

Weekly News Review

Issue 133, 29 Nov - 5 Dec 2023



Dwindling military strength and collapse signs of the junta

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Introduction

Military and political analysts often say that even the military leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing himself, cannot exactly know his military strength. Some analysts estimate the military strength at 500,000 while other analysts estimate the military strength at 300,000. However, during the military coup that began in February 2021, no one can deny that the military strength has significantly decreased. The military council has to rely more on air support and air offensives in the intensifying and wider resistance war in which the Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) and the Spring Revolution forces have been engaging. The number of military council soldiers killed in the fighting has increased while more and more soldiers have defected to the Spring Revolution forces.

For this week, the Burma News International (BNI)-Myanmar Peace Monitor's weekly news review focuses on dwindling military strength and collapse signs of the military, based on the incidents, events and data.

Significant news incident

Major General Zaw Min Tun, head of the military council's information team, said in the Myanmar Alin newspaper on 5 December 2023 that those who were declared as deserters before 3 December, 2023, will not be considered as deserters, will be treated as an unauthorized absence and they will be accepted for military service if they return with the intention of serving in the army.

In the manual on the Military Disciplinary Procedures No. 2, desertion means an unauthorized absence with no intention to return to the army, and Major General Zaw Min Tun said that it does not constitute desertion if they intend to return to the army and serve in the army.



It is known that on 7 December, 17 men aged between 25 and 50, who were imprisoned for violating military regulations, were released from the Bago Region's Paungde prison. They were serving prison sentences from 3 to 5 years. The

persons close to the prisons say that those imprisoned for desertion are being released from other prisons. ¹

It is known that about 10 imprisoned deserters from Obo prison and Htonebo labour camp in Mandalay Region are to be taken out by the military council. News sources from the Prison Department under the military council said that the purpose of taking them out from the prisons was to bring them to the front line. Only the soldiers with the rank from the privates to sergeant were taken out. ²

1 After announcing that they would be allowed to return to military service, some imprisoned deserters were released. RFA, <https://bit.ly/487rzhq>

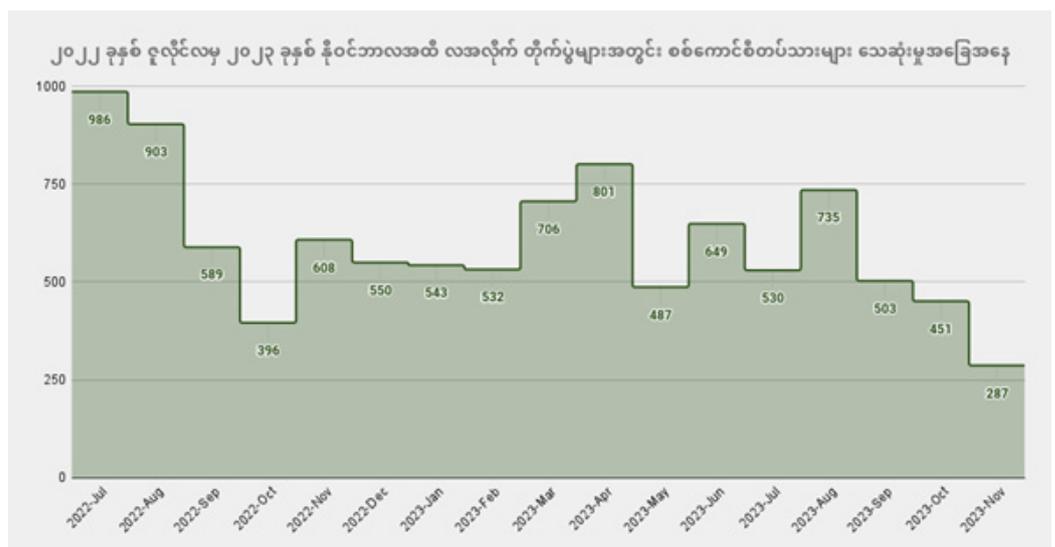
2 Imprisoned soldiers are taken out of the prisons to be sent to the front line. Myanmar Now, <https://bit.ly/3TcGrXu>

The news about Major General Zaw Min Tun's invitation to deserters and the release of imprisoned deserters and taking deserters out of the prisons are significant. It also shows insufficient military strength and dwindling situations on the front line.

Facts and figures, events and incidents

Our BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor is monitoring and documenting the issues related to peace and conflict every day. We record the data about casualties and arrests regarding the military council, revolutionary forces and the civilian population, during the battles based on daily news reports.

In the 17 months from 1 July, 2022 to 30 November, 2023, 10,256 soldiers of the military council were killed and 674, wounded. A total of 667 military council soldiers were captured by the resistance forces during the fighting. The above-mentioned figures are based on daily news. So, it can be considered to be even higher than now.



According to the findings, Sagaing Region has the highest number of deaths of military council soldiers with 3,229, and Magway Region has the second highest number of deaths. Hundreds of military council soldiers have been killed in Karen

State, Chin, Karenni (Kayah), Bago (east) Region, Mandalay, Tanintharyi, Shan (north), Kachin, Shan (South), Bago (west) and Arakan State. Battles and targeted attacks have resulted in the deaths of military council soldiers in Yangon, Ayeyawady and Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

According to the records of our BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor, there were up to 12 incidents in which 50 or more military council soldiers were killed in the armed resistance of the Spring Revolution.

On 13 November, 2023, more than 110 military council soldiers, including the battalion commander and the deputy battalion commander, stationed at the Loikaw University in Loikaw of Karenni (Kayah) state were killed in the attack by the joint revolution forces in the Karenni State. In addition, 38 military council soldiers were also arrested by the Karenni revolutionary joint forces as prisoners of war. It was found that the military council's company commander and 32 soldiers who remained in the university campus had surrendered on the evening of 14 November.³



3 More than 110 military council soldiers including the battalion commander stationed at Loikaw University were killed and the rest of the troops surrendered. Mizzima, <https://bit.ly/3NgOCy5>



Nearly 100 military council soldiers were killed in the attacks on Light Infantry Battalions-283, 32 and 284 based in Taungsun and Kyarin villages of Kyainseikgyi Township of Karen State and the battalions under No.1022 Border Guard Force (BGF) by the joint revolutionary forces led by the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). During the battle, which lasted from 1 to 5 January, 2023, 15 soldiers from the joint force were killed.⁴

The military council suffered heavy casualties in the Dawtamagyi battle in Demoso Township⁵ in the third week of March, 2023, the Kathaingtaung battle in Hpakant Township of Kachin State⁶ and the battles between Falam and Hakha in Chin State in July 2022⁷. During the "Operation 1027" that began in

4 About 100 members of the military council and 15 members of the revolutionary coalition were killed in the battle between Taungzun and Kyarin. KIC, <https://bit.ly/46P7tY0>

5 Many military council soldiers including the officer were killed, and many arms seized in the battles in Demoso Township. Mizzima, <https://bit.ly/46Q7wD9>

6 Almost all the soldiers of the military council were killed in the battle of Kathaingtaung, and the company commander and his family were captured. Mizzima, <https://bit.ly/3GA5w7o>

7 More than 60 military council soldiers were killed in the fighting between Falam and Hakha. Khonumthung, <https://bit.ly/3RwOxZD>

the northern Shan State, hundreds of soldiers defected as battalions surrendered their weapons.

