

Weekly News Review

Issue 105, 17 - 23 May 2023



What Lies Behind Increased Airstrikes

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Introduction

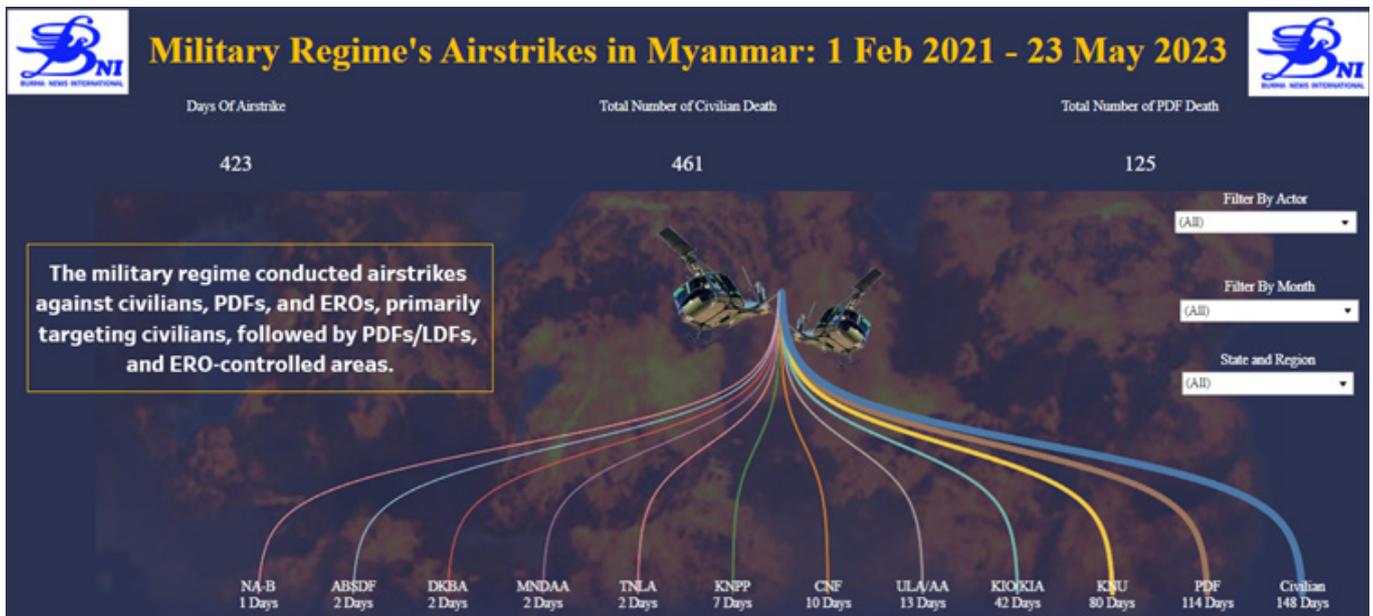
According to the Burma News International (BNI)-Myanmar Peace Monitor's record, the military council conducted airstrikes for 423 days till 23 May, 2023 since the coup. We record the airstrikes by day. The number of airstrikes may exceed thousands as at least three airstrikes or at most ten airstrikes are recorded per day.

The BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor's weekly news review for this week highlights the cause of daily airstrikes and significant news findings based on the figures related to the airstrikes by the military council.

Figures and data

Take a look at 423 days of airstrikes by the military council till 23 May, targeted attacks on civilians and IDP camps accounted

for 148 days. Targeted attacks on the EROs such as the Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/KNLA), the Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (KIO/KIA), the United League for Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA), Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA) and the Karenni National Progressive Party/Karenni Army (KNPP/KA) stood second with 161 days and targeted attacks on the People's Defense Forces (PDFs), third with 114 days. It is found that the military council conducts more targeted attacks on civilians and the Ethnic Revolutionary Organization (EROs) than the PDFs.¹

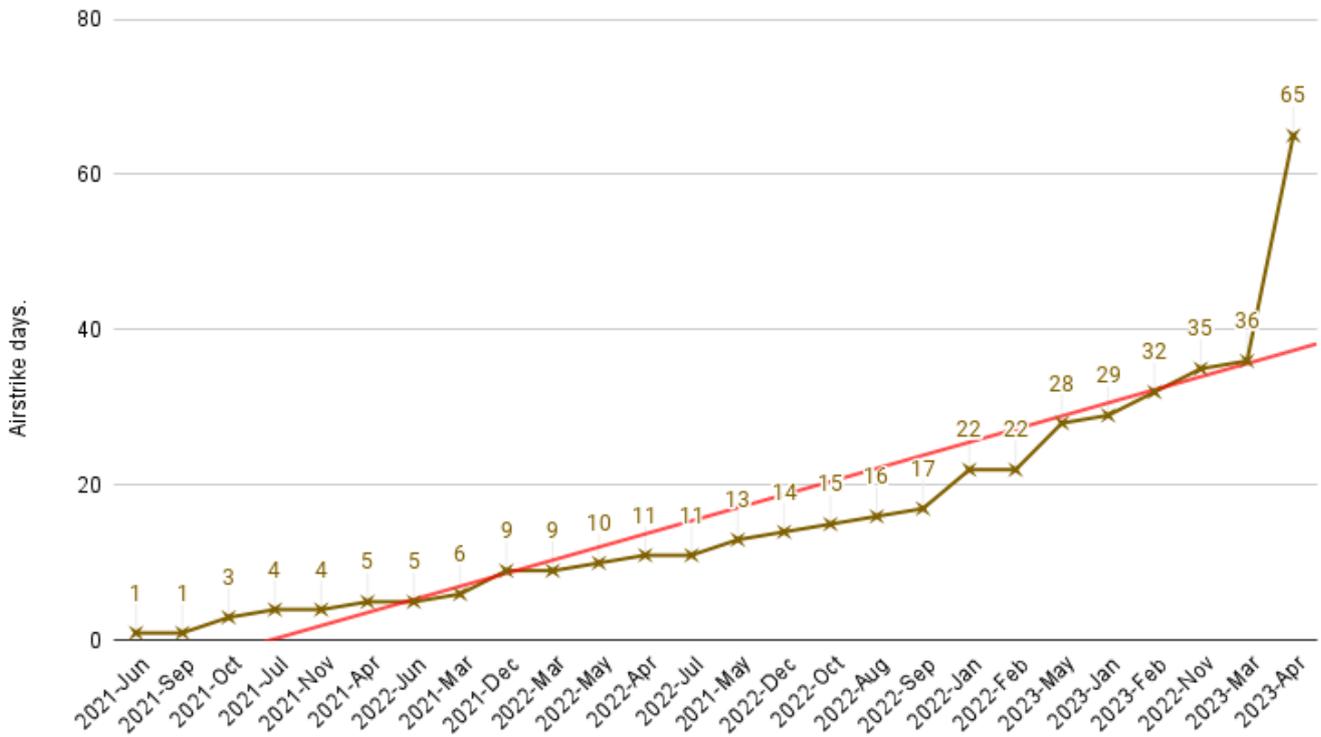


Airstrikes killed 461 civilians in regions and states, 125 People's Defense Forces/Local Defense Forces (PDFs/LDFs) members and 37 members of EROs.

