

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

Human Rights Situation in Mon State, Karen State & the Tanintharyi Region

August 2025



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Forced Conscription in Southeastern Burma is Devastating and Destroying Families as the Junta Increases Unlawful Tactics to Recruit Young Men and Women

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Over the last month, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) has documented a worrying rise in the violent and threatening tactics used by the junta to forcibly enlist men and women in the illegal forced conscription effort across all targeted areas including Mon State, Karen State and the Tanintharyi Region.

The conscription operations are being carried out under the framework of the People's Military Service Law and have intensified. This has caused devastation among communities, who have already heavily impacted and traumatized by the increasing attacks from the military junta.

In what residents describe as a 'reckless and desperate move', the military junta has intensified mass arrests of young men across Mon State and the Tanintharyi Region to forcibly collect conscripts for its 16th round of military training.

Young men between the ages of 18 and 40 have become the latest targets in a series of arrests that have left families terrified and communities living in fear.

On July 26, more than 40 young men were rounded up in Pu Tane Yoe village, Thaton Township, Mon State. They were taken to Thaton Town Police Station, Thein Sake Police Station, and the 9th Military Training Camp.

A relative of one of those detained recalled:

"When we went to the police station and asked, they said the men had already been sent to the 9th regiment.

They told us that if we wanted them released, we had to provide substitutes for conscription."

The arrests have continued. On August 9, around 30 junta personnel stormed the office of Lo Yar Phyate, a local social and funeral service group in Thein Za Yet Town, Kyike Hto Township. At least 15 displaced men sheltering there were detained and transferred to the 207th Light Infantry Battalion and family contact has been completely denied.

In Bilin Township, more than 30 young men were seized along the Bilin-Taung Zune Motorway and forced into military training. Villagers reported that junta units are operating mobile arrest teams:

"They wait in the evenings when young men are coming home from work. They don't stay in one place. They move around and arrest whoever they can. Sometimes, they even beat the young men they take," said a Taung Zune resident.

Those arrested include residents of Taung Zune, Thit Toe Kyune, Zoke Toke, Ah Nile Pon, and Hpwal Ka Lar villages. Most have been sent to the 6th Military School under

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the Mawlamyine-based Southeast Military Command.

In Tanintharyi Region, arrests are also becoming increasingly more common. On July 28, at least 16 workers were detained during night checks in the villages of Kaw Thaug Township for allegedly not filing “visitor reports.”

Similar checks in nearby villages and stone mines resulted in more arrests, though exact numbers are still unconfirmed. Many detainees under 35 years old were forced into conscription, while those able to pay bribes as high as 25,000–30,000 Baht were released.

The repression continues in Dawei, where soldiers and administrators at the Ka Myaw Kin Bridge Security Gate and in downtown wards have arrested dozens.

On July 8, seven young men from Launglon Township were detained; on August 4, another 11 young men were arrested in Dawei City and sent to the military hospital for forced medical checks before being sent to training camps.

“They send the conscription letters only after arresting them. First, they claim to check the ‘visitors’ list,’ but the truth is that they come to homes at night to take young men,” said a Dawei resident.

According to HURFOM field reports, the junta has already organized 15 rounds of conscript training since the February 2021 coup attempt. Those who complete training are sent immediately to the front

lines. Communities fear that with the 16th batch now underway, arrests and forced recruitment will only escalate.

For families in Mon State and the Tanintharyi region, the terror is constant. Young men no longer feel safe going to work or travelling to nearby towns.

Villagers say they live in fear that any knock at the door could mean their sons or brothers being dragged away:

“These arrests are destroying our lives. We worry every day about who will be taken next. Even the displaced and the workers just trying to survive are not safe,” said a resident.

In another case, at approximately 7:00 AM on July 30, around 10 youths were arbitrarily arrested by junta forces at the Ka Myaw Kin Bridge checkpoint, one of the main entry points into Dawei town.

The youths were reportedly travelling from Long Lone Township to Dawei when they were stopped and arrested individually at the checkpoint. Among the 10, two were later released on the same day, according to one of the released individuals.

Of those arrested, four were originally from Long Lone Township, while the others were from different parts of Mon State and had relocated to live in Long Lone.

“They were stopping vehicles at the Ka Myaw Kin checkpoint and inspecting ID cards and documents,” a local man told HURFOM.

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The group was taken to Light Infantry Battalion No. 401, based in Tha Pyay Chaung, Dawei Township. By the evening, two of the youths were released, according to firsthand accounts.

This is not the first such incident. Earlier in the month, on July 7, four youths from Long Lone were also arrested at the same checkpoint. Of those, three were forcibly sent to military training, while one was released.

In a related case, reports have emerged of a 16-year-old boy, Nann Ko Ko, who was forcibly conscripted by Infantry Battalion No. 282 in Yebyu Township. Despite being underage, military personnel allegedly fabricated a fake ID and sent him to military training.

On July 26, Nann Ko Ko fled the battalion and later joined the People's Defense Force (PDF) under Strategy 33. He reportedly escaped without carrying any weapons and has since shared that he was under 18 when he was recruited.

The military junta has ordered that every village tract and ward in Mudon Township must provide up to three conscripts for the military, with no exceptions.

The conscription drive is being enforced through local military recruitment committees, which include ward and village tract administrators.

These administrators are now tasked with identifying eligible men and coordinating forced enlistments.

Reports suggest that junta authorities are instructing administrators to conduct household surveys and random draws to meet the assigned recruitment quota.

The directive is being implemented in line with the junta's ongoing weekly military training programs, which are now in their 16th round. Administrators have been told they must supply a minimum of three recruits per area every month without fail.

In exchange for their cooperation, administrators who successfully meet recruitment targets are reportedly being allowed to collect conscription-related "fees" and other informal payments without legal consequence. These include monthly cash collections from households and kickbacks related to exemption certificates and conscript substitutions.

Sources in Mudon say administrators who fail to deliver recruits are facing threats of removal from their posts. As a result, many are now resorting to hiring conscripts or rounding up "replacement" youths—offering them between 700,000 to 1,000,000 MMK (approximately USD 300–400) in exchange for joining the military on someone else's behalf.

"Administrators are under intense pressure. Some are collecting between 10,000 and 20,000 MMK from every household monthly, just to ensure they can buy conscripts and avoid being dismissed," said a resident.

In previous months, young travellers from other regions passing through Mudon

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Township were arrested without cause—especially at night—and forcibly sent to military training centers. Arrests often targeted those without proper vehicle licenses, suspected drug users, petty thieves, or even simply youths out late at night.

However, locals say the situation has worsened in recent weeks. The junta, under pressure to hold a sham election and regain territory lost to resistance forces, is urgently expanding its army.

This has intensified pressure on junta-appointed administrators to supply increasing numbers of recruits, regardless of legality or local consent.

Similar patterns are being reported in other townships across Mon State. With local administrators under orders to fulfill military recruitment quotas—they are threatening civilians with home raids and arrests if they fail to comply. In some cases, families have been warned that their homes would be locked or sealed if they refused to hand over a male family member for conscription.

An estimated 2,800 conscripts have already been forcibly enrolled across Mon State during training rounds 1 through 15 of the junta's so-called "People's Military Service" program.

Many of the cases HURFOM has documented of arbitrary arrest over the last month were linked to forced conscription. More than 100 young people, including women, have been forcibly conscripted into military service.

The arrests are part of a sweeping crackdown by the junta's Township People's Military Service Recruitment Committee, which has imposed tightened restrictions and carried out door-to-door raids and street blockades.

Residents told HURFOM that junta troops are arresting youths both day and night. At night, soldiers enter homes under the pretext of checking household guest lists. During the day, main roads across town are blocked off, and troops forcibly enter houses to detain anyone they identify as eligible for conscription.

"Around 100 youths have been taken already. They are being sent off as recruits. Even women over 18 are among those arrested," said an eyewitness. "Soldiers come into homes pretending to check guest lists, but they're there to arrest. They close off whole streets in the wards and grab any young person they see."

In addition to residential raids, junta troops are also stationed at township checkpoints, where they stop and detain youth from surrounding villages as they travel into town. The pattern of forced arrests and conscription has heightened fear and uncertainty among residents.

Youths are avoiding public areas and limiting movement, as resistance groups have issued warnings that such operations are likely to intensify.

Since the implementation of the junta's People's Military Service Law, HURFOM has documented a sharp rise in the forcible

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recruitment of civilians, including students, activists, and those with no military background.

The policy has disproportionately affected ethnic communities, including those in Tanintharyi Region, who already face marginalization and insecurity under military control.

In Thanbyuzayat Town, Mon State, the military junta has repeatedly issued military summons letters to residents across multiple wards. Local sources confirmed that over 40 individuals received conscription notices between early July and early August 2025.

The affected wards include Kyan Khine Yae, Aung Chan Thar, Set Thit Paing, Aung Tharyar, Kyaung Paing, Hintharwadi, Aung Zeya, Aung Zeya Extension, Aung Mingalar, Kyakan, and Phaung Sein.

At least 12 men from Kyakan, Phaung Sein, Aung Zeya, Aung Zeya Extension, Kyan Khine Yae, and Aung Kuthoe wards have already been forcibly recruited into military service. Among those summoned, eight individuals are currently living abroad. In one case, a family was forced to pay 6 million kyat to the conscription team to hire a substitute.

