

Weekly News Review

Issue 119, 23 - 29 August 2023

Timor - Leste or a democratic alliance for Spring Revolution





Timor-Leste or a democratic alliance for Spring Revolution

Introduction

Timor-Leste. Most Myanmar people know it as East Timor. The East Timor government stands with the people of Myanmar who are facing a military coup. During the Spring Revolution, the East Timor government have actively engaged with the National Unity Government (NUG) and condemned the military coup. The military council's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a diplomatic note ordering the Charge d' Affaires of the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in Yangon to leave no later than 1 September 2023. It can be regarded as the coup d'état, which is facing huge pressures from international governments, is testing the waters with the international community.

This week, the Burma News International (BNI)-Myanmar Peace Monitor's (MPM) weekly news review spotlights the East Timor government's undertakings and stance towards the people of Myanmar during the Spring Revolution.



Incident

It was 27 August 2023. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar said it on 25 August 2023 issued a diplomatic note ordering the Charge d' Affaires of Timor-Leste in Yangon to leave no later than 1 September 2023. The ministry has observed that despite the repeated warnings and demands, the government of Timor-Leste has conducted engagements with the National Unity Government (NUG), according to the Foreign Affairs Ministry's statement.

The government of Timor-Leste announced on the same day that it condemned the action of the military group. It expressed its solidarity with the people of Myanmar and urged the military junta to respect human rights and seek a peaceful and constructive solution to the crisis. ¹

In its statement on 28 August, the NUG said it deeply respects and appreciates the position of Timor-Leste that values fundamental democratic policies and standards, the rule of law and human dignity. That stands as an exemplary model for international governments to follow. ² Timor-Leste's steadfast stance as a good friend will always be deeply remembered amid the junta's various pressures, the statement said.

1 East Timor condemned the expulsion of the charge d' affaires. <http://rb.gy/hqdey>

2 Press release (16/2023). <https://rb.gy/lnuoy>

Timor-Leste and NUG

Timor-Leste (also known as East Timor) is the second country after the Czech Republic to recognize and engage with the NUG as an official government.

East Timor President and Nobel Peace Laureate Jose Ramos-Horta officially invited the NUG to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the 9th new East Timor government on 1 July 2023.

According to the statement by the NUG's Foreign Affairs Ministry on 10 July, during the tour to East Timor from 1 to 5 July, the delegation led by the NUG's Foreign Affairs Minister Daw Zin Mar Aung held talks with President Jose Ramos-Horta, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Affairs Minister of the East Timor on continued cooperation and political agreements.³



³ Press release on Foreign Affairs Minister Daw Zin Mar Aung's official visit to Timor Leste. <http://rb.gy/c65is>



It must be said that the NUG's international diplomatic front has put huge pressures on the military group on all fronts of the Spring Revolution.



Although East Timor has never experienced a military coup, it will show its democratic culture to the world and walk on a democratic path. And the country would reconsider joining ASEAN if the bloc is unable to solve the conflict in Myanmar, East Timor President Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, said respectively on 7 August 2023. ⁴

It must be said that the NUG's international diplomatic front has put huge pressures on the military group on all fronts of the Spring Revolution which has set a goal of rooting out the military dictatorship and building a federal democratic union.

The NUG has opened representative offices in the Czech Republic, Australia, France, Japan, UK, Norway, South Korea and the United States and is engaging with heads of governments, parliamentary officials and political forces in the relevant countries. International governments that oppose the military coup and support democratic affairs also show that they do not recognize the military group by downgrading their diplomatic relations with Myanmar.

Review

Most of the international governments do not recognize the junta, and show that they stand with the Myanmar people's Spring Revolution by isolating and pressuring the junta, until more than two and a half years has passed since the military coup in Myanmar. Neighbouring countries such as China, India and Thailand are in a position to deal with the coup junta for their interests.

They are working on how to protect their interests in Myanmar by monitoring whether the junta or the forces of Spring Revolution which defy the military coup get the upper hand. East Timor

⁴ East Timor will join ASEAN after the Myanmar issue is resolved. <http://rb.gy/btjf0>



East Timor shows its exemplary stance for international governments which encourage and support the Myanmar Spring Revolution.



President and Nobel Peace Laureate Jose Ramo Horta and the East Timor government have chosen the democratic culture as a priority, condemned the seizure of power by force, and showed that he stands with the Myanmar Spring Revolution or the people's revolution.

The act of expelling the charge d' affaires of an embassy of a country and a government during the military coup, by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing's coup d'état which is facing huge failure of international diplomacy, is testing the waters with the international community for the first time.

However, East Timor's stance for democratic affairs and democratic culture is said to be practical by looking at its statement that it continues to stand for democracy with the people of Myanmar without complaining about the shameless act of the military group.

It is observed that international governments such as the United States, the UK, Australia, Germany and the Czech Republic may face options like East Timor. Timor-Leste, known to many Myanmar people as East Timor shows its exemplary stance for international governments which encourage and support the Myanmar Spring Revolution. It is noted that Timor-Leste and its government are proving to be a democratic alliance for the Spring Revolution and the people of Myanmar.

Weekly Highlight Quote



Some of my CDM friends quit the government jobs and applied for jobs in the private sector. When they applied, employers didn't want to hire them because they were part of the CDM. In fact they were among those who opposed the military coup and asked civil servants to leave their jobs. But now these CDM participants need jobs to survive, and employers are turning a blind eye to them. That makes me feel bad thinking if participating in the CDM is not something to be proud of.



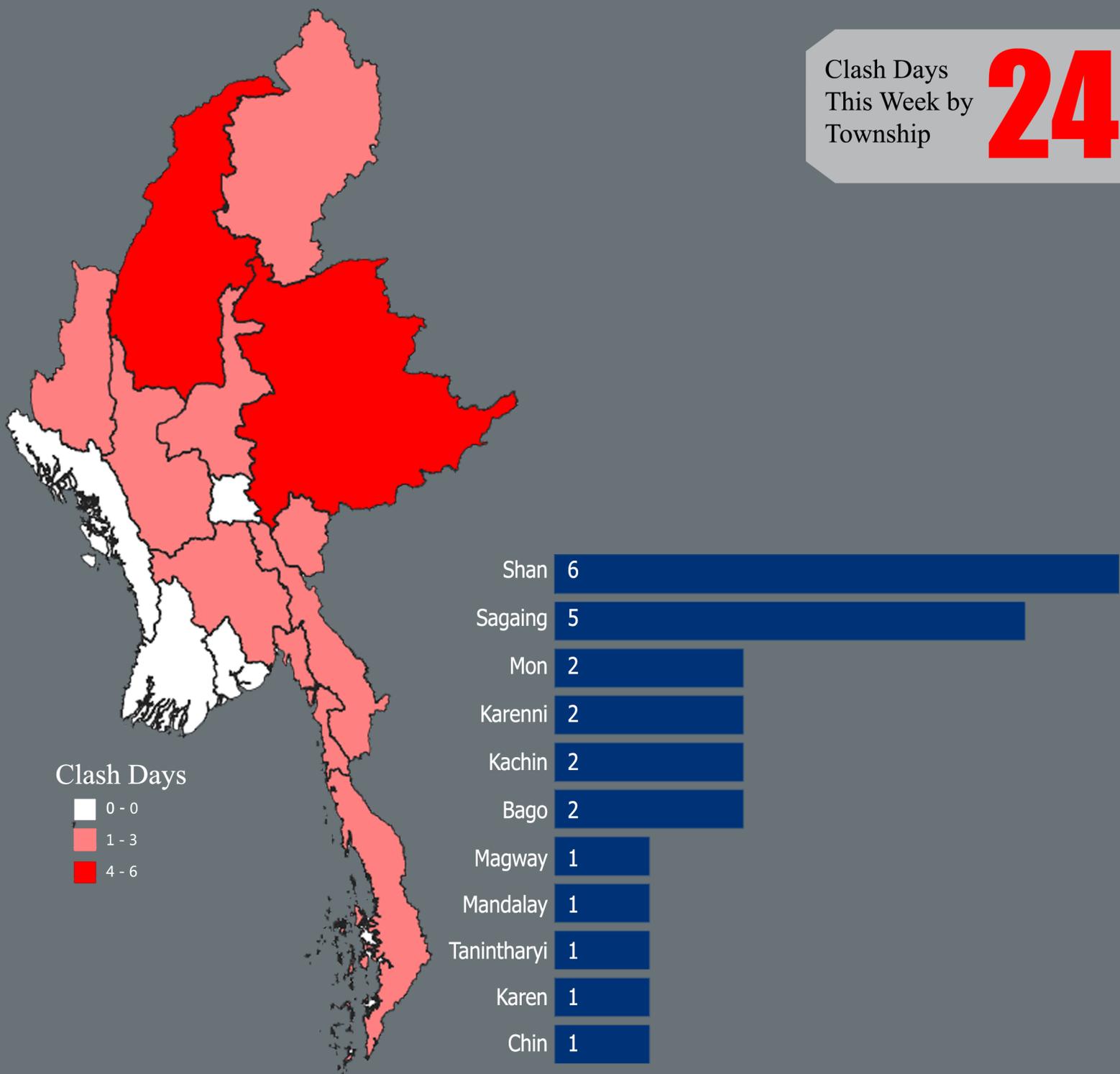
A female CDM civil servant
Ministry of Health