The military council has ramped up airstrike day by day. April and March, 2023 saw the highest number of airstrike days. According to the BNI-MPM's record, the military council conducted airstrikes for 28 days till 23 May, 2023, with the most airstrikes reported in Karenni (Kayah) State and Sagaing Region.

¹ Military Regime's Airstrikes in Myanmar: 1 Feb 2021 - 23 May 2023
<http://rb.gy/4delx>

March and April in 2023 saw the highest number of airstrike days.

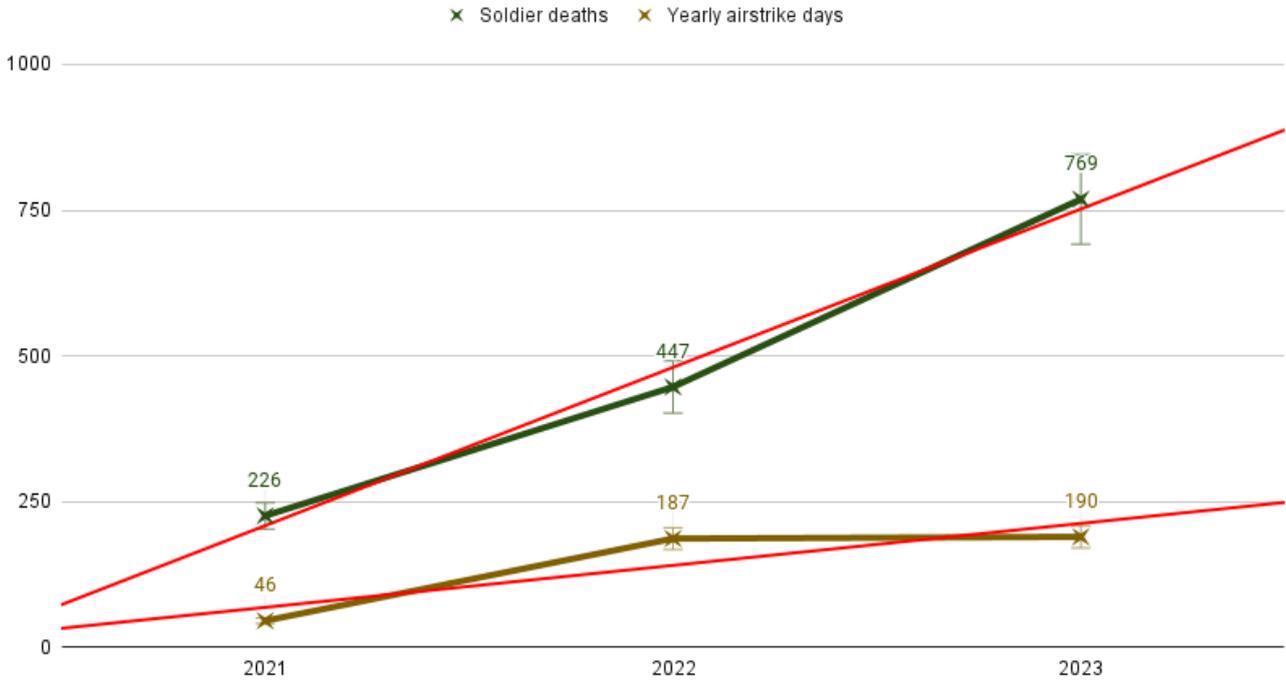


What Lies Behind Increased Airstrikes

Resistance war by the forces of the Spring Revolution has gained momentum during over two years of the coup. There are frequent targeted attacks on police stations, military outposts and departmental buildings, where the military council troops are stationed. We notice the fact that the military columns are not in a position to advance in Chin State, Sagaing Region, Magway Region, Karen State and Karenni State without the help of air force.

Our BNI-MPM interestingly finds out the reason for airstrikes by the military council through the collected figures. Take a look at the yearly figures, the increase in the number of soldier deaths is directly related to the increase in the airstrike days.

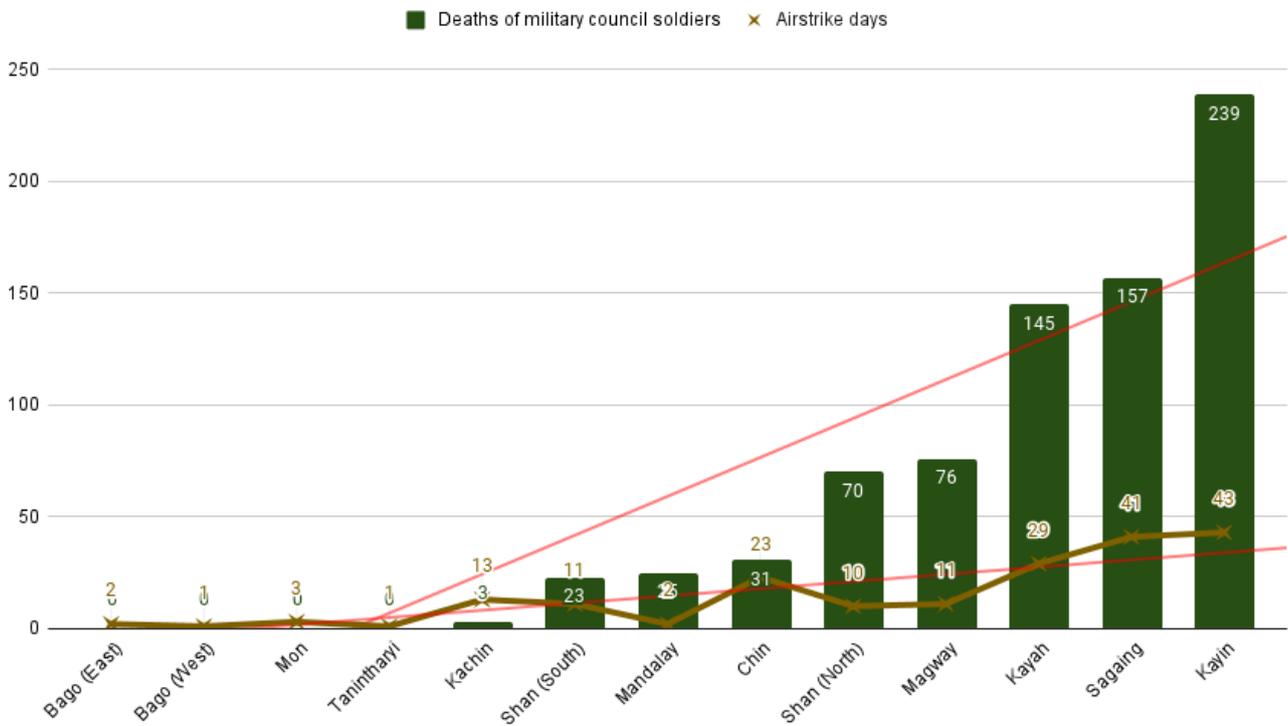
The increase in the number of soldier deaths is directly related to the increase in the airstrike days.