“What’s happening now is that the military just keeps sending out summons letters. They’re also holding monthly ‘drawing lots,’ and stopping young people on the streets to check if they’ve received notices. Some are arrested on the spot,” said a woman familiar with the situation.

The junta has reportedly intensified these efforts, delivering new summons letters each month without regard for the recipient’s location or personal status. University students and individuals residing abroad have been among those targeted.

Those who attempt to evade conscription by fleeing or going into hiding face threats of punishment. Families remaining in the household are warned that they could face house lockdowns, arrest warrants, or prosecution by conscription authorities.

The junta has already opened up to 15 military training batches in Mon State since the start of 2025 and continues to push forward with new rounds. The military has stated that each training batch lasts four months, with conscripts expected to serve for two years. Those with academic degrees or specialized skills may be held for three years.

In the event of a declared national emergency, the conscription period can be extended up to five years. The atmosphere in Thanbyuzayat has grown increasingly tense as residents live in fear of being taken or losing their loved ones to forced military service.

At least eight residents from Paradat village, Yebyu Township, Dawei District, remain in detention after a raid by junta troops in early August, despite the release of most others initially arrested. The raid occurred early in the morning on August 2 in Paradat village, located within the Dawei Special Economic Zone.

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Troops reportedly entered the area at 6 AM, and arrested approximately 30 villagers, including both men and women.

“There was a funeral taking place in the village. People were moving in and out, and the soldiers started arresting whoever they came across,” said a local woman who witnessed the events.

By 10 AM, the junta forces withdrew from the village and released several women and elderly men near Htauk Wa village, which is part of the Paradat village tract. However, eight men remained in custody and were taken away.

Eyewitnesses reported that the same troops, accompanied by the eight detainees, returned to the Deep-Sea Port area shortly afterward.

The arrests in Paradat follow a similar incident just days earlier in Pantin Inn village, Long Lone Township. On July 29, junta troops were ambushed by the Dawei Nationalities Liberation Army (DNLA) and allied resistance groups, sparking an intense battle.

During the clash, approximately ten houses were destroyed by fire, and several civilians were killed due to junta artillery shelling. The following day, on July 30, reinforcements—estimated at over 50 soldiers—were deployed to Pantin Inn.

That evening, more than ten residents were reportedly arrested and transported to a junta base near the Deep-Sea Port.

As of the afternoon of August 2, local sources confirmed that detainees from both Paradat and Pantin Inn villages had not yet been released. Families remain deeply concerned for their safety and well-being.

Between the night of 3 and 4 August 2025, at least 14 young people were forcibly arrested and taken by junta forces for military conscription in Dawei Town. The arrests were carried out both in public and during late-night home raids under the pretext of checking guest lists.

At least five people were detained from Sham Ma Lei Shwe Ward, three from Ta Line Thein Ward, and four from Uthayan Ward. Witnesses said the military arrived with specific names and forcibly removed individuals from their homes.

“They grabbed people right off the main roads and dragged others out of their houses,” said a relative of one of the detainees from Sham Ma Lei Shwe Ward. *“Some were taken using military call-up letters, but others were taken without any explanation.”*

A woman from Dawei noted that because many youths who had received call-up notices have gone into hiding, the junta is now arresting others arbitrarily, regardless of whether they were officially summoned.

On 5 August, at least five more individuals were reported to have been detained in Kyet Sar Pyin Ward and along Strand Road. Residents also reported that on the night of 4 August, junta soldiers arrested four young women, all around the age of 20.

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Most of those arrested are male youths aged between 19 and 35, and are officially registered as permanent residents of Dawei Township, not temporary guests.

In July, regional commands—including the Coastal Regional Command Headquarters—were reportedly ordered to conduct conscription as if carrying out a military operation, to meet recruitment targets.

Those arrested were held at Infantry Battalion No. 401, based in Tha Pyay Chaung, where they are gathered before being transported via waterway to the No. 12 Advanced Military Training School in Palaw Town.

Across Mon State, thousands of young people have been swept into the junta's People's Military Service through intimidation, manipulation, and outright force. Many are now trapped in frontline battles, used as human shields in reinforcement operations. Locals say the urgent need for manpower to carry out ground attacks is driving this unlawful exploitation of Mon youths.

On August 13, the Junta's Mon State Chief Minister U Aung Kyi Thein, alongside state ministers and Southeastern Command officials, visited newly arrived conscripts from across the state at the Township Basic Training School in Mawlamyine.

These young men and women are part of the 16th Batch of the People's Military Service training. According to residents, most had little choice but to comply once targeted by regional administrators.

“They’re increasing troop numbers to secure their planned election later this year,” said a resident of Thanbyuzayat Township. “It’s not just for polling places — they’re also filling the frontlines. As the election gets closer, recruitment is constant, day and night. They don’t slow down.”

Since June of this year, ward and village administrators have been working with township conscription committees to register all eligible youths. Residents report that summons letters are now arriving, with instructions to report to the township General Administration Department offices.

“Youth of service age must register. They check if you’re abroad or studying. They even make you sign pledges to vote,” explained a Kyaikmayaw Township resident. “Once the letter comes, you have to go. There’s no choice.”

For those who resist, the consequences are severe. Personal data stored in the administrative system makes evasion nearly impossible — house lockdowns, arrest warrants, detention, and steep “replacement fees” of between 6 and 10 million kyat are imposed. Parents, already struggling under economic hardship, face impossible decisions: pay, send their children to war, or flee.

The forced conscription law, enacted on February 10, 2024, orders men aged 18–35 and women aged 18–27 to serve. It also bans eligible youths from leaving the country and restricts passport changes under secret directives.

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Coup leader, Min Aung Hlaing has further tightened control by granting regional commanders full administrative and judicial powers in 63 townships, including Mon State, for up to 90 days — powers that residents fear are being abused to justify mass recruitment.

In resistance-controlled areas, the situation is equally dire. As the junta launches counteroffensives and airstrikes, young people are arrested in raids and sent directly to training camps.

More and more are risking dangerous, illegal border crossings into Thailand to escape, while others hide in Ethnic Resistance Organization-controlled territories.

“These are our sons and daughters,” said a mother from Mudon Township.

“They should be in school or building their futures, not carrying weapons for a regime that is destroying our communities. This law has stolen our children’s safety, our family stability, and our hope.”

HURFOM continues to monitor these widespread forced recruitment operations, which are contributing to rising fear and insecurity. These acts violate international human rights law and further demonstrate the junta’s use of coercion, intimidation, and violence to sustain its military apparatus.

As the junta prepares to open its 16th batch of military training for conscripts, villagers in Kyikemayaw Township, Mon State, are being forced to shoulder yet another burden.

Local administrators, acting under junta orders, have demanded that each ward and village send two young men for military training.

In Ta Ra Nar, Kaw That, Kaw Doon, Kyune Kone, Kaw Ka Line, Kha Yone, and Kyike Pa Ran villages, administrators convened meetings and instructed households to pay 15,000 MMK each month to hire substitutes for conscription.

“The junta demanded two young men from each village. But there are no youths left here. So, the administrators collected money from every household to pay substitutes who will attend the training,” explained a resident of Kyikemayaw.

For the 15th batch of conscription, administrators did not collect this so-called “fee.” However, with the 16th batch, the practice has become routine and coercive. Villagers reported that administrators issued threats against those unable to pay.

“If someone cannot afford the fee, they threatened to arrest a family member. They even said that if a son is working abroad, the father could be arrested and jailed instead,” said another villager.

HURFOM has also learned that local officials are claiming they have the authority—through the Township Public Conscription Summon Committee and the Village Administrators—to jail family members for three to six months if payments are not made.

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Since the coup attempt, the junta has organized 15 rounds of conscription training in Mon State alone. More than 2,500 young men have already been taken by force, leaving families traumatized and communities emptied of their youth.

The latest demands add another layer of financial extortion to households already struggling with food shortages, displacement, and fear.

Airstrikes

On the morning of 9 August, a junta airstrike struck Pein Nae Gone village in Kyaikhto Township, Mon State, killing one civilian and injuring five others. Residents described the attack, which occurred at 9:00 AM, as sudden and without warning, leaving the community in shock and fear.

A junta jet fighter dropped a bomb on Pein Nae Gone despite there being no active clashes in or near the area at the time. The airstrike killed 62-year-old U Kyaw Thein and injured Ko Gyn, Ko Hpa Gyi, Ko Aung Phyo Wai, Ko Phyo Gyi, and Ko Aung Soe Moe, all of whom are local villagers.

“It was around nine in the morning when the bomb was dropped. No one had time to escape. One person died instantly, and five were injured. Now, the village is nearly empty—most people have fled,” said a Pein Nae Gone resident.

The bombing also damaged at least four homes and forced hundreds of villagers to flee to safety. Pein Nae Gone is located

in Kyaikhto Township, an area under the administration of the Karen National Union’s Brigade No. 1 in Thaton District.

This latest attack is part of an alarming pattern of junta-led assaults in Kyaikhto Township, which has seen a sharp escalation in airstrikes, artillery shelling, and targeted violence against civilians over the past year.