(Excerpted from "An interview with a female CDM health worker who says she will continue to the end according to her beliefs" on the BNI-MPM website.)

Part II

What Happened This Week

According to data collected by BNI- Myanmar Peace Monitor (MPM), there were 24 days of clashes between Myanmar army troops, the People's Defense Forces/Local Defense Forces (PDFs/LDFs), and Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) from 23 to 29 August. Broken down by state and region, Shan State had the highest number of clash days with six. MPM records the situation of fighting by township in terms of days, although the actual number of incidents may be higher.



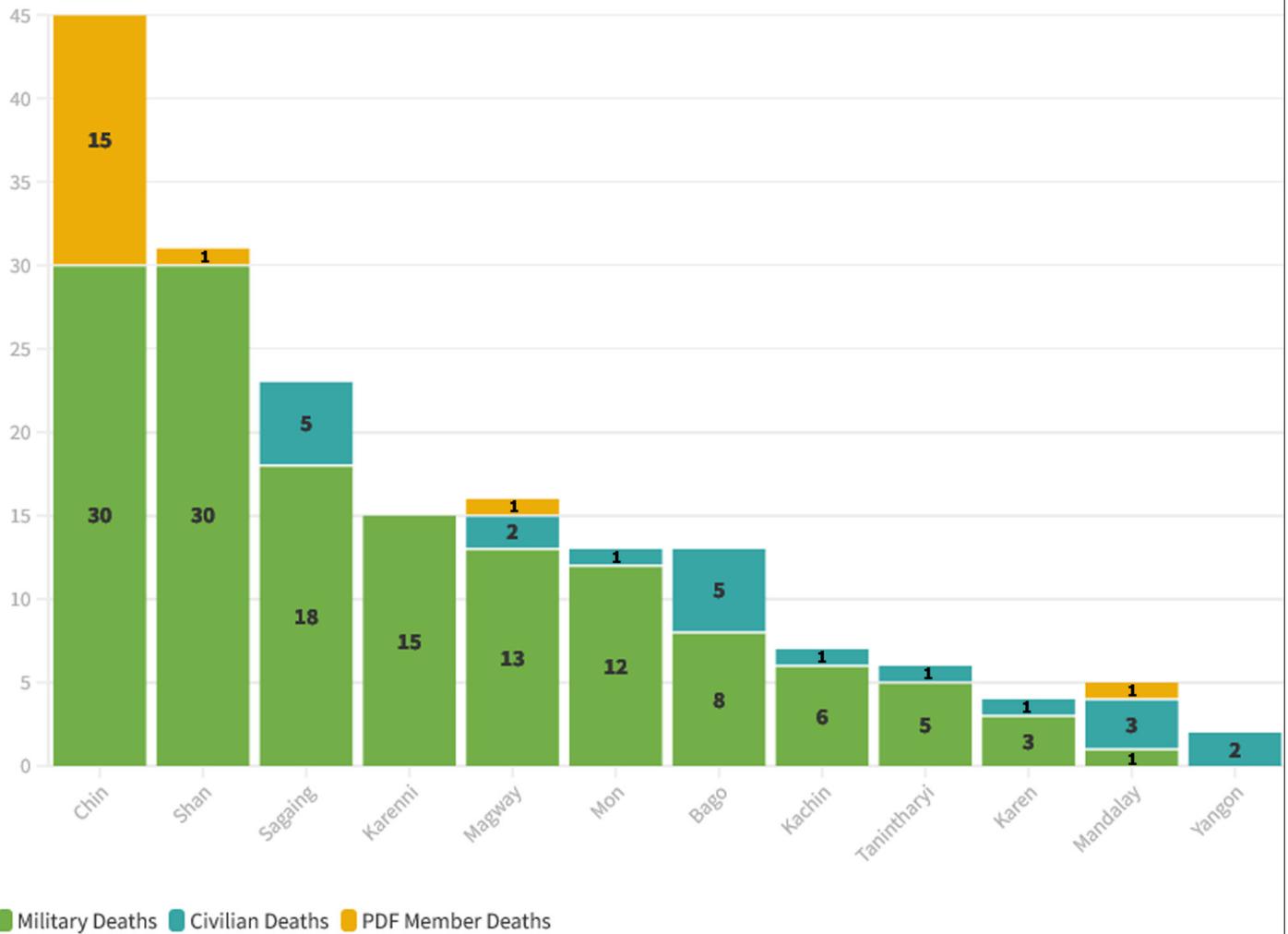
Military, PDF Member and Civilian Deaths

