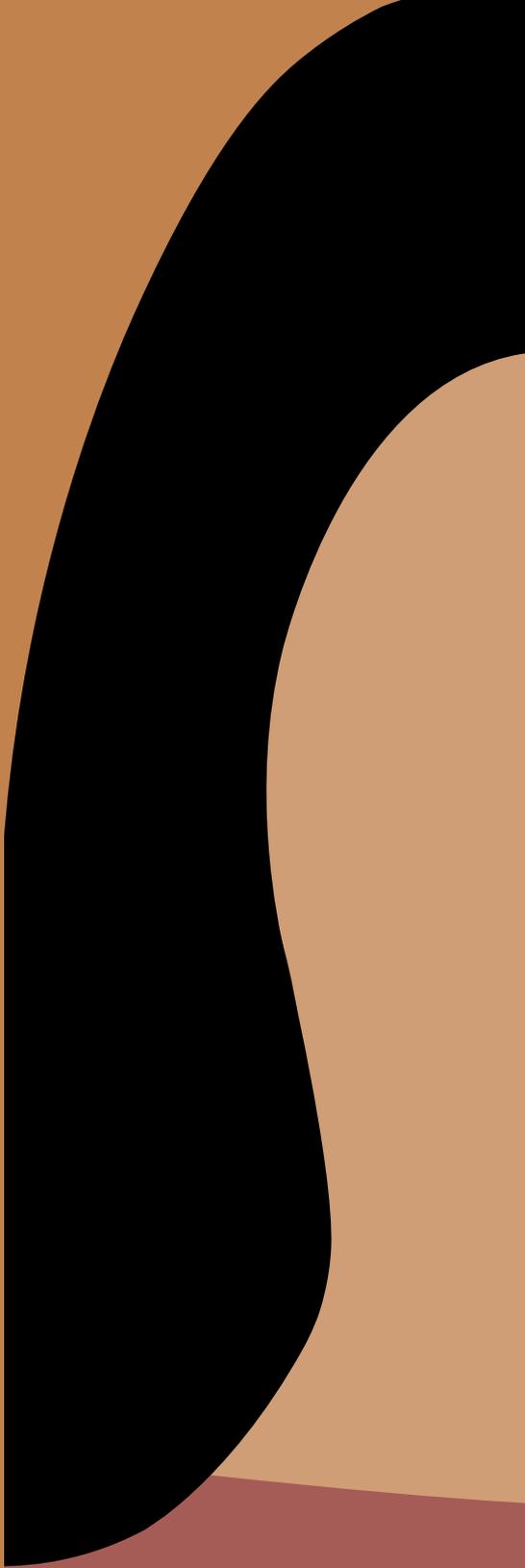


VOICE UP

**A Gendered Overview of the Human
Rights Situation in Southeastern Burma**

January - March 2024





This short report is the first in a series of quarterly updates and analyses with data from the Women & Child Rights Project of the Human Rights Foundation of Monland.

HURFOM acknowledges the adversity of women and girls in Burma who continue to resist the junta.

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HURFOM was founded by exiled pro-democracy students from the 1988 uprisings, recent activists and Mon community leaders and youth.

Its primary objective is restoring democracy, human rights and genuine peace in Burma. HURFOM is a non-profit organization, and all its members are volunteers with a shared vision for peace in the country.



Introduction

This short report is the first in a series of quarterly updates and analyses, which combines data collected from the ground by the Women and Child Rights project of the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM). Before the attempted coup in Burma, we had published similar content in a bulletin-style format under the title, **‘Voice Up.’**

The Women and Children’s Rights project seeks to monitor the situation of women and children in Mon areas and southern Burma about the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Field staff collect and distribute information and data to our local and international networks.

The findings also empower and educate women and children in the Mon community by providing information on their rights according to CEDAW and CRC and encouraging them to participate in the struggle to protect and enforce their fundamental freedoms.

Activities under the project include:

- 1. A bi-annual Mon and Burmese-language journal: ‘Our Rights Journal’.**
- 2. Capacity building includes training in women’s and children’s rights and training trainers in both areas. Women’s internship program.**
- 3. Data collection and documentation on topics such as the trafficking of women and children and violence against women and child soldiers.**

The data and analyses collected in this briefing paper are a testament to the tenacity and commitment of the women human rights defenders who spearheaded the documentation process. Despite the many challenges that women and children face, especially as the human rights situation has worsened since the failed coup, women’s resilience remains unwavering and steadfast in ensuring the enshrinement of all rights for all people in Burma.

Overview of the Situation for Women in Burma

Since the Attempted Coup

Thousands of civilians have suffered from violence, trauma and displacement since the attempted coup on 1 February 2021. As the pro-democracy movement in Burma shifted from one of peaceful protest to armed resistance, more women found themselves at increasing risk of military violence.

In the last three years, nationwide over 800 women have been killed in a war fueled by the Burma Army.¹ Across the country, 5,427 women have been arbitrarily detained, and nearly 4000 are still unlawfully detained in junta-run prisons where they face increasing risks to their overall well-being.² Among those arrested, 16 face the death penalty, and 52 have been sentenced to life in prison.³ In conflict torn townships and States across the country, there have been at least 130 cases of documented sexual violence⁴. However, this number is likely significantly higher as many cases of gendered violence are not reported due to stigma, fear of reprisals and a lack of reliable justice referral pathways.

The situation for women is deteriorating rapidly as the military junta deploys air and ground attacks, even in places of temporary shelter, such as camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) and conflict-affected refugees.

In HURFOM target areas of Mon State, Karen State and the Tanintharyi region, we estimate that at *least 145 women have been killed since 1 February 2021. In addition, 320 women have been seriously wounded. Nearly 1500 women have been unlawfully arrested and detained. Throughout the reporting period, at least eleven women were killed, twenty-three injured, seventeen were arbitrarily arrested and two cases of enforced disappearances.*

While soldiers of various ethnic revolution organizations (EROs) continue to fight the shared rival of the Burma military, women are constantly at risk of being sexually assaulted or raped by the Burma Army.

¹“Women Subjected to Sexual Violence during the Spring Revolution under the Military Coup,” 1 March 2024. Assistance Association for Political Prisoners

² “Fact-sheet: The situation of women of Myanmar,” 8 March 2024. Women’s Peace Network

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

Further, the military Generals have attempted to ruthlessly promote an ultra-nationalist agenda that profits from war and weaponizes humanitarian aid relief and global health emergencies for their benefit. They have set the country back significantly in terms of economic gains, alongside growing poverty rates.

The reality on the ground is that the junta has lost many soldiers and bases, troops are defecting, and the regime overall is deeply unpopular. In response, they have intensified its attacks on displaced populations and those with the least capabilities and resources to respond with weapons, including women and children, to weaken morale. These senseless attacks on civilian lives deprive them of their humanity and their fundamental rights to protection and safety.

The lack of security for women and children has caused growing concerns and led to worsening hardships among local people. Despite their immense gains, strength and adversity, it is women have suffered the most from the junta's crackdown on civilians. When the war between the junta and revolutionary forces intensifies in rural areas.

In the current situation, elderly people, women, and children suffer from a lack of food, nutrition, health care, shelter, security and protection. They are among the majority of IDPs who have been caught in the crossfire of the junta's reckless artillery weapon launches, mortar firing, forced portering, landmines and other rights violations.