Review

The deaths of tens of thousands of military council soldiers during the fighting make the decline of the military force evident. The number of police and soldiers under the military council who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) has reached tens of thousands. Therefore, filling the gaps created by the heavy casualty numbers has become an important process for the success of the military coup and the perpetuation of the military dictatorship.

It can be concluded that the military council is preparing to send soldiers imprisoned for desertion to the battlefields as providing military training to and arming the military supporters, even the methods of recalling military veterans to paid active duty are unable to cope with the crippling military strength.

In addition, take a look at the loss of hundreds of military bases to the forces of the Spring Revolution and the loss of tens of thousands of towns, the decline in combat skill of the regiments under the control of the military council, demoralization and the weakening of military strength are evident. It can be concluded that even these reasons have shown the signs of the collapse of the military.

Here, our review will be concluded with the view of Mr. Tom Andrews, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, on the military council.

"Any notion that the military can act as a stabilizing or unifying force should be put to rest. The opposite is true. The junta is an agent of chaos and violence."⁸



Any notion that the military can act as a stabilizing or unifying force should be put to rest. The opposite is true. The junta is an agent of chaos and violence.



8 Urgent action needed to save lives amid intensifying conflict in Myanmar, says UN expert, <https://bit.ly/41et8rv>

Female political activist sentenced to more than 20 years in prison

4 Dec 2023

A 24-year-old female political activist was sentenced to 22 years in prison by the Patheingyi prison special court on 30 November, the persons close to Patheingyi District Judicial Department.

A lawyer said, "The judge of Patheingyi District gave the order. The girl did not confess to the accusations of the military council at the court. She said she can be killed or imprisoned. However, she will not admit to being guilty of anything."

The military council arrested Ma Chit Su Tun (aka) Ma Chit Pu residing on Mahabawdi road in Sanchan at No.8 ward in Patheingyi and opened the cases against her for allegedly funding People's Defense Forces (PDFs) and Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), bomb explosions in Patheingyi Township in addition to the terrorism charge.

Ma Chit Su Tun (aka) Ma Chit Pu was allegedly charged under three sections including the section of the Counter-Terrorism Law.

The lawyer went on to explain that she was not entitled to the deduction of custody period.

Ma Chit Su Tun (aka) Ma Chit Pu is a B.Sc graduate from Patheingyi University. Before the coup, she actively participated in social affairs, community affairs and human rights sector.

After the military coup in 2021, she became a political activist who protested against the military coup, according to some of her close friends.

A person close to her said: "She is short and small. She is a graduate. She participated in the protests like others following the coup. Now she was sentenced to more than 20 years in prison."

In June, a force with a strength of 30 soldiers and police arrested her at her home in June, 2023 by blocking the road, the residents said.

In Patheingyi prison, there are nearly 600 male and female political prisoners, including political prisoners who have been sentenced to death and long-term prison terms by the terrorist military council, some prison department staff said.



17 TOWNS WHICH ARE CAPTURED AND CONTROLLED BY SPRING REVOLUTION FORCES

Shwepyiaye

On 21 November, the combined PDFs conducted an offensive in Shwepyiaye town in Homalin Township. On 22 November, the combined force captured it and arrested eight military council soldiers.

Khampat

On 4 November, the joint PDFs conducted an offensive against the military outpost and Myoma police station in Khampat town in Tamu Township. On 7 November, the joint force successfully captured the town.

Kawlin

On 3 November, the combined force of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the PDF attacked the military council outpost and Myoma police station in Kawlin town of Kawlin Township. On 6 November, the combined force captured the town.

Reedkhawdar

On 13 November, the joint force of Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA), CDF- Zanniatram, PDA - Tedim, CDF - Thantlang and CDF - Hualngoram attacked and captured two military outposts based in Reedkhawdar on No.2 Trade Route on the India-Myanmar border. Then, the joint force took complete control of the town.

Lalengpi

On 20 November, the joint Chinland Defense Forces attacked the military bases in Lalengpi town in Matupi Township. On 24 November, the joint force captured the town.

Rezua

On 26 November, the joint force of CNA and CDFs conducted an offensive against Rezua in Zoetone in Chin State under the name of "ZZLMS Operation". On 29 November, the joint force successfully captured the town.

Mese

Since 13 June, the joint force of the 4K composed of Karenni Army (KA), Karenni Nationalities Defence Force (KNDF), Karenni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF), Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/KNLA) and PDFs, attacked all military base camps in Mese Township. On 24 June, the joint force captured Mese.

Mone

From 2 to 4 December, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the joint revolutionary forces attacked the military council's outposts in Mone in Kyaukkyi Township. On 4 December, they captured Mone.

Injangyan

On 20 November, junta soldiers and police members from two military outposts and a police station in Injangyan Township withdrew.

Namkham

Since 5 November, the TNLA and joint forces taking control of almost all areas of Namkham, attacked the last military base camp in the compound of the pagoda where the soldiers and militia were stationed. On 7 November, the joint force took control of the town after the capture.

Chinshwehaw, Hpawnghseng, Kyukoke (Pang Hseng) and Theinni

Since 27 October, Three Brotherhood Alliance—Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and Arakan Army (AA)— jointly has launched "Operation 1027". On 2 November, the Three Brotherhood Alliance took complete control of Chinshwehaw, Hpawnghseng, Kyukoke (Pang Hseng) and Theinni.

Konegyan

The MNDAA-Kokang successfully captured Konegyan town on 28 November as the soldiers from No.125 infantry battalion based in Konegyan on the China-Myanmar border in northern Shan State surrendered with weapons.

Monekoe

On 5 November, the MNDAA-Kokang and the AA conducted an offensive against Monekoe strategic hill and took control of Monekoe in Muse Township on 7 November.

Kunlong

On 1 November, the Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) launched a military operation to capture Kunlong in northern Shan State, attacking Myanmar Army outposts and administrative offices. The ethnic army succeeded in capturing the town on 12 November.

Source : BNI - MPM DATA (7 Dec 2023)