The above-mentioned line chart shows the number of soldier deaths related to airstrike days. These figures do not encompass the number of soldiers killed in the nationwide resistance war.

Have a look at the number of soldier deaths related to airstrike days in regions and states till 23 May, 2023, 239 soldier deaths were recorded in Karen State, 157 in Sagaing Region and 145 in Karenni (Kayah) State. These regions and states saw the highest number of airstrikes.

The relation between the deaths of military council soldiers and airstrike days in regions and states till 23 May, 2023.



Significant news findings

At 11.30 pm on 23 May, the military council bombed Khalaelawkyal (Panwalphoekaloe) village in Mawkhee village-tract in Kawkareik Township (southern Myawaddy) in Dupalayar District in the KNU-controlled territory with jet fighter. The bombing destroyed eight civilian houses and a church in the village. ²

“People were sleeping when the army conducted an airstrike. The army bombed the church and destroyed it. The bombings also hit the houses beside the church. The people were sleeping in the house. Luckily, no one was hurt. The villagers had to flee to safer places at night,” a local woman from Panwalphoekaloe village told the Karen Information Center (KIC).

At around 2.30 pm on 4 May, the military council dropped bombs by flying three times over Pikhayar village in

² Second airstrike destroys eight civilian houses and one church in Panwalphoekaloe village in the south of Myawaddy 24 May, 2023, KIC <http://rb.gy/7qu2k>

Taungdwinchaung area located over 20 miles to the south-east of Minkin Township in Sagaing Region. The bombing killed seven civilians including three children and wounded ten others.³

Three bombs weighing around 500 pounds landed in the football ground in the west of the school. The bombing destroyed around 20 civilian houses and caused the holes at a depth of one to three feet. The military council conducted a surprise airstrike without any ground battles. The bombings resulted in heavy casualties as victims were unable to run, according to locals.

On the afternoon of 9 May, two military jet fighters from Mandalay TadaU air base carried out multiple shootings on the high school operated by the National Unity Government (UNG) in Htantaw village in YeU Township on the west bank of Mu River in Sagaing Region, by flying three times. Grenade rounds and bullets hit and destroyed the school's brick wall and arch.⁴

Around 300 students are attending that school run by the teachers who have joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). Children were hurt as they left the school around 30 minutes before the airstrike, locals said.

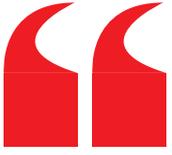
Review

According to the findings by the BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor, the military council's airstrikes target civilians the most. The days of airstrikes before the end of May, 2023, has exceeded the total days of airstrikes in 2022.

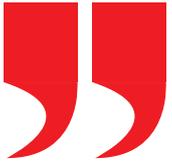
It is found that the military council increases airstrikes when it suffers more deaths during the resistance war by the forces of the Spring Revolution which are marching with a goal of rooting

3 Bombing kills seven people including children and wounds 10 in Minkin, 5 May 2023, Myanmar Now, <http://rb.gy/g5fs1>

4 Junta bombs high school in YeU, 9 May 2023, Myanmar Now, <http://rb.gy/c7lcb>



International governments, including the UN, should start making efforts to stop the military council's airstrikes.



out the military dictatorship and the territorial dominance declines.

In addition, the military council doesn't seem to take account of the mass killings of civilians like the deadly airstrike in Pazigy village in Kanbalu Township of Sagaing Region and the deadly airstrike in ANang Pa in Hpakant Township of Kachin State. We need to notice the fact that the military council does not take account of the lives of children and IDPs like the deadly attacks on the school in Letyetkone village in Depayin Township and the IDP camp in Karenni (Kayah) State.

So, the forces of the Spring Revolution which are marching with the public's support are required to make necessary preparations to cautiously avoid the military council's increasingly targeted airstrikes even though they cannot even defend the military council's deadly airstrikes. International governments including the UN should make efforts to stop the military council's airstrikes.

Weekly HighLight News



Some women face sexual violence in Nantthar village

25 May 2023

Some women from Nantthar village in Mawtake region in Indaw Township of Sagaing Region are facing sexual violence, according to locals.

A military column of over 100 soldiers from Division-77 has been stationed in Nantthar village in Mawtake region for more than two months. Of the stranded people, some females get raped, a IDP man from Nantthar village told the Kachin News Group (KNG).

"At the beginning, five girls aged between 10 and 20 got raped. One of the victims is the married girl. Soldiers are committing rape. However, the army has threatened locals not to tell others. So, the villagers have to keep quiet," a male IDP from Nantthar village said.

Three of five victims faced sexual violence when the military column entered the village. The rest two victims got raped later. This is just the list collected till late April. Soldiers continue to commit rape. The army threatened to burn the houses and kill them if they told others.

“Since the military column entered the village, soldiers have been committing sexual violence. Villagers remain silent about the rape case as they get threatened. Soldiers commit sexual exploitation when they get drunk,” an official from Indaw PDF told the KNG.

The women from five villages in Indaw Township faced sexual violence since the coup, according to the Indaw People’s Defense Force (PDF).

Single women are married off to the single men due to the risk of sexual violence in most of villages in Mawtake region including Nantthar village, according to locals.

The military column of Division-77 has been stationed in Nantthar village since 10 May, 2023. Around 1,800 of over 2,000 locals fled to safer places when the military column entered the village. There are over 200 locals left stranded in the village. Most of the stranded people are pro-military supporters.