2021 ----- 2024*

145+ Women
Killed

320+ Women
Injured

1500+
Women Arrested
and Detained

As many men, particularly in ethnic areas have joined the armed resistance, women have had to adapt under difficult circumstances. The high rate of attacks by the junta has led to many seeking safety in temporary shelters as their villages are reduced to ashes. The indiscriminate firing has killed women and young children in their homes while tending to their households, resting or hiding from attacks in nearby bunkers.

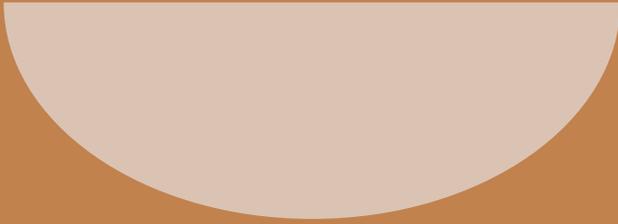
These circumstances have forced communities to abandon their livelihoods and education opportunities. Families have been separated by the war, with many conflict-affected children losing at least one family member as the junta continues to abduct, capture, imprison, torture and kill civilians. There have been many cases of mothers, sisters, wives, and children being held hostage in place of wanted activists and resistance fighters. When faced with such harrowing and traumatic situations, the physical and mental security of young women and children quickly deteriorates.

The trauma experienced by women who have been displaced, arrested, detained and witnessed the suffering of loved ones is endless. As the future of conflict-affected communities becomes more uncertain, their struggle for survival is met with more challenges. There remains widespread stigma in Burma for those seeking treatments, and there are also serious gaps in the provision of mental health services.

During these deeply challenging times, the human rights violations against women must be well-documented to ensure international accountability mechanisms are accessible for survivors and their families to see justice. Deeply ingrained military impunity has shielded Burma Army soldiers for too long.

With the 'Voice Up' series, HURFOM intends to spotlight the human rights violations against women and how in response, they are continuing to resist the military dictatorship in all its forms. The incidents are categorized by month, detailing the violations and victims' suffering. No survivor or their family received any reparations.

An Appendix at the end of this report contains a complete list of the victims' names, ages, and incident details documented by HURFOM between January and March 2024.



Overview of Incidents in January 2024

The beginning of the year was marked by ongoing violence against civilians. The Burma Army, as the primary aggressor in this conflict, continues to burden innocent people with trauma and uncertainty. Women, as guardians and protectors of the home and of their families and society, have been forced to endure unbearable loss.

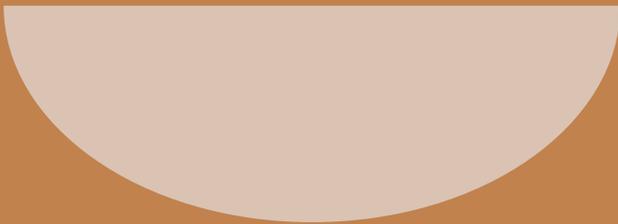
According to daily reports and documentation collected by HURFOM in January 2024, there were four women, including a 12-year-old girl, who were killed in the explosion of artillery mortar shells in Ye and Bilin Townships, Mon State.

In addition, the junta's firing of artillery weapons injured another seven women, two small boys, ages 2 and 9, as well as two 10th-grade students in Bilin, Thaton, Kaw Ka Rate, and Ye Townships.

One elderly woman lost her foot while her companion was injured when they stepped on the landmine planted by the regime in the Tanintharyi region. The junta also arbitrarily arrested two women from Yebyu Township.

Indiscriminate firing killed a young woman who was eating a meal when a bullet grazed her ear, causing her to die on the spot. Another woman was injured after five unknown gunmen opened fire on a local street.

Several additional incidents of indiscriminate attacks jeopardized the safety and security of women.



Firing of Mortar and Artillery Shells

On January 1st, at 11:30 AM, a woman named Mi Thidar Soe, age 39, from Ye Township in Mon State, who was working at a rubber plantation, was hit in the head by Light Infantry Battalion No. 591 and No. 583. Her skull was cracked, causing her severe pain and requiring immediate medical attention. Kyaung Ywar village tract in Ye Township is an area controlled by the New Mon State Party (NMSP). 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 launched by the junta.

On the same day of the attack, a nine-year-old boy was injured by the firing of eight artillery weapons launched at Wee Yaw village and Hton Bo Gyi village by Light Infantry Battalion LIB No. 9, based in Thaton Township. Civilians reported that the military is continuing to fire weapons almost every day in local areas.

On January 7th, at 11:45 AM, the Light Infantry Battalion No. 545 launched 120mm of artillery mortar shells into Kaw War Lae village. They exploded on the monastery of Aye Chan Thar Yar, damaging the two-story building and injuring two nuns. A young girl aged thirteen, Ma Ohmar Sar Ri, was injured on her left arm, and 16-year-old Ma Ein Tha Ran Thi was wounded on her right eyelid. They were taken to the hospital, where they received medical treatment.

Then, on January 19th, at 11:00 a.m., the Bilin-based junta's Artillery No. 314 in Zee Won attacked the village with mortar shells. Three women were killed, and seven were wounded. The victims, 22-year-old Ma Sandar, 49-year-old Daw Naw Mu, and Naw Kaw Lar Mu, were killed when the shells fired hit them in their homes in the village.

In addition, a 2-year-old child, a local woman, 46-year-old Daw Taw Tha, 68-year-old Daw Khin Than, 40-year-old Daw Khin Win Hlaing and 26-year-old Ma Wa Wa Thin, were hit by the shells and were seriously injured. 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.

Since the beginning of this year, as a result of the non-stop artillery and weaponry attacks by the junta in KNU-controlled areas in Bilin and Thaton Township, residents have been killed and wounded. Thousands have fled. Most of the attacks by the junta, as documented by HURFOM, took place when there was no active conflict. This is further evidence of the junta's targeting of innocent villagers, predominantly women, who have taken on additional roles and responsibilities in the home as many of the men have joined the opposition movement.

On January 20th, Light Infantry Battalion No. 588, Infantry Battalion (IB) No. 106, and the Artillery Battalion launched 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. The shells hit a young girl, 12-year-old Ma Yun Mee Mee, who was taken to the Ye Hospital and died while receiving treatment. In addition, two 10th-grade students from San Pya village were injured by the explosion.

There were two more artillery attacks before the end of January 2024. At noon on January 24th, a woman was hit by an explosion of artillery weapons from the military junta who was patrolling along the side of Ah Nyar Su village in Waw Township. Two houses were also damaged. Two days later, on January 26th, at 1:00 PM, the Artillery Battalion No. 306 based in Maw Tone village fired four artillery weapons, which exploded on a wooden house in Ka Dal Lake village in Maw Tone village. As a result, 5-year-old Ma Ei Swe Kale, a young child who was at home, was injured and suffered severe injuries to her body.

Since the beginning of this year, as a result of the non-stop artillery and weaponry attacks by the junta in KNU controlled areas in Bilin and Thaton Township, residents have been killed, and wounded. Thousands of civilians have fled. Most of the attacks by the junta took place when there was no active conflict.

Arbitrary Arrests and Abductions

On January 23rd, at 2 AM, after the junta forcibly entered a civilian home, a couple was arrested without reason. These cases are unfortunately far too common as the Burma Army regularly breaks into local homes and conducts violent arrests. Many of those detained are not heard from for many days as they are taken to military interrogation centers without any information released about their condition.