BNI - Myanmar Peace Monitor



mmpeacemonitor.org

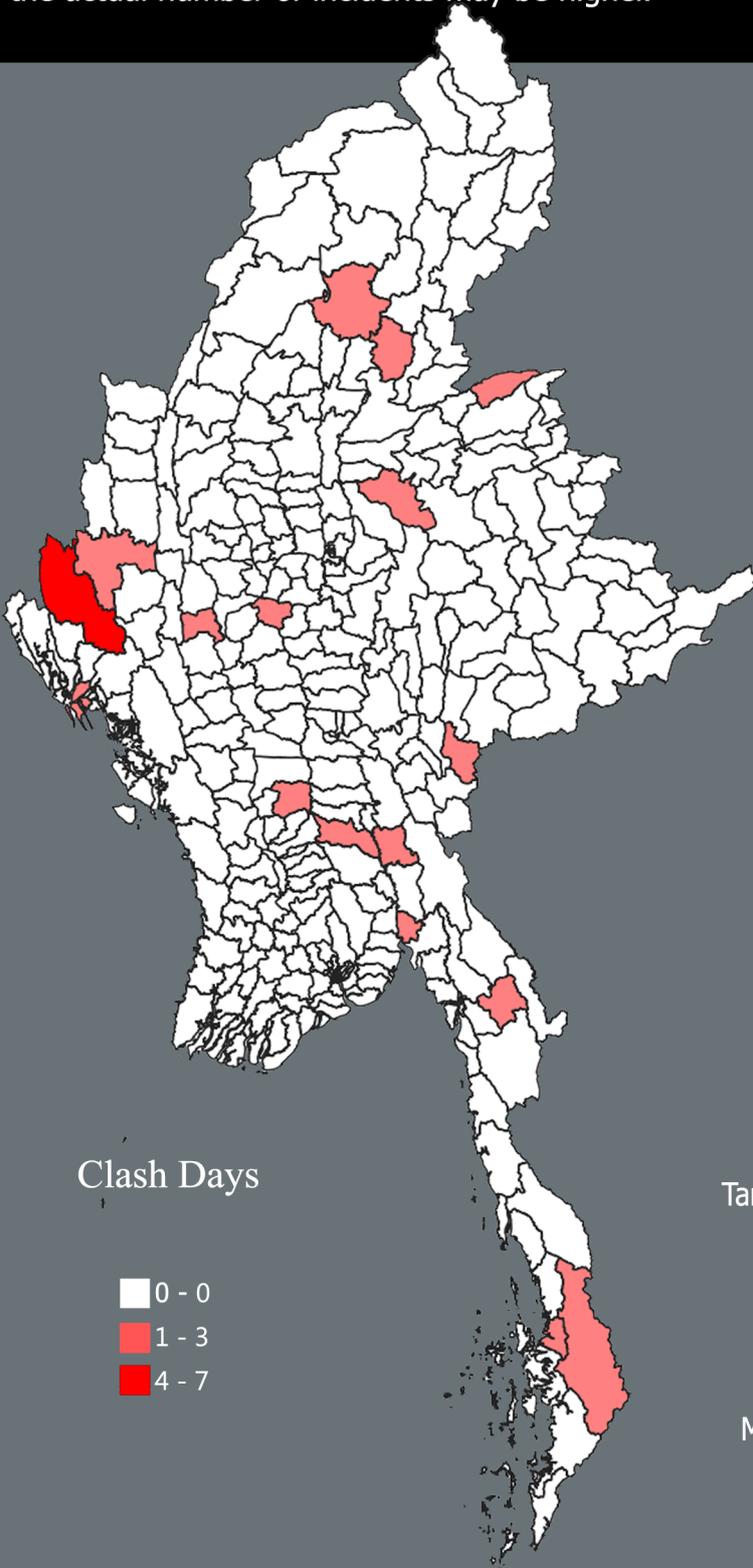


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Part II

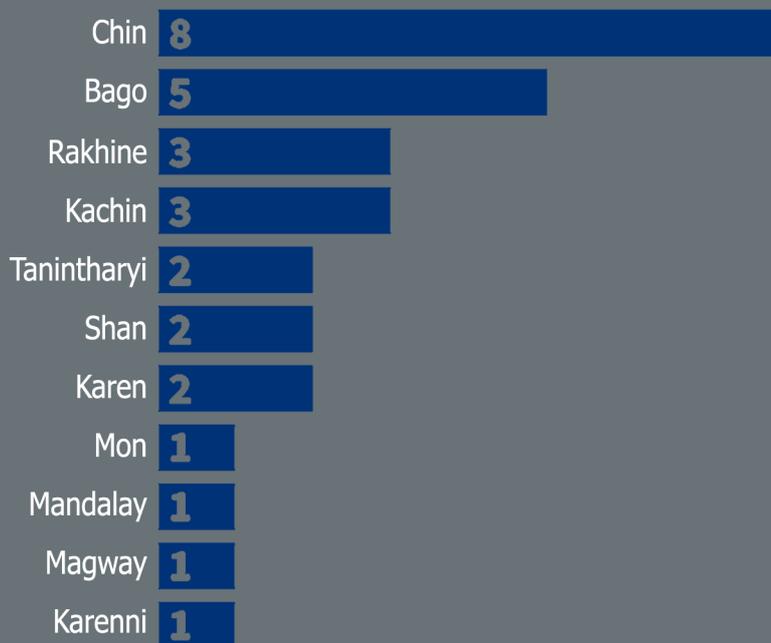
What Happened This Week

According to data collected by BNI- Myanmar Peace Monitor, there were 29 days of clashes between Myanmar Army troops, the People's Defense Forces/Local Defense Forces (PDFs/LDFs), and the Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) from 29 November to 5 December. Broken down by state and region, Chin State saw the most clashes, totaling eight days. MPM records the situation of fighting by township in terms of days, though the actual number of incidents may be higher.