23 - 29 August 2023

141

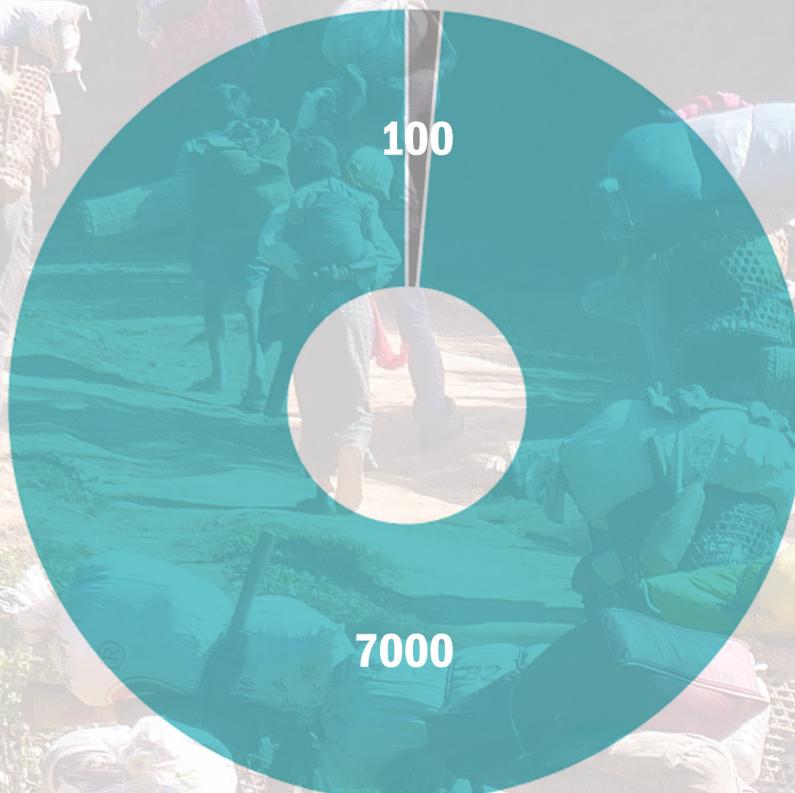
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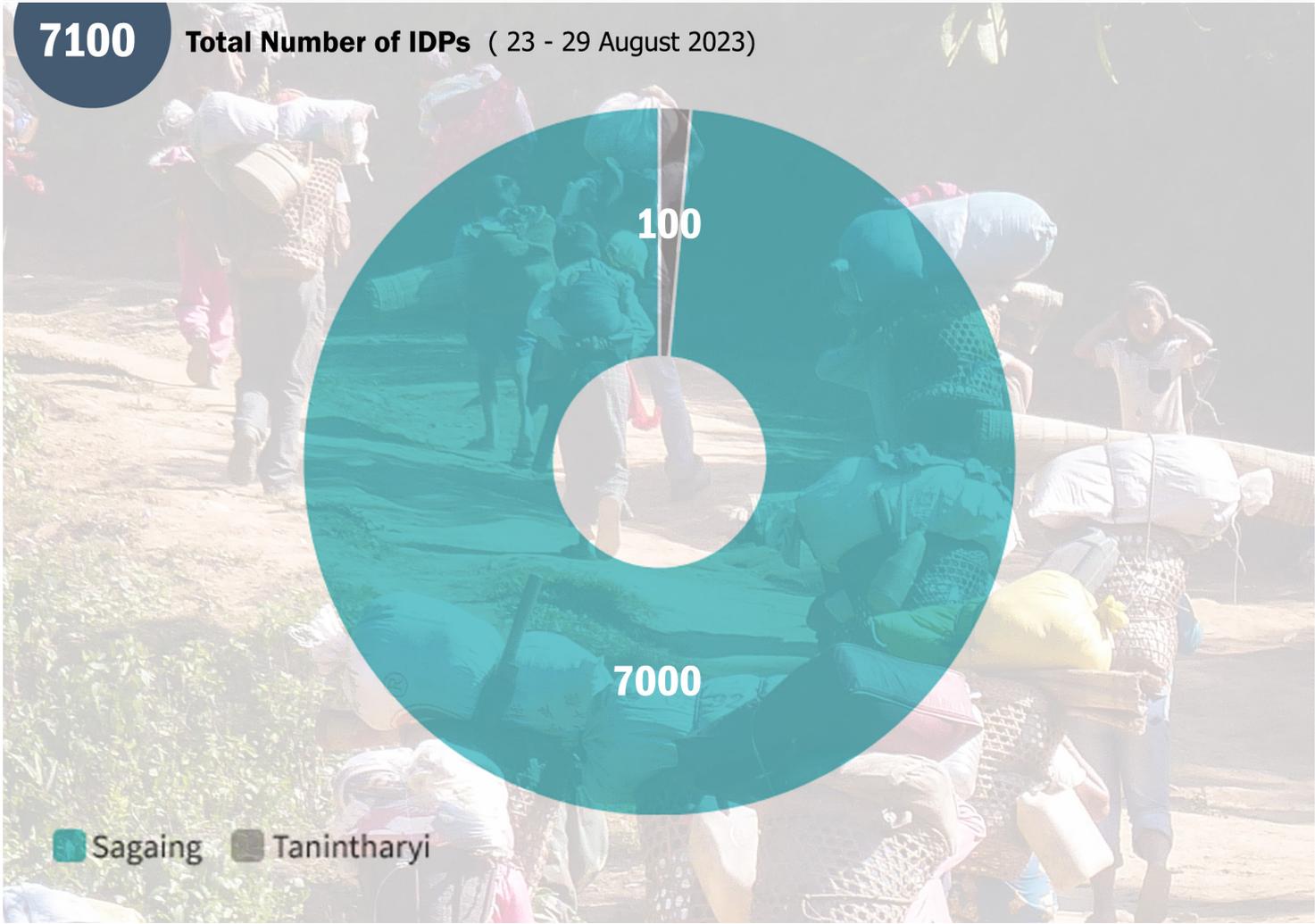


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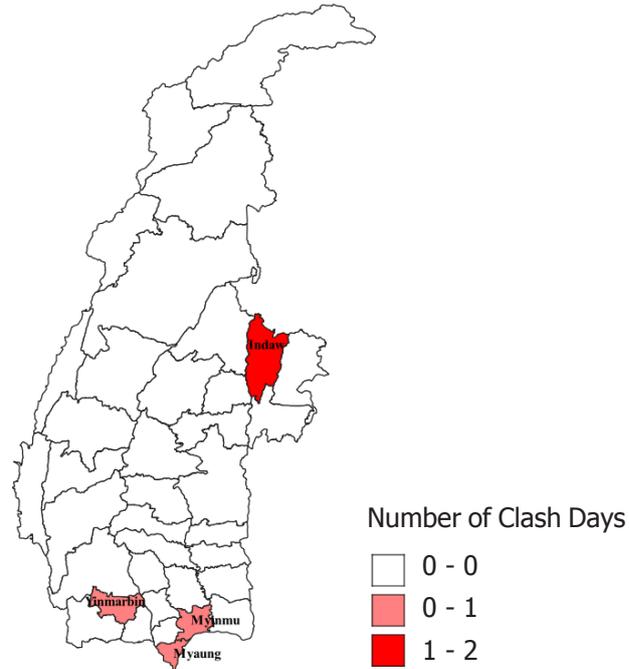
Total Number of IDPs (23 - 29 August 2023)



Sagaing Tanintharyi

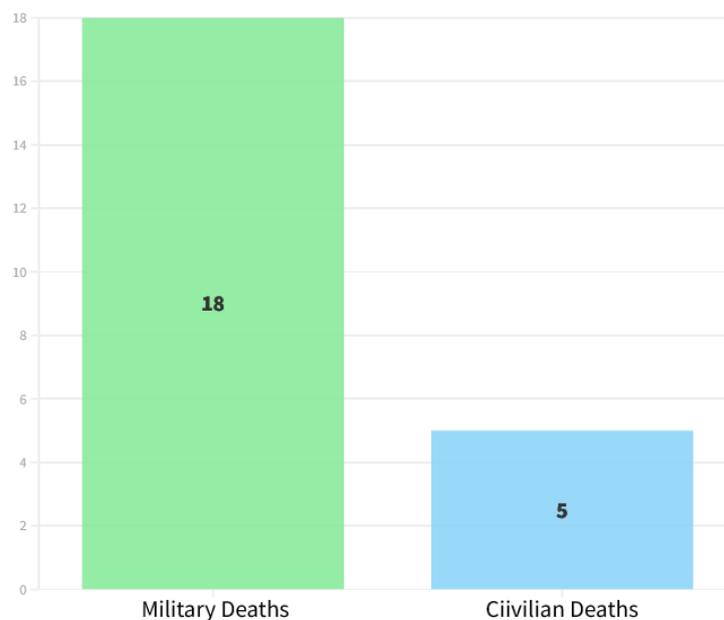


Clash Days
by Township
5 Days



Sagaing Region

Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and local PDFs in Yinmabin, Myinmu, Myaung and Indaw Townships, killing 18 junta soldiers. In addition, five locals of Wetlet Township were killed by junta gunfire. As Myanmar army troops set fire to houses and marched through the areas, more than 7,000 locals of Indaw and Kani Townships were forced to flee to safety.

