

Weekly News Review

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The Spring Revolution and the Role of India's Central Government

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Introduction

"India is the mother of democracy."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized this point during his address to the US Congress on 23 June. The parliamentarians present at the speech expressed their support by applauding.

However, it is worth noting that the Indian central government, led by Prime Minister Modi, has ignored the voices of the Spring Revolution forces or the people of Myanmar who are fighting for democracy, federalism, and the removal of military dictatorship. Instead, India continues to work closely with Myanmar's military regime led by coup plotter Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

This issue of Burma News International (BNI) - Myanmar Peace Monitor (MPM) Weekly News Review takes a closer look at the Spring Revolution in Myanmar and the role of the central government of India.

Is India supporting the Myanmar's military council?

India, which prides itself on being the mother of democracy, shares a border with Myanmar of nearly 1,000 miles (1643 km) between its provinces of Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh and Chin State, Sagaing Region, and Kachin State on Myanmar's side.

According to India's export records, over a period of six months from November 2022 to April 2023, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) transferred numerous military-end use products to Myanmar for a total value of more than 5 million USD. The shipments consisted of military end-use goods, technology, and technical documents to be used by the Myanmar military, Justice for Myanmar revealed on 24 June. (BEL is 51.14% owned by the Indian government. Other shareholders include Nippon Life India Asset Management, Goldman Sachs, Vanguard, BlackRock, Fidelity, the Canadian Pension Plan, California Public Employees' Retirement System, California State Teachers Retirement System and Caisse de Depot et Placement du Quebec and the Swedish pension funds, AP-fonden (AP1), Andra AP-fonden (AP2) and Sjunde AP-fonden (AP7).¹

Moreover, the Indian state-owned arms company Yantra India Ltd shipped multiple 122mm howitzers to the Myanmar military on October 27, 2022. In response, there have been calls for India, as a participant in the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) alongside the United States, Japan, and Australia, to halt the sale and supply of military equipment to Myanmar's military regime.²

In the last week of November 2022, joint forces of the local People's Defence Forces (PDFs) attacked a junta convoy carrying weapons from India. The convoy consisted of 13 vehicles and more than 100 people as it travelled along the Kale-Tamu road on the India-Myanmar border through Tamu in Sagaing Region.

1 State-owned Indian arms company exported over \$5 million in equipment to the Myanmar junta in the six months to April 2023 <http://rb.gy/x49sh>

2 India supplies military equipment to Myanmar military <http://rb.gy/zzc21>

An alliance of local resistance groups used explosives, drones, and heavy weapons against the convoy, according to an official from the Kale People's Defence Force (PDF), one of the groups involved in the attack.

However, the Indian Embassy in Yangon denied to Myanmar Now news agency that there had been any arms shipments from India to the Myanmar military, as claimed by the local defence forces. The attack on the convoy was carried out by combined forces of local defence forces, including PDF - Kale Battalion, Harmonious Northern Brotherhood, Ranger Kalay Defence Force (RKDF), KL-UGF S2, Daung Thway Yarzar and Northern People's Defence Force.³

The Spring Revolution and the Role of India's Central Government

Interactions have existed between the ethnic peoples of Chin State in Myanmar and the people of India since ancient times. Separated only by a small border river, the inhabitants of both sides maintained close and friendly relations, with "unhindered" comings and goings.

During the Spring Revolution in Myanmar, up to 60,000 people from Myanmar, including officials who participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), political leaders, elected members of parliament, and people displaced by the armed conflict, crossed the border into India to seek refuge, according to refugee aid workers in Mizoram State. Those displaced by the fighting have come and gone across the border depending on the situation of the fighting on the ground. In times of airstrikes by the military regime in Myanmar, they have to flee in large numbers to Mizoram State, which consists of 11 districts, they say.

However, the Indian Embassy in Myanmar has told the media that more than 50,000 civilians from Myanmar have fled to

³ Myanmar junta arms convoy attacked by defence forces near India-Myanmar border <http://rb.gy/y5rvw>

Mizoram and Manipur and have been hosted by local civil society groups and authorities.

In a published report presented by Tom Andrews - the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar at the 52nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on 9 March 2023, he accused the Indian central government of trying to prevent displaced people fleeing widespread violence and human rights violations from entering the country and sending them back.⁴

In January and February 2023, Indian special forces hunting for Myanmar refugees went house-to-house in 17 villages along the border in Moreh town in Manipur State, arresting more than 170 Myanmar refugees.⁵

It is reasonable to assume that the provision of security and protection for Myanmar refugees fleeing the civil war by state governments and the Indian central government remains questionable, while interactions between the Myanmar military council and the Indian central government have occurred on several occasions.

On 24 April 2023, India chaired a secret meeting in New Delhi on the Myanmar issue called "Track 1.5." Some members of the Myanmar military council were invited, and representatives from China, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and current ASEAN chair Indonesia also attended the meeting. The "Track 1.5" meeting, which focused on junta representatives, has been criticised for alienating Spring Revolution forces, including the National Unity Government (NUG), who are committed to building a federal democratic union.