Clash Days
This Week by
Township

29



Military, PDF Member and Civilian Deaths

November 29 - December 5 2023



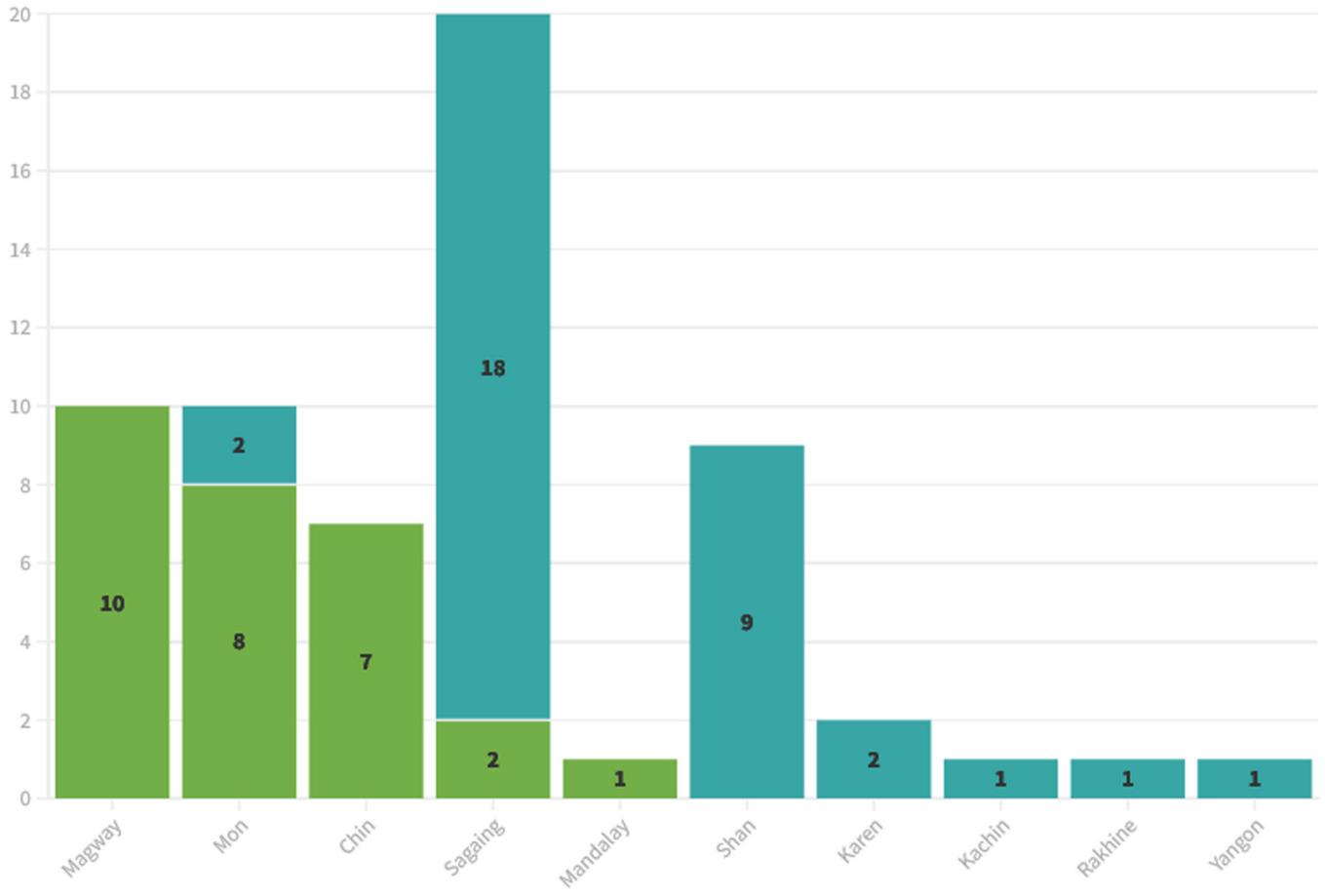
Military Deaths



PDF Member Deaths



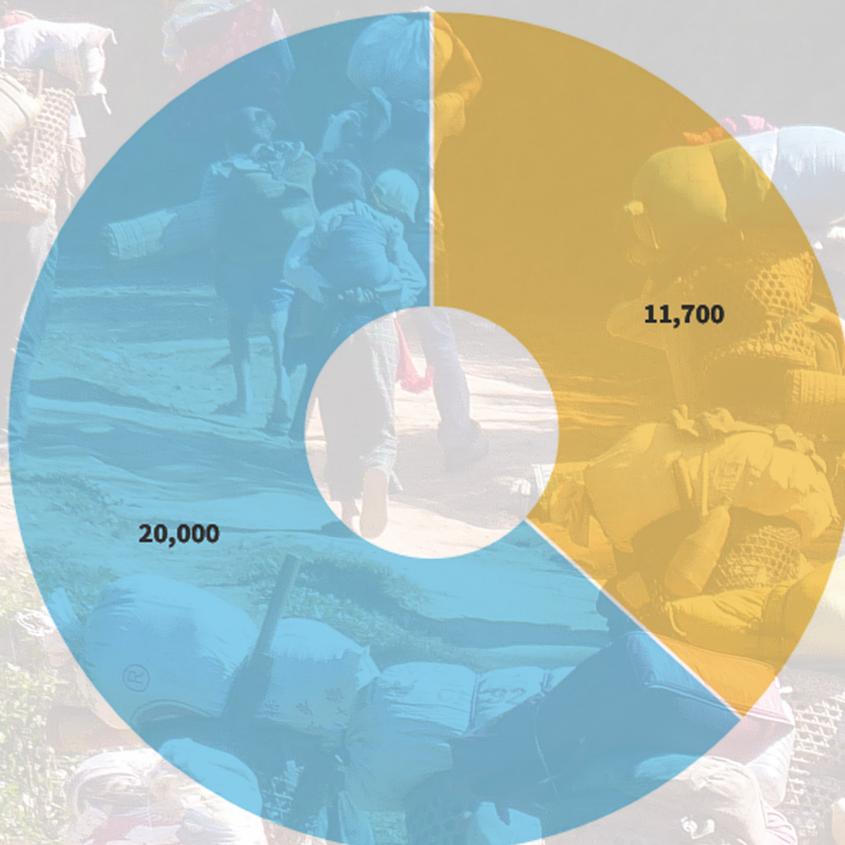
Civilian Deaths



■ Military Deaths ■ Civilian Deaths ■ PDF Member Deaths

31700

Total Number of IDPs (November 29 - December 5 2023)

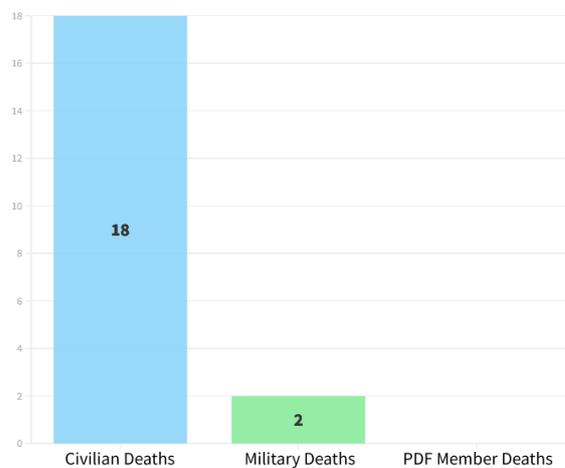


■ Mon ■ Kayin



Sagaing Region

On 29 November, PDFs attacked the military council's security forces stationed at Budalin police station and CB Bank with drones, resulting in the deaths of two junta soldiers and injuries to five others. ¹ In addition, 18 local civilians were killed by junta soldiers and members of the military-backed Pyu Saw Htee militia in Tamu, Yinmabin, and Monywa Townships.



Clash Days by Township

1 Day



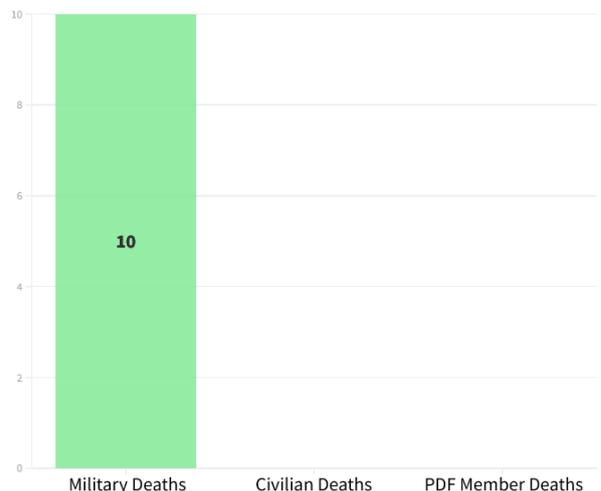
Number of Clash Days

- 0 - 0
- 0 - 1

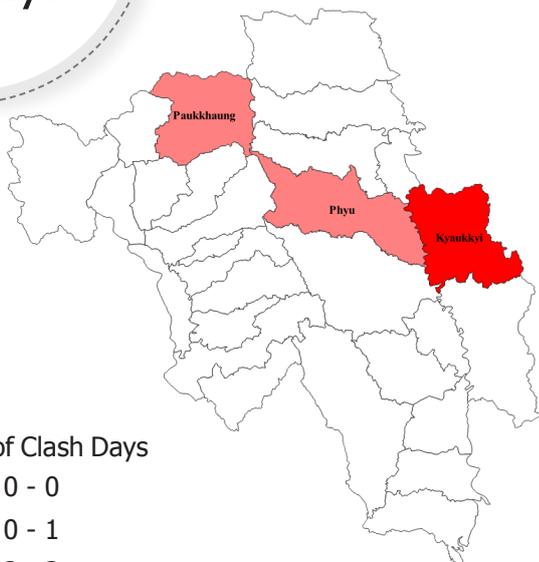
- 1 Two killed in attacks on two junta positions in Budalin town <https://bit.ly/3N7c15h>
- 2 Two junta policemen drowned after fleeing Kan village police station <https://bit.ly/47zsxTR>
- 3 Seven killed in attack on Ka Zun Ma police station in Seikphyu <https://bit.ly/3RtTCSD>