The area’s proximity to both Mon and Karen States resistance strongholds has made it a frequent target of indiscriminate military operations, often carried out without regard for civilian life.

Less than a month earlier, on 10 July, the junta also carried out an airstrike in Kyaikhto Township’s Min Saw village, Beelin Township, targeting a Karen National Union school.

Two bombs dropped by a military aircraft damaged several school buildings, further demonstrating the regime’s ongoing disregard for civilian safety, including children in education facilities.

Residents in Kyaikhto Township report living in a constant state of fear, with many forced to flee repeatedly to escape aerial and ground assaults.

The continuing attacks have devastated livelihoods, destroyed homes, and deepened the humanitarian crisis in Mon State, where displaced families now face food shortages, lack of shelter, and limited access to medical care.

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Arbitrary Arrests

Following the shooting deaths of two militia members, junta forces launched a brutal crackdown in Pu Taing Yoe village, Thaton Township, Mon State, arresting more than 40 local men, according to residents.

On the afternoon of July 30, at 2 PM, a combined force of junta soldiers and police raided the village, reportedly arriving in seven vehicles.

“There were about 40 troops, soldiers and police combined. They went door to door, arresting people. If anyone tried to flee, they were shot at. More than 40 people were taken,” said a resident of Pu Taing Yoe.

Among those detained were over 20 members of the National League for Democracy (NLD), while the rest were ordinary villagers, farm workers, shopkeepers, and local youth, according to sources.

The arrested men, all aged between 18 and 50, were reportedly transferred to multiple detention sites, including Thaton Township Police Station, Thein Seik Police Station, and the No. 9 Military Training Base for interrogation.

Families of the detainees are growing increasingly distressed. One family contact shared:

“When we asked the police, they told us the men had been sent to the No. 9 military base. They warned us that if we wanted our family members back, we’d need to send someone to serve in the military in their place.”

The raid followed a targeted shooting on the evening of July 26, when two militia members, U Than Zaw Oo and U Aung Ko Win, were killed near the village school.

The two men had just withdrawn money from a KPay shop when resistance forces shot them. Both were originally from Taung Soon village and had been stationed for more than six months at a monastery in Pu Taing Yoe alongside junta troops.

Tensions continue to rise as pro-junta Telegram channels have begun inciting violence, calling for the execution of the arrested men and demanding that young detainees be beaten, tortured, and forced into military training as conscripts.

In a separate case, more than 15 young male workers were arrested in Kawthaung Township, Kawthaung District, Tanintharyi Region, on the night of July 28, 2025, by junta troops citing “guest registration violations” as the reason, according to local sources.

At 10 PM, on July 28, joint forces composed of junta soldiers and local administrators carried out coordinated nighttime inspections in several villages under the 10-Mile Village Tract, including Kan Maw Gyi (also known as 8-Mile Village), 11-Mile, and 12-Mile villages.

They went door to door and detained male workers between the ages of 20 and 40, accusing them of failing to register their presence as required by military-imposed guest list rules.

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According to residents, five men were taken from 8-Mile Village. From 12-Mile, workers from several local companies were targeted, including four from Nyunt Hlaing Company, one from Aung Ko Lwin Natural Stone Company and one from Tin Aung Moe Company.

Additionally, five workers from a brick kiln in 10-Mile Village and one resident from the same area were also arrested. In total, about 16 men were rounded up.

Similar raids occurred on the night of July 30 in the 9-Mile area, as well as at the Naung Yoe natural stone production site and Tar Nyon Parda Village. Locals reported that junta troops conducted surprise inspections using guest list records and arrested both general labourers and rubber plantation workers.

Many of the detained workers were reportedly employed by well-known local business owners. Families and employers were forced to pay between 700,000 and 800,000 Myanmar Kyat in exchange for the release of eight detainees on July 29.

Sources also revealed that the military has demanded 10 young men from the 10-Mile Village Tract to be conscripted into service. These recent arrests appear to be part of a larger effort to meet those conscription quotas under the guise of enforcing guest registration regulations.

Villagers in Kawthaung fear further arbitrary arrests, as the junta continues to exploit administrative rules to target young people.

The climate of fear and extortion under the junta's forced conscription law continues to devastate young people and their families across Mon State. On June 21, three men accused of drug use were arrested by junta troops at a betel nut plantation in Kyoe Tha Dar Village, near Maw Ka Nin Village, Ye Township, Mon State.

They were taken to the Mawlamyine-based Southeast Military Command. The soldiers informed the detainees that those able to pay a ransom would be freed, while those unable to do so would be sent to military training.

By August 2, two of the detainees had been released after paying more than 50 million MMK to the army. The third detainee, 18-year-old Pay Lay, could not afford the payment. He was transferred to a military training camp and has not been in contact with his family since.

"The army is arresting drug users and small dealers, holding them at the Southeast Command, and demanding money for their release. If they can pay, they're let go. If not, they are sent to forced military training," said a Maw Ka Nin resident.

HURFOM's field data shows that this is not an isolated case. Under the junta's forced conscription law, arbitrary arrests and ransom demands have become an income source for military units. Across Mawlamyine, Kyaikmayaw, and Mudon townships, parents in an estimated 120 or more cases have been forced to make such payments to keep their sons from being taken for military service.

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These ransoms range from smaller sums—such as a few hundred thousand MMK—to massive payments in the tens of millions. Those who cannot pay face being sent to the frontlines, while families are left with unbearable debt or forced to flee.

This pattern has driven many youths and their parents into hiding in Ethnic Resistance Organization-controlled areas or across the border to neighbouring countries, leaving their homes, education, and livelihoods behind.

The social and economic impacts are severe: young people live under constant fear of arrest; parents face crippling financial strain; and communities lose their workforce and future leaders. The security environment continues to deteriorate as these unlawful practices undermine trust and force displacement.

HURFOM field reporters have confirmed a disturbing escalation in arbitrary arrests by pro-junta militias and Pyusawhti groups at the village and ward level, targeting young people for forced military service.

These arrests, often conducted in coordination with junta soldiers and police, are leaving communities gripped with fear and young men with no safe place to go.

In townships including Kyaik Hto, Bilin, Paung, Kyaikmayaw, and Mudon, these militias have been setting up ad-hoc checkpoints on small connecting roads between villages, blocking travel, and targeting youth returning from work.

Eyewitnesses reported that those captured are quickly transported to the nearest military camp by militia trucks. The men are often dressed in plain clothes and carrying bags, giving the impression they are civilians, only revealing their weapons when surrounding and arresting their targets.

In one recent incident in Paung Township two days ago, five young men were arrested on the outskirts of town. Families of two of them were able to secure their release by paying ransom amounts of three million kyat each. The remaining three are still in detention, with their whereabouts unknown.

The problem is not limited to these militias. In Kyaikmayaw Township, combined teams of junta troops, police, and pro-junta militias have been setting up toll gate-style checkpoints on key roads.

On 13 August, six young men were detained near Chan Gone village and accused of being “porters” for the military. An eyewitness, a 50-year-old local resident, told HURFOM:

“I saw them being beaten and arrested. Soldiers, police, and militia surrounded three motorcycles carrying the young men. They said they were taking them as porters. I don’t know which village the boys were from. I was hiding behind my garden fence when I saw it happen.”

Local administrators in Kyaikmayaw confirmed that since 1 August, village leaders have been ordered to provide five young men per village for military service. While some families have paid as much as 15,000 MMK

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per household to avoid sending their sons, many cannot afford such payments.

In the second week of August, militia and military units in Bilin Township began similar nighttime and evening operations in Taung Soon village tract, targeting workers returning home. In some cases, detainees have been released after paying ransoms of two to three million kyat, but most are cut off from all contact with their families.

HURFOM's field data indicates that in the second week of August, at least 45 young men from Bilin and Paung Townships were taken for military service through these coordinated arrest operations.

The junta's forced conscription campaign has emptied many villages of young people. In Mudon Township, residents say evenings are eerily quiet, with few venturing outside for fear of being detained.

These arrests are part of the junta's broader push to meet troop requirements under the People's Military Service Law.

In Mon State, summons letters have been delivered in some areas, while in others, young people are being taken directly from the streets without any legal process and sent to military training camps.

Artillery Strikes

Residents of Ywa Thit village in Ye Township, Mon State, were compelled to flee their homes after the military junta launched a heavy artillery attack and sent a ground unit

into the village. On the morning of 4 August 2025, the junta's Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 343, based in Ye, fired more than 10 rounds of heavy artillery toward Ywa Thit, a Mon village situated in the Ayuthaung village tract, near Highway No. 8 on the eastern side of the Ye–Mawlamyine road. The shelling happened without any active armed clashes in the area.

Although no civilian injuries were reported as a result of the shelling, residents expressed fear and concern for their safety. Following the attack, a column of around 80 junta troops entered the village and stationed themselves inside the local Buddhist monastery.

“There were no casualties from the shelling, but now they are occupying Ywa Thit village,” a local woman shared. “They’ve set up posts; some are in hiding positions, and they are beating and interrogating villagers.”

Eyewitnesses also reported that junta forces took control of rubber plantations, orchards, and village roads, tightened security, and began aggressive door-to-door checks, during which several villagers were physically assaulted.

Frightened by occupation and violence, many villagers from Ywa Thit and nearby areas have fled their homes, especially those living near plantations or in more exposed locations.