The Indian central government seems to believe that dealing with the military regime in Myanmar is inevitable because of existing border issues, such as Indian rebels operating on the Myanmar side of the border, and other economic interests. The Modi's government, which touts India as "the "mother of

4 India's response to UN Special Rapporteur's report <http://rb.gy/6s9nc>

5 Myanmar refugees in Manipur continue to be arrested <http://rb.gy/j98sf>

democracy," is unable to apply pressure on and isolate the Myanmar's military regime.

Review

On 22 June, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden jointly released a 58-point statement after their meeting at the White House. In the 30th paragraph of the statement, they expressed deep concern about the deteriorating situation in Myanmar and called for the release of all arbitrary detainees, the initiation of constructive dialogue, and Myanmar's transition to an inclusive federal democratic system.⁶



In India-the world's second most populous country-the administrative power of the central government is relatively stronger. State governments have no say in most international and foreign affairs. Take, for example, the government of Mizoram, which has taken in and helped people from Myanmar who have sought refuge in the state on humanitarian grounds. It will not be able to circumvent the policies and pressures of the central government led by Prime Minister Modi.

As a federal democratic country, India is Myanmar's most powerful neighbour. Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds the

6 Joint Statement from the United States and India <http://rb.gy/65d2p>



In the more than two years since the military coup, more than 1.7 million people have been displaced as a result of the military regime's expansion of armed conflict, arson attacks, and airstrikes.



chairmanship of the G20, the main forum for international economic cooperation that includes the United States, Britain, the EU, France, Canada, Indonesia, China and Russia, until mid-November this year. In addition, his government released "India: the Mother of Democracy" as its political manifesto. The Indian central government, which currently leads the group of countries that account for two-thirds of the world's population and has declared India as the "Mother of Democracy" in the world, still presents a source of hope for the Spring Revolution - especially for the people of Myanmar who are going through the military coup.

In the more than two years since the military coup, more than 1.7 million people have been displaced as a result of the military regime's expansion of armed conflict, arson attacks, and airstrikes. These displaced people are in a humanitarian crisis and continue to lack access to international humanitarian assistance. For this reason, India's ability to provide cross-border assistance is a tremendous support and opportunity to resolve the humanitarian crisis for the people of Myanmar.⁷

Furthermore, it is crucial for the Indian central government to address the issue and work towards finding a solution that prevents any future occurrences of airstrikes targeting civilians along the India-Myanmar border. Although the actions of the Indian central government, which has always prioritised the security of its border and its economic interests, are not wrong, it should carefully consider its practical actions so that they do not support the Myanmar military regime in any way.

It should be noted that the world has been keeping a watchful eye on the future processes of the Indian central government to see how it would benefit the Spring Revolution in Myanmar and the aspirations of the people of Myanmar in their pursuit of establishing a federal democratic union

7 Internally Displaced Persons Situation in Myanmar (Feb 2021 – Current)
<http://rb.gy/lfecn>

Weekly Highlight Quotes



Now, if someone asks me what I want to do, I want to see the face of the person who bombed the village by helicopter. How does he feel in this situation? I want to ask whether he has humanity and is a Myanmar race or not. There are so many questions I want to ask this person, whether he committed this incident as he didn't have a family. I pray that such a tragedy never happens. I am doing prayer alone. I always think about what will happen to myself, day and night. This is not me alone. The people of the entire village who experienced this process are thinking about it. I have to console myself due to my baby. Sometimes I always think if it will be okay if I die.



Ma Moh Moh – Survivor of the Pazigyí village airstrike
(From "An interview with a pregnant woman who survived the Pazigyí village airstrike" by BNI-MPM)

