

Weekly News Review

Issue 93, February 15 - 21, 2023



Junta's deadly airstrikes targeting civilians

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Introduction

Our BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor published the Weekly News Review (Issue No.77) which covered the junta's mass killings of civilians including children in, based on the airstrike on a self-reliant school in Letyetkone village in Depayin Township of Sagaing Region on 16 September, 2022 and the airstrike on a music concert in ANang Pa of Hpakant Township on 23 October, 2022. Then, we published a fact-based review on the junta's increased airstrikes, in the early this year.

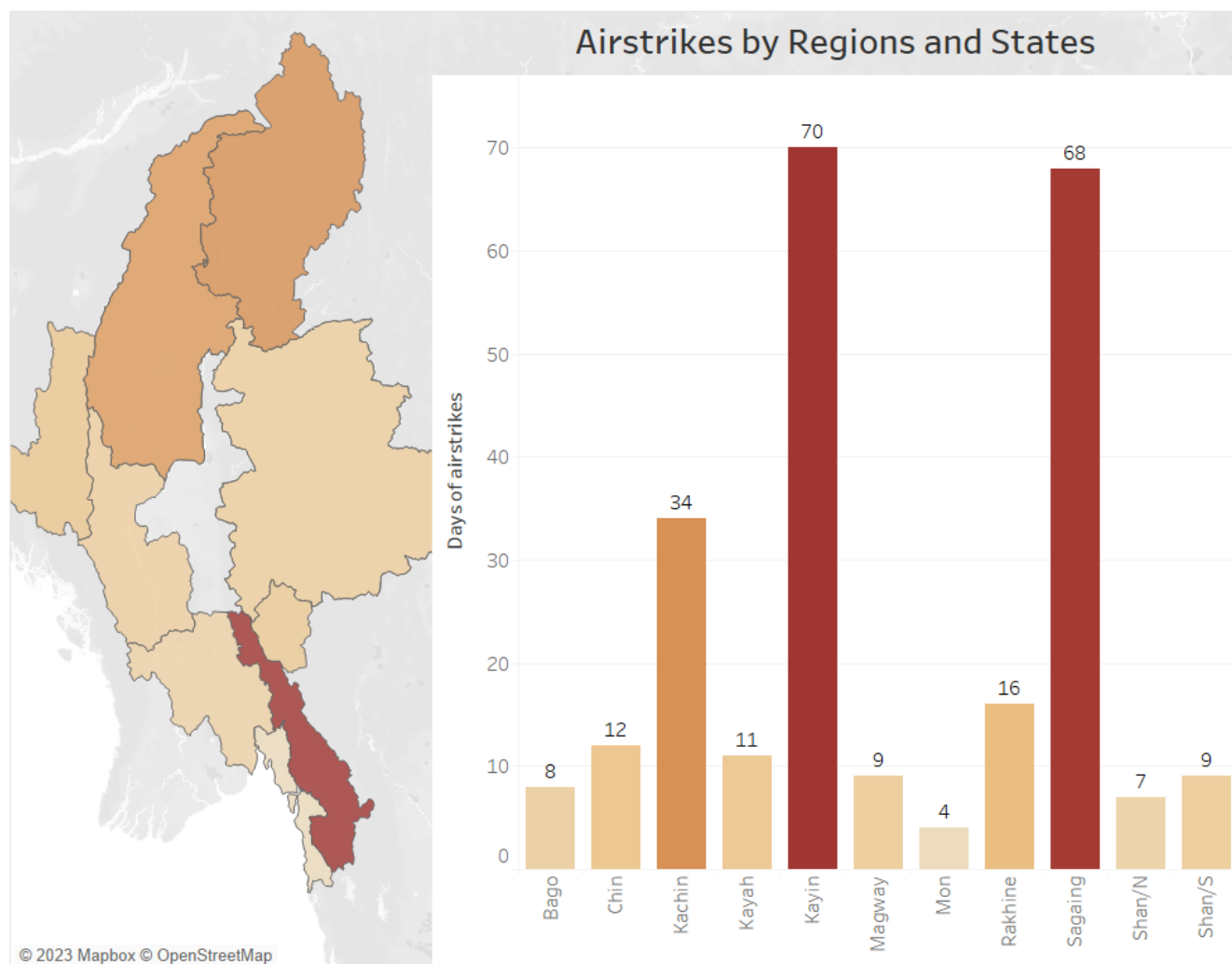


This week, the BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor's weekly news review highlights the junta's increased airstrikes on targeted areas and impacts based on the facts and figures.

Junta's targeted airstrike areas

According to our BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor's record, the military council conducted airstrikes for 246 days from 1 February, 2021 to 14 February, 2023. The number of airstrikes is said to exceed a two-digit number. Taking a look at the junta's increased airstrikes on targeted areas, except for Yangon, Mandalay, Ayeyarwaddy and Tanintharyi Regions, the remaining 12 regions and states faced the junta's airstrikes. Among them, Karen State and Sagaing Region experienced the junta's airstrikes the most. Kachin State stood third on the list of airstrikes. It is found that Arakan State, Shan State, Karenni (Kayah) State, Chin State, Magway Region, Bago Region and Mon State become the targets of the junta's airstrikes.





Taking a look at the airstrikes by township, Myawaddy and Hpapun Townships in Karen State faced the junta's airstrikes the most, with 51 days. The regions which experienced the military council's airstrikes for five to 11 days are: Kyarinseikgyi and Kawkareik Townships in Karen State, Maungdaw Township in Arakan State, Katha, Yinmarbin and Depayin Townships in Sagaing Region, Hpakant, Waingmaw and Moemauk in Kachin State, Pekon on the Shan-Karenni border, Demoso in Karenni State and Kyaukkyi Township in Bago Region.