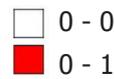


Clash Days
by Township

1 Day

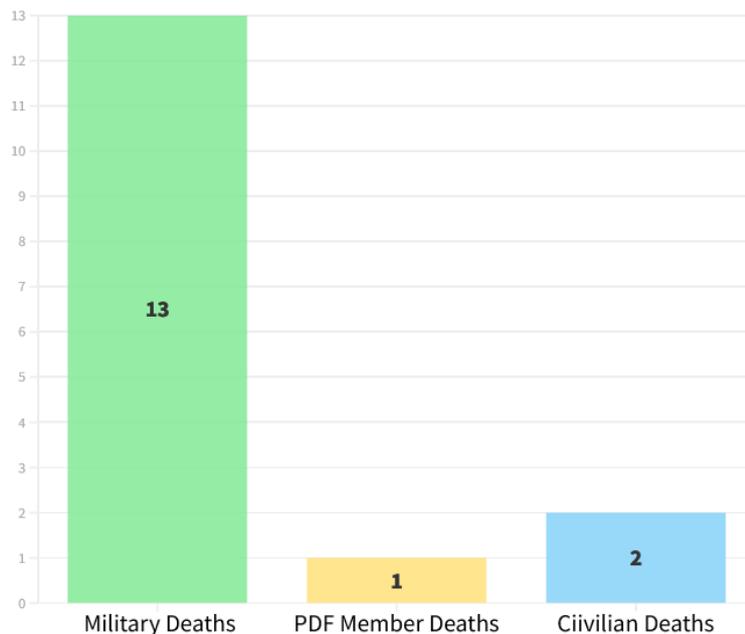


Number of Clash Days



Magway Region

Clashes broke out between Myanmar army troops and the PDF near Kaingtawma police station in Myaing Township, killing two junta soldiers and one resistance member.¹ On 29 August, a junta column was attacked with mines in Htilin Township, resulting in the death of one civilian and four junta soldiers.² In addition, seven junta soldiers were killed in attacks in Yesagyo and Mying Townships. On 27 August, artillery shelling by junta troops killed one man and wounded four others near Shoneshi village in Gangaw Township.³



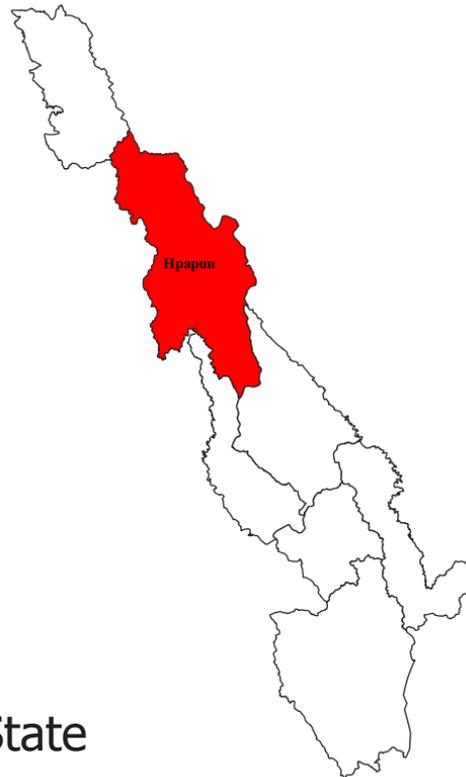
1 PDF member killed in accident as rifle barrel broke (video) <https://tinyurl.com/27almkhp>

2 Junta convoy attacked with mines in Htilin, civilian navigator and four junta soldiers killed <https://tinyurl.com/2y92g82k>

3 Local man killed, 4 injured by heavy artillery shelling by Gangaw-based IB 50 <https://tinyurl.com/2cv8os8b>

Clash Days
by Township

1 Day



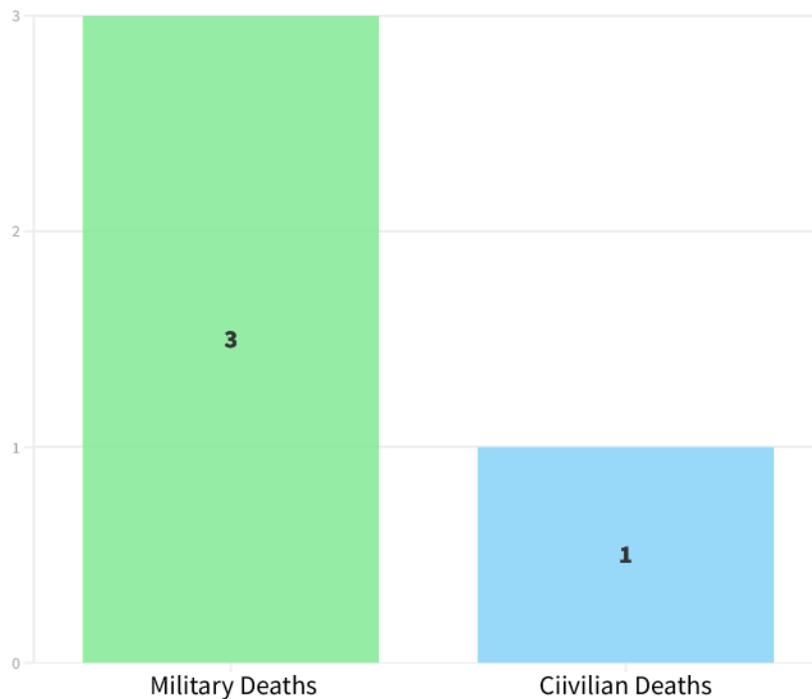
Karen State

Number of Clash Days

□ 0 - 0

■ 0 - 1

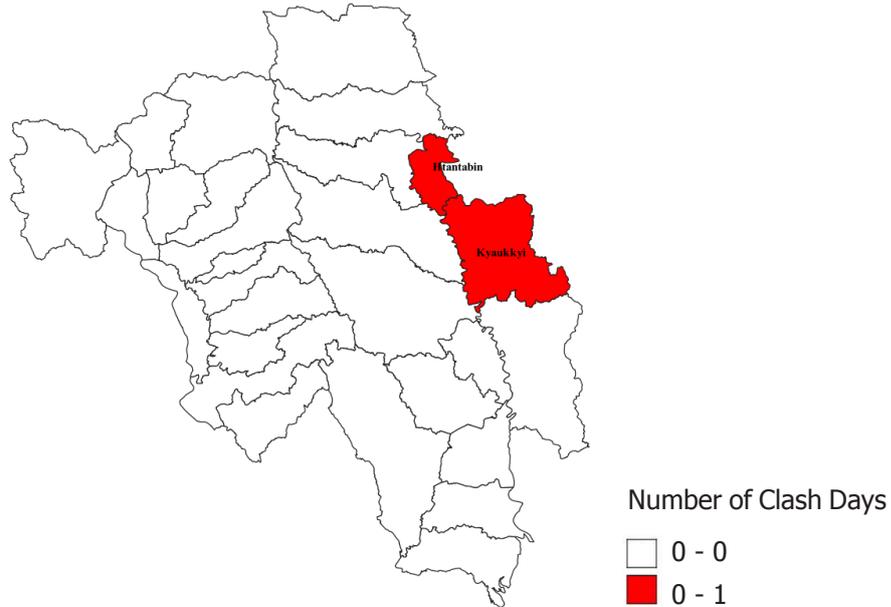
On 23 August, joint forces of the Brigade 5 Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and PDF attacked Hpapun township police station in Hpapun Township, killing three policemen.⁴ In addition, a man named Ko Win Htein, who was known to be a junta informant, was killed by unknown gunmen in Payathonzu town in Kyainseikgyi Township.⁵