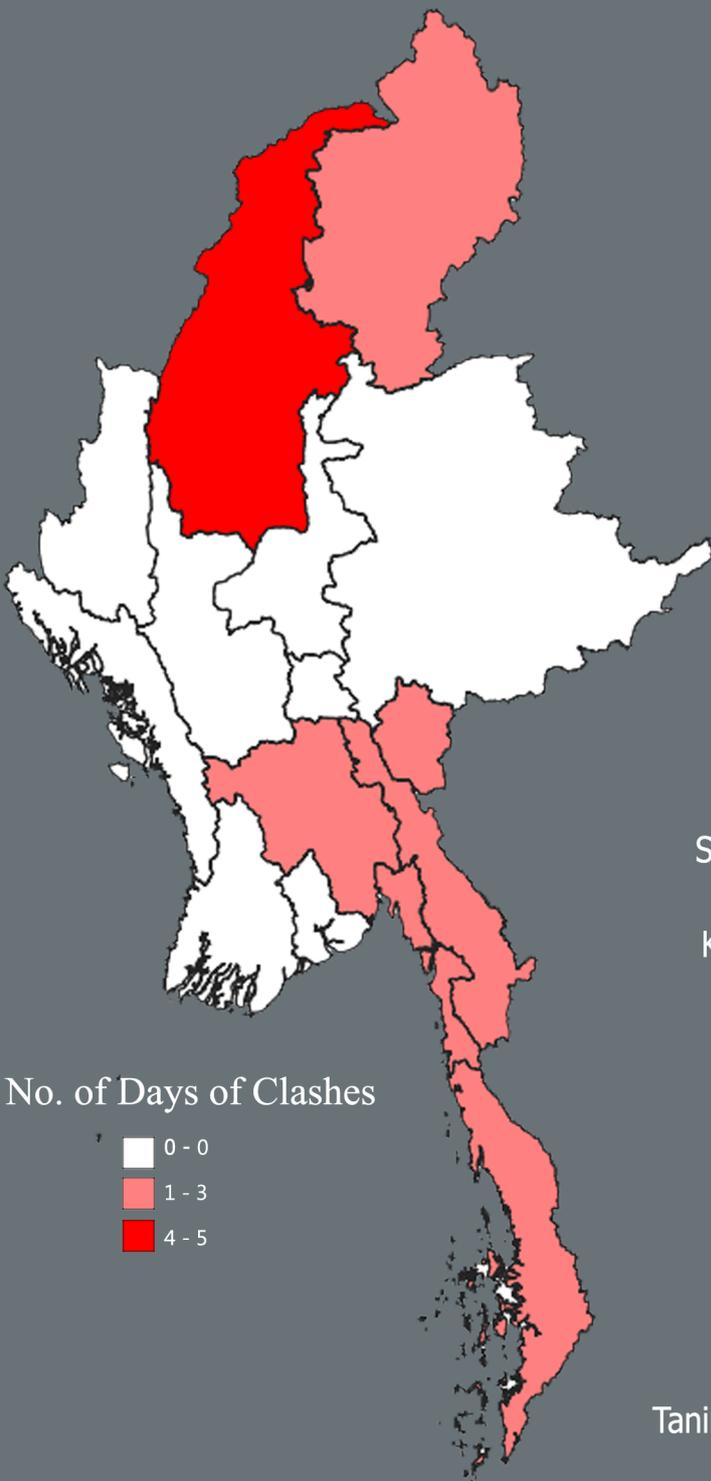
Part II

What Happened This Week

According to the record by the Burma News International (BNI)-Myanmar Peace Monitor, there were 15 days of clashes between the military council forces, the PDFs/LDFs and the EROs from 21 to 27 June. Sagaing Region topped the list of clashes in regions and states, with five days. The number of clashes may be higher than that as the clashes in townships are recorded by day.