“The stranded people have to sign the pledge. They have to go outside during the designated period. Soldiers have threatened to burn the houses and kill the family members if they don’t return to their home. So, we have to live under the control of the military council,” a man from Nantthar village said.

Locals from Nantthar, Aungkone, Tonetaw and Inpin villages fled to safer places two months ago as the Division-77 was stationed in Nantthar village.

BNI - MPM

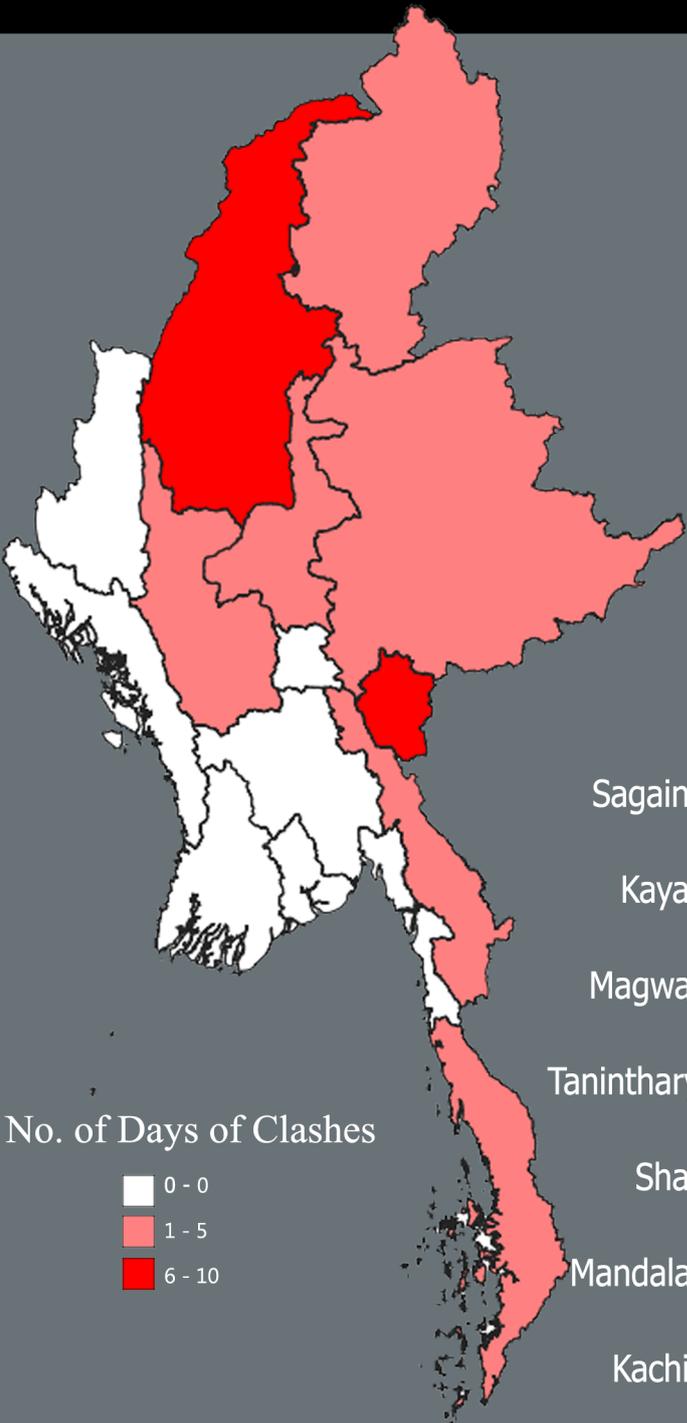
Part II

What Happened this Week

According to data collected by BNI- Myanmar Peace Monitor, there were 29 days of clashes between military council forces, the People's Defence Forces/Local Defence Forces (PDFs/LDFs), and Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) from 17 to 23 May. Broken down by state and region, Sagaing Region topped the list with 10 days. MPM records the situation of fighting in days by township, but the actual number of incidents may be higher given the frequency of clashes.