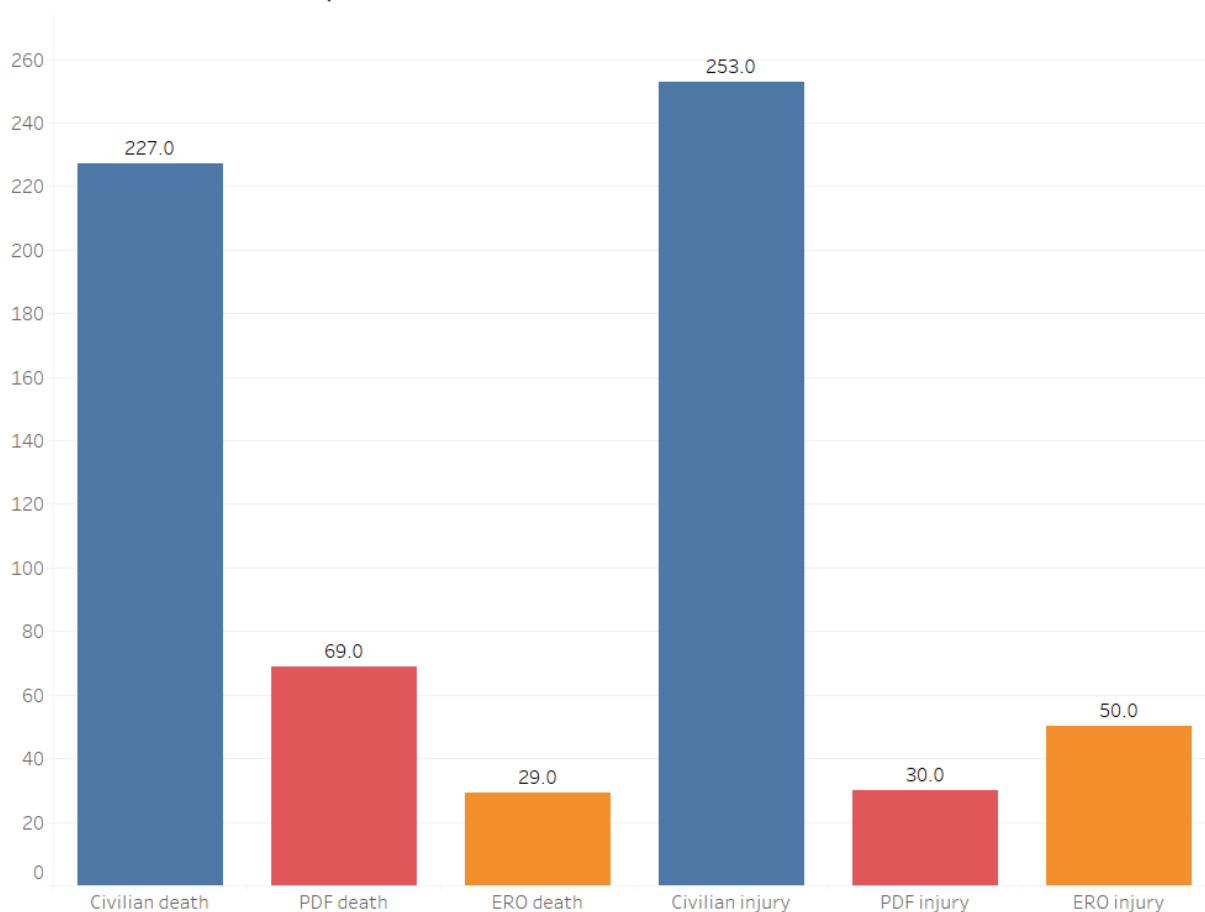


According to the figures recorded since the coup till 14 January, 2023, up to 69 townships experienced the military council's targeted airstrikes. Twenty-three townships faced airstrikes for at least one day, 19 townships for two days, 24 townships for three to 10 days and three townships for more than 10 days.

Impacts of airstrikes

According to the figures recorded till 14 January 2023, the junta's airstrikes killed nearly 230 civilians. It is found that the airstrikes had big impacts. Sixty-eight PDF and LDF members and nearly 30 EROs members were killed by the airstrikes. The airstrikes also wounded 253 civilians, 50 ERO members and 30 PDF/LDF members and displaced 45,500 civilians.

The impacts of airstrikes on civilians, PDFs and the EROs



Sagaing Region, Kachin State and Karen State are said to be the junta's targeted airstrike areas which see strong armed resistance. The number of civilian casualties from the junta's airstrikes has reached nearly 500. It is questionable whether the military council is carrying out targeted airstrikes on civilians on purpose.

The Letyetkone incident, the A Nang Pa incident and four-day airstrikes on the Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps in Demoso Township bear witness to the junta's targeted attacks on civilians.

The junta's airstrike on the headquarters of the Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA) accentuates the junta's targeted attacks on the EROs which have joined the Spring Revolution since early 2023.



The military council led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing who is trying to seize the country's power forcibly has to rely only on airstrikes for the longevity of military coup.

Review

During over two years of the military coup, the resistance war against the junta has become wider and more intense. Sagaing Region, Kachin State, Karen State, Kayah (Karenni) State and Chin State see coordinated resistance by the revolutionary forces such as the PDF/LDF and EROs including the National Unity Government (NUG) which are making armed resistance by designating 2023 a decisive year.

It is found that the military council which is losing ground and has lost control of territories mainly relies on airstrikes during its offensive operations. The military council led by

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing who is trying to seize the country's power forcibly has to rely only on airstrikes for the longevity of military coup. The figures have witnessed that the junta's airstrike is the biggest threat to the life and survival of civilians.

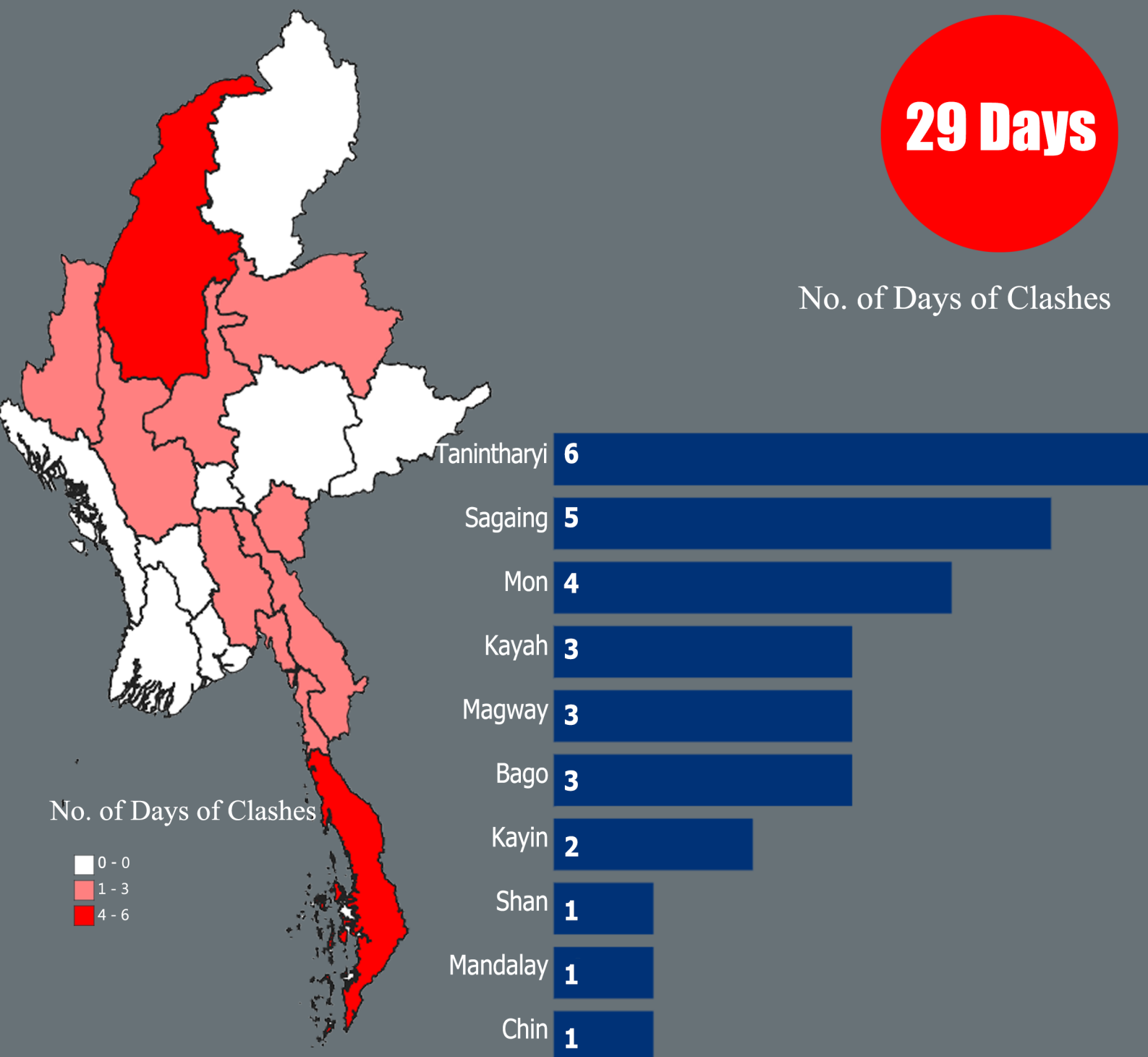
The junta's airstrike may serve as a deterrent to the Spring Revolution's goal of rooting out all dictators including the military dictator and building up the federal democratic union. Forces and groups involved in the Spring Revolution are required to seek a solution for defending the junta's deadly airstrikes. International governments are urgently required to make more efforts to protect the life and property of the Myanmar people by seeking the ways to defend the junta's airstrikes.



Part II

What Happened this Week

According to the record by the BNI - Myanmar Peace Monitor, between 15 and 21 February, there were 29 days of clashes between the military council troops, the People's Defense Forces (PDFs)/Local Defense Forces (LDFs) and the Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs). Taking a look at the list of clash days in regions and states, Tanintharyi Region topped the list of clashes with six days. The number of battles may be higher than that as the number of battles in townships are recorded by day.