15 Days

No. of Days of Clashes



Military, PDF Member and Civilian Deaths

21 - 27 June 2023



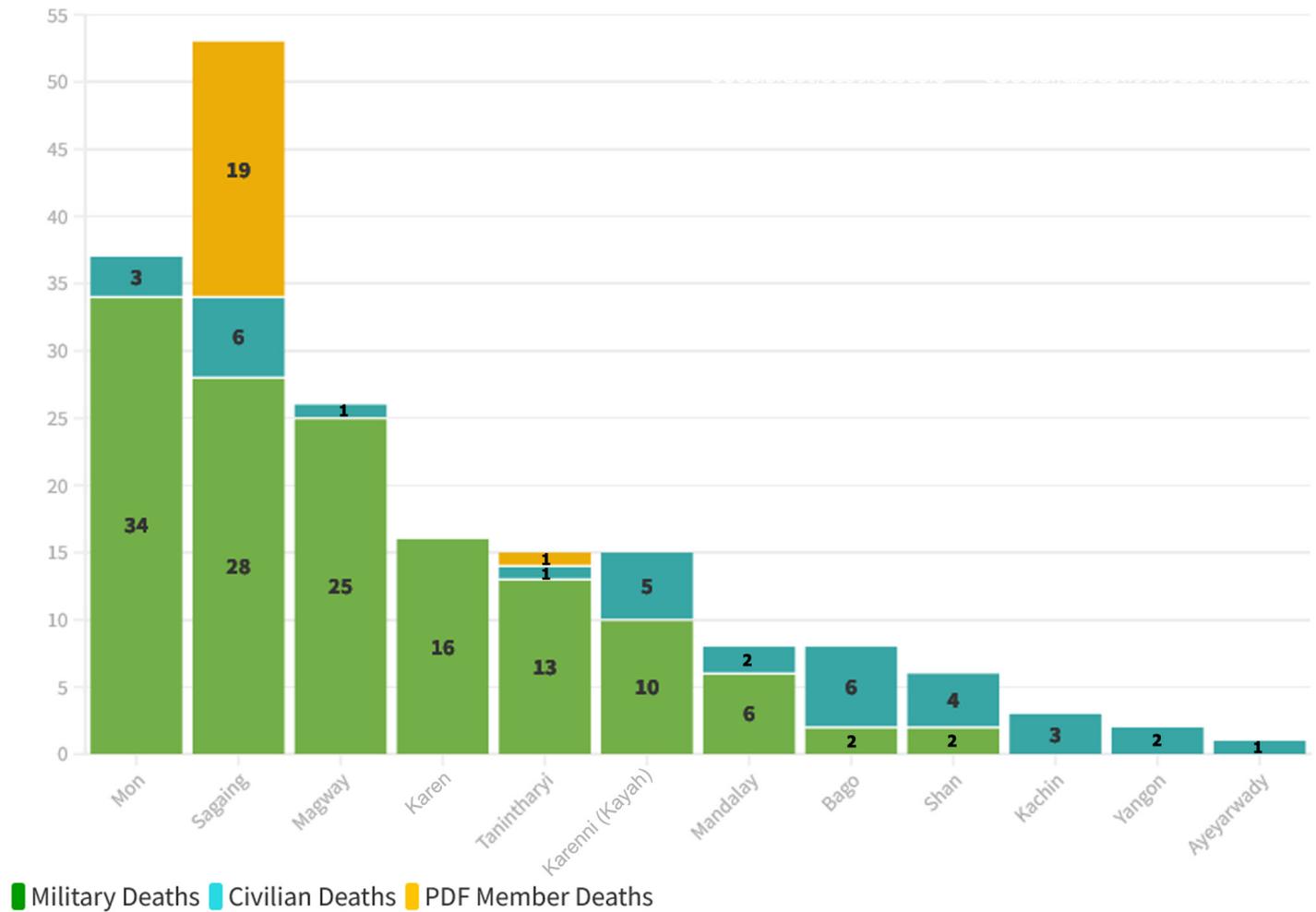
Military Deaths



PDF Member Deaths



Civilian Deaths



3000

Total Number of IDPs (21 - 27 June 2023)



Sagaing 3000

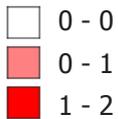


Total no of days of clashes

5 Days

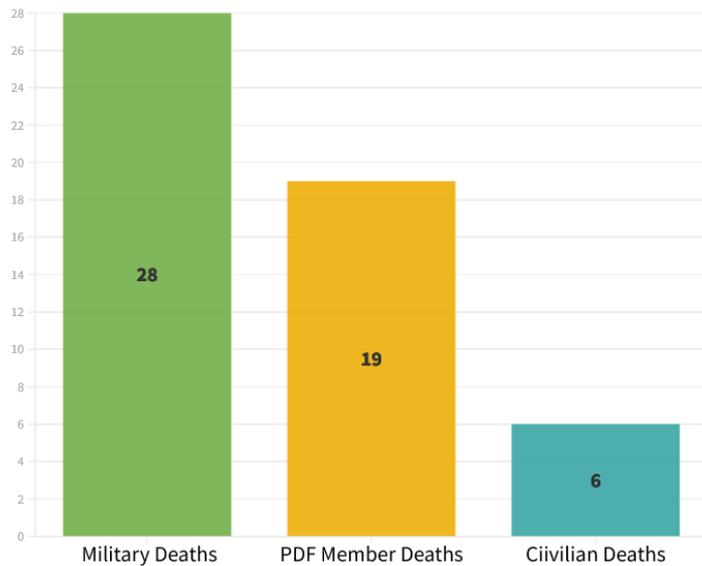


No.of Days of Clashes



Sagaing Region

Fifteen junta soldiers and 13 members of People’s Defense Force (PDF) were killed in the battles between the military council forces and the PDFs in Monywa, Sagaing, Kalay and Wetlet Townships. Thirteen junta soldiers were killed in the mine and drone attacks in Wetlet and Sagaing Townships. Six PDF members were killed in the military council’s shootings in Sagaing and Myaung Townships. Similarly, six civilians were killed in the military council’s shootings in Kalay, Wetlet and KhinU Townships. On 25 June, more than 3,000 locals from Tazi village in Kalay Township fled to safer places.