Landmines

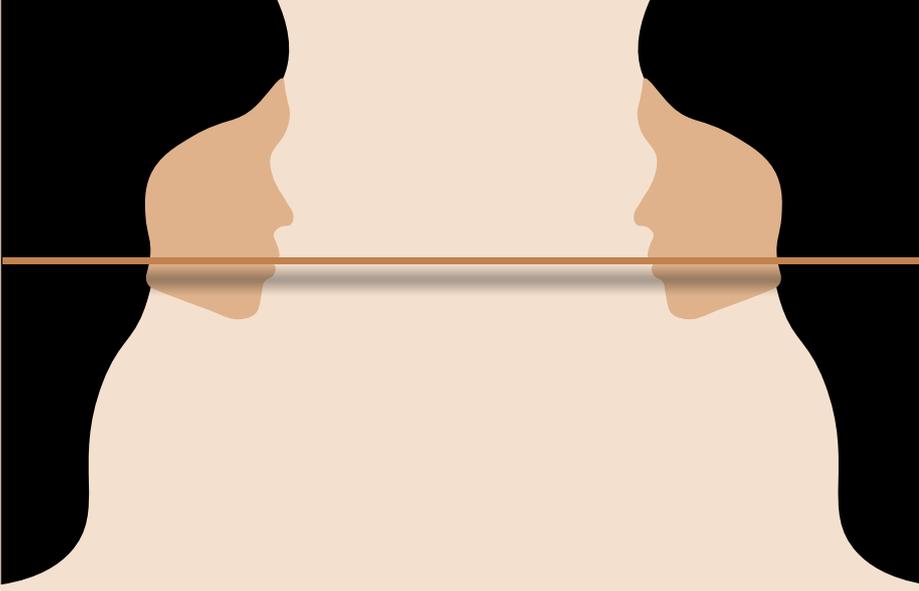
On January 9th, at 7 PM, a 67-year-old woman named Daw Thwe and 36-year-old Ma Mee Kang, who was accompanying her from the west bank of Nyaung Pin Kwin village, Tanintharyi Township, stepped on a landmine in a rubber farm in the east of the junta's Infantry Battalion No. 561. Daw Thwe was seriously injured when she lost her leg in the explosion. Ma Mee Kang, who was also wounded, was being treated with less severe wounds at her home.

In a separate incident on January 25th, at 7 AM, 60-year-old Daw Yin Shwe from Kawt Wa Lae village stepped on a landmine after returning from donating alms at Kawt Kyaik Monastery. The lower part of her left knee shattered, and she also suffered from a severe injury to her right leg. She was taken to the General Hospital in Kyone Do for emergency treatment. She is now in recovery.

Indiscriminate Firing

On January 4th at 12:30 PM, a civilian was shot when he stopped at a local shop. Two masked men arrived on a motorcycle and fired at him. At the same time, a young woman, Ma Hnin Ye Htwe, who was eating nearby, was hit by a bullet that pierced her left ear, causing her to die on the spot.

A few days later, on January 6th, at 9 AM, during the clash between the military junta and the armed wing of the KNU, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and armed opposition forces in Ah Lu Lay village, two workers, 39-year-old Ko Zayar Min and his wife, 36-year-old Ma Ni Ni Aye, were hit by the weapons fired. They were eating in their house and suffered injuries to their upper bodies when one of the bombs exploded nearby.



Attacks by junta-backed informers have only contributed to the heightened fears local people experience daily. On January 12th, five unknown gunmen opened fire inside Wa Bank on General Street, Kant Kaw Ward, Kyaik Hto City. A woman was wounded in her left thigh and her back. The firing of bullets at any day and time has created an uncertain environment. Any decision can result in a deadly altercation with the murderous junta. This has unjustly contributed to the increased stress in the choices people must make for their survival.

On January 18th at 11:30 AM, although there was no fighting in the vicinity of Kaw Hlaing village, two couples riding motorcycles were hit by the military junta's artillery mortar shell fire. The husband suffered from wounds to his body as a result.

Violence Against Women

A CCTV video file of U Soe Tun, chairman of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), punching and beating a woman working at a hotel massage room circulated on social media. The assault happened at the Royal Mawlamyine Hotel in Mawlamyine, Mon State, on January 13th, close to midnight. According to the video footage, an intoxicated U Soe Tun assaulted a female massage parlor worker who came out of a room with him.

For decades, the soldiers of the military-backed USDP have evaded accountability. They are protected by the 2008 Constitution which shields them from any type of consequences. As a result, they often deploy violent behavior against women on and off the battlefields. Women are threatened if they report their cases which risks putting themselves or their families in danger. Many do not see justice for the attacks against them.



Overview of Incidents in February 2024

The lives of innocent civilians continue to be affected by the junta's reckless attacks, which included fatalities, injuries, and the abductions of individuals, particularly women and children, increasing concerns among communities. Similar incidents led to persistent threats to vulnerable lives and infrastructure posed by military actions.

In February, HURFOM reported on more widespread gendered violence committed by the military junta. These incidents included tragic deaths caused by landmines and artillery explosions, as well as ongoing arbitrary arrests. All of the cases documented, and the many more human rights violations which remain unreported due to fear of reprisals, are taking place amidst a worsening humanitarian crisis created by and fueled by the junta.

In February 2024, a **total of 21 people suffered from human rights violations by the junta**. Among them, two women lost their lives, three women and four boys were wounded, and twelve women were arrested by the junta across the Mon State and Tanintharyi region, Southern Burma. A landmine blast killed one woman. Artillery fire claimed the life of another. Ongoing mortar shells fired by the junta are among the leading causes of death for displaced women and children.

Another woman had to undergo a surgery and had her leg amputated after stepping on a landmine planted by the junta in Tha Yet Chaung Township, Dawei. Meanwhile, unlawful arrests continued, leading to the arrest of twelve women, including two young women, ages 18 and 28, from Yebyu, Dawei and Mawlamyine, Mon State.

The following are the documented cases in the second month of the year.

Firing of Mortar and Artillery Shells

Women and children continue to be caught in the crossfire of violence. A 9-year-old boy was seriously injured when the regiment fired artillery mortar shells into Kaw Hlaing village, Thaton Township, Mon State, on 1 February at 4:30 PM. The Light Infantry Battalion No. 9 based in Thaton shot two artillery shells into Kaw Hlaing village, causing an explosion. Saw Thet Naing Htwe, age 9, was hit by the blast and suffered a broken leg.

“The army is firing artillery weapons every day. It hit a child living in the house. The injury is severe because of a leg fracture. The whole village is frightened,” said a resident of Kaw Hlaing village.

When the military junta attacked with artillery mortar shells in Pha Lan Taung village, Hpa-An Township, Karen State, two children were injured. A 15-year-old boy named Saw Aung Tha Pyay Hein suffered a fractured left arm while playing in the stadium, and 16-year-old Saw Nay Myo Oo broke his wrist and suffered from severe abdominal injuries. One motorcycle was also damaged when two artillery weapons exploded in Pha Lan Taung village. The two boys who were harmed by the explosion of artillery shells received medical treatment at Pha Lan Taung District Hospital. Saw Nay Myo Oo was in critical condition.