Military, PDF Member and Civilian Deaths

February 15 - 21, 2023



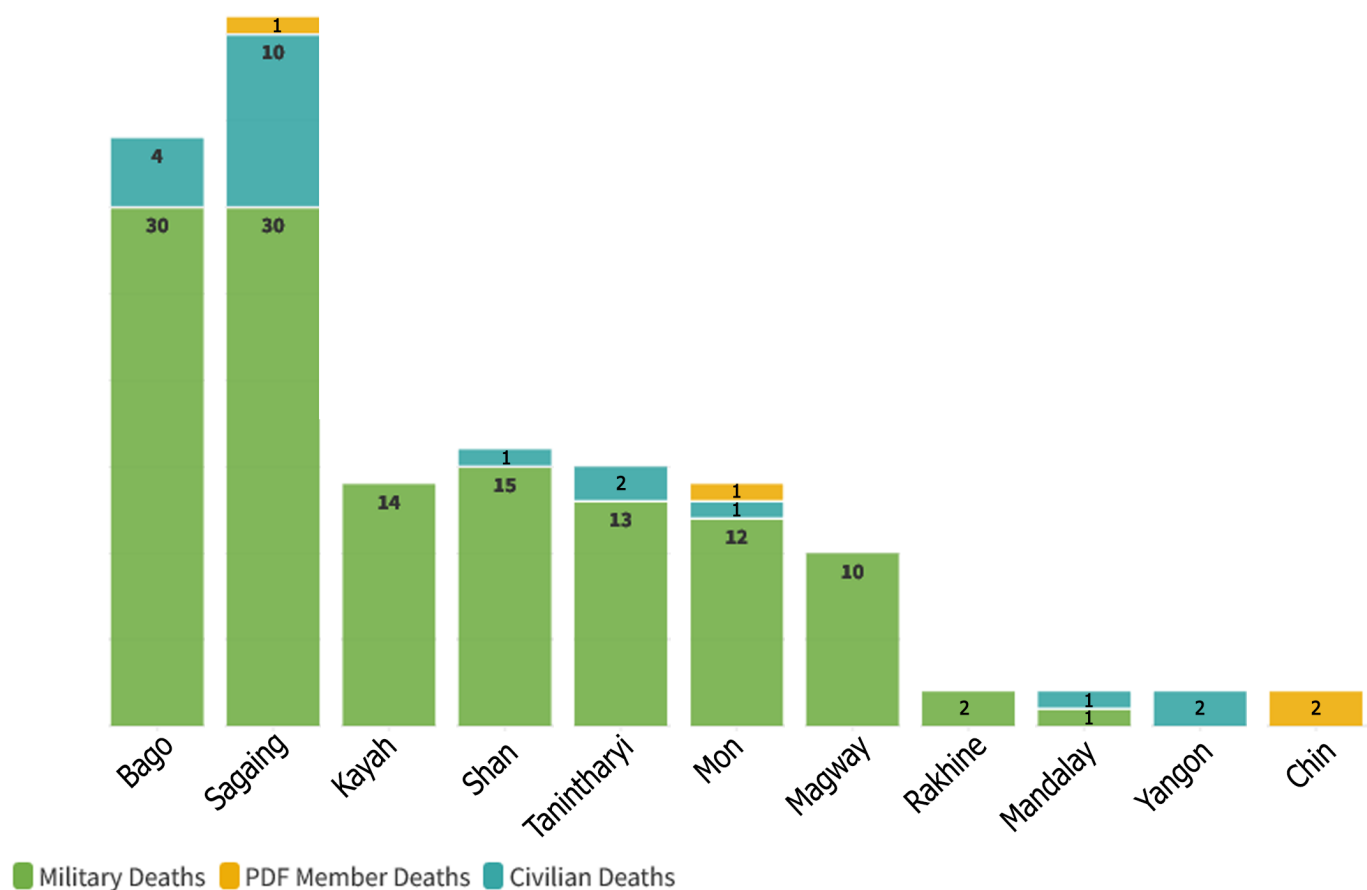
Military Deaths



PDF Member Deaths

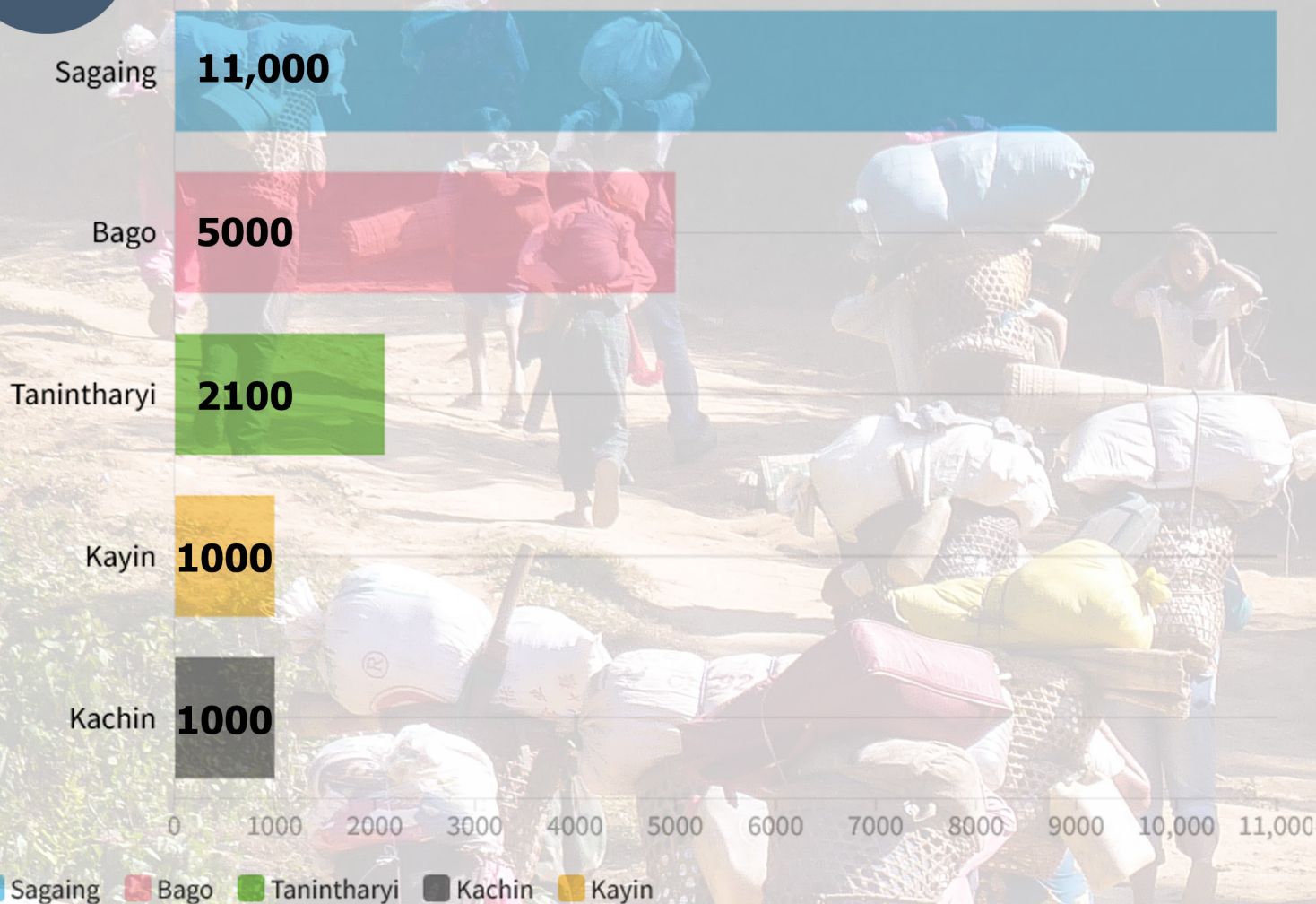


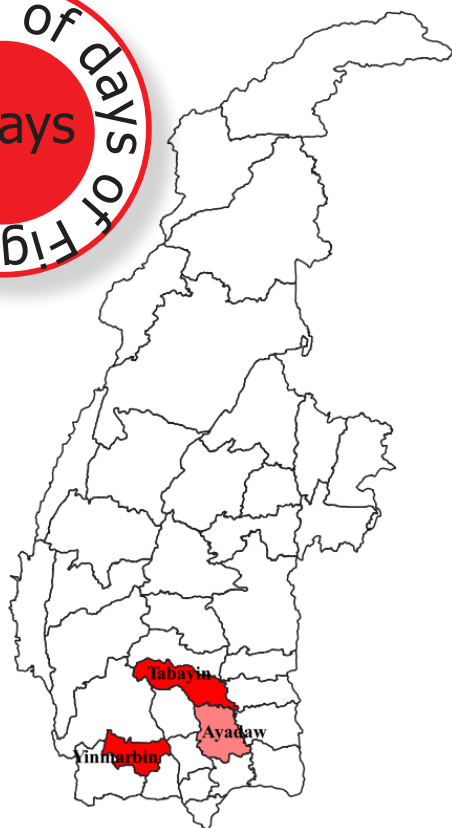
Civilian Deaths



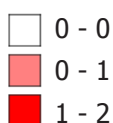
20,100

Total Number of IDPs (February 15 - 21, 2023)





No.of Days of Clashes

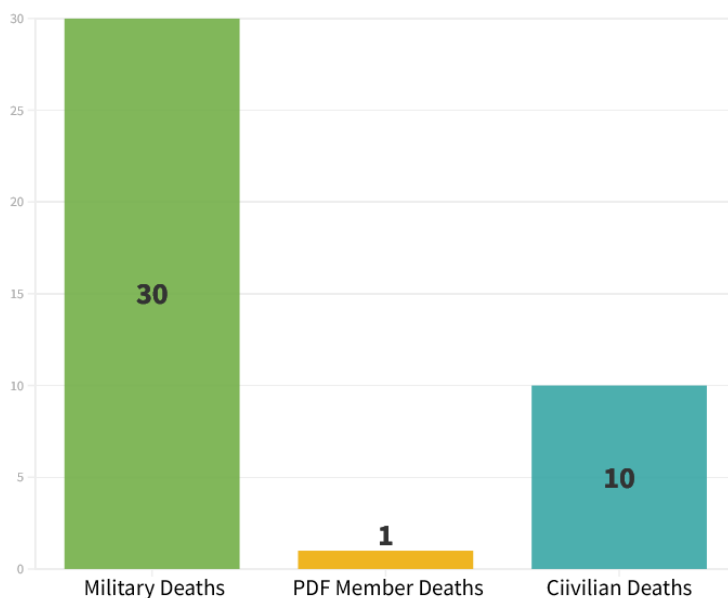


Sagaing Region

Locals found seven bodies with gunshot wounds after military council troops entered Inngyi village in Katha Township on 15 February. The unidentified bodies of men aged about 18 are reportedly not the residents of Inngyi village. In recent days, regime troops violently entered villages including Meingo, Tettulay, Tharyarkone, and Inngyi, setting fire to about 700 houses.

On 17 February, locals found two burned bodies of men in the forest near Kaingyoe village in Htangone region of Kanbalu Township. The victims were a man in his 20s and a man in his 30s who were killed by junta troops when they returned to the village to pick up packages of essentials. In addition, the regime troops had also abducted a boy and a girl, both at the age of 15, during their journey. The violent incursions by the military council troops in the Htangone and Zigone areas have so far displaced nearly 15,000 residents from 18 villages.