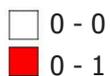


Total no of days of clashes

1 Day

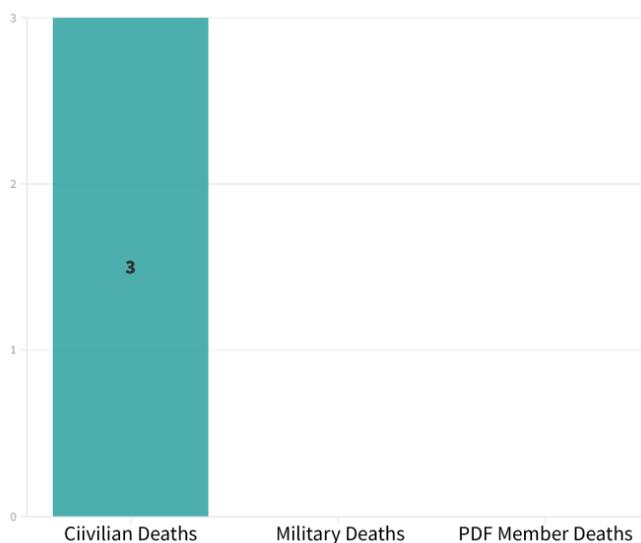


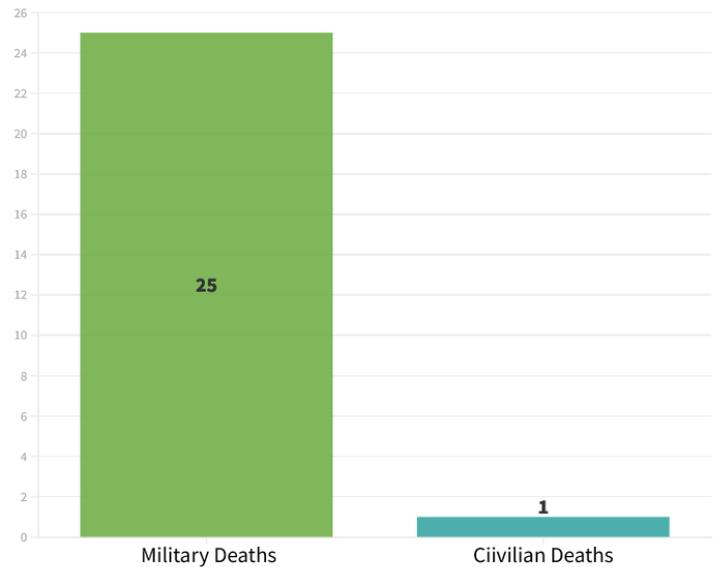
No.of Days of Clashes



Kachin State

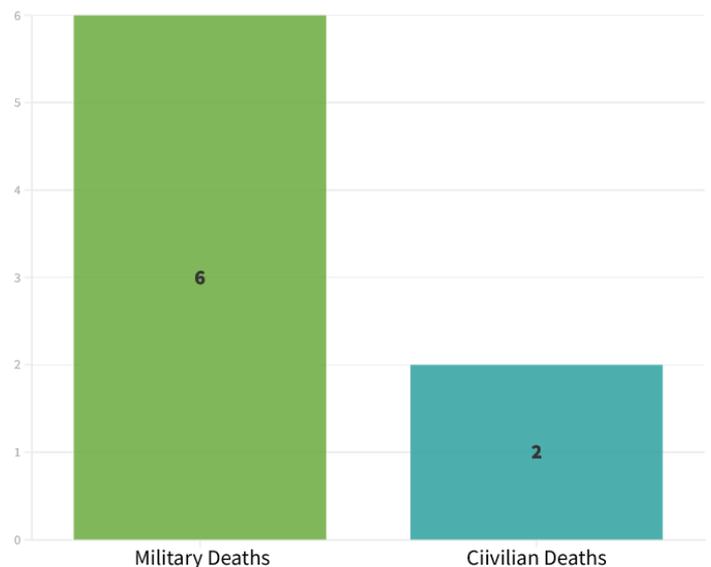
On 26 June, there was a clash between the military council force and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) near Sadon waterfall in Waingmaw Township. On 21 June, three civilians were killed in the military council’s shooting on the station office of Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) at No.3 ward in Hsaingtaung in Hpakant Township.





Magway Region

Twenty-five junta soldiers were killed in mine attacks in Htilin and Seikphyu Townships. On 21 June, U Maung Thu Hlaing, a crime reporter from Shwetabin village in Htauksharpin village-tract in Minbu Township was shot dead by an unknown armed force.



Mandalay Region

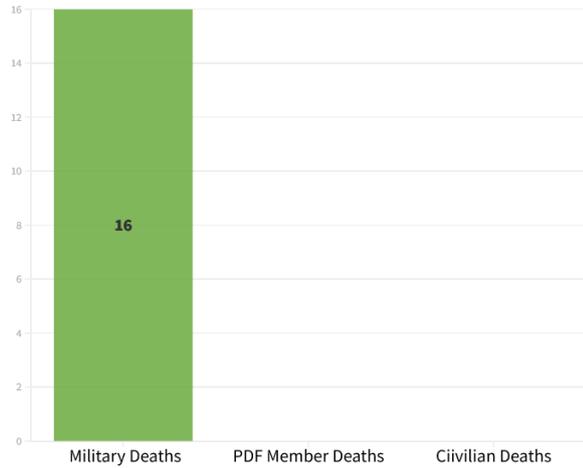
On 24 June, six military council soldiers were killed and ten wounded in a drone attack by the combined force of local guerrilla forces in Ngamyar police station in Ngazun Township. On 22 June, a member of Thway Thauk group was assassinated by the PDF in Sharsaychatgyi village in Madaya Township. On 23 June, 100-household head U Myat Htoo, 56, and his son Ye Myint Mo Htoo, 21, were shot by an unknown armed force between 105 (a) street x 84th street and 85th street at No.500 block in Kyunloneushaung ward in Chanmyathazi Township. The 100-household head was killed in the shooting.