Magway Region

On 26 November, three military council police officers who deserted from Kan village police station in Gangaw Township drowned. ² On 4 December, seven military council soldiers were killed and 15 others injured when a joint PDF raided Ka Zun Ma police station in Seikphyu Township. ³



5 Days

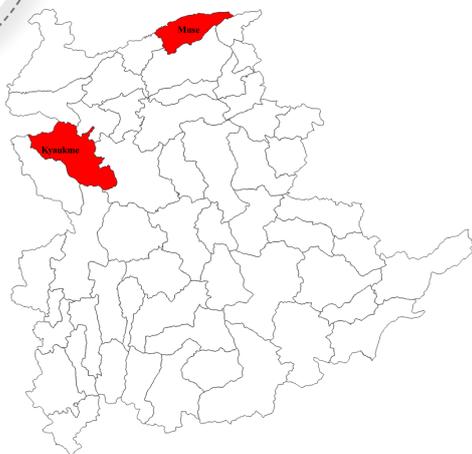


Bago Region

On 29 November, PDFs attacked the military checkpoint on the inter-district road between Nyaungkone and Chinlel villages in Nyaungkone village tract, Paukkaung Township. ⁴ In addition, on 30 November, Myanmar Army troops clashed with the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) near Kyawhlagyi village in Phyu Township. ⁵ From 2 to 4 December, the KNLA and joint resistance forces attacked Myanmar Army outposts and bases in Mone, Kyaukkyi Township, and captured the town on 4 December. ⁶

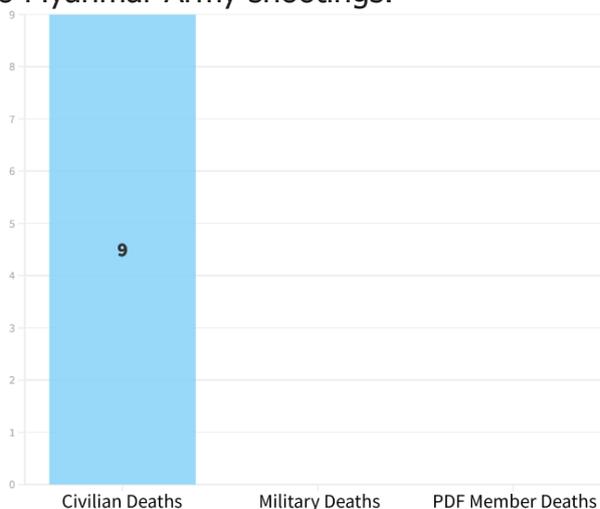
Clash Days
by Township

2 Days



Shan State

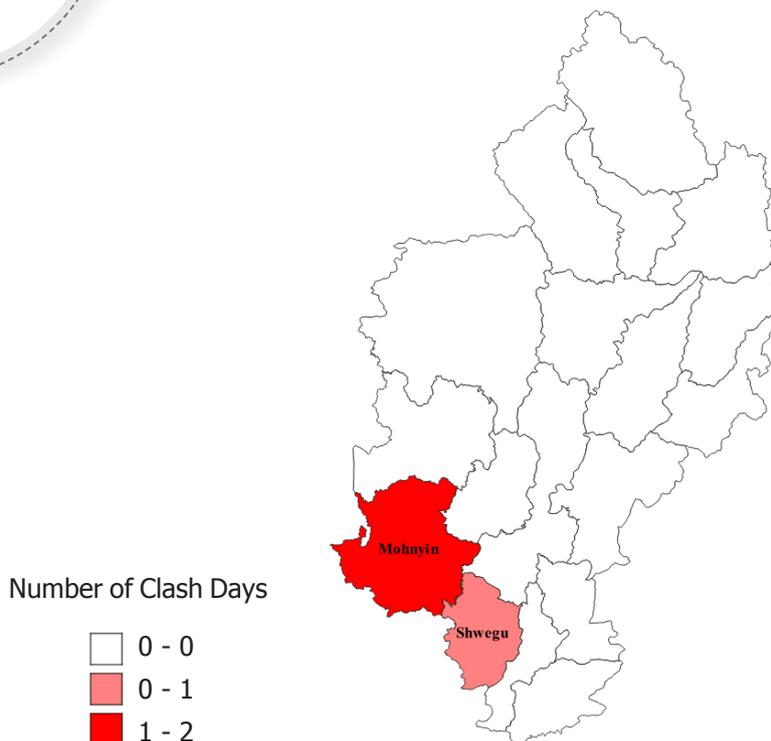
Clashes occurred between Myanmar Army troops and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) in Muse and Kyaukme Townships. In addition, nine local civilians were killed in Lashio, Theinni, Namhkam, and Kyaukme Townships due to Myanmar Army shootings.



4 Junta checkpoint on inter-district road in Paukkaung attacked <https://tinyurl.com/2f9739hv>

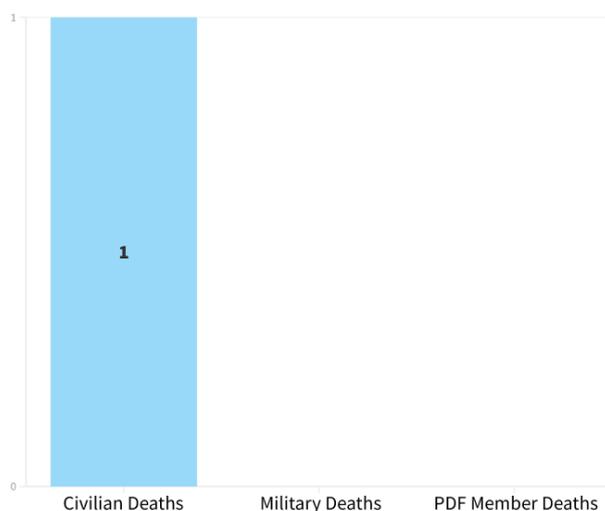
5 Junta fires from air during fighting in Phyu <https://tinyurl.com/2f9739hv>

6 Joint KNLA-PDF forces seize Mone <https://bit.ly/3t3MGCg>



Kachin State

Clashes occurred between Myanmar Army troops and KIA and joint PDFs in Shwegu and Mogaung Townships. In addition, on 5 December, a Lisu ethnic man from Aungmyay village (1) in Waingmaw Township was fatally hit by an artillery shell fired by U Shwe Min-led Lisu militia.⁷



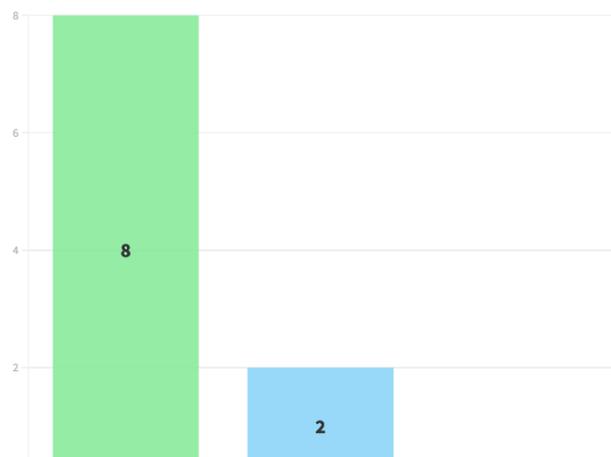
⁷ Civilian killed in artillery shell explosion in Waingmaw <https://bit.ly/3uJdubw>