Twenty-one junta soldiers and one PDF member were killed in the battles between the military council troops and the PDFs in Yinmarbin, Ayardaw and Depayin Townships. Eight junta soldiers were killed in the attacks in Wetlet, Monywa and Htigyaing Townships. On 15 February, one junta soldier was killed by friendly fire between two soldiers who stood guard on Myanmar Economic Bank in Kani Township. Ten locals were killed by the military council's shooting in Myinmu, Katha and Kanbalu Townships. More than 11,000 locals from Pale and Minkin Townships fled for safety due to the military council's offensive.





Kachin State

A column of about 30 regime troops entered Hsaungchaing village in Hpakant Township on 16 and 17 February and searched the civilian homes, forcing about 1,000 residents to flee to safety.

On 16 February, regime soldiers abducted more than 30 residents of Hmawsisar village. Among those arrested are women who were searching for jade stones at the mine dumps, as well as some other company employees.

On 16 and 17 February, a military column advanced toward Saungchein village in Hmawsisar village-tract in Hpakant Township. Around 1,000 locals fled to safer places.



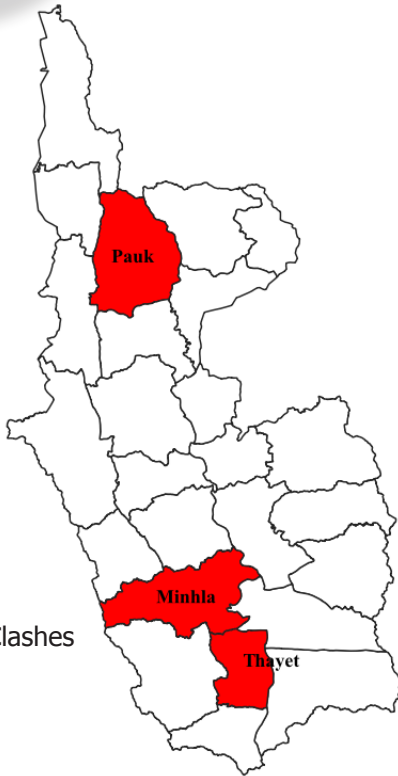
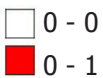


Magway Region

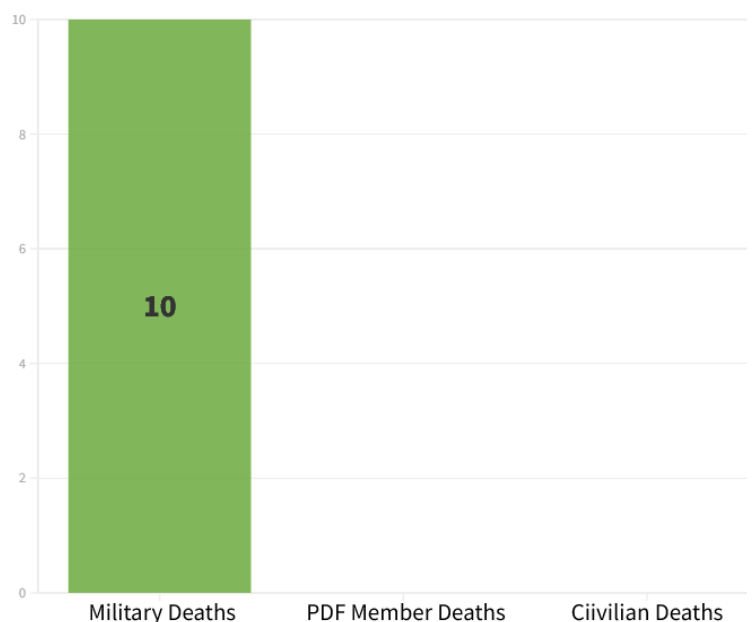
On 16 February, a combined force of the PDF carried out attacks on camps of military council troops and pro-military Pyu Saw Htee militia, who were involved in torching houses in Shwebontha village, seizing rice paddy as well as motorcycles and livestock of the villagers. The raid was carried out in collaboration with People's Revolution Front, resistance groups from Pakokku military area, Pakokku Revolution Front's Bravo Squad, and Black guerrilla force.