Total no of days of clashes

1 Day

No.of Days of Clashes

- 0 - 0
- 0 - 1



Karen State

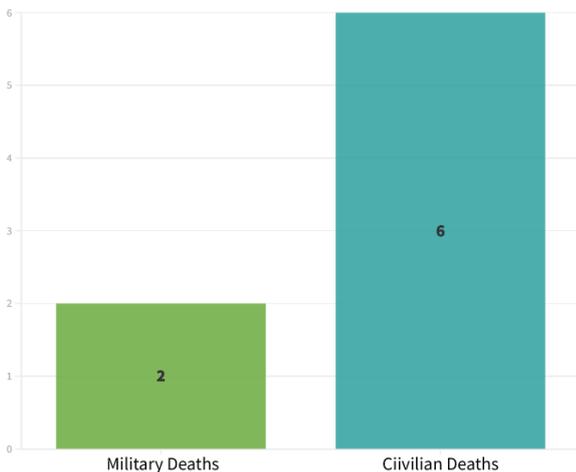
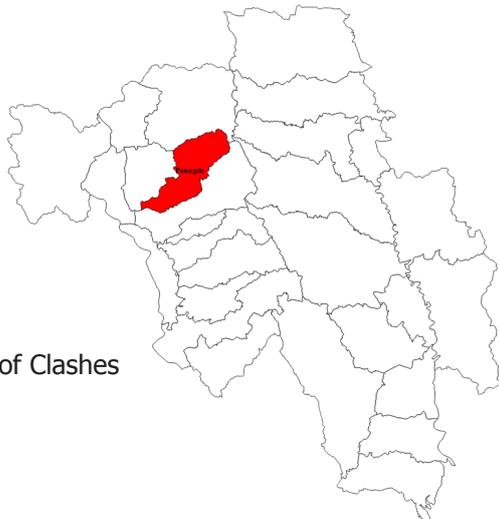
On 21 June, eight junta soldiers were killed in the battle between the military council force and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in Kawkareik Township. On 23 and 24 June, eight junta soldiers were killed by heavy shelling in Kawkareik Township.

Total no of days of clashes

1 Day

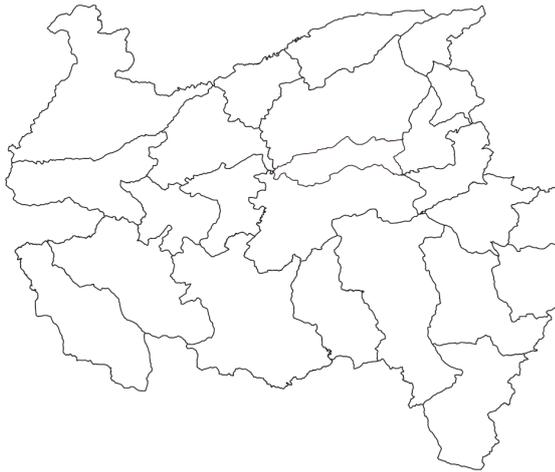
No.of Days of Clashes

- 0 - 0
- 0 - 1



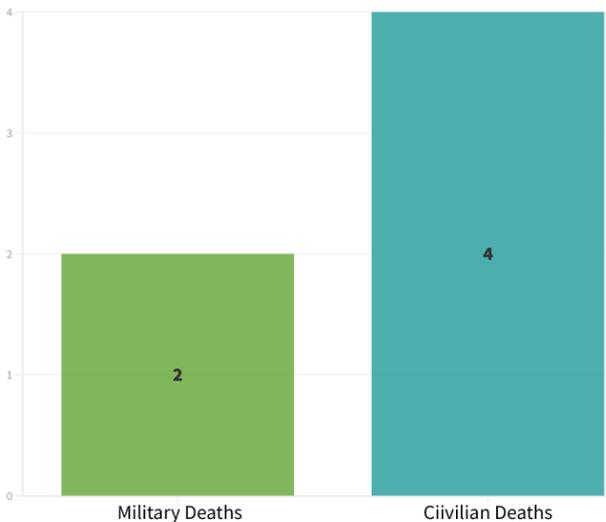
Bago Region

On 25 June, two military council soldiers were killed in the battle between the military council forces and the PDF between Letpankhone village and Maukwin village in Thitpoke village-tract in Paungde Township. On 22 June, U Sandar Thiri, an abbot from Letpankhone village in Thitpoke village-tract in Paungde Township was killed in a shooting by an unknown armed force. On 26 June, surveillance officer Kyaw Kyaw from Sinmyeeswe Myoma police station in Sinmyeeswe in Thegon Township and retired police officer U Soe Thet Aung were shot by the PDF. U Soe Thet Aung died on the spot and surveillance officer Kyaw Kyaw who was seriously wounded is receiving medical treatment in Pyay Hospital. On 24 June, the military council's artillery shelling hit and killed four locals in Kyauktaga Township in Nyaunglebin District.