The latest military movement follows an earlier attack by the Ye Balu Armed Force on 12 July, when resistance fighters reportedly

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targeted a junta checkpoint near Ywa Thit and Taung Soon villages. Locals believe that the junta's current operations are in retaliation.

Meanwhile, the junta's offensives have also escalated elsewhere in Ye Township. On 2 August, airstrikes were carried out on Kyauk Tai, Khamoom, and Nae Pyar villages, located within the administrative area of KNU Brigade 6, Battalion 27. In addition, at least six clashes occurred throughout Ye Township during July between junta forces and allied resistance groups.

The continued use of indiscriminate shelling, ground raids, and airstrikes has heightened fear and insecurity for thousands of civilians in Mon State, many of whom have already been displaced multiple times due to the conflict.

In another case, a local civilian injured by an artillery shell during intense fighting in Pan Tin Inn village died while receiving treatment at Dawei General Hospital, according to residents. The man, one of five people wounded by artillery fire, passed away on the morning of 5 August 2025.

The clash occurred on 29 July, when heavy fighting broke out between junta forces and local resistance groups in Pan Tin Inn village. The battle lasted more than 10 hours.

According to eyewitnesses, U San Oo, a villager in his 60s, was hiding near his home when an artillery shell exploded nearby, causing serious injuries.

“U San Oo’s injuries were severe. The shell fragments damaged his internal organs,” said a local source. *“He was taken to the hospital, but he didn’t make it. His body was brought back to the village and buried.”*

Another civilian was also reportedly shot and killed by junta troops during the same battle, bringing the civilian death toll to at least two. Following the clashes, on 30 July, junta soldiers detained more than 10 residents of Pan Tin Inn village.

They were taken to a temporary military base near Yay Nget Port in Yebyu Township. As of 5 August, those detained have not been released, and their condition remains unknown. According to statements released by resistance groups involved in the fighting, one resistance fighter was killed in action, and junta forces suffered multiple casualties during the engagement.

The ongoing clashes in Launglon and surrounding areas continue to pose a grave risk to civilians, many of whom are caught between frontlines, detained arbitrarily, or injured by indiscriminate shelling.

On the morning of 13 August 2025, heavy fighting broke out between junta forces and a joint force of revolutionary armed groups near 60-Mile Village, Yar Phu Village Tract, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division. During the clashes, the Ka Lane Aung-based 282nd Artillery Regiment indiscriminately fired four artillery shells toward the village.

One of the shells exploded in a creek just outside the village, injuring 50-year-old Daw

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Chway, who had been fishing to earn a small daily income.

“Four shells landed outside the village that morning. I had told my mother not to go fishing, but we rely on it for survival — we have nothing else. Now she’s hurt, and we’re in trouble. If these attacks continue, more people will be killed,” said Daw Chway’s daughter.

The blast caused a serious injury to Daw Chway’s arm. She is currently receiving treatment at Ye Township General Hospital.

A resident of 60-Mile Village told HURFOM:

“The junta targets places where they think the resistance is active, without caring if civilians are nearby. People are living in constant fear — some suffer heart problems from the shock of these shellings. Daw Chway survived only because villagers reached her quickly; without help, she would have bled to death.”

This was not the first such incident in recent weeks. On 8 August, the Mawrawaddy Navy Unit fired two shells at Sin Swel Village, Min Thar Village Tract. While no casualties or damage were reported, the attack left residents shaken.

Earlier, on 1 August, the 282nd Light Infantry Battalion shelled Thar Yar Mon Village, Yar Phu Village Tract, destroying durian trees and other crops in a nearby plantation.

Since early July 2025, military tensions in Yebyu Township have escalated sharply.

The junta has repeatedly launched indiscriminate artillery attacks into civilian areas, causing injuries, destroying livelihoods, and creating an atmosphere of fear for local communities.

Enforced Disappearances

Two brothers from Thae Phyu village, located in the Thein Khun village tract of Tanintharyi Township, were found dead after being forcibly disappeared by junta forces. Their bodies were discovered in a forested area near the old Kyein Chaung village, according to a statement released by the Karen National Union (KNU) on August 3.

The victims were identified as Saw Phalo and Saw Kabi, both in their 30s and originally from Thae Phyu village. The two men had gone missing on 15 July 2025 after leaving their village to assist in bringing a healthcare worker. For nearly two weeks, their whereabouts remained unknown. On 28 July, their remains were located in the forest between Thein Khun and a neighbouring village. By the time they were found, only skeletal remains were left.

According to photographic evidence released by the KNU Myeik-Tavoy District Information Department, nylon ropes—believed to have been used to tie the victims—were found scattered around the site, indicating the men may have been tortured or executed before being abandoned.

The bodies were discovered in an area where junta troops have been active in recent months.

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Since early 2025, military tensions have intensified along the Tanintharyi–Mawtaung border road, particularly near Thein Khun village. Clashes between junta forces and local resistance groups have escalated, and reports of rights violations against civilians have become more frequent.

These killings are part of a disturbing pattern of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings by the junta in southeastern Burma. The deliberate targeting of civilians, especially in contested areas, continues to place local communities at severe risk.

An 18-year-old boy from Thar Yar Mon village in Yebyu Township, Dawei District, also went missing after being arrested by junta troops on August 19. The teenager, who was on his way home from Nat Eain Taung village by motorbike, was detained by soldiers near Kaw Hline village and has not been seen since. His family and community members fear for his safety as no information about his whereabouts has been provided.

“He usually goes to Nat Eain Taung for work. This time, he was carrying a large amount of money. After his arrest, one of the soldiers called us and accused him of sending military information to the resistance forces from his phone,” explained a resident.

“The soldiers who arrested him likely belong to either Light Infantry Battalion No. 273 or No. 282. These two battalions have been active around Thar Yar Mon village throughout August. Both units have a long record of committing unlawful killings without accountability, so we are very worried.”

His family has been left without answers. Relatives went to the Mawrawaddy Navy Command to inquire, but officials there denied knowledge of his detention. His whereabouts remain unknown.

“Accusing him of being connected to the resistance is baseless. He has no links to them. He was simply carrying about 300,000 MMK that day. It has already been two days since his arrest, and we have heard nothing. I only pray that no harm has come to him,” said his aunt, her voice heavy with fear and worry.

The disappearance has left his family and community deeply concerned, with growing fears that he has become yet another victim of the junta’s pattern of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance.

Landmines

Tragedy struck Palaw Township, Myeik District, when two teenage boys lost their lives after their motorcycle hit a landmine while they were on their way to buy medicine.

Local sources confirmed that the incident occurred on the afternoon of July 28, 2025. The two boys, both around 16 years old, were travelling along the road between To village and Pitat village when the landmine detonated. One of the teenagers died instantly at the scene, while the other succumbed to his injuries after being taken to the hospital.

“The road between To and Pitat had been closed for safety concerns. Unfortunately,

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the two boys were trying to get medicine and took the risk. They triggered a landmine along the way,” said a resident from the area. “It’s heartbreaking. Their bodies have now been brought back to their families.”

The Palaw region has experienced ongoing and intense clashes between junta forces and local resistance groups. Recently, the military has conducted repeated airstrikes and artillery shellings, causing widespread fear and forcing people to flee. At least ten civilians have been killed in these attacks.

Landmines, together with the rising armed conflict, are making life more dangerous for civilians, especially children and youth, who are just trying to meet their basic needs amidst the chaos.

Sham Election

HURFOM field reports confirm that the junta has accelerated its preparations for a planned sham election, forming ward- and village-level election sub-commissions across Mon State. These committees are being assembled under the direct supervision of township, district, and state-level authorities loyal to the regime, working from the junta’s basic administrative structures.

Local sources in the Mon State General Administration Department (GAD) say these commissions are being populated with individuals handpicked by the junta: military-appointed officials, members of the pro-military Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), retired civil servants, and department staff known to be regime supporters.

The aim is to complete the sub-commissions by mid-August 2025, with lists of approved members sent directly from township and district levels for appointment.

HURFOM notes that a nationwide militarization plan is reinforcing this process. Since August 2024, the junta has formed a committee to train, arm, and supply militias at village and ward levels across the country, as military losses to resistance forces continue to mount.

This committee—led by the junta’s border affairs minister and announced in an order signed by junta secretary General Aung Lin Dwe, is tasked with establishing branch offices at regional, district, and township levels to oversee so-called “people’s security and anti-terrorism groups.”

These militias have been explicitly ordered to serve as local security forces during the junta’s organizing and pre-election preparation activities, working alongside other regime-backed department members and election commission officials.

Pro-military “People’s Security” groups, many of whom have undergone weapons training since last year, are now tasked with enforcing local security, guarding polling preparations, and arresting anyone opposing the election.

Orders from Naypyidaw—enforced by the Southeast Command, police, and the GAD—direct these groups to monitor all dissent and take immediate action against those deemed “obstructionists.”

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A resident of Mawlamyine Township told HURFOM, *“In our ward, they already picked ten commission members and appointed seven. Most are junta loyalists or ex-officials. We know these elections will not be free or fair. People here don’t believe in them, and I will avoid voting as much as I can.”*

The commissions have also been ordered to verify voter lists, census data, and household information in advance of the polls, under the guise of “accuracy checks.” Immigration officers have been visiting villages weekly to record personal details, raising fears that voter rolls will be manipulated so that all ballots benefit the junta.