29 Days

No. of Days of Clashes



Sagaing 10

Kayah 7

Magway 3

Tanintharyi 2

Shan 2

Mandalay 2

Kachin 2

Kayin 1

Military, PDF Member and Civilian Deaths

17 - 23 May 2023



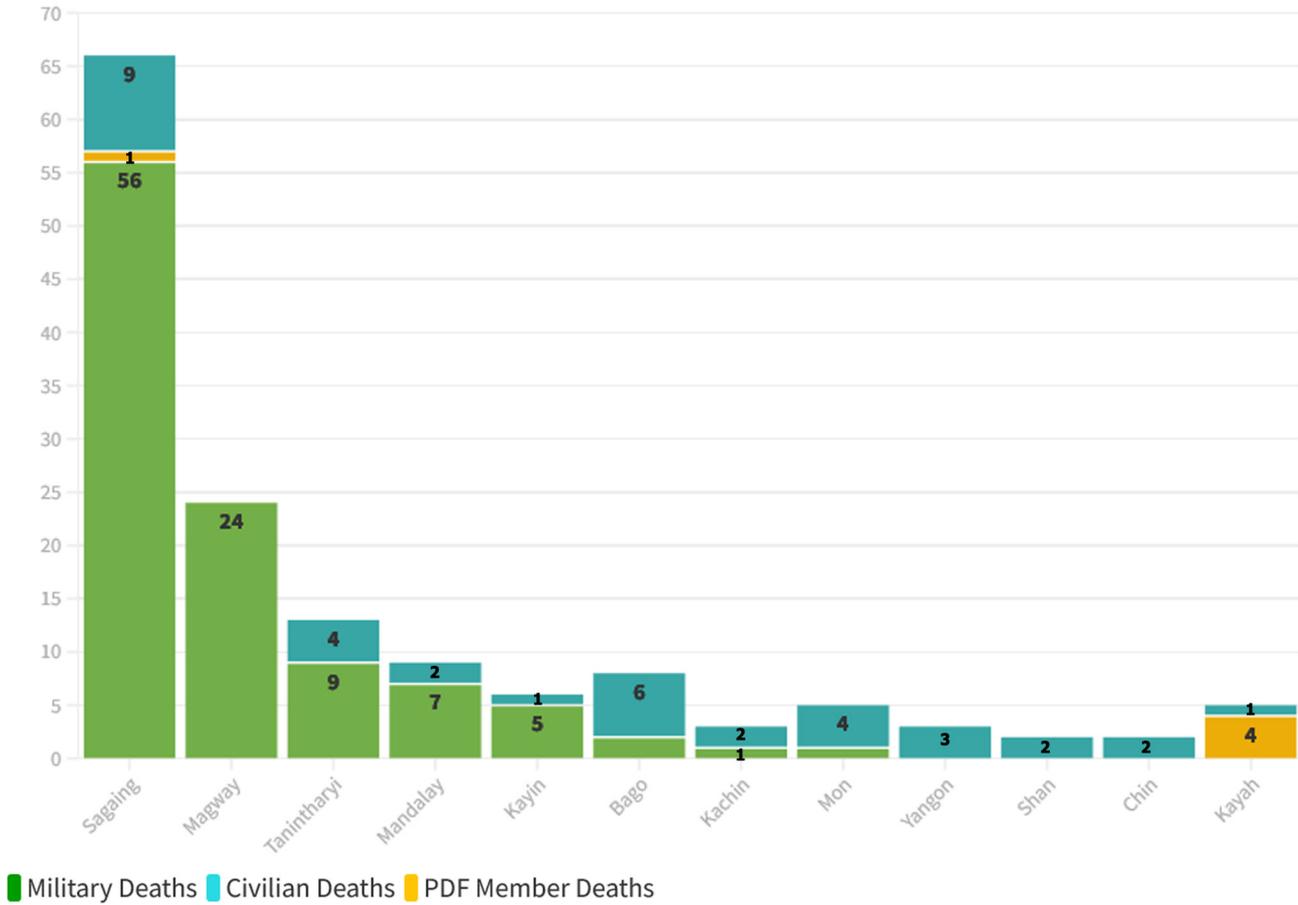
Military Deaths



PDF Member Deaths



Civilian Deaths



30,000

Total Number of IDPs

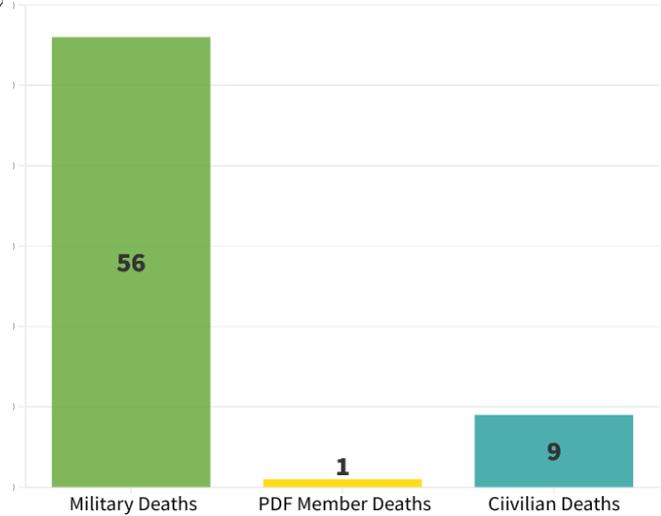
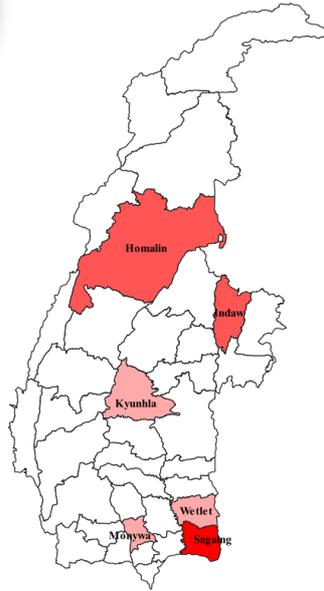
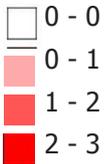
17 - 23 May 2023

Sagaing 30000





No.of Days of Clashes

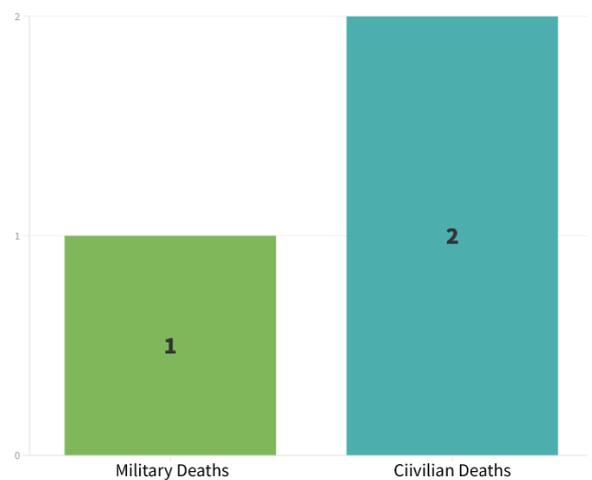
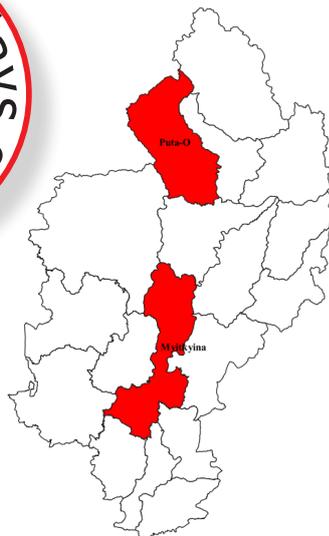
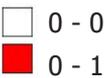


Sagaing Region

Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and local PDF in Kyunhla, Homalin, Monywa, Sagaing, Wetlet, and Indaw Townships, killing 50 junta soldiers and one member of the resistance. Five junta soldiers were killed when junta troops were attacked with mines in Ye-U Township on 23 May. In addition, two policemen from Thazi police station in Monywa were shot at point-blank range as they came out to buy betel squids on 20 May, killing one of them. Six local residents were arrested and killed by junta soldiers in Kanbalu and Chaung-U Townships. On 23 May, a military council-appointed administrator named Bo Myint of Ward 8 of Shwebo was assassinated by PDF members. On 17 May, two women were fatally hit by a mine explosion when they went into the forest to collect vegetables near Manin-Minkone village. In Kanbalu Township, more than 30000 local residents were forced to flee to safety when Myanmar army troops entered the villages following the area was hit by Cyclone Mocha.