⁴ Resistance attack on Hpapun police station leaves three policemen dead <https://tinyurl.com/27mokzr4>

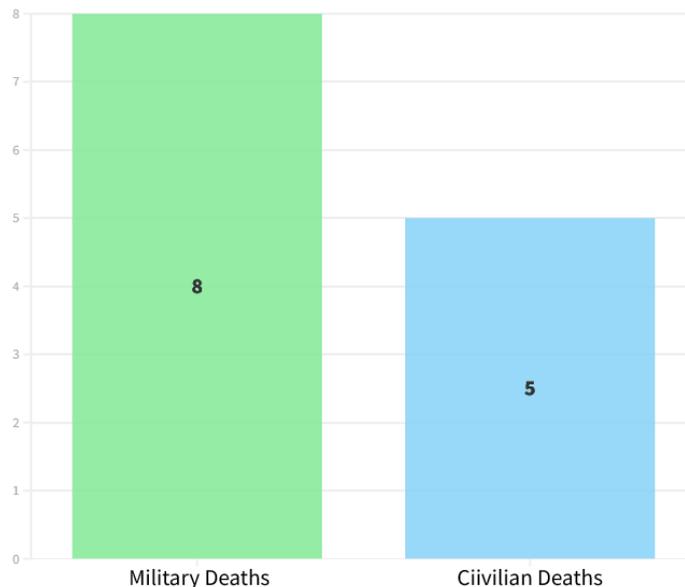
⁵ Former BGF member shot dead in Payathonzu for being junta informant <https://tinyurl.com/27gkz76g>

Clash Days
by Township
2 Days



Bago Region

Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and joint forces of the KNLA and PDF in Htantabin and Kyaukkyi Townships, killing seven junta soldiers. On 25 August, one junta army captain was killed and three others injured a house in Okehpyat village in Phyu Township, where junta soldiers were holed up, was attacked with drone grenades by the PDF. ⁶ In Minhla and Shwegyin Townships, four local civilians were killed by junta troops. On 26 August, an Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) organizer named U Myo Zaw Aung was shot dead by PDF members in Kwaytchaung village, Okpho Township. ⁷

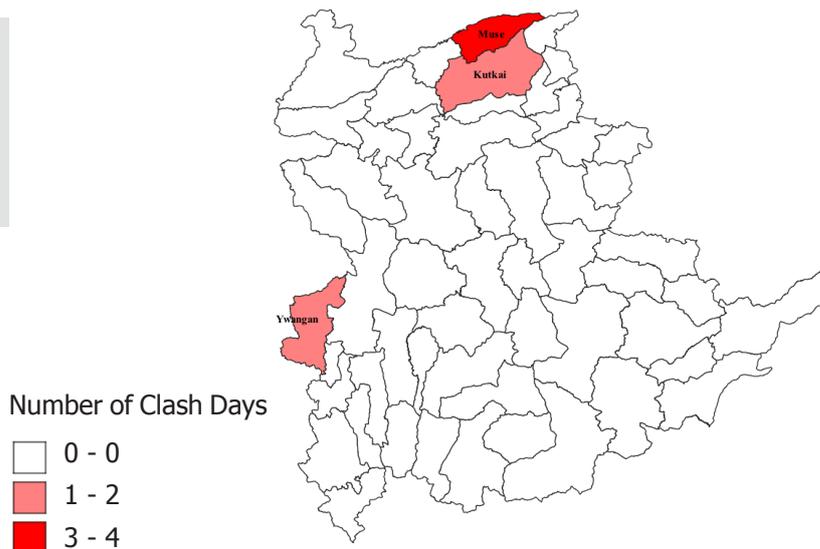


⁶ PDF attacks on junta positions in Kyaukkyi, Phyu leave four junta soldiers dead, three injured <https://tinyurl.com/2yp9c3jl>

⁷ USDP organizer shot dead in Okpho <https://tinyurl.com/2yp9c3jl>

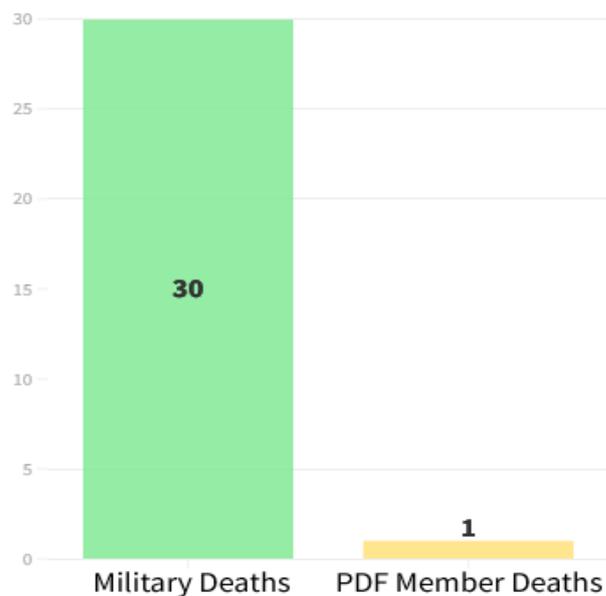
Clash Days
by Township

6 Days



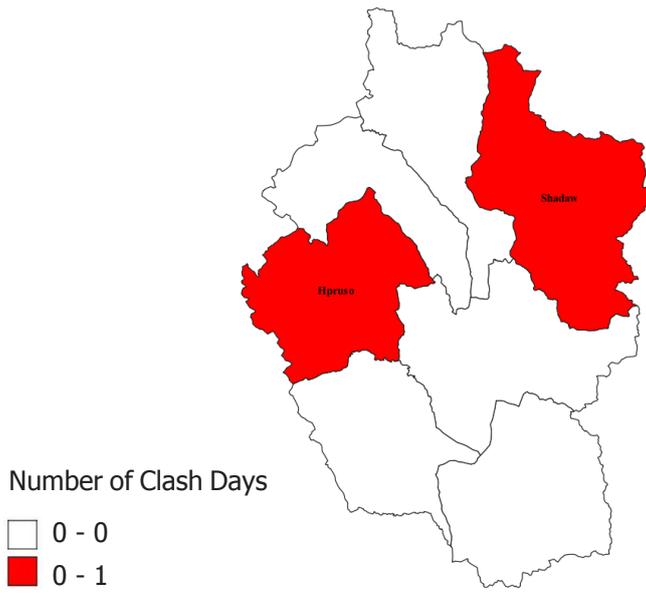
Shan State

Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and joint forces of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and PDF in Kutkai, Muse, and Ywagan Townships, killing 26 junta soldiers and one resistance fighter. In addition, four junta soldiers were killed and three others injured when an explosion occurred at a junta army camp in Kyaukgu village in Yatsauk Township on 26 August.⁸