These operations are happening alongside intensified security measures designed to protect the regime’s “campaign activities” and to prevent leaks of sensitive information, including via media and social media.

A former Mon political party member, aged 35, explained: *“Every junta’s department has been tasked to support the election, but in reality, they’re turning into informers, spies, and watchdogs for the junta. Freedom of expression, assembly, and movement are being further crushed. They’re working from now to make sure every ballot is theirs.”*

A former politician based in Mudon, warned that these actions are part of a wider pattern of election-related repression. In recent weeks, the Junta has passed additional election laws and amendments, including legislation allowing the death penalty for those opposing the vote.

This month alone, HURFOM has documented increased arbitrary arrests, intimidation of community leaders, including religious leaders, and forced recruitment of young people under the pretext of “security duties” for the polls. These violations underscore that the planned election is designed not to reflect the will of the people, but to entrench military power.

Despite losing control of vast territories to Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs) and the National Unity Government (NUG), the junta-appointed Union Election Commission (UEC) announced on 15 August that all 330 townships across the country will be designated as constituencies — including areas where fighting is ongoing and the military has no authority.

The decision includes over 90 townships in Rakhine, Shan, Kachin, Chin, Karenni, and Karen States, as well as Sagaing, Magway, and Mandalay Regions — areas where junta forces have either been expelled or face heavy resistance.

Observers say this proves the election will be nothing more than a façade, as voting in “war zones” cannot reflect the will of the people.

“This is the junta pretending to control the whole country. They are including territories they do not govern, just to claim legitimacy. The upcoming election is not about democracy — it is a cover-up to secure power,” explained a Mon political researcher. Analysts also noted that under pressure from China, the junta is attempting to organize voting

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nationwide, even while launching brutal offensives to retake lost ground.

Residents and civil society leaders widely believe the election will be marred by fraud and intimidation. Many see it as the regime's largest attempt at manipulation since the coup. The system being imposed mixes the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) and Proportional Representation (PR) methods.

However, the details of how PR votes will be calculated remain unclear, leaving political parties uncertain and distrustful of the process. Further complicating matters, since April 30, 2022, the junta has restructured and expanded district boundaries through orders issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (orders No. 319/2022 – 333/2022).

As a result, the number of townships has now grown to 354 and the number of districts to 129. Analysts believe this was part of the military regime's preparations, which were planned three years in advance for the upcoming election.

Opposition from EROs and resistance forces remains strong. Groups in Karen, Karenni, Kachin, Rakhine, and other areas have stated they will not allow junta-controlled elections to take place in their territories. *"How can you hold voting in active conflict zones? This is absurd,"* said an ERO member based in Dawei.

Meanwhile, under the junta's election law, political parties are forced to contest in at least half of the constituencies nationwide or risk deregistration.

This condition further disadvantages smaller or ethnic-based parties already struggling under repression and displacement.

For civilians, the reality is grim. Communities already traumatized by war now face the added fear of arbitrary arrests, forced recruitment, and a sham election that strips them of their political voice.

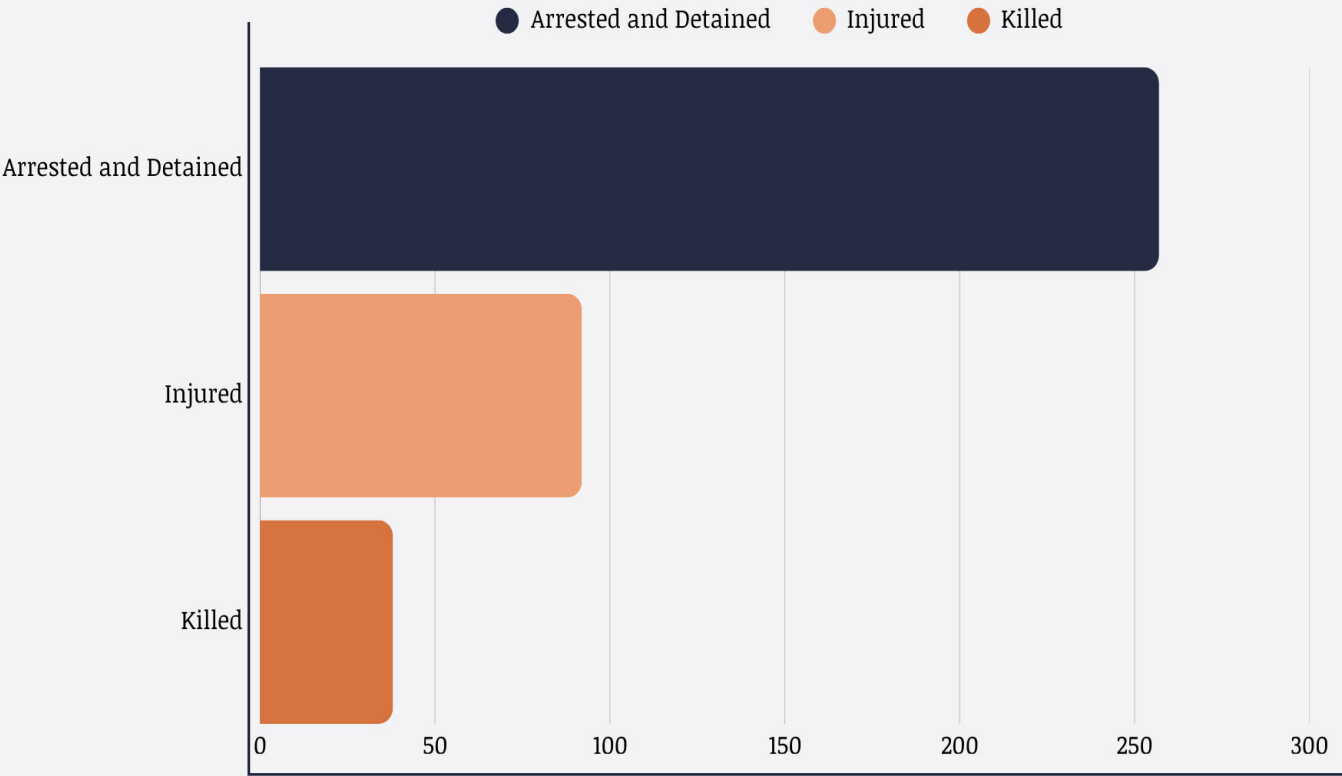
Across Mon State and elsewhere, ordinary people say what they long for is not an election orchestrated by the Junta, but genuine peace and the end of military dictatorship.

As junta leader Min Aung Hlaing declared he will consider the election legitimate if his side wins more than 50% of the vote, residents fear the outcome has already been predetermined.

SCALED UP HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

HURFOM fieldworkers continue to take great risks to document the human rights violations being perpetrated in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region. By the end of August 2025, HURFOM recorded at least 152 people arrested, 105 detained, 92 injured, and 38 killed across all target areas.

Civilians Arrested, Injured & Killed in August 2025 in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region



5+

Pro-Democracy Protesters, Politicians & Activists
Sentenced by the Junta

9+

Protests Across Target Areas in August 2025

3

MON STATE

1

KAREN STATE

5

**TANINTHARYI
REGION**



49,500+

CIVILIANS NEWLY DISPLACED ACROSS TARGET AREAS

**CIVILIANS TARGETED IN MON STATE, KAREN STATE
AND THE TANINTHARYI REGION**

4+

**SENTENCED FOR
PARTICIPATING
IN THE CIVIL
DISOBEDIENCE
MOVEMENT**

1+

**ACTIVISTS
SENTENCED IN
JUNTA COURTS**

8+

**ENFORCED
DISAPPEARANCES
BY THE JUNTA**

130+

**CASES OF RANSOM PAYMENTS REPORTED IN
MON STATE AND THE TANINTHARYI REGION**

95+

**DESTROYED HOMES BY THE
JUNTA'S INDISCRIMINATE
ARTILLERY SHELLING,
DRONES AND AIRSTRIKES**



35+

**CASES OF THE JUNTA USING CIVILIANS AS
HUMAN SHIELDS IN TARGET AREAS**

80+

**CASES OF CIVILIAN VEHICLES CONFISCATED
FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS**

220+

**IN AUGUST 2025, AT LEAST 220 YOUNG
PEOPLE WERE FORCIBLY CONSCRIPTED
INTO MILITARY TRAINING**



KAREN STATE

**17,500 Newly Displaced
27 Injured, 13 Killed**

Mon State



Tanintharyi Region



Community leaders, religious groups, and humanitarian networks urgently appealed for help as heavy rains have caused deadly landslides in Than Taung Gyi Township, northern Karen State. Many lives have been lost, homes destroyed, and families left with nothing.

Since late July, relentless heavy rains have pounded the region, and by 9 August, landslides had swept through multiple areas, including Wards 1, 3, and 4 near Naw Bu Baw Pray Hill in Than Taung Gyi Town. Several villages, including Leikpyar Lay and Kho Wae, were also severely affected.

By the night of 9 August, at least 13 people had been confirmed dead, including a two-year-old child. Local sources said the death toll could rise further, as there are still missing persons and search efforts are ongoing.