The daily launching of artillery shells by the military junta into Kaw Hlaing village has made it difficult for the local people to go to work to support their families. They are living in fear. Kaw Hlaing village is in the administrative area of the Karen National Union (KNU) Brigade 1, Thaton District, where most Karen people live.

On February 4th, the military junta launched an indiscriminate artillery attack on Nyar Hta Well village, Thaton Township, Mon State, that injured 42-year-old Naw Ma Hla Baung and damaged 12 houses, according to a statement by the Thaton District KNU. The Thaton-based Artillery Regiment attacked the village of Nyar Hta Well at night. There were no active armed clashes in the area during this time.

A few days later, on February 7th, the junta targeted Kyone Long old village, Ye Township, Mon State. Despite no active fighting, the regime launched five indiscriminate artillery attacks. One of the artillery shells exploded on the house and injured seven family

members—a ten-year-old child, five men, and a woman. The 316th Artillery Regiment, based in Ye Township, was responsible for the attack.

On February 15th, at 6 PM, the terrorist army's No. 208 Light Infantry Battalion fired six artillery weapons at villages in Hpa-An Township, and one shell exploded at the base of the house of Saw Kyo Mutu in Ray Aye village. The blast injured 35-year-old Naw Se-Wha and 58-year-old Naw Ma Pyar. The homes of Saw Le Do, Saw Maung Han Thein, Saw Kyo Mutu, Saw Lae Do, and Naw Kiki were also damaged.

At 5:30 AM on February 16th, the 315th Artillery Battalion launched a drone bomb attack in Kyarinnseiky Township, killing 53-year-old Naw Kawt Kaw from the village of Loh Shar. The KNU reported that a woman was hit by a blast when the junta was bombarded with artillery weapons and a drone in Kyarinnseiky township.

Not long after, another attack took place on February 17th at 1 AM. Burma Army soldiers stationed in Lat Pan village of Pa Waw township fired two drones into Kha Ywal village. It launched two shells, which injured a young woman on her head. She was taken to Thein Zayat District Hospital for treatment. In addition, at least three homes were damaged.

Towards the end of February, early in the morning, the KNU reported that one woman, age 53, Naw Kok Kaw, from Lol Shar village, was killed by an explosion of artillery shells in Kyainnseiky township.

Arbitrary Arrests and Abductions

Arbitrary arrests threaten the safety of local civilians, especially women who are at risk of sexual violence in military custody. On the afternoon of February 2nd, the military junta arrived in the villages of Tha Pyay Soon and Min Dud in Yebyu Township, and at least 20 local men and women were arrested. As of February 4th, two villagers—a mother and son—have not been released from those detained.

On February 3rd, in the evening, Daw Lae Lae Cho, age 38 and a resident of Phaung Taw village, was also taken captive when her husband, 37-year-old Ko Kyaw Zin, was arrested by the junta for unknown reasons. This arrest marked the beginning of a steady increase in abductions in which almost a dozen women from four

village tracts were detained by the junta during the first three weeks of February. As the junta increases its presence, women are being targeted for their pro-democracy activities.

Two sisters, Daw Cho Cho and Daw Nyo Nyo, aged 40, were captured by the Mawrawaddy Navy at 11:00 PM on February 17th. Two days before, Daw Kay Jar Oo, a teacher who is a member of the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), was abducted when she was returning from shopping in Kanbauk village on February 15th. A young woman aged around 18 from Tha Boot Chaung village was also arrested by the junta.

“The phones of individuals arrested are being checked with advanced technology. Many people are all locked in one room together,” said a recently released person.

Since the beginning of this year, the Mawrawaddy Navy has been arresting and interrogating the locals in the Kanbauk area: “There are more and more cases of junta-backed affiliates entering and arresting people at homes at night,” said a local.

On February 20th, in the morning, the middle school teacher from high school in Kanbauk, Daw Yin Yin Aye, and the secondary school teachers from the post-primary school, Hlae Kone, Daw Nilar San, and Daw Thet Thet Mon, were arrested at their respective homes.

“The phones of individuals arrested are being checked with advanced technology. Many people are all locked in one room together.”

On February 28th, at night, U Ko Naing and Daw May Day, a married couple from the Hlae Kone ward, Kanbauk area, were also arrested by the Mawrawaddy Navy.

In Mawlamyine, Mon State, the junta arrested a young woman after members of a military lobby group on the messaging application Telegram urged them to arrest her. Thiri Yadanar Mg, a Facebook user, was accused of supporting opposition groups on her social media page. The junta issued a statement accusing her of posting information that affected ‘national peace and order’ when she wrote: “[The junta] is running out of bullets,” as well as sharing supportive posts of the Spring Revolution.

Thiri Yadanar Mg is being investigated under Section 505-A of the Penal Code. Ordinary people, including those from Thanbyuzayat Township, are worried that more cases like hers will follow, and that they too will be accused and arrested on baseless allegations.

In addition, at midnight on February 19, the junta captured Daw Yin Aye, age 50, Ma Thet Thet Mon, age 30, Ma Nilar San, age 38 and Daw Zarchi Myoe in Kanbauk village and Min Thar village in Yebyu Township at their respective homes.

In the last week of February 2024, the military junta arrested a teacher who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and a male vendor from Kyike Hto Township, Mon State. On February 21st, 35-year-old CDM schoolteacher Daw Phyu Phyu Khine was arrested by the junta at the Lat Pya checkpoint in Kyike Hto City. She was sent to a military interrogation center, but family members of Ko Ka Lar do not know her whereabouts.

Landmines

Landmines are a life-threatening risk for civilians living in conflict areas. On February 7th, a 52-year-old woman, Daw Ma Lay, from Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State, was injured by a landmine explosion and sent to the local hospital. She died at Thanbyuzayat Township General Hospital due to injuries to both of her legs.

“This is the first time that a landmine in Ka Rope Pi killed a villager. The villagers are frightened to go to their plantation. But they feel they must go, or they will have livelihood problems,” said a Ka Rope Pi resident. The junta’s battalions along Thanbyuzayat-Ye Highway Road have lost control of the area and planted landmines to protect their bases, according to villagers who spoke to HURFOM.

On February 9, unexploded landmines were found in a school and other locations in Mel Ta Yo village, Kyikemayaw Township, Mon State, which caused parents and residents to be worried about the safety of their children. There are concerns about the risks of sending them to school.

A few days later, on February 12th, 40-year-old Daw Myint was on her way to her workplace at a rubber plantation near Kyar Inn village when she stepped on a landmine. She suffered injuries to one foot and lost the other.

“This is the first time that a landmine in Ka Rope Pi killed a villager. The villagers are frightened to go to their plantation. But they feel they must go, or they will have livelihood problems.”

Day Myint is from Tha Yet Chaung Township, Tenasserim Division. Her foot had to be amputated after being sent to the Dawei General Hospital for treatment. When the People’s Defense Force came to remove the landmines at noon, they found four other landmines.

“The military junta planted the landmine. Now, no villager dares to go to their plantation,” added a Nyaung Zin resident.

According to the 2023 report by the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, more than 1,300 people have been injured or killed by the landmine explosion since the attempted coup on February 1st, 2021.