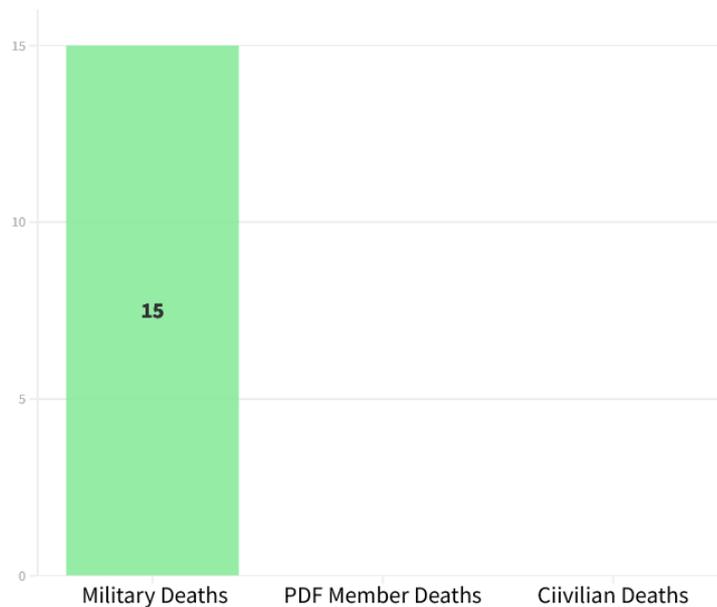
⁸ Explosion at junta camp in Yatsauk kills four, injures three <https://tinyurl.com/2b3m28tf>

Clash Days
by Township
2 Days



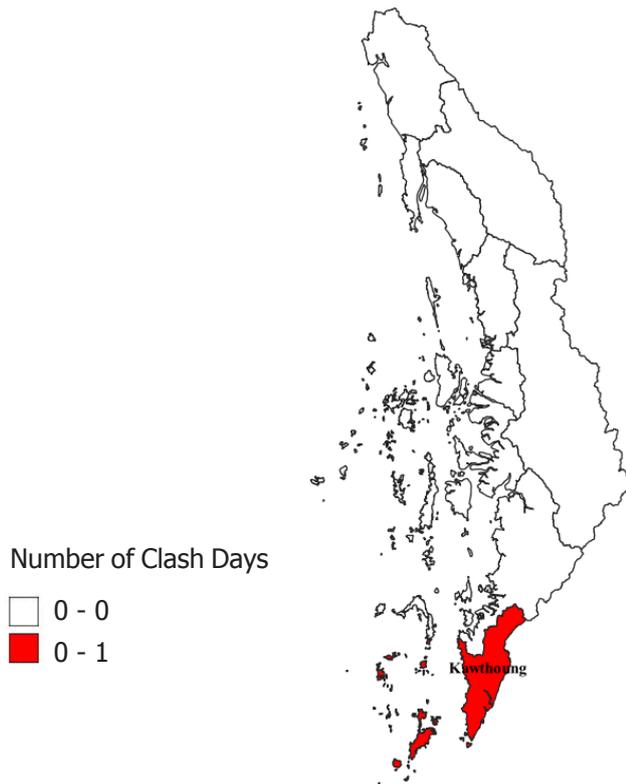
Karenni (Kayah) State

Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and joint forces of the Karenni Nationalities Defense Forces (KNDF) and the PDF in Shadaw and Hpruso Townships, killing 15 junta soldiers.



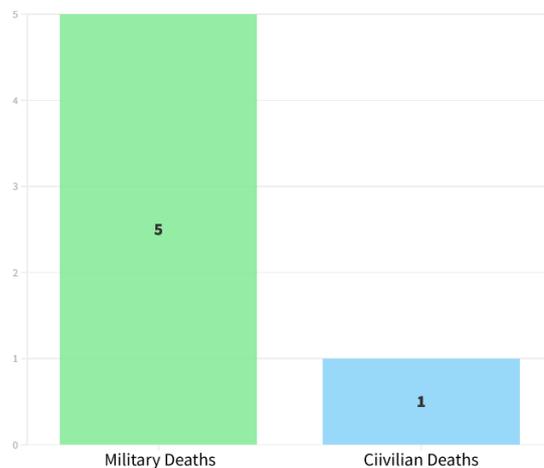
Clash Days
by Township

1 Day



Tanintharyi Region

Clashes broke out between Myanmar army troops and the PDF in Maliwan village in Khamaukkyi Township, Kawthaung District, on 24 August, killing five junta soldiers. Due to the fighting near Maliwan, around 100 locals of Chaungwa village crossed the border into Thailand to seek safety.⁹ On 23 August, one man was killed by junta gunfire near Wai Lu Wan monastery in Pala town of Palaw Township and two children were also arrested.¹⁰

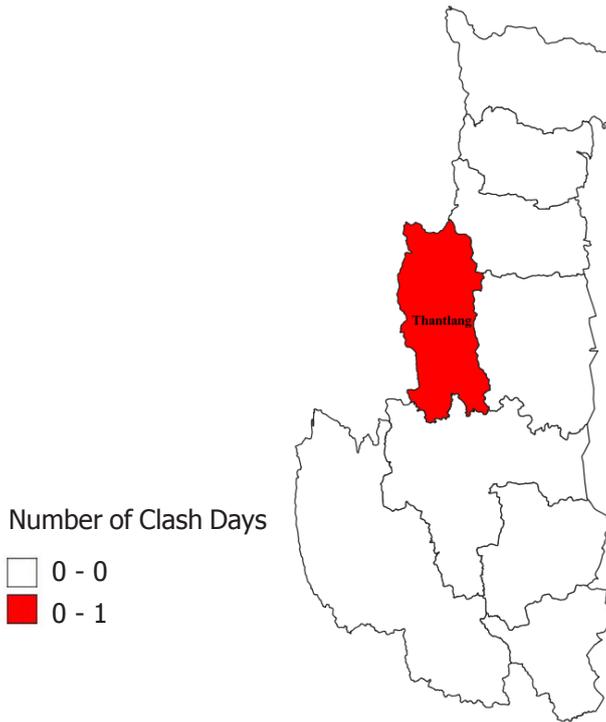


⁹ Locals flee to Thailand amid clashes in Kawthaung <https://tinyurl.com/249v2hbg>

¹⁰ Junta army kills father, arrests two children in Palaw <https://tinyurl.com/2xne6ryj>