No.of Days of Clashes

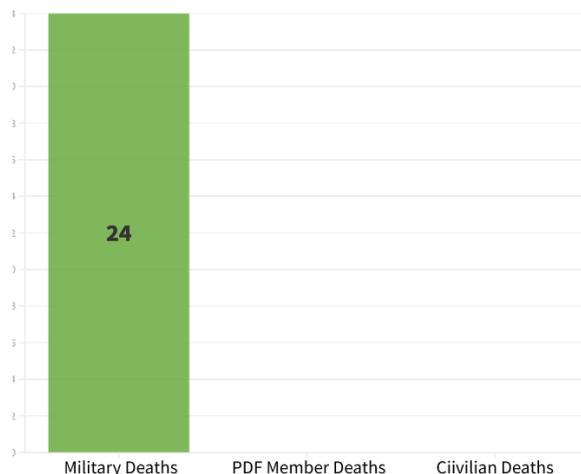
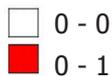


Kachin State

Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and the joint forces of Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the PDF in Myitkyina and Puta-O Townships, killing one junta soldier. On 22 May, two youths were shot dead and five others were arrested by military council soldiers in Rampu Ward, Myitkyina.

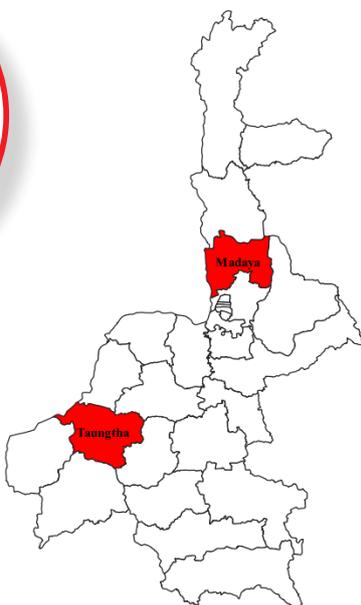


No. of Days of Clashes

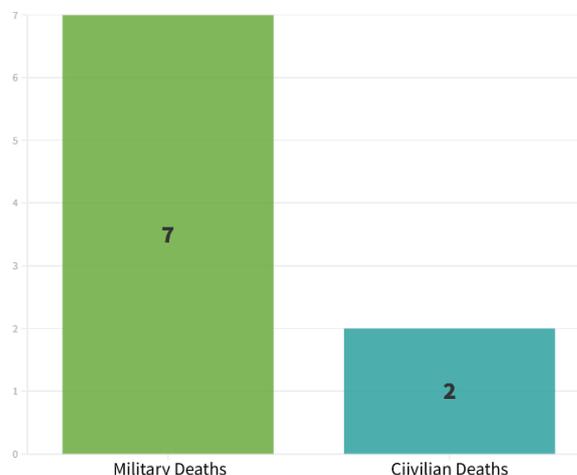
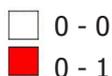


Magway Region

Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and the PDF in Yesagyo, Pakokku, and Myaing Townships, killing 23 junta soldiers. On 20 May, the PDF attacked the pro-military village of Kanni village in Myaing Township with drones, killing a company commander on the regime side.

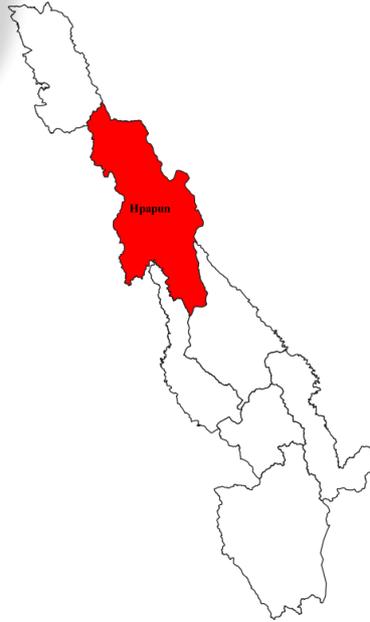


No. of Days of Clashes

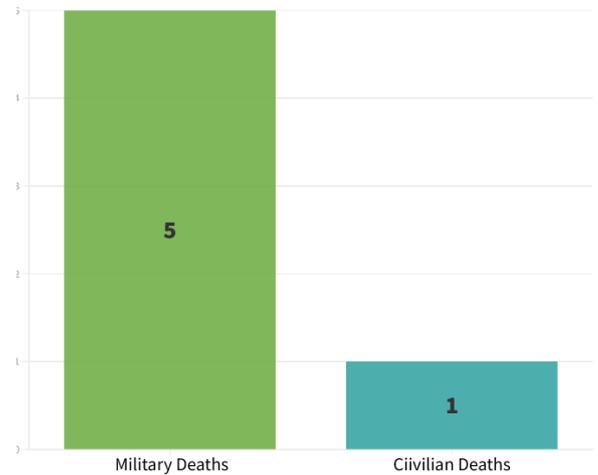
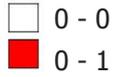


Mandalay Region

Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and PDF in Madaya and Taungtha Townships, killing six junta soldiers. In addition, two regime soldiers were shot by PDF members in Pawtawmu on 23 May, killing one of them. On 18 May, a township-level USDP reserve committee member named U Kyaw Min from Yaechaungbo village of Wunsu village tract, Madaya Township, was fatally shot by unknown gunmen. On 19 May, the house of U Than Naing, 100-household head of Aungpinlel Ward in Chanmyathazi Township was attacked with improvised explosive devices by unknown gunmen, killing his mother on the spot.

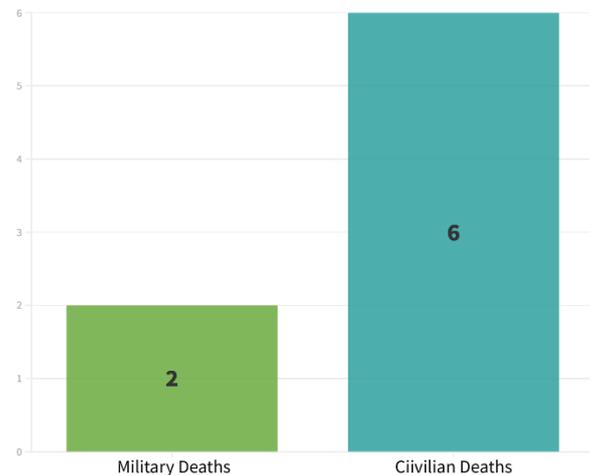


No. of Days of Clashes



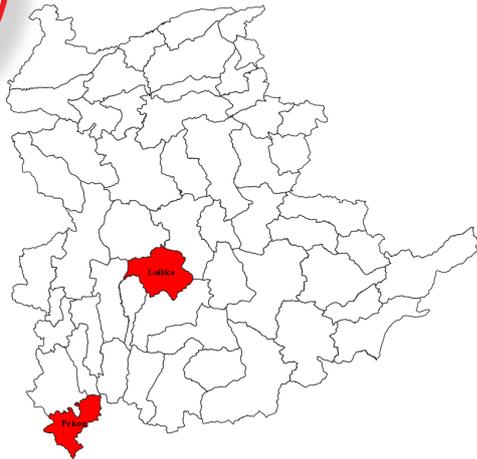
Karen State

On 20 May, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) launched a raid on a Border Guard Forces (BGF) checkpoint between Katayti and Hteekahsawme villages in Hpapun District, killing five BGF members. On 23 May, Myanmar army troops fired artillery shells towards downtown areas of Kyeikdon in Kyainseikgyi Township, killing one child and injuring another.