1 Day



Mon State

On 3 December, joint forces of the KLNA and Kyaikto Revolutionary Force (KRF) attacked the police checkpoint at Mokepalin Junction in Kyaikto Township, resulting in the deaths of three junta soldiers and injuries to at least two others.⁸ In addition, five military council soldiers were killed when a military convoy traveling from Bilin to Yangon was attacked with mines by joint KNLA forces.⁹ In the past two weeks of fighting in Kyaikmaraw Township, more than 20,000 locals were displaced from about 20 villages including Chaunghnitkhwa, Meikayo, Kyaukkwe, Pawlaw, Hlakazaing, Taungkalay, and Kawtsat.¹⁰ On 30 November, a military intelligence informant was shot dead by unknown gunmen in Kyaikkaw ward, Thuwanawaddy, Thaton Township.¹¹ On 1 December, the military carried out bombings in Kyaikmaraw Township without any fighting in the area, killing a Buddhist monk from Mikathit village.¹²



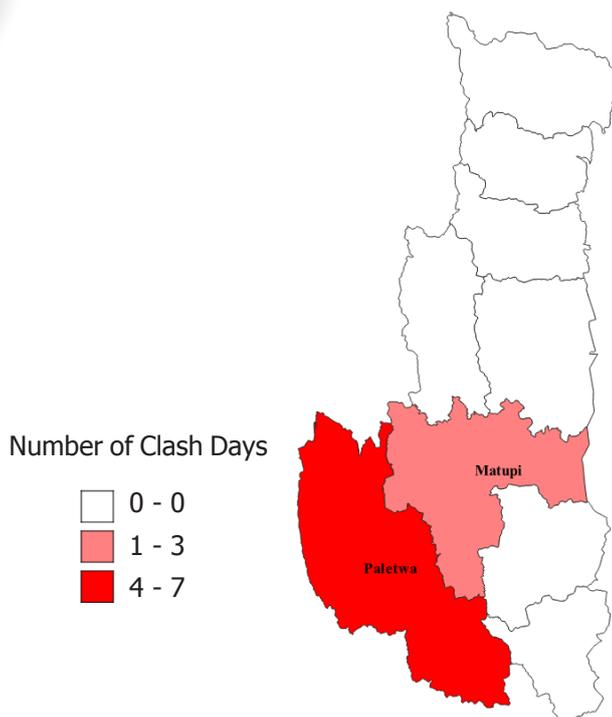
8 Three killed including officer, at least two injured in attack on police checkpoint at Mokepalin Junction
<https://bit.ly/3t2ynOo>

9 Five killed including officer in mine attack on junta convoy in Kyaikto <https://bit.ly/481rqMr>

10 Over 20000 people displaced by fighting in Kyaikmaraw
<https://tinyurl.com/2uc8yawp>

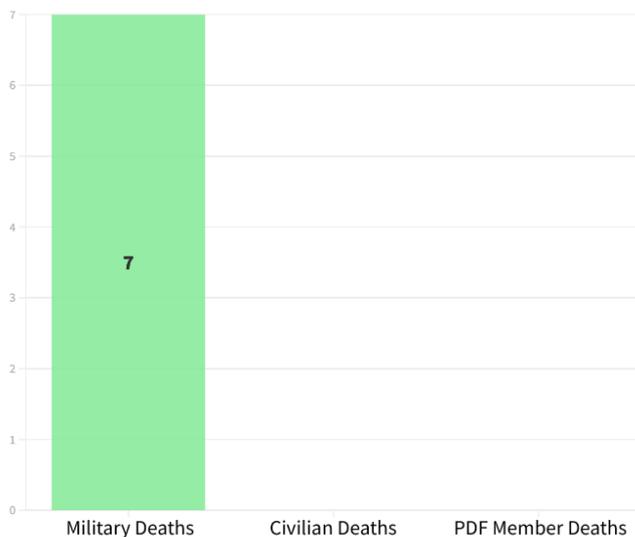
11 Military intelligence informant shot dead in Thaton
<https://bit.ly/3sXScq5>

12 Monk killed in junta bombing in Kyaikmaraw
<https://bit.ly/4a1CyL5>



Chin State

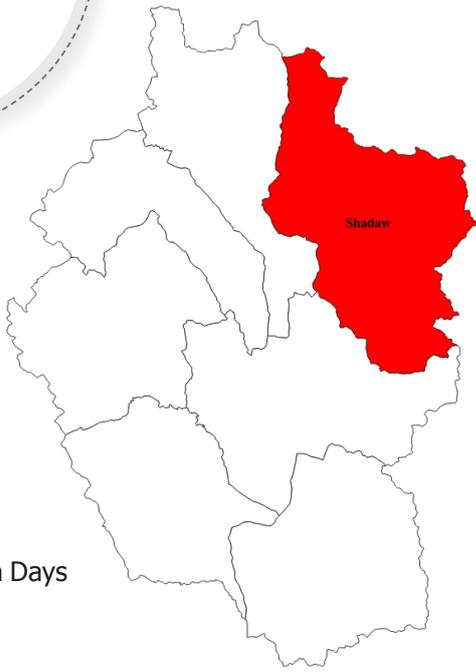
On 1 December, the Chinland Defense Force (CDF) attacked the Myanmar Army’s Kar Kin Kone outpost near the entrance of Matupi on Matupi-Mindat road, resulting in the deaths of seven junta soldiers.¹³ In addition, from 14 November, the Arakan Army (AA) attacked the military council’s strategic hill of Tarunaing with two helicopter landing pads in Paletwa Township, capturing it completely on 5 December.¹⁴



13 Chin resistance forces launch raid junta outpost at Matupi entrance, seven killed including captain <https://bit.ly/3RsATaf>

14 AA captures junta’s Tarunaing strategic hill after 20 days of attack <https://bit.ly/4a3MqDX>

1 Day

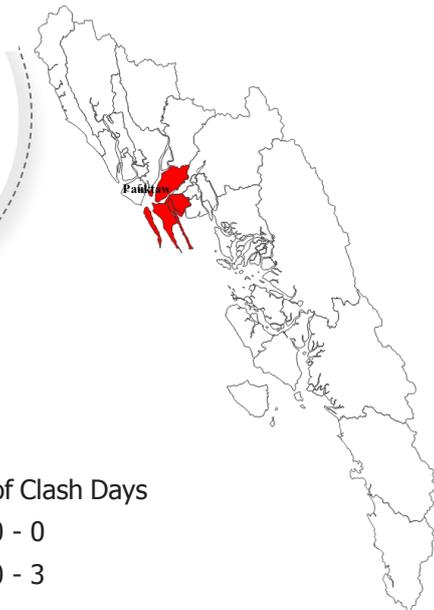


Karenni (Kayah) State

On 3 December, joint Karenni resistance forces captured Puchaung outpost of Infantry Battalion 72 in Shadaw Township. ¹⁵