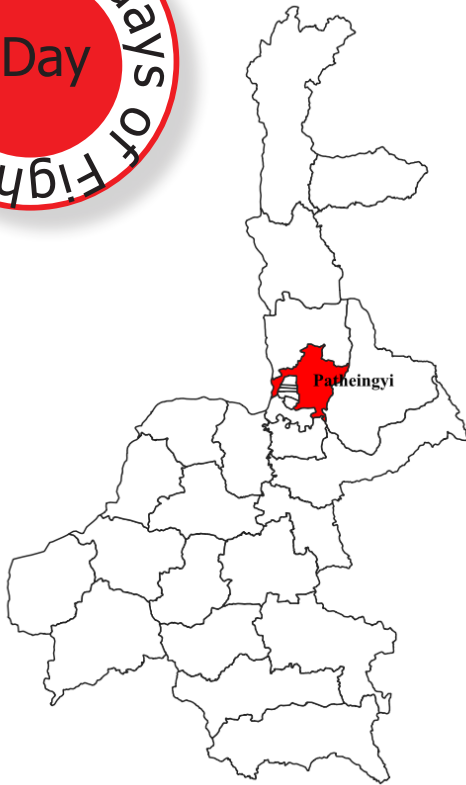
On 19 February, PDF forces attacked a Pyu Saw Htee camp in Yaelelkyun area of Yesagyo Township with light and heavy weapons. In the area, about 70 regime troops have set up camps and have been torching civilian houses, looting their cash and valuables and killing and eating their livestock.

No. of Days of Clashes

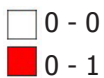


Ten junta soldiers were killed in clashes between the military council troops and the PDFs in Pauk, Thayet and Minhla Townships.





No.of Days of Clashes

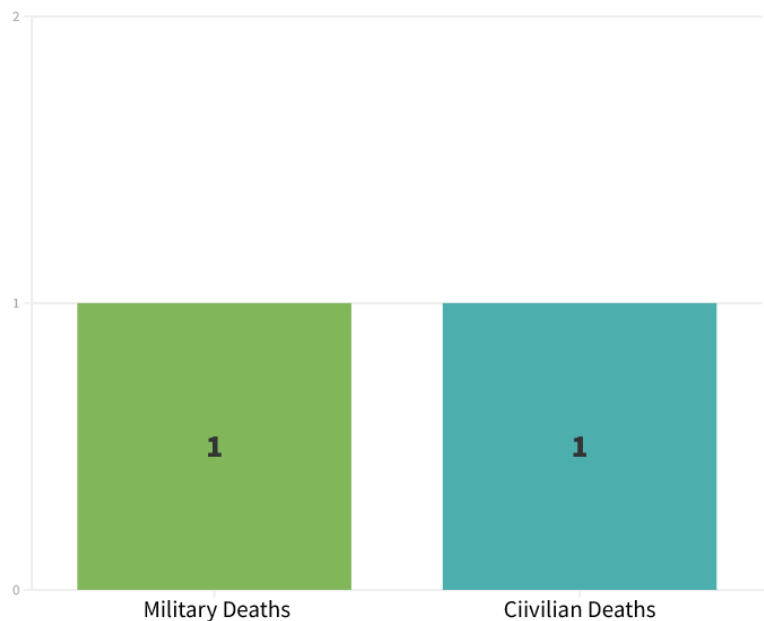


Mandalay Region

In Maha Aungmye Township, U Zaw Win Tun, the administrator of Shweboneshein ward and a widely known pistol-bearing loyal supporter of the military council, was shot dead on 17 February while riding his motorcycle. The pro-military administrator was assassinated by Aung Sitaw guerrilla force (AST-MDY) between the 78th Street and Yangon-Mandalay Railway while on his way to visit a friend in Chan Mya Tharsi Township.

This was followed by an exchange of fire between the two sides in which three members of the Pyu Saw Htee militia were seriously injured. The resistance members seized a carbine rifle, 70 bullets and three boxes of bullets from the Pyu Saw Htee members. The pro-junta members of Pyu Saw Htee are known to extort the residents of neighbouring villages such as Nweni, Kyweyaekone and Myakantha.

On 17 February, the PDF shot U Zaw Win Tun, 100-household head from Shweboneshein ward in Maha Aungmye Township while riding a motorcycle. On 21 February, there was an exchange of gunfire when the PDF members attacked the administrator office in Sinywargyi village-tract in Patheingyi Township. One PyuSawHtee head was killed in the shooting.





Karen State

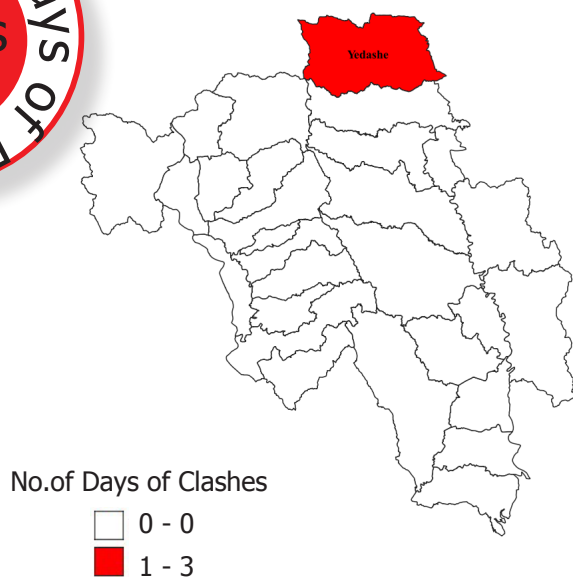
On 21 February, clashes broke out between military council troops and Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in Leiktho town. As a result, regime troops indiscriminately fired heavy weapons at residential areas, injuring four civilians, displacing more than 1,000 people, and damaging more than 10 civilian homes and a church.

On 19 February, the military bombed the makeshift shelters of displaced people in southern Kawkaireik Township, injuring three displaced women, including a 14-year-old girl.



On 20 and 21 February, there was a clash between the military council troops and a combined force of the KNLA and the PDF in Thandaungyi Township. Due to the military council's artillery shelling into the wards, four civilians were wounded and more than 1,000 locals fled for safety.

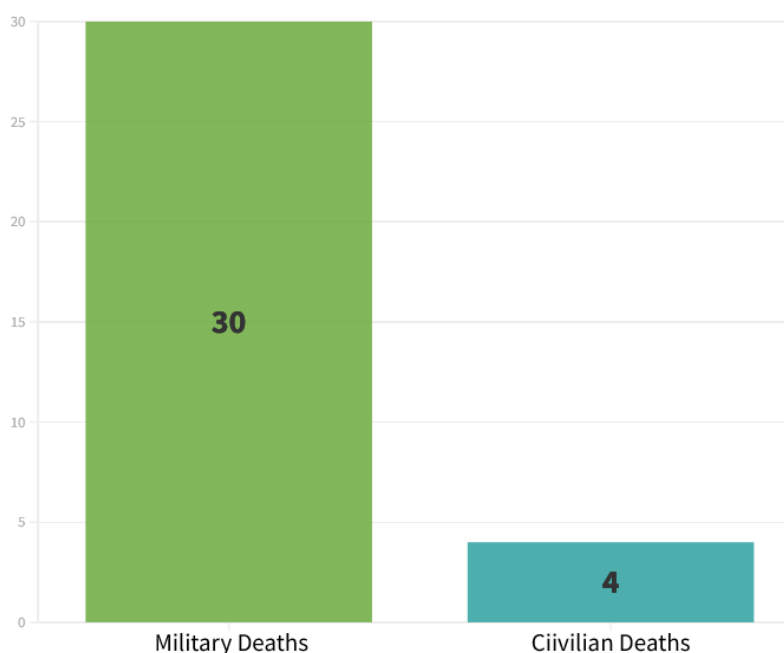


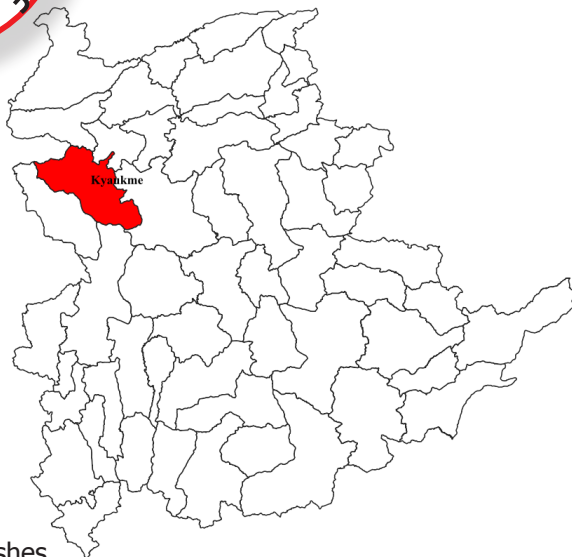


Bago Region

On 18 February, artillery shells from the No.599 Light Infantry Battalion stationed at Tonetaw village in Mu Township hit the dining table in Daw Myint Myint San's house, killing her on the spot and seriously injuring two of her daughters while they were eating together.