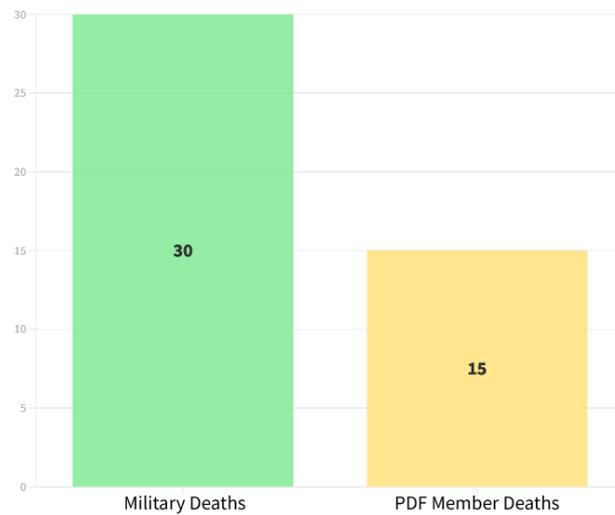
Clash Days
by Township

1 Day



Chin State

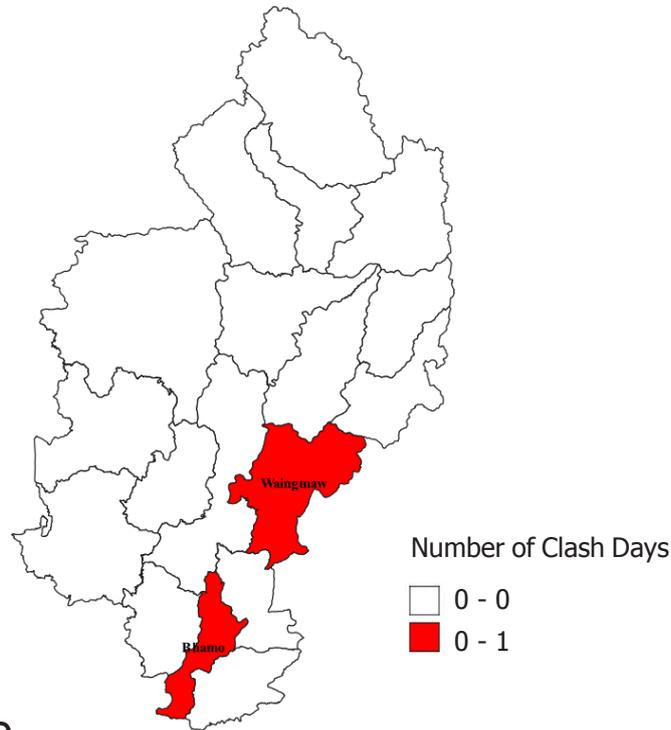
Chin defense forces attacked four Myanmar army positions including Tatkone in Thantlang on 28 August, killing more than 30 junta soldiers and 15 resistance members.¹¹



¹¹ Over 30 junta troops, 15 Chin defense members killed in Thantlang battle <https://tinyurl.com/28bugsk9>

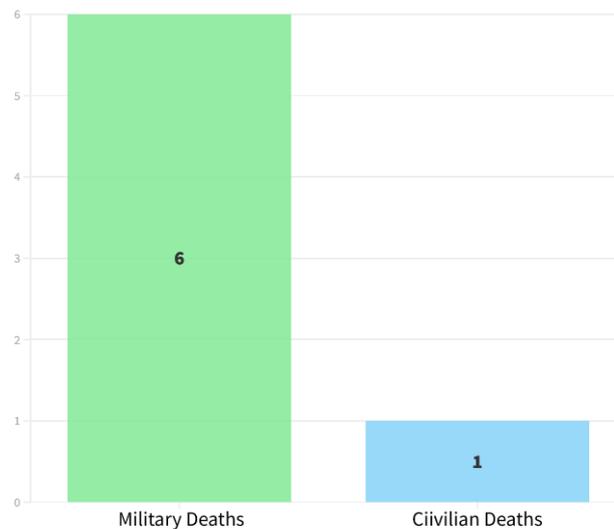
Clash Days
by Township

2 Days



Kachin State

Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and combined forces of the KIA and PDF in Waingmaw and Bhamo Townships. Six junta soldiers were killed when an junta column advancing toward Hpakant was attacked with mines by the KIA in Namtein village.¹² Wa Baw Tan Gun, the father, of the three family members from Pyaw Len Lawk Ward, Natgyikone, Mogaung Township, arrested by the junta army, died at a military interrogation center, reported on 27 August.¹³

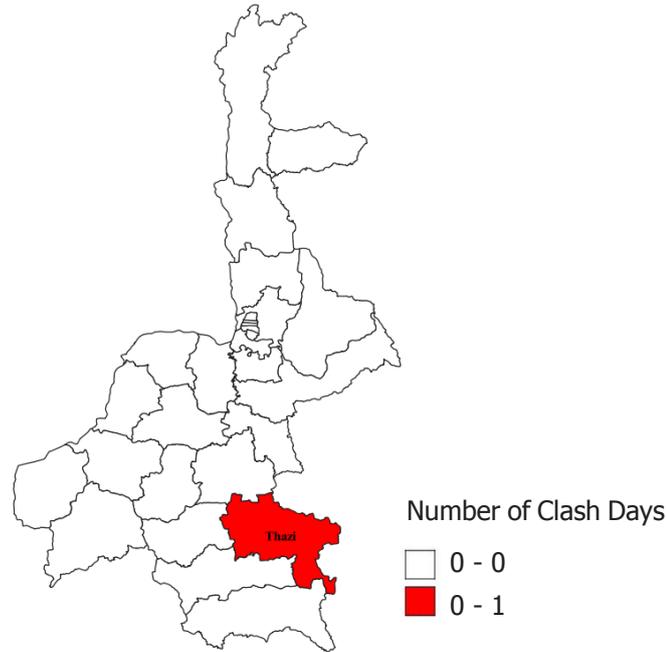


¹² Junta column approaching Hpakant attacked with mines <https://tinyurl.com/23yrgche>

¹³ Kachin man dies in military custody after arrest by army <https://tinyurl.com/2ct5cqu8>

Clash Days
by Township

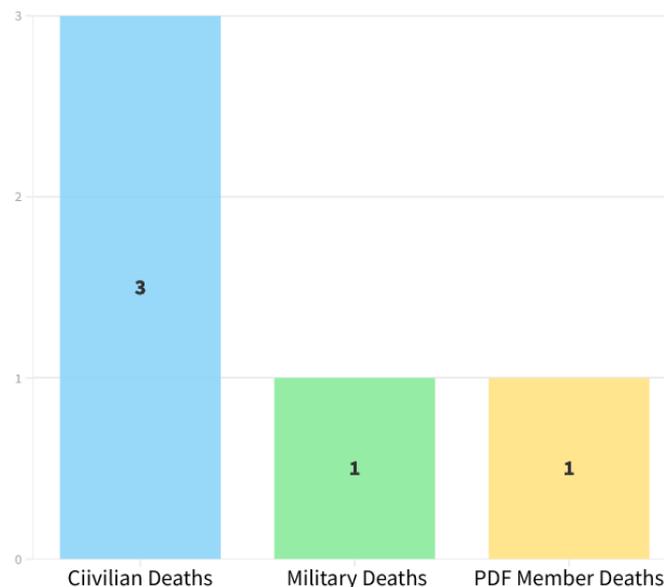
1 Day



Mandalay Region

On 27 August, clashes broke out between Myanmar army troops and the PDF near Myetkharinn village in Thazi Township, killing one resistance member.¹⁴

On 26 August, PDF members attacked a police checkpoint between the road connecting Twinngge village in Thabeikkyin Township and Mongmit, leaving one junta policeman dead.¹⁵ On 27 August, two junta-appointed village administrators and one USDP member were shot dead by unknown gunmen.¹⁶