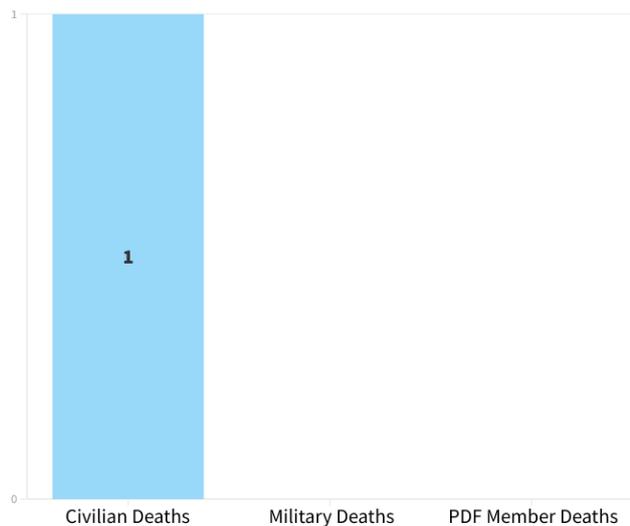
Clash Days by Township

3 Days



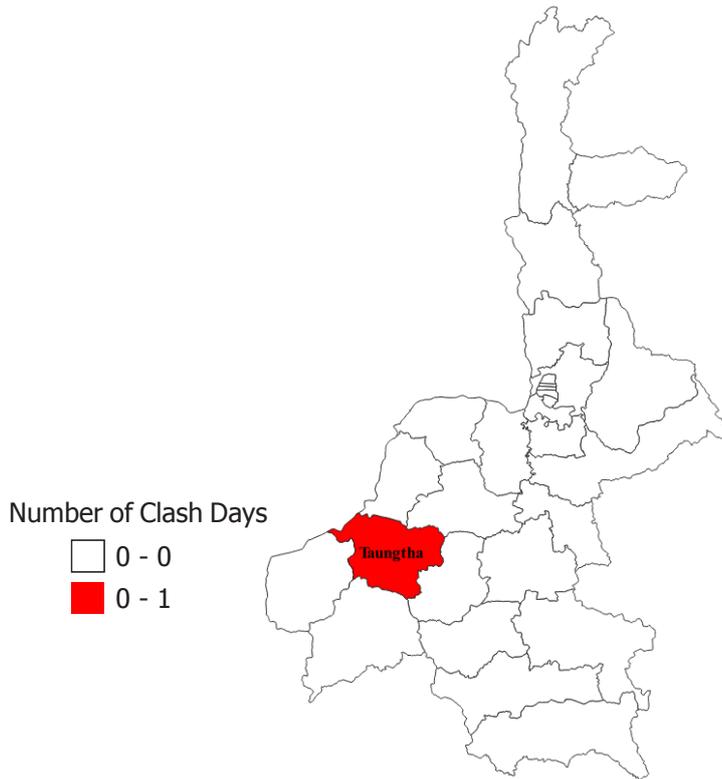
Arakan State

Clashes occurred between Myanmar Army troops and the Arakan Army (AA) in Pauktaw Township from 1 to 3 December. In addition, on 4 December, one resident of Chi Lel Phin village in Sittwe Township and at least four others, including a Buddhist novice, injured by Myanmar Army artillery fire. ¹⁶



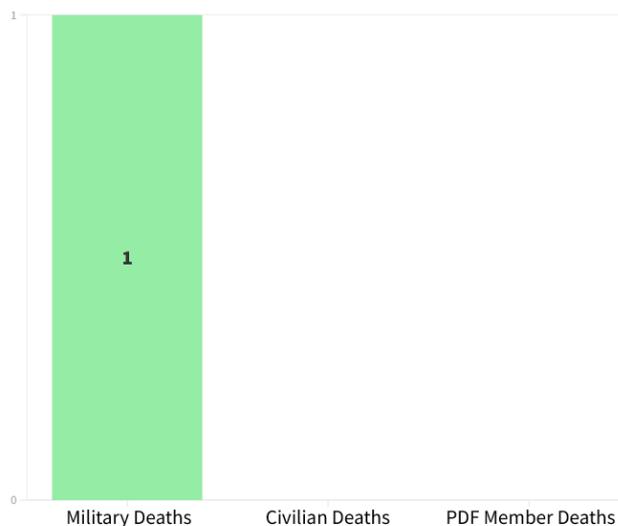
15 Resistance forces seize junta's Puchaung outpost <https://bit.ly/46Lxo31>

16 Villager killed, at least four injured including novice in junta shelling on Chi Lel Phin village in Sittwe <https://bit.ly/3GsOack>



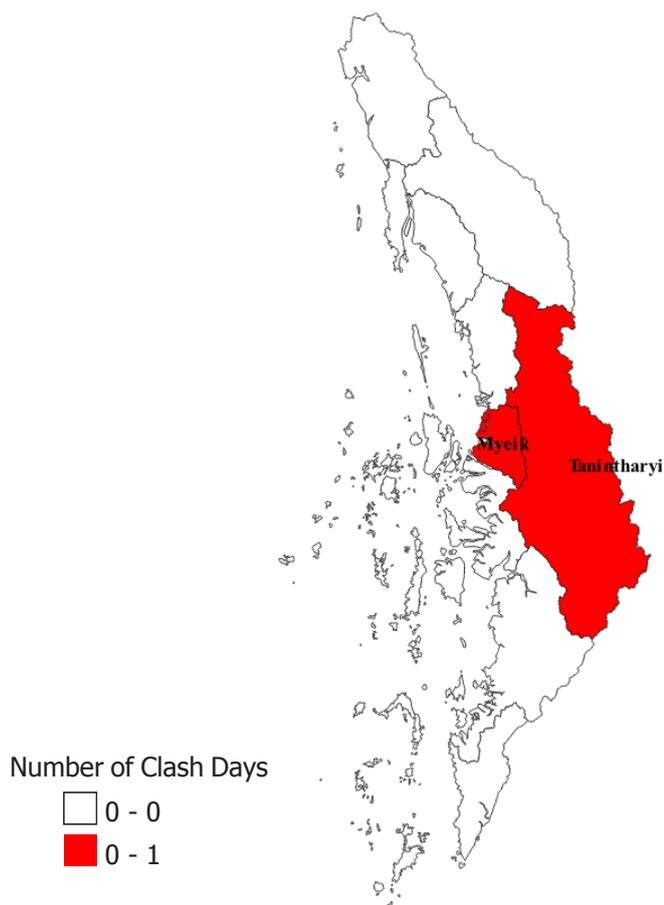
Mandalay Region

On 29 November, clashes occurred between Pyu Saw Htee militia members and PDFs in Tamaikthar village in Taungtha Township. During the clash, one Pyu Saw Htee member was killed and five firearms were seized. ¹⁷



¹⁷ Five firearms seized in attack on Taungtha Pyu Saw Htee <https://bit.ly/3sXfjky>