On 12, 14 and 16 February, 30 junta soldiers were killed in the battle between the military council troops and the PDFs in Yedashe Township. The military council troops who suffered heavy losses carried out indiscriminate firing of small and heavy weapons. Two civilians were killed and more than 5,000 locals fled for safety. On 18 February, a local woman from Kyuntaw village in Mu of Nyaunglebin District was killed by the military council's indiscriminate artillery shelling. On 16 February, the military council abducted nurse May Zun Moe joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) in Okpho Township and forced her to show the PDF camp. She was shot dead by the military council soldiers as she refused to show the camp.





No.of Days of Clashes



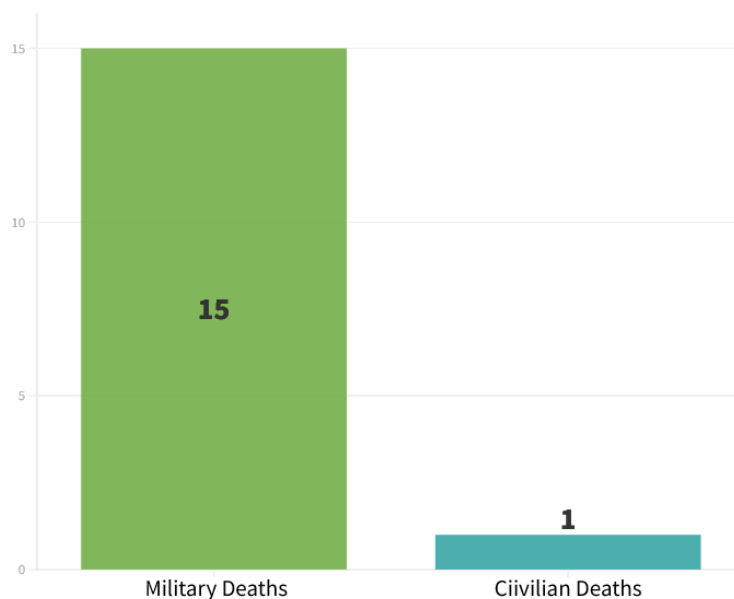
Shan State

On the morning of 17 February, two children from No.2 Ward of Tangyan were hit by a landmine explosion while digging for sweet potatoes in their yard, killing one and injuring the other.

In Taunggyi, a 20 year-year-old man collecting his belongings was crushed under the brick wall when military-owned shop spaces and apartments were demolished with bulldozers in Kyaunggyi ward.

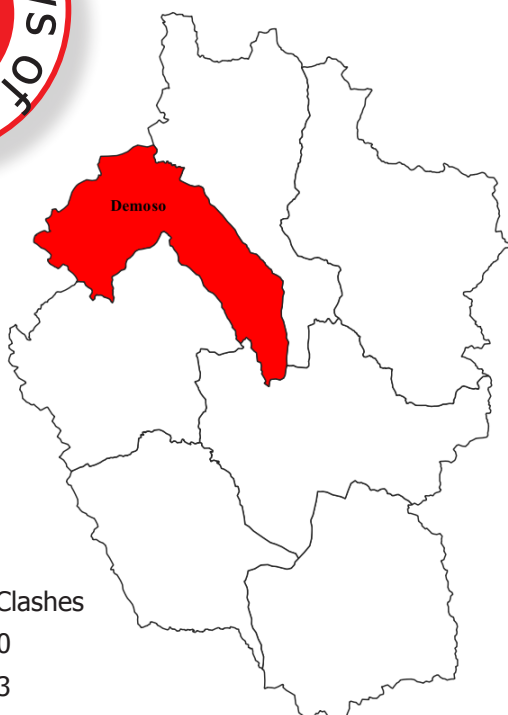
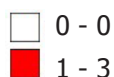
On 18 February, regime soldiers and junta department officials taped signs reading "Military Land, No Trespassing" to the storefronts of Shan Yoma housing block, barricaded the street, and bulldozed the storefronts in 212 Market.

On 20 February, 15 junta soldiers were killed in a clash between the military council troops and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) near Namkhone village in Kyaukse Township. On 17 February, a child was killed in a landmine explosion when two children harvested sweet potatoes in the compound at No.2 ward in Tangyan Township.





No.of Days of Clashes



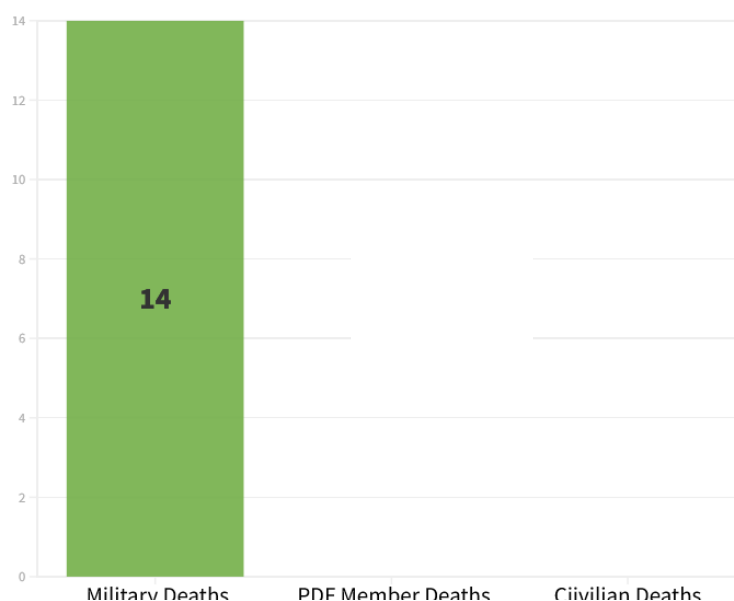
Karenni (Kayah) State

Military council troops indiscriminately fired with heavy weapons near the bridge of Kyaukkyi village in Loikaw Township, hitting a man named U Aung Pe who was on his way back home from working in his hill farm and wounding in the thigh.

On 16 February, strong winds and heavy rain tore apart the roofs of about 15 displacement camps in Demoso and Phruso Townships, and they were in urgent need of help.

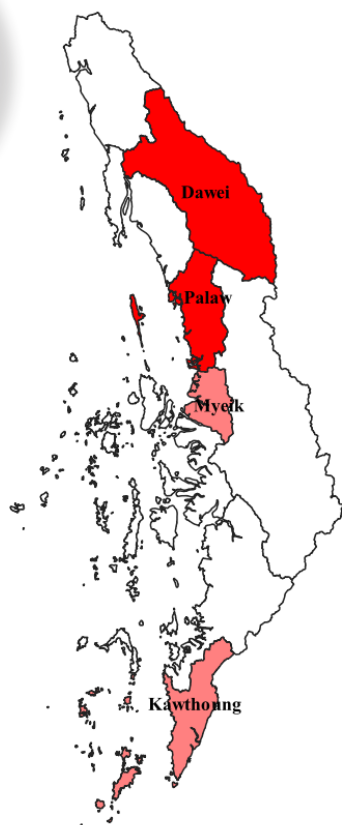
The Myanmar military had destroyed 1190 houses from 89 villages in Karenni State, which include more than 500 villages, and forced 40 percent of the state's population to safer locations, with 70 percent of those displaced being women and children.