“I was truly shocked to see whole layers of earth collapsing, mixed with floodwaters and uprooted trees. The roads are so badly buried under mud and debris that repairing them feels impossible. The roads connecting the town are severely damaged, and landslides are happening everywhere in the villages around Than Taung Gyi.

Many farms and orchards have been wiped out. Some families have lost five or even eight acres of land — their entire source of income. Now they have nothing left to survive on. Everything is destroyed, and even food supplies can no longer reach us,” said a local villager.

On the afternoon of 9 August, a massive landslide completely buried Lower Hteepuchee village, about 15 miles from Than Taung Gyi. Survivors have fled to safer areas, erecting makeshift shelters in the town and nearby villages.

“We have no homes left. We are staying in safer places, sometimes with relatives, or setting up temporary shelters on open ground instead of the steep slopes. At least it is safer here — but when the rain comes again, there is always the risk of more landslides,” one displaced villager said.

Damaged roads have made it impossible for some humanitarian aid to reach the hardest-hit areas. Currently, local communities, religious leaders, and charity groups are leading the relief response, doing what they can with limited resources.

Landslides and collapsed bridges have also been reported along the Taungoo–Than Taung Gyi road and on connecting village roads, further isolating affected communities.

Community leaders, religious groups, and humanitarian networks are urgently calling on all domestic and international donors to respond to the needs of survivors in Than Taung Gyi, where lives and livelihoods have been devastated, and safe shelter, food, and medical assistance are urgently needed.

Residents in Kyon Doe Township, Kawkaeik District, Karen State, are facing another wave of displacement as junta forces continue to launch heavy assaults on civilian areas along the Kyon Doe–Nabu road.

Local sources reported that indiscriminate shelling, airstrikes, and drone attacks have devastated villages, forcing thousands to flee their homes in fear.

Over the last two weeks of August, fighting erupted daily between junta troops and resistance forces led by the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA).

The clashes have been concentrated around Chaung Phya village and surrounding areas, where at least eight villages, including Ohn-Tabin, Yay-Pu-Gyi, Ngar-Tai, Koh-Wa-Lae, Win-Pya, Lay-Taing, Nyinyar-Thar-Lin, and Inn-Gyi, have been emptied as residents fled.

“The junta has been firing artillery, using drones, and carrying out air raids. Many families fled weeks ago, but some elderly villagers stayed behind. Those of us who escaped are struggling with food shortages. We only brought a little rice with us, and now it is almost gone. If this fighting continues, survival will be very difficult—especially for children and the elderly,” said a 40-year-old displaced villager who fled with his family on July 16.

A local People’s Defense Force (PDF) commander told HURFOM that junta forces have reinforced their operations with troops from No. 12 Military Operation Management Command (MOMC-12) and Infantry Battalion No. 97, both based in Kawkaeik Town.

“The military is using villagers as human shields, forcing people to remain in contested areas to protect their columns. This is a grave war crime,” he said.

Residents who managed to flee expressed deep worry for relatives still trapped in villages.

“Many families are still stuck inside. The military is using them as cover. We are extremely worried for their safety,” one displaced person told HURFOM.

Reports also indicate that artillery shells have landed inside villages, damaging homes and destroying local livelihoods.

One villager explained: *“We have been displaced for nearly two weeks now. Only a few remain in the villages—mostly elderly people who cannot travel. The rest have fled into the forests or nearby safer areas.”*

According to military sources, junta forces have suffered casualties and were forced to retreat during some battles. Nevertheless, the army has continued to reinforce its offensives in an attempt to regain control over the Kyon Doe–Nabu and Kyon Doe–Kawkareik roadways, as well as strategic points along the Asia Highway. Heavy weapons, drones, and airstrikes are being deployed in these operations.

The humanitarian consequences are devastating. Thousands of displaced civilians are now in urgent need of food, medicine, and shelter. Without swift and immediate assistance, the situation for these communities, already living in dire conditions, will only worsen.



MON STATE

**9,500 Newly Displaced
25 Injured, 15 Killed**

Karen State



Tanintharyi Region



On the morning of 9 August 2025, junta forces arrested fifteen displaced men sheltering at the “Lo Yar Phya Social Assistance Office” in Theinzayat Town, Kyaikhto Township, Mon State. Local residents reported that the arrests took place at 10:00 AM, when a joint column of approximately thirty junta troops stormed the compound.

“When the military trucks arrived, everyone was terrified. No one dared to step outside to see what was happening. The soldiers then picked out fifteen men from among the displaced people and took them away,” said a Theinzayat resident.

The detainees, aged between 18 and 37, were reportedly taken under the pretext of “needing to be questioned.”

They were held at Light Infantry Battalion No. 207’s base in Theinzayat, where family members have been denied access to them. Relatives fear the men may be forcibly sent to military training for conscription.

All fifteen men had fled to Theinzayat in May 2025, after armed clashes in Kwin Seik village, Shwe Kyin Township, Bago Region, forced them from their homes. They had been living in the Lo Yar Phya office along with more than fifty other

displaced people from Kwin Seik and nearby villages. None have been able to return home due to ongoing insecurity.

The arrests have sparked widespread fear among the displaced community. Family members worry that this latest act is part of the junta’s broader pattern of targeting displaced people, particularly men of fighting age, under the guise of “security checks.” In Kyaikhto Township,

HURFOM has documented repeated violations by junta forces, including arbitrary arrests, forced conscription, intimidation of humanitarian workers, and indiscriminate airstrikes on civilian areas. Theinzayat Town, in particular, has become a hotspot for such abuses, with displaced communities living under constant threat.

This latest incident reflects the shrinking space for civilians to seek safety, even in temporary shelters. The targeting of IDPs in need of protection underscores the urgent need for international monitoring and pressure to halt these violations.

In another alarming case of young men being forcibly enlisted into the military, the Mon State junta arrested more than 30 young men along the Bilin–Taung Zune Motorway in Bilin Township, Mon

State, and forced them into military training as conscripts.

In its desperate bid to replenish dwindling troop numbers, junta forces have been targeting civilians in the area. According to local sources, soldiers frequently patrol the road and carry out sudden arrests, particularly in the evenings when young men are returning home from work.

“They move around with a mobile team. The arrests are not at one fixed location. Sometimes, they even beat those they capture,” explained a villager from Taung Zune.

Those detained are primarily between the ages of 20 and 30, making them eligible under the junta’s forced conscription law. Families of the arrested young men have since lost contact with their loved ones, who have been taken away without notice or due process.

Residents confirmed that those seized came from Taung Zune, Thit Toe Kyune, Zoke Toke, Ah Nile Pon, and Hpwal Ka Lar villages. Most have reportedly been sent to the 6th Military School under the Mawlamyine-based Southeast Military Command, where they remain detained.

The repeated arrests have left young men in Bilin Township living in fear. Many now avoid using the Bilin – Taung Zune Motorway, even if it means taking longer and more difficult routes, as the threat of arbitrary detention looms over them daily.

Airstrikes have also been detrimental to the survival of local people. At around 10:20 AM, on 24 August, junta fighter jets launched an airstrike on Chan Myae Monastery in Chan Myae village, Kyaikhto Township, Mon State. The strike directly hit the dining hall where monks were preparing for their morning meal.

Eight monks were inside the hall at the time of the attack. Two monks were killed instantly, while five others sustained injuries. Of the injured, at least two were reported to be in critical condition. The monastery’s dining facility was completely destroyed.

A villager who arrived shortly after the bombing told HURFOM field reporters:

“The monastery is supposed to be a safe place. Instead, they bombed it during the meal. Two monks died immediately. We are very shaken and afraid—if even the monasteries are not safe, where can people go?”

This tragic incident is part of a wider pattern of indiscriminate junta violence in Kyaikhto Township, where airstrikes and artillery shelling have targeted civilian areas throughout 2025.

A local villager explained that junta forces appeared to attack the monastery under the suspicion that resistance fighters were hiding there. However, he stressed that no armed groups had ever taken refuge inside the monastery.

Earlier this month, HURFOM documented mass arrests in Theinzayat and Bilin townships, where displaced men were seized from shelters and forced into conscription. Civilians across Kyaikhto and Bilin are increasingly living in fear as religious sites, homes, and displacement shelters come under attack.

The targeting of a Buddhist monastery, where vulnerable monks sought refuge, underscores the junta's blatant disregard for civilian life and religious sanctity.

Communities in Mon State continue to face displacement, loss of livelihoods, and grief as the military escalates attacks in its bid to assert control and prepare for its sham election.

In the lead-up to the junta's planned sham election, the military has deployed hundreds of reinforcements to battalions based in Thaton and Ye Townships, Mon State. Local residents fear that this expansion of troops will only bring more human rights abuses, including arrests of young people, extortion, looting, torture, and even extrajudicial killings.

Since early August, more than 300 soldiers have been added to existing units in Thaton, along with large supplies of weapons and ammunition. Similar reinforcements have been observed along the Thanbyuzayat–Ye highway and into Ye Township, areas the junta is attempting to redraw as constituencies for the upcoming vote.

“The presence of more troops means more danger for us. Young people will be targeted, and abuses will increase. Until the election is over, we feel it will be very difficult to live safely,” one resident told HURFOM.