2 Days

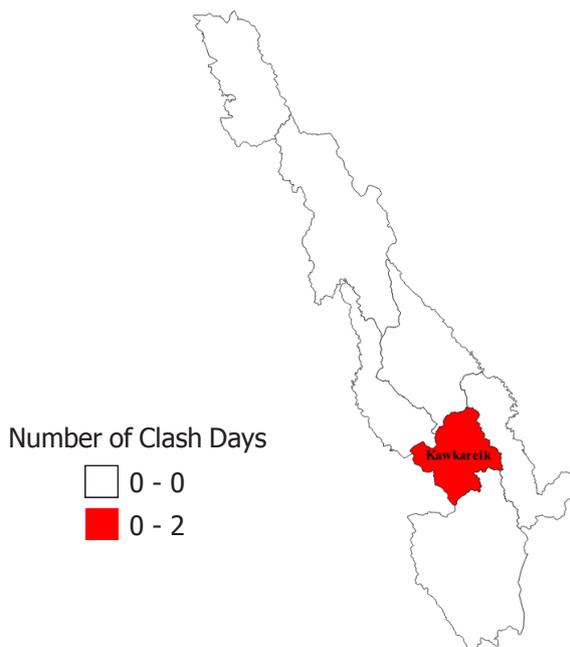


Tanintharyi Region

On 29 November, clashes occurred between Myanmar Army troops and PDFs near Kanto village in Banlamut village tract, Tanintharyi Township. ¹⁸ In addition, on 2 December, joint PDFs attacked the junta outpost in Tonebyawgyi village in Myeik Township. ¹⁹

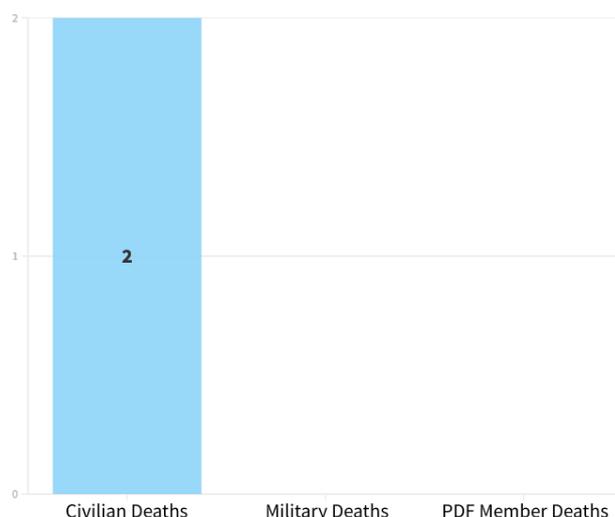
18 Two junta vehicles attacked with mines in Tanintharyi, casualties likely <https://tinyurl.com/2p96vdnt>

19 Junta convoy, outpost attacked in Tanintharyi <https://bit.ly/3Gv9rCh>



Karen State

Clashes occurred between Myanmar Army troops and joint KNLA forces from 1 to 2 December in Kawkareik.²⁰ As a result of the fighting in Kawkareik Township, some 11,700 people from 24 villages were displaced.²¹ On 1 December, an artillery shell fired by junta troops hit a house in Anhpagyi village south of Kawkareik, killing a family member and severely injuring a man in the head.²² In addition, a man named U Mya Kyaw, who lived in Kankaw Lane, Ward (3), Payathonzu, Kyainseikgyi Township, was shot dead by unknown gunmen.²³



20 Fierce fighting continues in Kawkareik <https://bit.ly/48jQ631>

21 Over 10,000 people from 24 villages flee amid fighting in Kawkareik <https://bit.ly/3NddGWK>

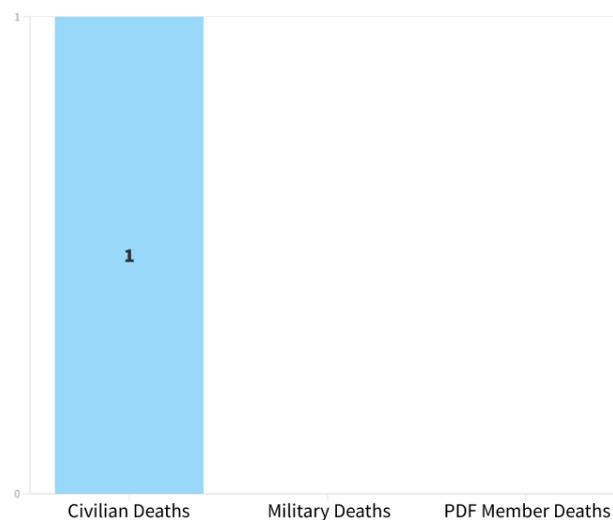
22 Civilian casualties reported in Kawkareik clashes <https://bit.ly/3GIz2YJ>

23 Man shot dead in Payathonzu <https://bit.ly/486HXyL>



Yangon Region

On 1 December, U Than Tun, chairman of the New National Democracy Party, which was founded by former member of State Administration Council (SAC) U Thein Nyunt – was shot dead by PDF members at his home in Thingangyun Township. ²⁴



²⁴ Party chairman assassinated in Yangon <https://bbc.in/3sZ3OJq>



In January 2023, 16 complainants from Myanmar, including Fortify Rights, filed a complaint under the principle of universal jurisdiction against Myanmar military generals and their associates for genocide against the Rohingya people in 2016 and 2017 as well as other crimes against humanity across the country since the 2021 military coup. However, the Federal Public Prosecutor General of Germany decided not to investigate the crimes. The reason for this is that the accused are not present in Germany and such an investigation would overlap with the work of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM). However, Fortify Rights is currently working with survivors to develop new strategies to end impunity and ensure accountability, according to the statement. ¹

On 3 December 2022, Thai Foreign Minister Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara said Thailand is ready to accept more refugees along the border and set up temporary shelters if fighting intensifies in Myanmar. He also said that the Thai government is closely monitoring the situation in Myanmar and has urged all parties involved in the conflict to end fighting immediately and start talks as soon as possible. According to the UN Refugee

¹ Germany declines to probe war crimes charges against Myanmar military generals
<https://burmese.dvb.no/post/627481>



Thai authorities have also pushed back thousands of Karenni refugees who had fled fighting to Myanmar, prompting HRW to call for an end to the practice.



Agency, more than 90,000 refugees from Myanmar are staying in nine temporary shelters in Thailand. However, without a legal framework for refugee protection in Thailand, refugees face charges of illegal entry or residency under Thailand's Immigration Act of 1979, as well as arbitrary arrest and detention. Recently, Thai authorities have also pushed back thousands of Karenni refugees who had fled fighting to Myanmar, prompting Human Rights Watch (HRW) to call for an end to the practice.²

On 5 December 2022, the delegation led by Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev awarded the Order of Alexander Nevsky and the Order of Friendship to junta chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and deputy junta chief Vice-Senior General Soe Win to mark stronger Russia-Myanmar cooperation. Min Aung Hlaing also presented Patrushev with the honorary title of Thray Sithu in return. During the meeting between the Russian delegation and Myanmar military leaders, they discussed defense, security, counter-terrorism cooperation as well as economic and electricity sectors. Among the issues discussed was Russia's position to always stand by Myanmar on the international stage, according to the report. In November, Russia and Myanmar also held their first-ever joint naval exercise in Myanmar's territorial waters off the coast of Myeik in Tanintharyi Region.³

² <https://www.dvb.no/post/627947>

³ <https://www.rfa.org/burmese/news/min-aung-hlaing-get-awards-from-president-of-russia-12062023004632.html>

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.