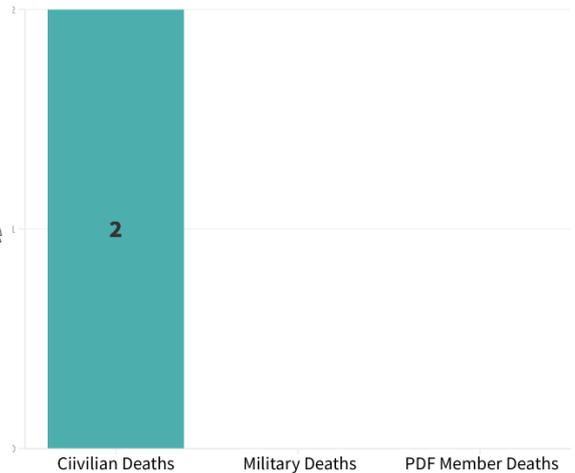
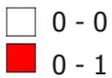


Bago Region

On 18 May, one junta sergeant was killed and another injured when ten inmates grabbed guns and ran away from the special court inside Taungoo Prison. On 22 May, a leader of the pro-military Pyu Saw Htee militia from Nyaungnipin, Paungde Township, named U Than Naing was killed by PDF members. Four local residents were arrested and killed by military council soldiers in Okpho and Waw Townships. On 21 May, the administrator and his wife of Ywarthit village in Eainkadon village tract, Thonse Township, were shot dead by PDF members.

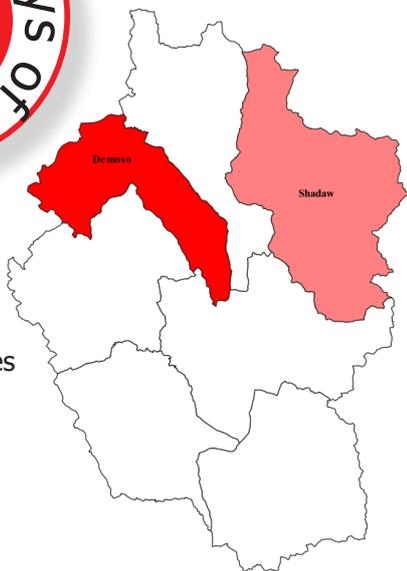


No. of Days of Clashes

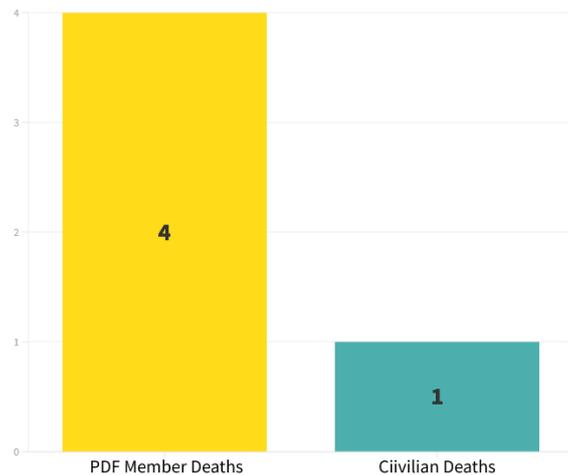
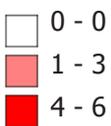


Shan State

On 17 May, clashes occurred between advancing Myanmar army troops and PDF-Pekon in Pekon Township. On 20 May, clashes occurred between the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) and the Pa-O National Liberation Organisation/Pa-O National Liberation Army (PNLO/PNLA) near Hohkaing village of Namhu village tract, Mawksai Township. On 19 May, a resident of Loiyang village in Mong Kung Township was gunned down by unknown gunmen in the forest. On 22 May, a civilian was fatally hit when a car carrying civilians was fired upon by unknown gunmen on Pekon Road in Moebye.



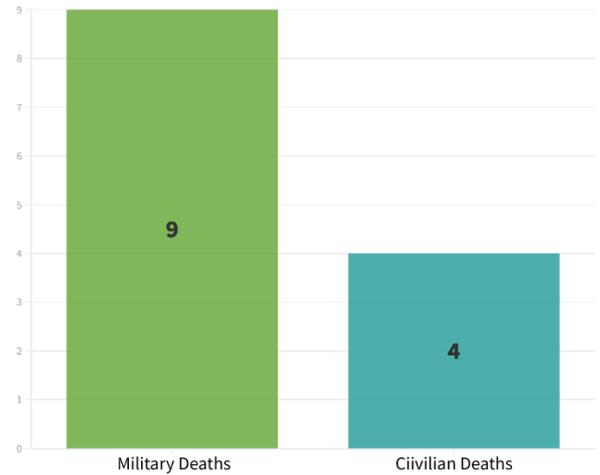
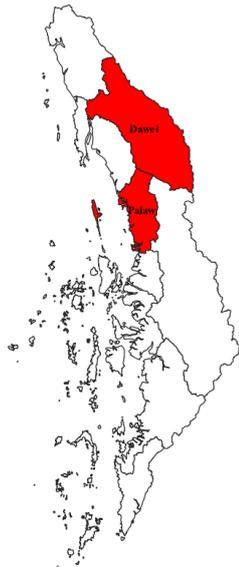
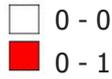
No. of Days of Clashes



Karenni (Kayah) State

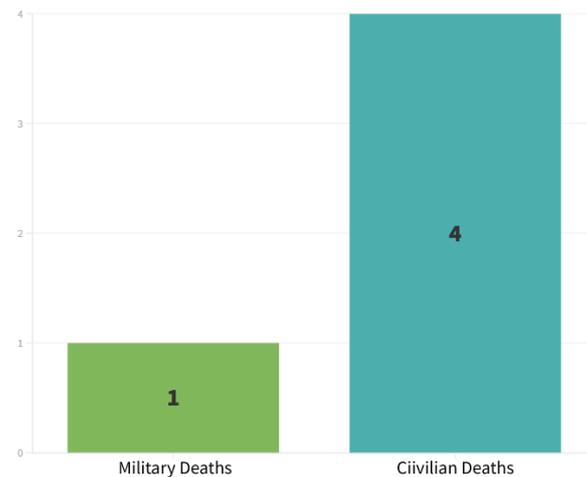
Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and joint forces of the Karenni Army and local Karenni defence forces in Demoso and Shadaw Township, killing four on the local defence force. On 17 May, a woman was killed when the regime's air force bombed Sawlon village in Bawlakhe without there being any fighting on the ground.