On 14, 18 and 19 February, 14 junta soldiers were killed in a battle between the military council troops and a combined force of Karenni defense forces.





No. of Days of Clashes

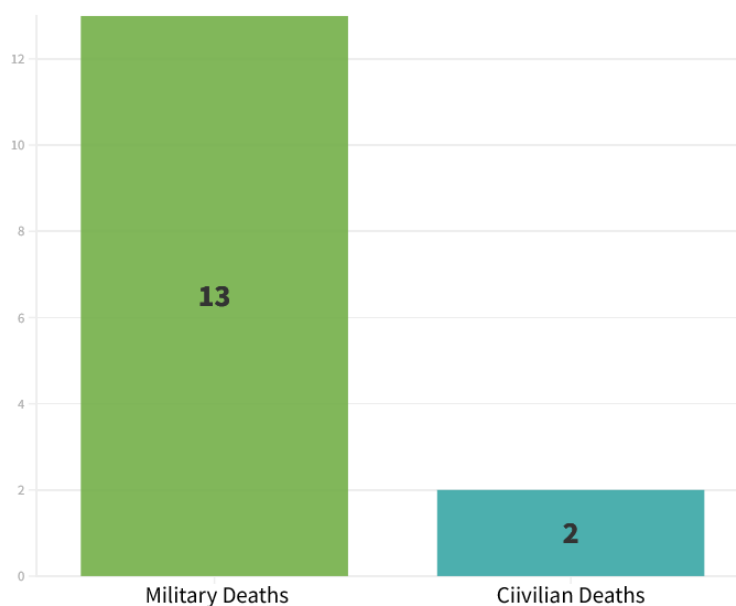


Tanintharyi Region

On the evening of 17 February, two civilians were killed when a passenger bus travelling on Pyidaunsu Road near Khechaung village in Bokeyyin Township was fired upon with guns. The victims were a 21-year-old woman and a 9-year-old boy who were travelling on Shwe Nyi Ko Line bus from Kawthong to Myeik.

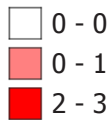
On the evening of 21 February, clashes broke out in Khamaukgyi Township between troops of the Military Council and combined forces of the Kawthoolei Army (KTLA) and the PDF, displacing more than 100 people from the Myanmar side to Ranong District in Thailand. The displaced people, including elderly people and children, were hiding in the coconut oil plantations near Waingdan and Patkaru villages in Patkyan village tract in Karapuri Township, Ranong district. They are currently being provided with humanitarian aid by the Thai Army's No. 25 Infantry Unit and No. 415 Border Guard Force.

Thirteen junta soldiers were killed in the battles between the military council troops, the PDFs and the Kawthoolei Army (KTLA) in Dawei, Kawthaung and Palaw Townships. Due to the battles, more than 2,100 locals from Dawei and Kawthaung Townships fled for safety. On 20 February, fighting between the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the KTLA continued in Dawei Township. On 17 February, two civilians were killed in a shooting by an unknown armed group on a passenger bus on the Union Road near Khaechaung village in Bokeyyin Township.





No.of Days of Clashes

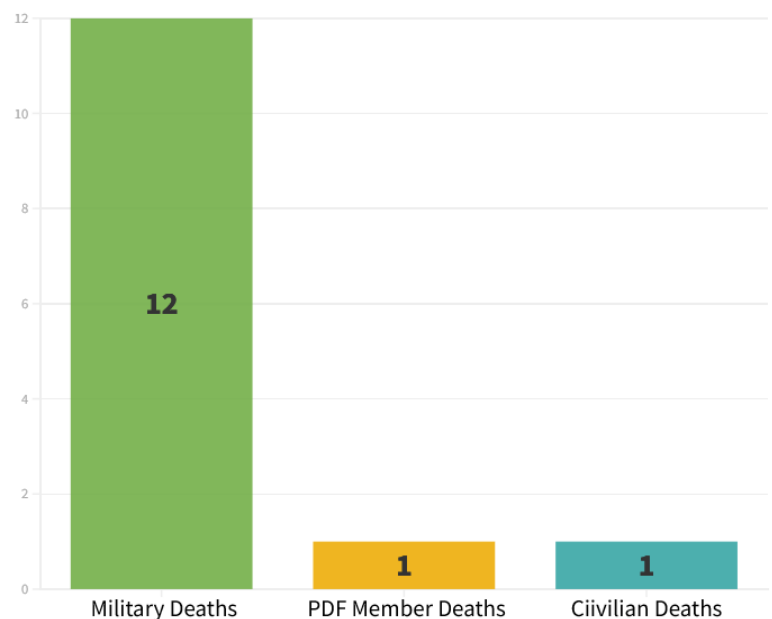


Mon State

Military council soldiers arrested 40 Rohingya people who were trying to cross Weakali village forest reserve in Thanbyuzayat Township on 19 February. Those arrested, 25 men, 12 women and three children, were taken to Kamarwet police station.

On 15 February, Special Operation Force (SOF) shot and killed a leader of Pyu Saw Htee militia named Myint Yi, also known as Paw Pi, while he was sitting in a tea shop in Yinnyein (South) village, Paung Township. The pro-junta militia leader was known for arresting young men and CDM participants, and extorting money from people in the village.

Eleven military council soldiers and one PDF member were killed in the clashes between the military council troops and a combined force of the KNLA and the PDF in Thaton and Ye Townships. One local man was killed in the military council's shooting in the fighting near the new Kamarsaing village in Thaton Township.





Ayeyarwady Region

A prison court in Patheingyi Prison sentenced political prisoner Ko Soe Paing Oo and three of family members to respective prison terms on 15 February. Military council soldiers had arrested Ko Soe Paing Oo, his wife Ma Chaw Suu Hlaing, his niece M Suu Hlaing Moe and his brother-in-law Ko Tin Hla at their home in No.10 Ward of Patheingyi on 2 December 2021. Ko Soe Paing Oo was sentenced to 20 years in prison for allegedly transporting weapons, while others were each sentenced to five years in prison.

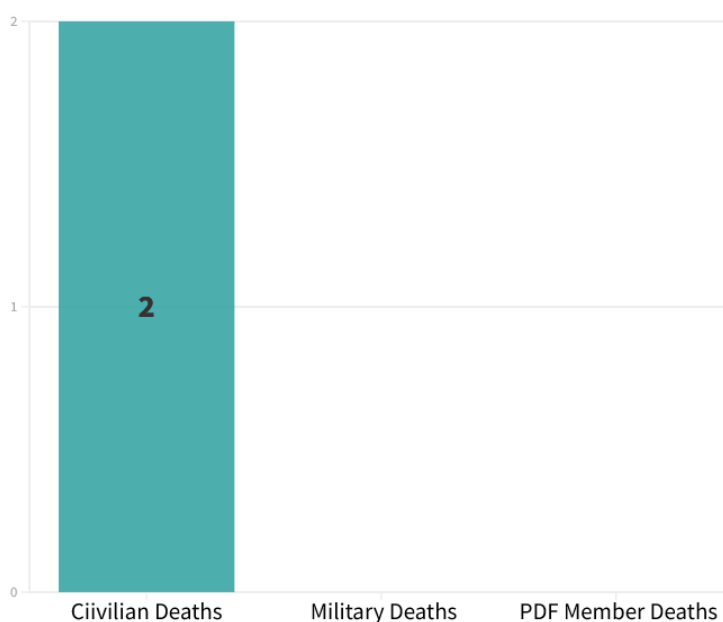
As part of Operation Nan Htike Aung, Aung San Battalion of Sun Ye Nway Oo resistance group carried out a bombing attack on gambling and funfair event sponsored by pro-military council supporters and members of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) near Taungbetkan administration office in Kwin Kauk, Inga Township on 19 February.