Shan State

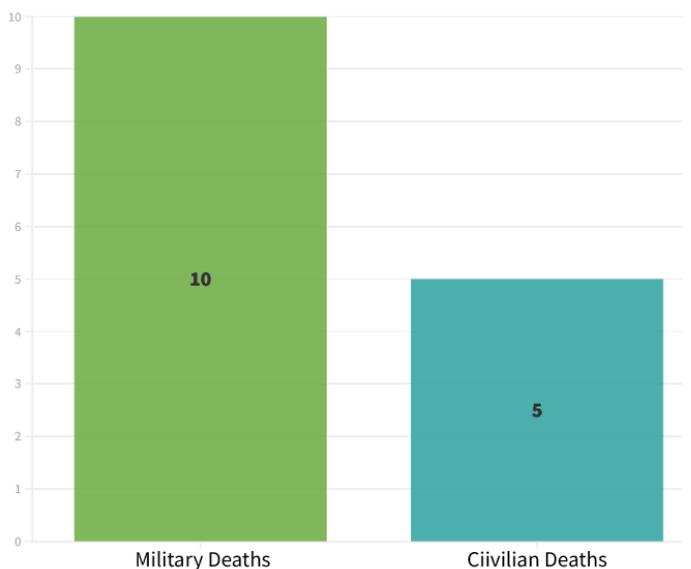
On 22 June, one member of the people militia force was killed in an attack by an unknown armed force on the military council and the people’s militia force, which stood guard over in front of the primary school in Honar ward in Muse. On 23 June, one member of people’s militia force was killed in a quarrel and shooting between the police members and the people’s military force at a crowded place in Laukkai. On 21 June, a local man from Manpain village located about 38 miles from Kutkai Township was found dead with wounds inside the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) outpost. On 21 June, one man died on the spot in a shooting on a car by an unknown armed force in Muse. On 23 June, at least two civilians were killed and seven others including a woman seriously wounded in a shooting by the military council force on a car at the industrial zone junction in Honar ward in Muse.



Total no of days of clashes
3 Days

No. of Days of Clashes

- 0 - 0
- 0 - 1
- 1 - 2



Karenni (Kayah) State

Ten junta soldiers were killed in the clashes between the military council force and the Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF) in Mese and Hpruso Townships. The military council’s aerial bombardments killed five civilians in Hpruso and Hpahsaung Townships.

Total no of days of clashes

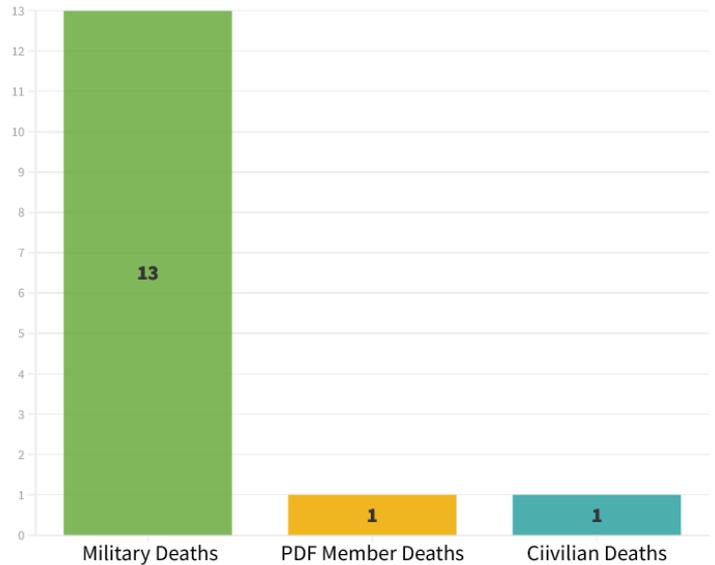
1 Day

No.of Days of Clashes

- 0 - 0
- 0 - 1



Tanintharyi Region



On 21 June, there was a clash between the military council force and the PDF in Palaw Township, killing ten junta soldiers and one PDF member. On 22 June, three Pyu Saw Htee members were killed in the PDF’s attack on a military outpost in Yaynganchaing village in Kawthaung Township. On 25 June, the junta’s shelling hit and killed Ko Ye Win, a 50-year-old local from Kyaungnaint village in Palaw Township.