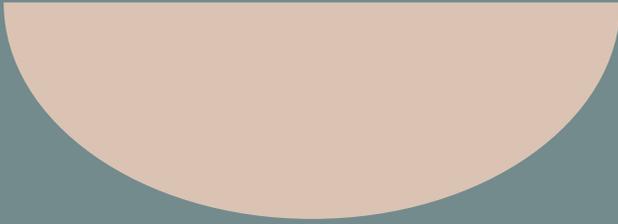
Indiscriminate Firing

On February 4th, at 11:00 AM, after the military junta forces entered the school of Kin Shay village, the People’s Defense Forces ambushed when they were conducting a house-to-house search and inspection. Fighting broke out between the two sides. At the time of the shooting, Daw Shin Aye, who was about 60 years old, was killed while trying to shield herself from the violence near her home.

Violence Against Women

On February 28th, at 2:30 AM, two women living in Kyaikmayaw Township died of knife wounds, and their belongings were taken. The two victims were 56-year-old Daw Par Par Thi and 50-year-old Daw Hla Hla Win.

Since the coup, the complete erosion of law has led to increased criminal activity, including thefts which quickly can turn violent and result in death. This is yet another aspect of survival that people are struggling to cope with.



Overview of Incidents in March 2024

A worrying trend of ongoing abuses by the military junta continued in March. According to the documentation collected by HURFOM, attempts by local villagers, especially women, to try and live peacefully were met with violence. This includes the case of an elderly woman who stepped on a landmine while gardening. She suffered severe injuries and is among the thousands of people who have had their lives negatively impacted by the loss of limbs as a result of landmines.

In the two months from February to March 12th in Zahar village, Dawei, three people were hit by landmines. All three were gardening when they stepped on landmines. The military junta deliberately places them in areas that local people frequent, including farms, schools, clinics, and surrounding areas in a village. This is done as yet another fear-mongering tactic.

Indiscriminate firing by the military junta was deployed frequently during periods when there was no active fighting taking place. This resulted in more innocent women being caught in the crossfire of violence while at home or in their villages. One woman was killed when artillery shells hit her while she was fleeing by motorbike during an attack.

The worsening trajectory of human rights violations during the third month of the reporting period is indicative of the military junta's disregard for civilian lives. For women, they continue to be targeted and impacted in different ways, which makes their struggle for survival more difficult. The following cases are further evidence of how the Burma Army is waging its assaults against the civilian population with impunity.

Firing of Mortar and Artillery Shells

On March 2nd, the military junta launched air assaults on Tha Yet Chaung Township, Dawei District, forcing residents from seven villages to flee their homes and find safe shelter. After a “Pyu Saw Htee,” a pro-military camp in Yaung Maw village, was attacked, the junta responded with a Mi-2 helicopter-led air assault. This forced residents from King Shae, Saw Phyar, Say Hpyat Gone, Moe Shwe Gone, Ann Pyin, Kyet Sar Pyin, and Kyar Inn villages to flee their homes:

“There were three air assaults. Ten bombs were dropped in one single air strike,” said a resident.

During the attack, many houses were also burnt down in King Shae and Moe Shwe Gone villages. The military base in Yaung Maw village also fired artillery shells: “The military launched artillery attacks until the evening of March 3. About 20 military troops were killed in the battle within an hour. In retaliation, they launched both air assaults and an artillery attack against civilians,” said a woman from Yaung Maw village.

When fleeing from the air assaults on a motorbike, a woman from Say Hpyat Gone was struck and immediately killed.

Arbitrary Arrests and Abductions

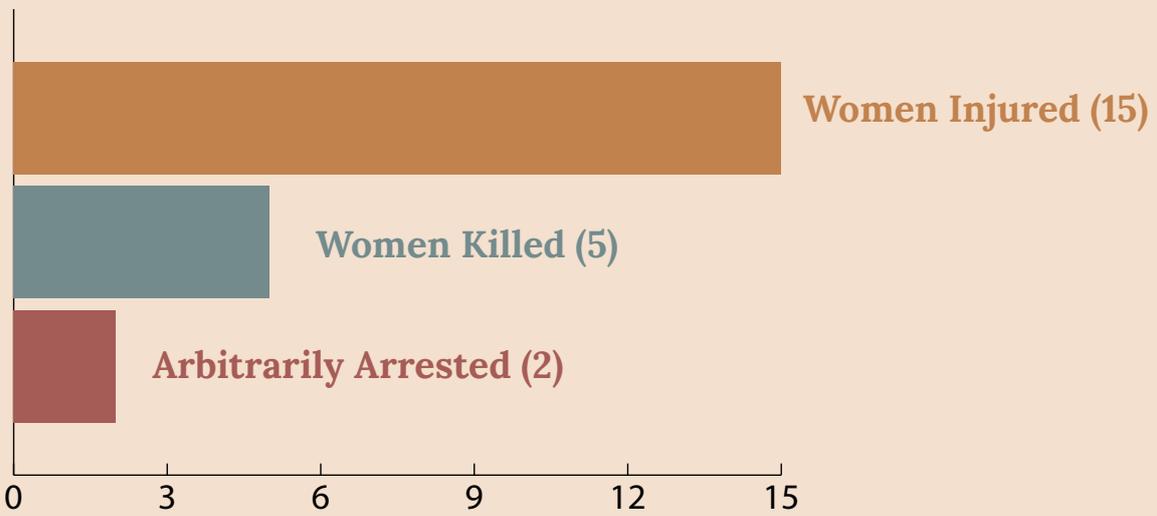
On March 2nd, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) arrested three local militia leaders from Kaw Pi Htaw village and Sein Taung Ward, Kamarwet City, Mudon Township, Mon State. In response, the 318th Artillery Regiment based in Ah Bit village, Mudon Township, arrested three women who are relatives of members of the NMSP. The arrested women were all related to NMSP leaders and members, including 57-year-old teacher Mi Myint Than, 33-year-old Mi Ye Win, and Nai Ah Lin. Their whereabouts have been unknown since their arrest.

Landmines

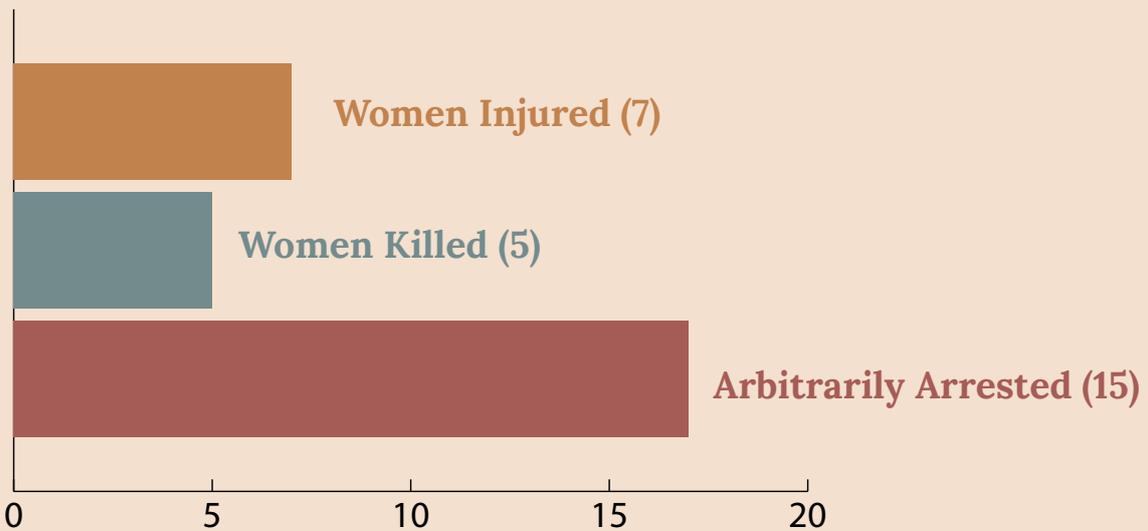
On the morning of March 11, a woman stepped on a landmine in Zahar village, Dawei Township, and her right leg was amputated. The victim is 60 years old and was gardening near her home when the explosion happened. “She used to go to her farm regularly and pick cashew nuts there,” a local told HURFOM. She is now receiving medical treatment at Dawei Hospital.