Yangon Region

The GTIG garment factory in Myay Tine Ward, Wartayar Industrial Zone, Shwe Pyi Thar Township, announced a planned closure of the factory by 28 February. The factory informed the its workers of the planned closure on 16 February, but did not give a reason. The factory began operations in 2017 and currently employs more than 1300 workers. The factory is also known to have repeatedly violated labor laws.

On 17 February, military council conducted household inspections in the wards and intensified searches of highway buses after explosives, including hand grenades, were found at Shop No. 6 of Market Block (S) in Thiriyadana Wholesale Complex on Thudama Road in North Okkalapa Township.



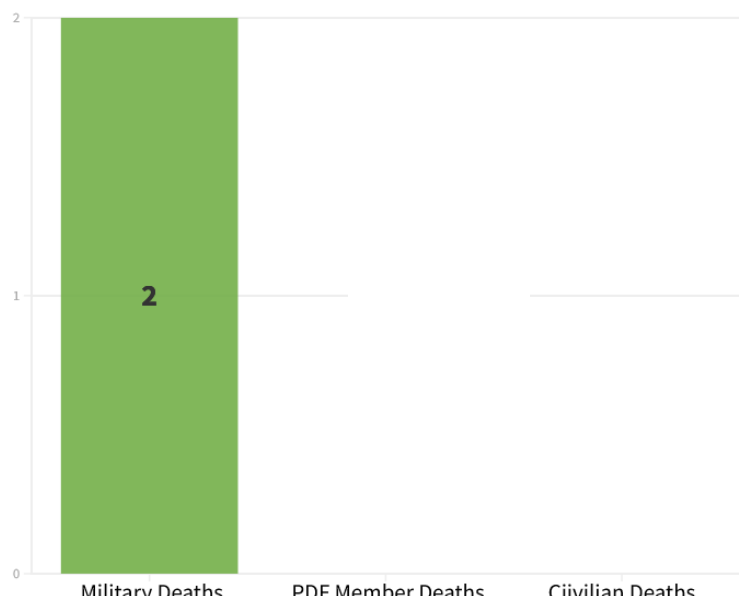
On 19 February, two 100-household heads were killed in an attack by the PDF members on No.94 ward administrator office in Dagon Seikkan Township.



Arakan State

More than 40 Rohingya women from Phwe Yar Kone displacement camp in Sittwe Township demanded effective action against a man who had been arrested for allegedly trying to rape and murder them. The arrested man is the person in charge of the IDP camp named U Ous Phan Gawnim, who allegedly raped 45 women, including married women, women with children, mentally disabled women, and underage women, through various threats.

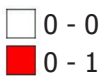
On 17 February, military council soldiers arrested 56 Rohingya people who had come to the homes of two men named U Shwe Hla and U Myint Naing in Aung Taing village, Sittwe Township. Those arrested were 36 men and 20 women from villages in Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, and Mrauk-U townships who had allegedly come to the village on the two men's promise that they could travel to Malaysia by boat for MMK 8 million.



On 16 February, two junta soldiers were killed in a mine explosion near the naval camp in Tinma village in Kyauktaw Township.



No.of Days of Clashes

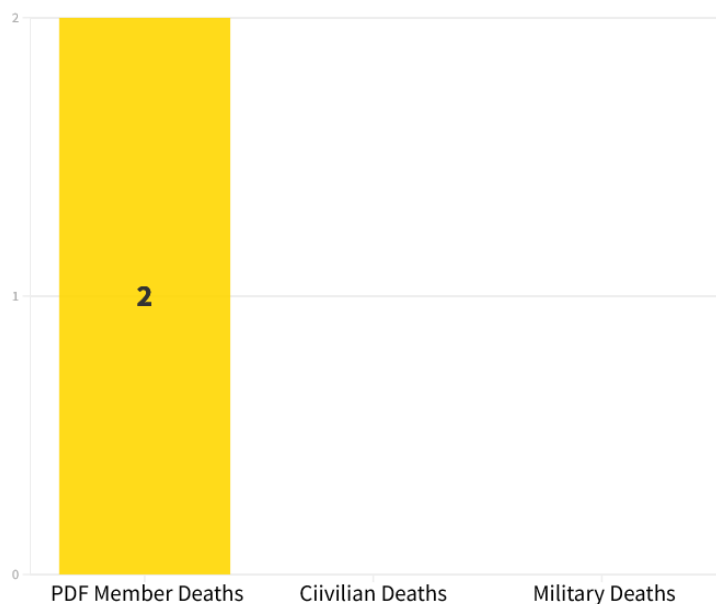


Chin State

A 26-year-old woman named Pi Laltanpuii, who lives in Zokhohtar village on the India-Myanmar border in the Indian state of Mizoram, lost a leg in a landmine explosion near Satawm village while visiting her husband in Leilet village in Falam Township.

On 16 February, Chin National Army (CAN) and Chinland Defense Force (CDF) - Thantlang conducted a raid on military council troops stationed at Thantlang Baptist Church (TBC) compound. Two comrades of the ethnic resistance fell in the raid. The regime then called in artillery fire and air support to try to retake the town.

On 16 February, two members of Chinland Defense Force (CDF) were killed in the battle between the military council troops and the CDF in Thantlang Township.





The U.S. Embassy in Yangon announced on 16 February that the United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), will provide an additional \$50 million in humanitarian assistance for emergency food and nutrition assistance in Burma, where increased displacements, armed conflict, and growing food insecurity are compounding existing needs.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Myanmar, Scot Marciel said that the US should take the lead on the Myanmar issue, which is difficult for ASEAN to resolve. He added that the uprising in Myanmar, which opposes the coup by the military council, has yet to find a solution and has entered its third year, and the international community has yet to come up with a viable strategy to help end the crisis, adding that the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus is not working.

U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi spoke by telephone on 15 February about issues that ASEAN will focus on this year, including approaches to the Myanmar issue. He also said that the United States will support Indonesia's role as the chairman of ASEAN this year.

The European Union (EU) announced on 20 February that it had adopted restrictive measures against nine individuals and seven entities, including Myanmar military officials. The sixth round of EU sanctions targets departments of the Ministry of Defence and a state-owned enterprise under its jurisdiction, as well as private companies supplying fuel, arms and funds to the military. The listed individuals include Admiral Moe Aung, Commander-in-Chief (Navy); General Maung Maung Aye, Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air); Lieutenant Colonel Myo Myint Aung, Yangon Region Economic Minister; Maj-Gen Zin Min Htet, Chief of Myanmar Police Force; Major General Ko Ko Maung, Regional Military Commander in Kachin State; and U Myo Myint Oo, junta energy minister.

India-based Myanmar civil organizations have pointed out that India, a neighbouring country of Myanmar, recognizes and formally engaging with the military council, which is responsible for serious human rights violations and the coup. In the two years since the military coup, India has provided weapons to the military council four times, and Ambassador of India to Myanmar, Mr Vinay Kumar, also attended the military council's Independence Day ceremony held on 4 January this year, according to India for Myanmar, a group that helps Myanmar and war-affected refugees in India.

However, the Mizoram government has reportedly spent more than 40 million rupees to help refugees from Myanmar and



It is difficult for the revolutionary forces to obtain anti-aircraft weapons...and civilians, including children, are living in danger under various difficulties.



Bangladesh. Currently, 31,508 refugees are living in Mizoram State. Among them, 31,050 are from Myanmar and 458 from Bangladesh.

U Naing Htoo Aung, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Defence of the National Unity Government (NUG), pointed out that it is difficult for the revolutionary forces to obtain anti-aircraft weapons because the Myanmar military council's airstrikes are ignored by various countries around the world and civilians, including children, are living in danger of their lives under various difficulties.

The military council is using military aircraft procured by Russia, and the regime may intensify airstrikes in the near future as it has already carried out more than 650 airstrikes, U Naing Htoo Aung said 16 Feb. during an online meeting with a member of the Japanese lower and upper houses of parliament.

Remark:

References and news sources for the 'What Happened This Week' section are from local and foreign news agencies as well as 15 media organizations of Burma News International - BNI.