Total no of days of clashes

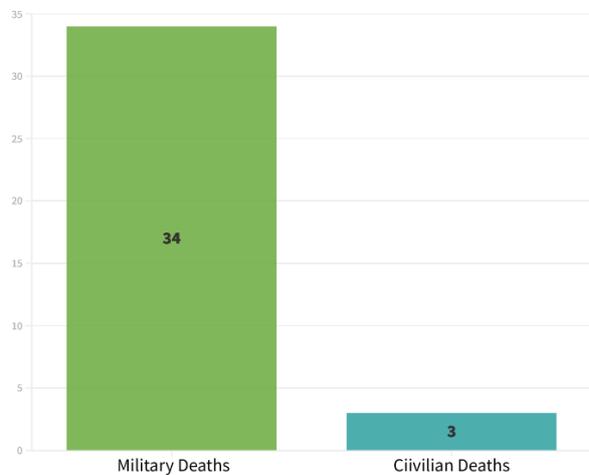
3 Days

No.of Days of Clashes

- 0 - 0
- 0 - 3



Mon State

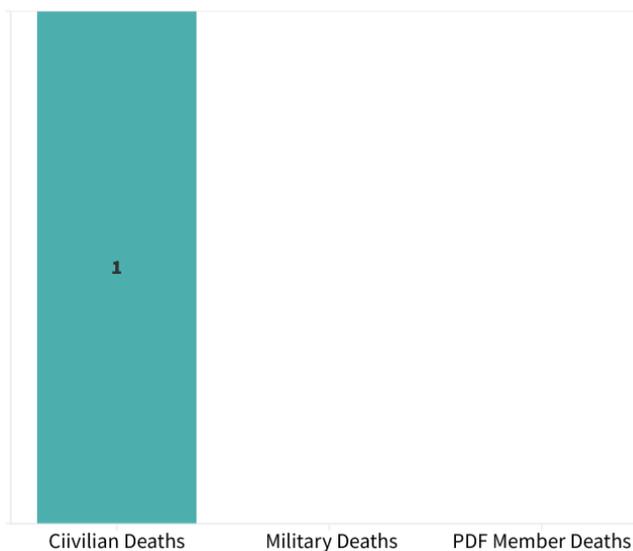


Fighting took place between the military council force and a combined force of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the PDF in Ye Township from 25 to 27 June, killing 29 military council soldiers. On 22 June, four junta soldiers were killed in an attack by the PDF on the inspection gate on Chaungtaung bridge in Ye Township. On 22 June, one military-back people’s militia force was killed and one wounded in a bomb blast in front of the basic education high school in Kamarwat in Mudon Township. On 22 June, Ma San Myint Kywal, an NRC broker, was shot dead by an unknown armed force near a clock tower in Lamaing in Ye Township. On 22 June, CEC member of Kyaikto Township Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) U Ye Naing was assassinated by the PDF. On 25 June, an 18-year-old local woman was killed by the military council’s shelling and airstrike in Hnitkayin village in Ye Township.



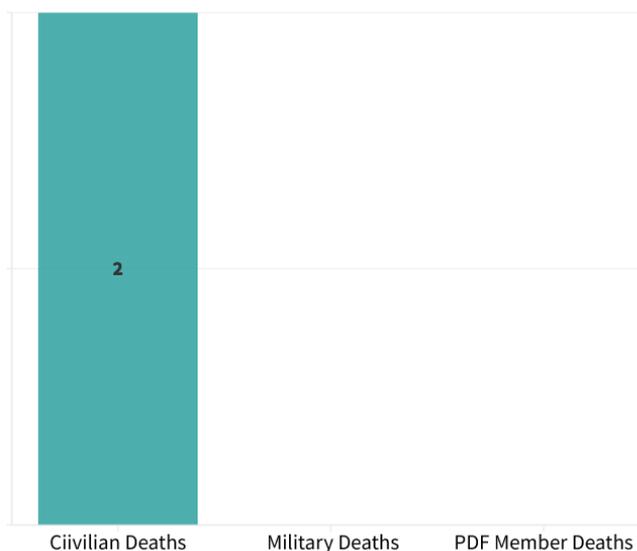
Ayeyarwaddy Region

On 21 June, a youth who was arrested by the military council soldiers on suspicion of motorcycle theft in Athoke in Yegyí Township, died at the interrogation center.



Yangon Region

On 23 June, U Hla Kyi, member of Dagon Seikkan Township Administrative Council was shot dead by the PDF in Dagon Seikkan Township. On 27 June, a man was found dead with wounds near Dhammayone bus stop on Shukhinthar road in Thaketa Township.





The US government announced on 21 June that it sanctioned the Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank (MFTB) and Myanmar Investment and Commercial Bank (MICB).

According to the statement issued by US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, the designations of Ministry of Defense (MoD), the MFTB, and the MICB were taken pursuant to Executive Order 14014 for being political subdivisions, agencies, or instrumentalities of the military regime.

The Myanmar revolutionary forces such as the General Strike Coordination Body (GSCB), the Global Myanmar Spring revolution (GMSR) and the Blood Money Campaign (BMC) immediately issued the statement on 21 June as it cut off the flow of money to perpetuate violence against the people by the military council.



Myanmar's neighboring ASEAN member countries are necessary to take action against the military dictators for the crimes they have committed.



Justice For Myanmar (JFM) has called on the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) to immediately cancel the counter terrorism military exercises to be organised by the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Counter Terrorism and co-chaired by the Myanmar military junta and the Russian regime.

Myanmar's neighboring ASEAN member countries are necessary to take action against the military dictators for the crimes they have committed. It is also difficult for ASEAN members to move forward in resolving the ongoing conflicts in Myanmar, said Thomas Andrews, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar on 21 June.

ASEAN countries have no reason to hold talks with Myanmar military leaders as Myanmar military leaders fail to implement a five-point consensus agreed with the ASEAN leaders, he continued.

Myanmar stays on the black list of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) together with North Korea and Iran, according to the report on 23 June. The Paris-based 39-member FATA includes a watch list of countries that require close monitoring and a blacklist of countries that are considered high risk.

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.