No. of Days of Clashes



Tanintharyi Region

Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and the PDF in Dawei and Palaw Townships, killing four junta soldiers. On 17 May, five regime soldiers were killed when they came under mine attacks between Banlamut and Nyaungpinkone villages. On 20 May, a man in his thirties died after being tortured at a regime's interrogation centre. On 23 May, 100-household head named U Tin Than of Khamaukkyi town, Kawthaung Township, and commander of the reserve fire brigade company were gunned down at their homes by unknown gunmen. A similar incident occurred when unknown gunmen opened fire on the immigration office and police station in Launglon Township on 23 May, killing deputy immigration staff officer named U Min Thein Latt and injuring two other staff members.

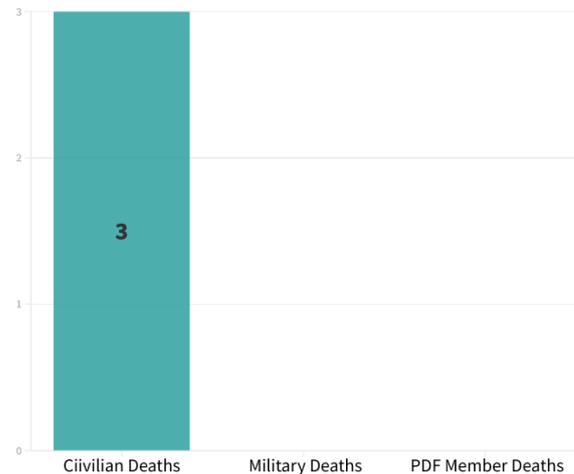


Mon State

On 19 May, a military council soldier was killed when the junta outpost near Zeetaw village was attacked with drones and heavy weapons by the PDF. On 19 May, a resident of Naychar (Kyarkwin) village was fatally hit when junta troops marching on foot down from Melan, Bilin Township, was attacked with heavy weapons. On 21 May, a married couple was fatally shot by unknown gunmen while they were riding a motorcycle near Wutgyi village in Hpalat village tract, Paung Township. On 18 May, one man was shot dead and another was injured by unknown gunmen in Ahnin village, Thanbyuzayat Township.

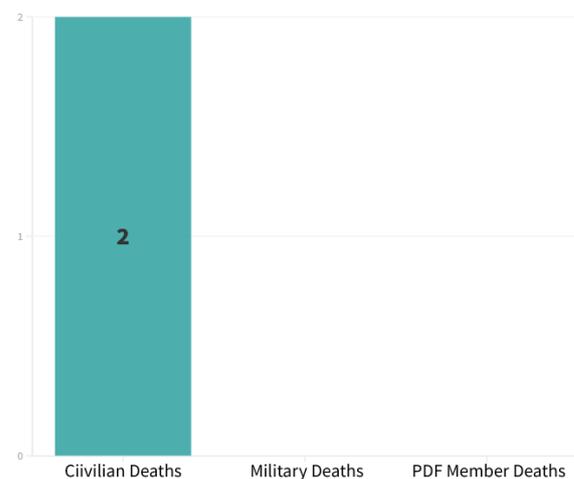
Yangon Region

On 22 May, three people including the administrator U Zaw Lwin of Ward 88 of Dagon Seikkan Township were fatally hit when the group of seven people were attacked by unknown gunmen.



Chin State

On 22 May, family members found the burned bodies of two Tedim residents at a Myanmar army camp, who had disappeared between Falam and Hakha.





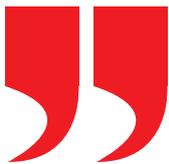
The G7 Leaders' Summit, held in Hiroshima, Japan from 19 to 21 May, called on the Myanmar military council to immediately cease all violence and reiterated their call on all states to prevent the flow of arms into Myanmar. The call was made in the statement of the summit.

On 19 May, Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the government of Singapore is making efforts to prevent the supply of weapons accessories for the Myanmar military's weapons factories and is complying with the request of the United Nations. The statement also said that the government of Singapore remains committed to providing humanitarian assistance to support the people of Myanmar, and that in line with the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus, it will continue to work with the United Nations to facilitate peace and national reconciliation in Myanmar.

According to a UN report by UN Special Representative Tom Andrews, Singapore has been a strategic transit point for the export of weapons to the Myanmar military. The report found that \$254 million USD worth of supplies have been shipped from dozens of Singapore-based entities to the Myanmar military since the coup. As many as 138 Singapore-based firms have served as intermediaries for the Myanmar military since the coup.



Five British insurance companies were added to the 'Dirty List' after they failed to give a commitment to stop providing insurance cover for deliveries of aviation fuel to Myanmar.



According to the report, up to 138 organizations in Singapore provided weapons to the Myanmar military. The report found that the Myanmar military imported arms through Singapore, including parts for MiG-29 fighter jets, K8W trainer and light combat aircraft, Mi-17 helicopters, dual-purpose military support equipment, raw materials, and production-related materials, such as spare parts for ATR-42 transport aircraft and trucks.

Burma Campaign UK, a London-based non-governmental organization that works for human rights, democracy, and development in Myanmar (Burma), announced on 22 May that it had added five British insurance companies to its "Dirty List" after they failed to commit to stopping the provision of insurance cover for deliveries of aviation fuel to Burma. The five companies are: UK P&I, Steamship Mutual, Britannia P&I, North Standard and Shipowners' Club. They are mutual insurance clubs which have provided insurance cover (protection and indemnity (P&I) insurance) to vessels which have delivered aviation fuel to Burma.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) postponed the deadline for the military council of Myanmar to submit its report on the alleged genocide against the Rohingya by three months. The original deadline was 24 May 2023, but it has now been extended to August 24, 2023.

Pita Limjaroenrat, the leader of the Move Forward Party, which won the most votes in the recent Thai election, promised that his government would engage in dialogue with all stakeholders in Myanmar in an effort to bring peace to the country. He said that his government would focus on human security considerations, including humanitarian and economic aspects, and that it would implement these measures with a view to achieving mutual peace and prosperity for Thailand, Myanmar, ASEAN, and beyond.

Pita is currently trying to form a coalition that will vote him in as prime minister, with a majority of the 750-member House of Representatives and the Senate likely to vote for him.

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.