“Ahead of their so-called election, the junta's main priority is to expand constituencies, even in areas now controlled by resistance forces. Their only goal is to claim they can hold polls everywhere, no matter how unrealistic or illegitimate it is. In the process, they completely ignore the human rights violations committed by their troops.

For decades, the military has operated under a culture of impunity, never holding its soldiers accountable for atrocities. Today is no different. Their so-called ‘self-reliance policy’ gives soldiers a free license to abuse civilians — from extortion and arbitrary arrests to torture and worse — under the excuse of sustaining themselves.

For ordinary people, this means more abuses and an even greater loss of basic rights. I fear the coming months will bring even more suffering for our communities, as the junta pushes ahead with its sham election plans at any cost.”

— 63-year-old former NLD party member, Thaton Township

Resistance forces are preparing for clashes, and locals fear intensified fighting: *“If the junta pushes into our areas, battles will be fierce,”* a PDF fighter explained.



TANINTHARYI REGION

22,500 Newly Displaced

40 Injured, 14 Killed

Karen State



Mon State



Junta troops have continued their campaign of terror in Pala Town, Palaw Township, Tanintharyi Region, by deliberately shooting and killing civilians, according to testimonies from local residents. Four civilians, including a woman with a mental health condition, were killed during a recent military operation.

On 2 August, three men and one woman were shot and killed by junta soldiers who were reportedly targeting anyone they encountered in the town. The victims were identified as U Aung Oo, U Mae Pya, U Soe Lin, and Daw Thi Win. All were residents of Pala town and believed to be in their early 30s.

Eyewitnesses said the woman, Daw Thi Win, who was mentally unwell, was shot directly in the chest. Her body has not yet been retrieved, and residents remain uncertain about her whereabouts.

“Soldiers are shooting at anyone they see in Pala Town. It is no longer indiscriminate; they are intentionally targeting civilians. Even the woman with mental health issues was killed. Her body is still out there somewhere, but no one knows for sure where it is,” said a resident who spoke on condition of anonymity due to safety concerns.

The killings occurred in Myay Ni Kone Ward, Pala Town, within the town limits.

Residents were able to recover the bodies of two of the victims, while the other two remain missing. This latest incident follows another brutal killing on 29 July, when junta soldiers reportedly strangled and then shot a man named U Lin Htaik Zaw, also a resident of Palaw.

Clashes between the junta forces and local resistance groups have intensified since 24 July in Palaw and surrounding villages. Residents report that the military is employing excessive force, including ground assaults, naval attacks, and airstrikes. As a result, civilian casualties have been rising rapidly.

“The military is no longer distinguishing between civilians and combatants. They are using all available weapons to kill anyone in sight,” another resident reported.

Since July 2025, junta personnel stationed at checkpoints on the Ye–Dawei Highway have been extorting money from travellers and drivers.

Two gates in particular – the “Da Dar Phyu” Security Gate in Ye Township, Mon State, and the “Ma Hwelve Taung”

Security Gate in Dawei Township, Tanintharyi Region – are demanding payments ranging from 5,000 to 20,000 MMK, leaving civilians with additional financial burdens.

At the Da Dar Phyu Gate, drivers and passengers are forced to pay arbitrary fees. Trucks are charged 20,000 MMK, while minivans must pay 2,000 MMK and each traveller 5,000 MMK.

Residents report that both army and police forces operate separate gates near the Da Dar Phyu Bridge, forcing drivers to pay twice if they use the crossing.

“The police extort 20,000 MMK from each truck at one gate, and the army takes another 2,000 MMK at the next. Both gates are very close to each other. It’s unavoidable if you need to use the bridge,” explained a resident who often travels the route.

Civilians transporting basic goods are also being targeted. A tank of gasoline is taxed 5,000 MMK, a bag of rice 3,000 MMK, and a package of instant noodles 2,000 MMK. Even a bag of betel nuts costs an additional 2,000 MMK.

“After the clashes near Kyuang Yaw, they started limiting rice and food transport. Now we pay extra for everything we bring home,” said a villager from Ye Chaung Pyar.

The situation is similar at the Ma Hwelve Taung Gate in Dawei Township, where

travellers and truck drivers are forced to pay between 3,000 and 13,000 MMK. Larger vehicles face even steeper costs: 15,000 MMK for a 12-wheel lorry and 30,000 MMK for a 22-wheel truck.

Since the attempted coup in 2021, the junta has installed so-called “security gates” across Mon State, Karen State, and Tanintharyi Region. These checkpoints have become notorious for extortion, harassment, and arbitrary demands.

Instead of providing safety, they have become sources of fear and financial exploitation for ordinary people who are already struggling to survive.

Tensions remain high in Yebyu Township, Tanintharyi Region, as clashes continue between junta forces and the allied resistance groups of Mon and Karen States and the Tanintharyi Region.

In response, junta personnel have tightened inspections at the Ma Hlwe Taung checkpoint near Kaw Hlaing village, leaving travellers and residents facing increasing restrictions and uncertainty.

According to residents, the fighting has intensified since July, with no fewer than five armed encounters along the Ma Hlwe Taung road in August alone. A local man from Yebyu Township, who frequently travels the route, explained:

“The inspections are much stricter than before. But people are still travelling

between here and Ye as usual. If it's just people, they let them pass. But if vehicles are carrying goods, they check them. If they want to confiscate the goods, they just do it, whether the items are restricted or not."

Since late June, junta troops stationed at the checkpoint have been particularly focused on seizing rice, medicine, and other basic commodities.

Residents said soldiers regularly confiscate supplies, worsening shortages for displaced villagers. The situation has been further complicated as resistance forces also issue travel warnings.

A Yebyu local told HURFOM:

"Around that road, resistance forces sometimes carry out checks, but not regularly. Usually, travel is fine. But after 6 PM, no one can travel. There are frequent artillery shellings and clashes near Kaw Hlaing, so travellers need to be cautious."

The ongoing conflict has forced residents from Kaw Hlaing, Mile 60, and Mayan Chaung villages to flee. After more than two months of displacement, families are struggling with a lack of food and shelter, according to local sources.

Meanwhile, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) Brigade 27 announced on July 13 that vehicles travelling along the Mawlamyine–Ye–Dawei–Myeik Union Highway No. (8) would undergo strict inspections.

The junta responded by further tightening its security checks, compounding the hardships faced by civilians.

As fighting escalates and security measures intensify, ordinary people remain caught in the middle, facing both the dangers of armed conflict and the daily struggles of survival.

Displacement continues to rise steadily. Over 3,000 residents from Saw Phya and nearby villages in Thayet Chaung Township, Tanintharyi Region, have been forced to flee their homes due to intense clashes between junta forces and allied resistance groups.

Displaced families are now urgently seeking food, shelter, and medicine as their situation becomes increasingly critical.

At around 11 AM on August 19, heavy fighting erupted near Saw Phya village and continued for nearly four hours until 3 PM. Villagers from Saw Phya, Moe Ywe Kone, Kin Shay, and Kyauk Hlay Kar fled in large numbers to seek safety. The number of casualties from both sides remains unconfirmed.

"Even before this, the junta had restricted the transport of rice, food, fuel, and medicines into this area, so there were already shortages."

Now, with these armed clashes intensifying, the situation has worsened. Many IDPs are surviving only on rice

porridge. Cases of children and elderly people falling ill are increasing. We are appealing for humanitarian aid as quickly as possible through any available support,” said a group of local youths assisting displaced villagers.

Since the beginning of August, junta troops have intensified their operations in Thayet Chaung Township, sparking repeated clashes with resistance forces. On August 14, fighting near Uttu village resulted in junta soldiers reportedly burning at least five civilian homes.

Residents said the military also destroyed livelihoods, deepening the suffering of already vulnerable communities.

Families who fled remain displaced with little access to essential supplies. As conflict spreads and restrictions on aid tighten, the needs of these civilians grow more urgent by the day.

Tensions are rising again in Yebyu Township, Dawei District, as junta forces tighten inspections at the Ma Hlwe Taung checkpoint.

Since the second week of August, fighting between junta troops and joint Mon-Karen resistance forces has intensified near Kaw Hlaing village, close to Kalein Aung town.

Local residents say the checkpoint has become a source of constant fear and harassment.

“Troops are inspecting goods in detail, especially rice. They check ID cards carefully and demand permits for even small amounts of food or consumer items. If anything exceeds their limit, they simply confiscate it,” explained a truck driver interviewed on August 22.

More soldiers have now been deployed to reinforce the Ma Hlwe Taung gate. Civilians report that trucks transporting rice, medicines, and basic goods are stopped and searched thoroughly. The impact has been severe.

Residents in nearby Kanbauk said prices have skyrocketed — a sack of rice is nearly 200,000 kyats, medicines cost about 40 percent more, and other essentials have risen between 10 to 20 percent.

Since July, no fewer than six clashes have broken out along the Ma Hlwe Taung road. Artillery fire by the junta has been indiscriminate, forcing villagers from Kaw Hlaing, Mile 60, Maran Chaung, and Thayar Mon to abandon their homes.

“During the rainy season, medicine, food, and shelter are desperately needed,” said a displaced villager.

The Ye–Dawei road is now a frontline, where civilians risk both armed clashes and extortion at checkpoints. As of mid-August, intense battles are continuing near Kalein Aung, with large reinforcements sent in by the junta.