Summary of Key Findings

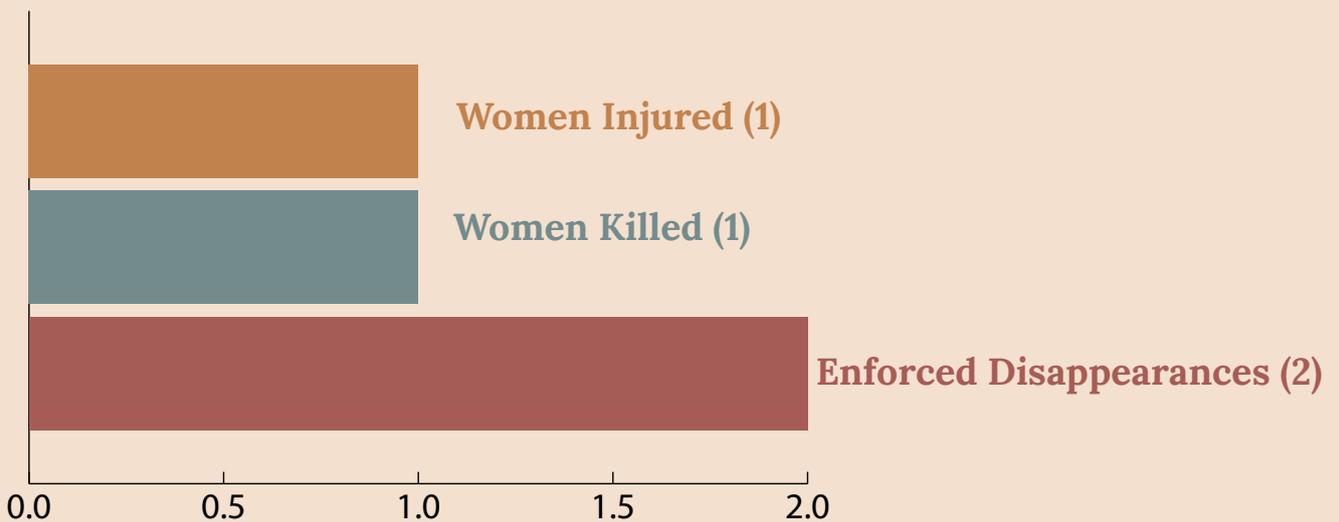
January 2024

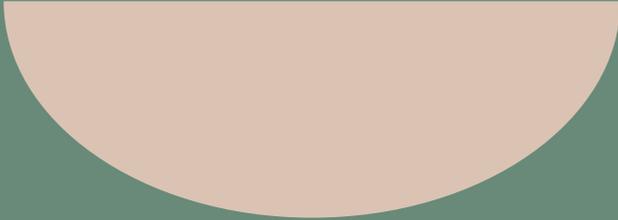


February 2024



March 2024





Comparative Analysis

In similar incidents across Burma, civilians targeted in the junta's aerial and ground attacks must flee. On January 7th, the regiment attacked Ta Mu village in the Sagaing region with airstrikes, killing 17 people, including nine children, and injuring 20 others.⁵ The junta does not discriminate between civilians and armed forces but targets everyone in its reckless attacks.

The violence has led to the deaths of at least 330 women in 2023 as a result of fighting by the junta forces, according to the Women's League of Burma.⁶ The number of internally displaced persons also increased, the majority of whom are primarily women and children, and who are in urgent need of protection mechanisms and access to food and water.

In addition, based on a report issued in December last year by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, 267 children have been killed since the coup.⁷ The international aid organization Save the Children estimates that another 520,000 children have been forced to flee their homes because of ongoing violence.⁸ These circumstances have deprived them of their right to an education in a safe and accessible environment.

Another concern is the rise in child rape cases in the Mon and Karen States since the coup. Based on findings from HURFOM, family members of child rape victims have not reported their cases to the police or sought justice in courts because they do not trust the system which the military junta has sabotaged.⁹ They have instead pursued community levels of justice by accepting monetary compensation from the rapists under the presence and pressure of village/ward Administrators and police officials.

⁵ "Myanmar: 17 civilians killed, 20 injured in air strike on Kanan village, Sagaing," 10 January 2024. Relief Web

⁶ "Women and children suffer amid Myanmar's civil war," 31 December 2023, Radio Free Asia

⁷ "The Lives of Children in Myanmar," 3 September 2023. The Diplomat.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ "Family members accept monetary compensation for child rape: Rule of law abandoned," 25 January 2024, Human Rights Foundation of Monland



On February 5th, the regime committed one of its most fatal airstrikes in Demoso Township, Karenni State. It launched two airstrikes and six rounds of artillery shelling on two villages.¹⁰ The first round hit Daw Si Ei School, killing four children and injuring 28 people, including teachers and children. The second attack struck a school in Loi Nan Pa Village, killing an elderly man and injuring three teachers and five other civilians.

Within one day of the killing of these children, the junta took hostages and brutally murdered eight displaced civilians, including three children, a pregnant woman, two women with disabilities, and two men, in Shadaw Township, Karenni State.¹¹ Their dead bodies were found with torture marks and close-range gunshot wounds.

On Children's Day, which was marked on February 13, junta forces fired artillery toward villagers along the border of Shan and Karenni states. Three women were killed, and several others were injured.¹² One of the victims was a young girl who was fatally struck when she was coming home from school. The deceased also include a 30-year-old mother and a 50-year-old woman. Among those injured was an elderly woman who was weaving peacefully when her home was hit, causing her to lose a leg.

Cases of gendered violence and attacks against women are not only happening in Southeastern Burma but across the country. Decades of military rule have perpetuated a deeply harmful and stereotypical view of women, which presents them as weak, uneducated and defenseless. The way the military torments women before killing them, often in front of their families, is indicative of many years of patriarchal culture that seeks to dehumanize them. This is perhaps no clearer than the genocide against the Rohingya, in which women were brutalized in horrific ways before being murdered by Burma Army soldiers.

In response to the many unraveling crises, women-led organizations have provided women and children with legal aid, monetary and material support and vocational training. Still, they face many challenges in delivering their services due to threats and restrictions from the military junta.

¹⁰ "Junta airstrike on school in Kayah state kills 4 children," 5 February 2024. Radio Free Asia.

¹¹ "Myanmar junta troops murder seven IDPs in Karenni's Shadaw Township," 8 February 2024. Myanmar Now.

¹² "Three Women Killed and Several Others Injured by Artillery Shell in Eastern Phekon Township in Karenni State," 14 February 2024. Kantarawaddy Times



Conclusion

All of the crimes against women and children were perpetrated with impunity as calls for accountability to the international community continue to fall on deaf ears.