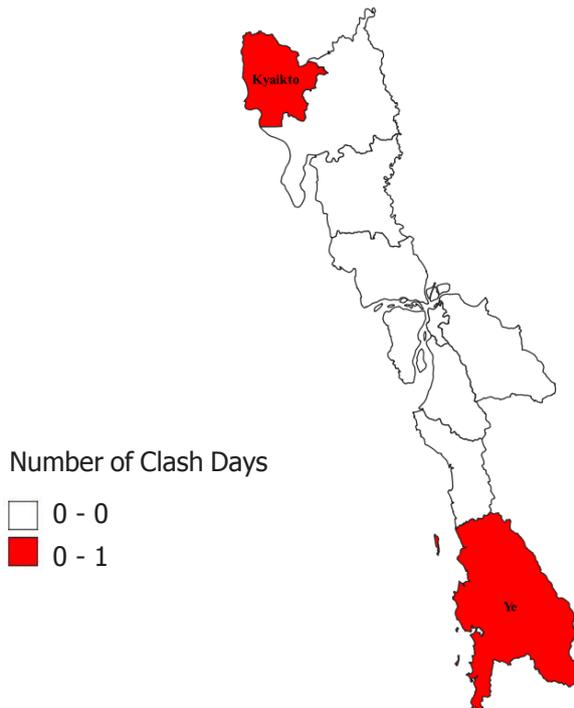
¹⁴ One comrade killed, weapons worth 30 million kyats lost in junta raid on PDF camp in Thazi <https://tinyurl.com/286y7mpl>

¹⁵ Police checkpoint attacked in Thabeikkyin, one policeman killed <https://tinyurl.com/2cphrrzs>

¹⁶ Three bodies found in Madaya in single day <https://tinyurl.com/29p3q7yj>

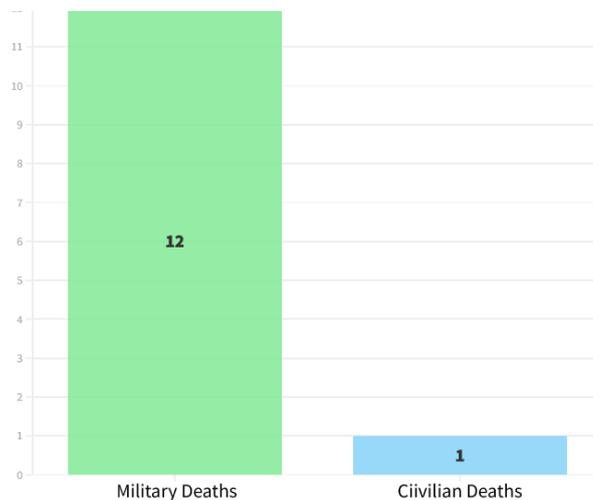
Clash Days
by Township

2 Days



Mon State

Clashes occurred between Myanmar army troops and combined forces of the KNLA and PDF in Ye and Kyaikto Townships, killing seven junta soldiers. On 24 August, PDF members attacked the junta soldiers stationed at Daukyat rural hospital, leaving four junta soldiers dead.¹⁷ The PDF attacked Border Guard Forces (BGF) captain Win Soe and his mistress while travelling in a car, leaving both dead.¹⁸



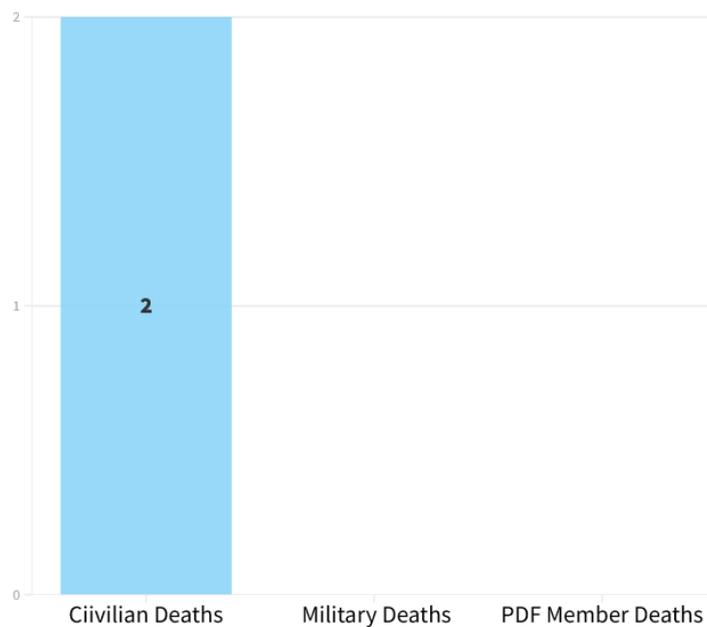
¹⁷ Four killed, 8 injured in resistance attack on junta troops stationed at hospital <https://tinyurl.com/2yysy6ba>

¹⁸ Notorious BGF captain Win Soe shot dead in Kyaikto <https://tinyurl.com/234za5uk>



Yangon Region

It was reported on 29 August that two prisoners died at the Aing Ka Laung police station detention center in Taikkyi Township after being tortured and forced to do hard labor by prison authorities.¹⁹



¹⁹ Two prisoners die after being tortured by authorities at Aing Ka Laung police station <https://tinyurl.com/2b53y9ys>



The Deputy Commissioner of the Royal Thai Police Surachet Hakpan said that 126 undocumented children who were studying at Thai Rath Witthaya School No (6) in Ang Thong Province in central Thailand who were arrested by Thai immigration police and sent back to the Myanmar border, would be allowed to study if they re-enter through legal channels. The repatriation took place in July, and Thai lawyers association, human rights groups, and parliamentarians pointed out that this violates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. ¹

Bangladesh is preparing to begin the safe and voluntary repatriation of Rohingya people. Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Masud Bin Momen said on 27 August that about 1,000 people will be initially repatriated to Myanmar, their country of origin, in December. ²

1 Thai deputy police chief says repatriated children from Myanmar can return to school if they re-enter through legal channels <https://tinyurl.com/27feob9a>

2 Bangladesh prepares to begin Rohingya repatriation to Myanmar <https://tinyurl.com/24vnxkoxk>



Thirteen members of the UN Security Council, excluding China and Russia, issued a joint statement on 23 August condemning “appalling violence” against civilians in Myanmar.



The United States will continue pursuing accountability for Myanmar's military which conducted genocidal violence against Rohingya, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on 25 August.³

On August 23, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced that it would increase sanctions against foreign companies and individuals assisting the Myanmar's military council in procuring aviation fuel. Those sanctioned include Khin Phyu Win – owner of SHOON ENERGY, and Zaw Min Tun – owner of Asia Sun, who are involved in purchasing and distributing jet fuel for the military, as well as three other companies affiliated with them - PUMA ENERGY MYANMAR PTE. LTD, PEA PTE.LTD (PUMA ENERGY IRRAWADDY AVIATION PTE LTD), SHOON ENERGY PTE. LTD (ASIA SUN AVIATION PTE. LTD).⁴

The London-based Burma Campaign UK added seven more Indian companies to its 'Dirty List' of international companies funding or arming the Myanmar military or linked to human rights violations in Myanmar. The list includes metals and arms manufacturing, arms, biotechnology software, export, and laboratory equipment companies.⁵

Thirteen members of the UN Security Council, excluding China and Russia, issued a joint statement on 23 August condemning “appalling violence” against civilians in Myanmar.⁶

3 US vows accountability for Myanmar army's genocide against Rohingya
<https://tinyurl.com/24thong9>

4 US sanctions target jet fuel sector for enabling junta airstrikes
<https://tinyurl.com/23wvedys>

5 Burma Campaign UK adds 7 Indian firms to 'Dirty List' for arming Myanmar military
<https://tinyurl.com/2b5q64x6>

6 Thirteen UN Security Council members condemn Myanmar junta violence against civilians <https://tinyurl.com/2xz9njba>

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.