Local resistance groups have urged travelers to remain cautious, especially as junta attacks escalate.

Reports from the ground confirm that junta troops advancing in Thayet Chaung Township, Dawei District, have burned down homes in Moe Shwe Kuu village, leaving families displaced and their livelihoods destroyed.

At 6 AM on August 22, nearly 100 soldiers launched artillery fire before raiding Moe Shwe Kuu. As they entered the village, troops set houses ablaze, engulfing parts of the community in flames. Local residents estimate that between five and ten homes were destroyed, though the full extent of the damage is still being assessed.

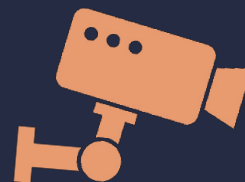
“We could see the fire from far away. At least several houses were burning, but no one knows exactly how many because people had already fled in fear,” said one villager.

The attack comes amid an escalation of violence in Thayet Chaung. Since August 19, heavy clashes near Saw Phyar village have driven thousands from their homes. Villages such as Saw Phyar, Kin Shay, Moe Shwe Kuu, and Kyauk Hlay Kar are now largely deserted, with more than 2,500 people displaced in just a matter of days.

The destruction of civilian homes and forced displacement highlight the ongoing pattern of war crimes committed by the junta in Tanintharyi Region. Families who fled are now left with nothing, urgently in need of food, shelter, and medical care as the rainy season compounds their suffering.

MONTHLY FEATURE

Junta's Digital Crackdown in Mon State: Silencing Voices and Cutting Virtual Lifelines Ahead of the Sham Election



In recent months, the junta has deepened its assault on freedom of expression and the right to information in Mon State and across southern Burma. As the military prepares for a widely condemned sham election, vast sums of money and human resources are being poured into sophisticated technology and surveillance tools designed to cut off the last remaining lifelines civilians rely upon to access the outside world.

HURFOM spoke with both local technology experts and victims of these policies in Mon State. Their testimonies confirm what Burmese media agencies and HURFOM's own field reports have long warned: the military is weaponizing technology to repress communities, punish dissent, and erase truths from reaching the public.

Imported Firewalls and Deep Surveillance

At the heart of this crackdown are powerful gateway firewalls installed at the country's main internet entry points. Described by one IT professional as "*digital gates at the border*," these systems filter every connection and can detect and block VPNs or encrypted applications, such as Signal.

Technical sources confirmed that the system is reportedly supplied by Geedge Networks (Jizhi), a Chinese company linked to the architect of the Great Firewall of China.

Additionally, the junta deploys Deep Packet Inspection (DPI), a method that inspects the contents of internet traffic—even encrypted traffic—to identify VPN patterns. *“It’s like opening every letter before it’s delivered,”* one expert told HURFOM.

Investigations revealed DPI equipment installed inside local internet service providers such as Frontiir, where junta cyber teams are believed to have remote access to monitor and intercept civilian web activity.

Surveillance at Every Level

Beyond the high-tech controls, repression reaches the streets. Civilians report being stopped by soldiers or police in towns across Mon State, their phones inspected for VPN applications. Fines, intimidation, and even arrests follow.

According to HURFOM’s monitoring, dozens of such incidents have been documented since the Junta announced its new Cybersecurity Law, which came into force on 1 January 2025.

This law criminalizes the use of unauthorized VPNs, imposes jail sentences, and requires tech companies to store user data for years, subjecting it to military requests. *“It feels like they want to make fear itself the law,”* said a young woman from Ye Township who was fined after being caught with a VPN app.

The junta has also expanded its wider surveillance infrastructure, including the installation of CCTV cameras in cities, stricter SIM card registration requirements, and digital ID schemes that facilitate the tracing and targeting of individuals. Together, these create what experts describe as an “electronic umbrella,” sealing off civilians from private communication.

Cutting Virtual Lifelines

For people in Mon State, VPNs and encrypted platforms were never luxuries—they were lifelines. Civilians used them to read independent news, contact journalists, coordinate with civil society, and maintain fragile connections to loved ones in exile. Now those pathways are being closed.

“I used to send updates about airstrikes in my area to a group of journalists. Now, with VPNs blocked and surveillance everywhere, I don’t dare. But it means no one knows what is happening to us,” said a villager from Yebyu Township, who has lived under constant shelling.

HURFOM’s monthly situation updates confirm the scope of this repression. Between January and June 2025 alone, dozens of cases of violations against the right to free expression were documented, including arbitrary arrests for online activities, internet cuts, and detentions linked to VPN usage.

In February 2025, for example, at least 182 people were arrested and 135 detained, many on accusations of “sharing unlawful information” online. By April, 310 were arrested and 185 detained in further crackdowns.

Silencing Ahead of Sham Election

The timing of this sweeping digital repression is no accident. As the junta moves to stage a sham election in 2025, its strategy is clear: silence critical voices, block independent media, and control the narrative.

The systematic investment in foreign surveillance technology, unlawful enforcement of cyber laws, and the militarization of internet service providers represent not just censorship, but a deliberate campaign to deny civilians their rights to know, to speak, and to inform.

“Mon State is becoming an information desert,” warned one local activist. “Without secure communication, people are left voiceless, isolated, and unable to defend their rights.”

A legal aid member in Mawlamyine, Mon State, who asked not to be named for security reasons, described the situation in stark terms:

“What is unfolding in Mon State is more than a digital crackdown; it is an attack on the very essence of human dignity. By denying access to truthful information, criminalizing communication, and stripping away privacy, the junta is violating fundamental rights guaranteed under international law.”

He went on to explain the devastating consequences of the junta’s cyber policies:

“For ordinary people, these restrictions mean living in constant fear. A simple act, such as opening a news site or sending a message, can put you at risk of arrest. Families are cut off from knowing what is happening in their own communities, and young people—who once used VPNs to study, to share their voices, or to dream of a better future—are now silenced.

The junta’s digital war has made people feel isolated, powerless, and voiceless in their own land.”

HURFOM calls for urgent attention from the international community to condemn and resist these unlawful acts. The freedom to speak, to know, and to connect are not privileges; they are lifelines, and they are being cut before the eyes of the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the International Community

- 1. Impose Targeted Sanctions:** Increase sanctions against military leaders and entities directly involved in human rights abuses and target key financial sources supporting the junta's operations, including the extraction and sale of natural resources in Burma.
- 2. Advocate for a Global Arms Embargo:** Support a comprehensive arms embargo on Burma to prevent the junta from acquiring weapons used in attacks against civilians and ethnic minority areas.
- 3. Promote International Accountability Mechanisms:** Encourage the establishment of an international tribunal or support the role of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in investigating and prosecuting human rights violations committed by the junta. Engage with organizations like the UN Human Rights Council to advocate for independent investigations.
- 4. Support Cross-Border Aid Delivery:** Work with humanitarian organizations to provide cross-border aid, as many areas in conflict zones remain inaccessible. Direct resources to trusted local organizations that are capable of reaching these communities.
- 5. Pressure for Independent Monitoring of the Census:** Given the concerns regarding the current junta-led census, advocate for international monitoring to ensure transparency and to protect ethnic minority populations from being misrepresented or targeted.

To Humanitarian Donors

- 1. Increase Funding for Local Organizations:** Allocate funds to communitybased organizations (CBOs) like the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), which has on-the-ground access and established networks to support victims of forced conscription, displacement, and violence.
- 2. Support Mental Health and Trauma Services:** Recognize and respond to the psychological toll of the conflict on civilians, particularly children. Donors must fund programs aimed at providing mental health support for trauma recovery.
- 3. Provide Resources for Civilian Protection Measures:** Fund initiatives that assist local communities in constructing bomb shelters, securing safe spaces, and implementing early warning systems to protect themselves from sudden attacks

To the National Unity Government

- 1. Strengthen Diplomatic Outreach:** Increase efforts to garner support from ASEAN countries and other regional partners. Position the NUG as a legitimate government committed to democratic values and the protection of ethnic minorities.
- 2. Enhance Communication with Ethnic Groups:** Foster strong, unified alliances with ethnic armed organizations and civil society groups. Emphasize a commitment to federalism and respect for the rights of ethnic minorities in a future democratic Burma.
- 3. Establish Civilian Safe Zones:** If and when possible, the NUG must work with ethnic armed organizations to designate and protect civilian safe zones in collaboration with international observers. This could help mitigate displacement and casualties from ongoing military actions.

To Other Stakeholders

- 1. Raise Awareness and Advocate for Media Coverage of the Human Rights Situation in Burma:** Encourage international media to continue reporting on the situation, highlighting the junta's actions, particularly the targeting of ethnic minorities, forced conscription, and restrictions on movement.
- 2. Promote Digital Literacy and Secure Communication:** Provide resources for digital security training to help civilians and activists protect their communications and data from junta surveillance, especially as monitoring increases in southeastern Burma.
- 3. Support Education on Risks of Unexploded Ordnance Devices and Landmines:** Fund educational initiatives to raise awareness about the dangers of unexploded artillery and landmines left in conflict areas, which continue to pose significant risks to civilians, especially children.

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

Human Rights Situation in Mon state, Karen state & the Tanintharyi Region

AUGUST 2025