From an early point in history, a gendered bias politically and socially evolved in Burma. This has led to systems that have been developed with a strong patriarchal influence. As such, women have been oppressed for decades through cultural and gendered contexts.

However, despite their significant challenges, women remain resilient and unwavering in their commitment to a free and fair Burma. They have increasingly become more active in political leadership positions and in providing humanitarian aid.

While their security remains an ongoing threat in the wake of the junta's systematic and widespread crimes against civilians, the commitment of women has been integral to the success of the Spring Revolution. They have successfully and unapologetically defied what it means to be a caretaker amidst the country's profoundly harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal systems. These gains cannot and must not be overlooked.

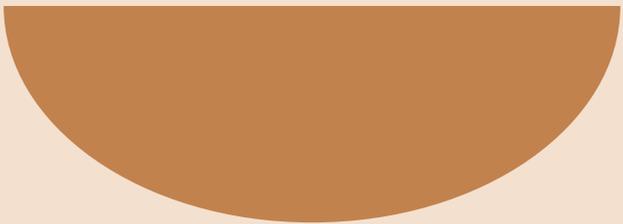
Despite the adversity women have consistently shown, the junta has evaded accountability for their crimes for decades. The cases documented in this report demonstrate the failure of global actors to hold the Burma Army responsible for their widespread crimes against civilians. The lack of consequences has made it clear to the regime that they feel they are above the law. This distorted narrative must be reversed with tangible, concrete actions. Without proper redress for the crimes that have targeted women and children, there cannot be justice for the people.

There has been immense, prolonged suffering, as the United Nations, ASEAN, and other vital bodies have allowed the people's perils to be brushed aside. HURFOM amplifies our calls to the international community for accountability mechanisms to be urgently enforced. This includes referring the situation of human rights in Burma to the International Criminal Court, targeted sanctions, and a global arms embargo.



Recommendations

1. A referral of the situation on the ground in Burma must 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; all local humanitarian channels recognized as efficient, organized and with full capacity. Survivors must be granted assistance beyond statements of condemnation and through support services, justice and reparations.

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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.
 9. For the International Labour Organization (ILO) or an international prison monitoring group to regularly visit the deplorable conditions across Burma's prisoners in which political prisoners are being unlawfully detained. Women, especially, are at an increased risk of being sexually abused and violated during interrogations by the military. Previously, the ILO had taken part in these visits and made robust calls and recommendations.
 10. For cases of conflict-related sexual violence, the international community must make justice referral pathways more accessible. HURFOM urges action to address documented cases of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence in Burma as well as the full participation of women's human rights

Appendix

This is the summary of victims and the crimes perpetrated against them by the military junta between **January and March 2024**. These cases documented by HURFOM are only a small sample of the gravity of the crimes being perpetrated against women regularly. This also excludes unreported instances in which stigma deters women from reporting.

January 2024

Name/Age	Date	Incident	Location	Impact	Notes
Mi Thidar Soe, aged 39	January 1 11:30 AM,	Hit by artillery weapons fired by Light Infantry Battalion No. 591 and No. 583.	Kyaung Ywar village tract in Ye Township, Mon State	Severe injury, including a cracked skull	There was no fighting at the time when the junta fired towards civilians.
Ma Hnin Ye Thwe	January 4 12:30 PM	Hit by a stray bullet that resulted in a hole in her left ear.	Kyaik Hto Township, Mon State.	Died from severe injuries.	
Ma Ni Ni Aye, aged 36	January 6 9 AM	Hit in the crossfire of battle between the military junta and the joint forces of the KNLA army.	Alu Lay village, Bilin Township, Mon State	Her waist, thigh, and arms were wounded by the battle.	
Ma Ohmar Sar Ri, aged 13	January 7, 11:45 AM	Light Infantry Battalion No. 545 battalion fired with 120mm guns.	Kaw War Lae village, Mon State	Wound sustained to her left arm.	There was no fighting at the time when the junta fired towards civilians.
Ma Eain Dara Thi Thwen, aged 16	January 7 11:45 AM	Light Infantry Battalion No. 545 battalion fired with 120mm guns.	Kaw War Lae village, Mon State	Her right eyelid was injured by the gunfire.	There was no fighting at the time when the junta fired towards civilians.

January 2024

Name/Age	Date	Incident	Location	Impact	Notes
Daw Thwe, aged 67	January 9, 7 PM	Light Infantry Battalion No. 561, planted a landmine.	Nyaung Pin Kwin village, Tanintharyi Township.	The victim was injured, and had to her left leg amputated.	One of two women were returning from their plantation when they stepped on a landmine.
Ma Mee Kan, aged 36	January 9, 7 PM	Light Infantry Battalion No. 561, planted a landmine.	Nyaung Pin Kwin village, Tanintharyi Township.	Suffered minor injuries by a landmine explosion.	One of two women were returning from their plantation when they stepped on a landmine.
Unknown woman	January 12	Five gunmen raided and fired inside Inwa Bank on General Street.	Kyaik Hto, Kant Wa Bank on General Street, Kant Kaw Ward, Kyaik Hto City	The victim was wounded in her left thigh.	
A woman working in a hotel massage parlor	January 13 12 AM	Mawlamyine District Union Solidarity and Development Party Chairman U Soe Tun violently assaulted a woman working at a massage parlor.	Royal Mawlamyine Hotel in Mawlamyine, Mon State.	Serious injuries after being violently beaten.	The USDP Chairman was never held accountable.
Naw Ku Ku	January 18	About 10 artillery weapons were fired from the No. 9 Light Infantry Battalion based.	Thaton, Mon State.	The victim was wounded in the right thigh.	There was no fighting at the time when the junta fired towards civilians.
Ma Sandar, aged 22	January 19, 11 AM	Zee Won Artillery No. 314 attacked with artillery weapons.	Bilin, Mon State	Died	

January 2024

Name/Age	Date	Incident	Location	Impact	Notes
Daw Naw Mu, aged 49	January 19 11 AM	Zee Won Artillery No. 314 attacked with artillery weapons.	Bilin, Mon State	Died	
Naw Kaw Mu Lar	January 19 11 AM	Zee Won Artillery No. 314 attacked with artillery weapons.	Bilin, Mon State	Died	
Daw Taw Tar, aged 46	January 19, 11 AM	Zee Won Artillery No. 314 attacked with artillery weapons.	Bilin, Mon State	Injured	
Daw Khin Than, aged 68	January 19 11 AM	Zee Won Artillery No. 314 attacked with artillery weapons.	Bilin, Mon State	Injured	
Ma War War Thin, aged 26	January 19 11 AM	Zee Won Artillery No. 314 attacked with artillery weapons	Bilin, Mon State	Injured	
Daw Khin Win Hlaing, aged 40	January 19 11 AM	Zee Won Artillery No. 314 attacked with artillery weapons.	Bilin, Mon State	Injured	
Ma Yun Mee Mee of Ayu, aged 12	January 20	Military junta Light Infantry Battalion No. 588 and the 106th Artillery, launched an artillery fire.	Ye City, Mon State	The victim died while receiving medical treatment.	

January 2024

Name/Age	Date	Incident	Location	Impact	Notes
Ma Nwe Nwe Thet, aged 40	January 23 2 AM	Military junta soldiers drove into the Mi Kyaung Ai neighborhood and arrested Ma Nwe Nwe Thet, a gardener. Her partner, Ko Win Ko Ko Oo, at their home.	Mi Kyaung Ai neighborhood Kanbauk area, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily arrested	Was released in February 2024
Ma Theik Theik Hlaing aged 42	January 23 Midnight	Arrested by the military junta with her partner, Ko Toe, from the same neighborhood.	Mi Kyaung Ai neighborhood Kanbauk area, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily arrested	Was released in February 2024
Ma Thae Su Lin aged 20	January 24 12 PM	Artillery shells were fired by the military junta.	Ah Nyar Su village in Wa Township, Eastern Bago township.	Injured in the hip and her back.	
Daw Yin Shwe, aged 60	January 25 7 AM	Stepped on a landmine after returning from donating alms to Kawt Kyaik Monastery.	Kawt Wa Lae village, Karen State	The lower part of her left knee was broken, and her right leg was severely injured.	

February 2024

Name/Age	Date	Incident	Location	Impact	Notes
Daw Lae Lae Cho, aged 38	February 3, Evening	Arbitrarily arrested on accusations that her husband was supporting the People's Defense Forces	Hlae Kone ward, Kanbauk area, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	
Naw Se Wha, aged 35	February 4	The terrorist junta's No.208 Light Infantry Battalion fired six artillery weapons at villages	Nyar Hta Well village, Thaton Township, Mon State	Injured	
Naw Ma Pyar, aged 58	February 4	The terrorist junta's No.208 Light Infantry Battalion fired six artillery weapons	Nyar Hta Well village, Thaton Township, Mon State	Injured	
Daw Shin Aye, aged 60	February 4 11 AM	The junta fired during conflict between the junta and armed opposition forces.	Kin Shay village, Tanintharyi regione	Died	
A woman in her 30s and her 3-year-old child	February 10	Arbitrarily arrested by the military junta units based in Dawei on accusations that her husband was supporting the People's Defense Forces.	Dawei	Arbitrarily Arrested	
Daw Myint Than, aged 40	February 12	Stepped on a landmine her way to her workplace at a rubber plantation	Kyar Inn village, Mon State	Injuries to her front foot which was blown off in the blast	
Daw Kalar Ma, aged 45	February 14 5:30 PM	Confronted by the military junta	Pu Law Township, Myeik, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	

February 2024

Name/Age	Date	Incident	Location	Impact	Notes
Daw Than Win, aged 45	February 14 5:30 PM	Confronted by the military junta	Pu Law Township, Myeik, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	
Naw Se Wha, aged 35	February 4	The terrorist junta's No.208 Light Infantry Battalion fired six artillery weapons at villages	Nyar Hta Well village, Thaton Township, Mon State	Injured	
Daw Kay Jar Oo	February 15	A teacher with the Civil Disobedience Movement, she was abducted when she was returning from shopping by the Mawrawaddy Naval Headquarters.	Kanbauk village, Dawei District, Tanintharyi Region	Injured	
Daw Shin Aye, aged 60	February 4 11 AM	The junta fired during conflict between the junta and armed opposition forces.	Kin Shay village, Tanintharyi region	Died	
A young woman from Tha Boot Chaung, aged 18	February 15	Arrested by the Mawrawaddy Naval Headquarters while running errands.	Hlae Kone ward, Kanbauk area, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	
Naw Kawt Kaw, aged 53	February 16 5:30 AM	Wae Ka Li's artillery battalion bombarded and shot with a drone	Kyainnseikyi Township, Karen State	Died from a head wound.	
Three women	February 16	In addition to the Anti-Terrorism Act, a case has been opened against them under Section 505(a) of the Penal Code.	Pu Law Township, Myeik, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	

February 2024

Name/Age	Date	Incident	Location	Impact	Notes
Two sisters, Daw Cho Cho and Daw Nyo Nyo	February 17 11 PM	Mawrawaddy Naval Headquarters	Hlae Kone ward, Kanbauk area, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	
A young woman, aged 18	February 17 1 AM	Junta troops attacked twice with drones and fired artillery weapons.	Kha Ywal village and Let Pan village of Pa Waw township	Head Injury	
A middle school teacher, aged 50	February 20 Morning	Arrested at her home by the Mawrawaddy Naval Headquarters	Hlae Kone ward, Kanbauk area, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	
Daw Nilar San, a middle school teacher from the Post Primary School aged 38	February 20 Morning	Arrested at her home by the Mawrawaddy Naval Headquarters	Hlae Kone ward, Kanbauk area, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	
Daw Thet Thet Mon, a middle school teacher from the Post Primary School, aged 30	February 20 Morning	Arrested at her home by the Mawrawaddy Naval Headquarters	Hlae Kone ward, Kanbauk area, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	
Daw Zarchi Myo	February 20	Arrested at her home by the Mawrawaddy Naval Headquarters	Hlae Kone ward, Kanbauk area, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	

February 2024

Name/Age	Date	Incident	Location	Impact	Notes
Thiri Yadanar Mg (Kit Kit), aged 28	February 20	Arrested by the junta after members of a military lobby group reported her.	Shwe Nat Taung Ward, Mawlamyine, Mon State	Arbitrarily arrested and charged with Section 505(a) of the Panel Code	
Daw Thin Thin Soe, aged 42	February 21 7:45 PM	A bomb explosion occurred. It is unclear who planted it.	Yay Bon War, Myeik District, Tanintharyi Region	Minor injury on her left arm	
Daw Su Su Lat	February 28 Noon	Arrested by the Ba Htoo Army.	Dawei, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	
Daw Nandar Lwin	February 28 Noon	Arrested by the Ba Htoo Army.	Dawei, Tanintharyi region	Arbitrarily Arrested	
Daw Par Par Thee, aged 56	February 28 2:30 AM	A gang of robbers assaulted two women and their belongings were stolen.	Aung Thu Kha ward, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State	She suffered a cut on her neck and her left shoulder. She died of a stab wound to her abdomen.	
Daw Hla Hla Win, aged 50	February 28 2:30 AM	A gang of robbers assaulted two women and their belongings were stolen.	Aung Thu Kha ward, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State	Abdominal wound. She died from a cut to her neck..	
Daw May Day	February 28 Midnight	She was abducted with her husband by the Mawrawaddy Naval Headquarters.	Hlae Kone ward, Kanbauk area, Tanintharyi region.	Arbitrarily Arrested.	

March 2024

Name/Age	Date	Incident	Location	Impact	Notes
Unknown name, and age	March 2	The military launched air assaults forcing residents from seven villages to flee	Tha Yet Chaung Township, Dawei District	When fleeing on a motorbike, a woman from Say Hpyat Gone was struck and immediately killed.	
57-year-old teacher Mi Myint Than, 33-year-old Mi Ye Win, and Nai Ah Lin.	March 2	The New Mon State Party (NMSP) arrested three local militia leaders. In response, the 318th Artillery Regiment based in Ah Bit village, Mudon Township, arrested three women who are relatives of the NMSP.	Mudon Township, Mon Stat	Their whereabouts since being abducted are unknown.	
Daw Hnin Mu, aged 60	March 11	A woman stepped on a landmine while harvesting for cashews near her home.	Zahar village, Dawei Township,	Her right leg was amputated	



VOICE UP



**A Gendered Overview of the Human Rights
Situation in Southeastern Burma**

January - March 2024

