

# MONTHLY OVERVIEW

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

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JULY  
2023



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## SUMMARY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

# The first Anniversary of the Execution of Four Political Prisoners and Ongoing Arrests and Death Sentences Demands Immediate Action as Impunity Thrives in Southeastern Burma and Nationwide

**JULY 2023**

Escalating violence in Southeastern Burma remains a threat to the survival of civilians. Indiscriminate firing, forced relocation, destruction of property, arbitrary arrest, and unlawful detainment are among the human rights violations that continue destabilizing the country. The soldiers of the Burma Army perpetrate these crimes with impunity. The silence and lack of action beyond condemnation by the international community only encourage them to commit more atrocity crimes.

In Southeastern Burma, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) continues to document the worsening rights situation. Fieldworkers conduct interviews and collect other information from all over the country, and individual cases are reported depending on opportunity and circumstances. The issues presented herein constitute first-hand accounts of abuses perpetrated by the junta.

Targeted offensives, including air and ground strikes, have led to a worsening humanitarian crisis, with thousands displaced and urgently needing food, water, medicine, and shelter. Most displaced in Burma are women and children seeking refuge in temporary relocation sites and camps. However, even in civilian areas, the military junta has not hesitated to deploy

attacks. Despite the vulnerability of these groups, the regime has been relentless in waging its assaults against a largely unarmed civilian population.

The month of July also marked the solemn anniversary marking one year since the military ordered and carried out the execution of four men who were vocal in their pursuits for democracy in Burma, including an elected Member of Parliament. News of the devastating and cruel loss of life was announced in the state-run newspaper. Family members were among those who received the news with sadness and overwhelming despair, having not been notified beforehand.

Over 100 people have been sentenced to death in Burma since the attempted coup. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners called the execution the shameful result of trials held in a 'kangaroo court.' The regime has held 'trials' for those arbitrarily arrested and detained that have been closed to the public and the media. The judges are all appointed by the Burma Army and blindly disregard the rule of law.

The military junta carried out these executions to warn the pro-democracy movement that their activism would not be tolerated. This act of cruelty and murder

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## SUMMARY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

**JULY 2023**

only propelled activists to amplify their calls to the international community to condemn the brutal military regime. The ongoing miscarriage of justice is evident in the lack of accountability for the Burma Army, which routinely violates the rights of the people.

In addition, while the junta continues to carry out their campaign of violence, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM+) Experts Working Group on Counter Terrorism intends to carry out military training exercises. Military Commanders in Russia and Burma are organizing these in August and September.

The support of authoritarian countries like Russia to Burma goes against the people's will and their calls to end the fighting. Historically, the longest civil war remains to be Burma and across over seven decades, thousands have suffered at the hands of the junta's cruel and unjust pursuits for power.

Their greed has made them utterly incapable and unsuitable to lead in any capacity, and the international community must recognize this—countries like Russia, India, China, and others Track 1.5 bodies who engage with the military risk legitimizing the unlawful power grab.

The training on 'anti-terrorism' is being chaired by two countries led by dictators, having violated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights

treaties. Further, the junta has targeted pro-democracy opposition forces, daring to call them 'terrorists' in their pursuits for the restoration of the democratically elected National League for Democracy (NLD) and an end to the violence.

For decades, the junta has deployed countless attacks against a largely unarmed civilian population. Ethnic people, in particular, have faced widespread, systematic discrimination that has resulted in forced relocation from their homes and scorched earth campaigns that have attempted to erase their existence.

The junta indiscriminately targets civilians in HURFOM target areas of Mon State, Karen State and the Tanintharyi region. According to residents, one local civilian was killed, and three were injured when artillery weapons fired by the junta military exploded in Kawkareik District, Karen State, at the beginning of July.

Days before, on June 28, at 5:30 PM, an explosion occurred in the town after the junta battalion based in Kawkareik opened fire. The two 120 mm shells fired by the junta troops exploded near a civilian home:

"The junta fires artillery shells daily to prevent their battalions from being attacked. There were three shots fired and then another two," said a resident.

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## SUMMARY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

### JULY 2023

The victim, 50-year-old U Soe Myint, died on the spot when the military shells exploded. The weapons wounded two women and one man. Those who were injured by the artillery shells were taken to the public hospital in Kawkareik Township with the help of the Social Relief Association. Two homes, including a motorcycle, were also damaged when the artillery weapons detonated.

Civilians in Kawkareik Township face ongoing threats to their lives and mass insecurity due to the frequent explosions of artillery weapons in their neighbourhoods and villages. The attacks have increased since the attempted coup.

In another attack on civilians in Karen State, field reporters reported that the junta troops opened fire on two villages in Kawkareik and Kyarinnsaikyi Townships with artillery weapons, killing one person and injuring two people. On June 30, at 8:50 pm, the Infantry Battalion No.283, based in Kyarinnsaikyi Township, fired 120 mm artillery shells at Tagay village in Kyarinnsaikyi Township. Saw Soe Lin, a 44-year-old resident of Tagay village, was killed when the artillery weapons exploded in the rubber farm in the town.

The same day, at around 7:20 pm, the Infantry Battalion No.275 of the junta terrorist military fired four times of 120mm

mortars in the Mae Kanal village, injuring 76-year-old Naw Ma Ngo and 10-year-old Naw Ae Phaw Khali.

In the areas controlled by the Karen National Union, the military junta has continued to target people with artillery weapons. The local people are afraid and must flee.

“Currently, there are approximately thousands of people, and they are from four or five villages. They are in urgent need of food and shelter during the rainy season. If they return to the village, they don’t know when artillery weapons will kill them,” said a member of the ground support team, explaining the difficulty with the increase in IDPs.

Due to the junta’s forces under Division No. 44 consciously firing artillery weapons at residences in the villages of Kyaik Hto Township, Mon State, and set landmines, a child was killed, one Buddhist nun was injured, and houses, including religious buildings, were damaged on 13 July.

The next day, on July 14, 2023, artillery weapons were launched from the checkpoint station of the Military Junta’s Division-44 stationed at the intersection of Mu Palin road, and it exploded in the vicinity of Aye Pagoda Monastery near Mu Palin village, damaging two monastery buildings. The artillery in her arm injured a

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## SUMMARY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

**JULY 2023**

61-year-old treated at Nyang Khar Shay Hospital.

In addition, between July 7th and 14th, eight residential houses, two cars, and two shops were destroyed due to the firing of artillery weapons by Division-44 into the Nyat Phaw Taw village, Kyaik Hto township.

*“Everyone is fleeing from home”* added a local villager.

“Military Junta’s checkpoints have also been deployed in the areas. The more they come, the more they extort money illegally from the villagers. There have been restrictions on the transportation of goods and food. Now we are allowed to transport rice only if we pay money. We don’t have any to pay as they extort money every day. On the other hand, we are running away from the clash, and it is becoming more difficult to make a living,” said a village resident.

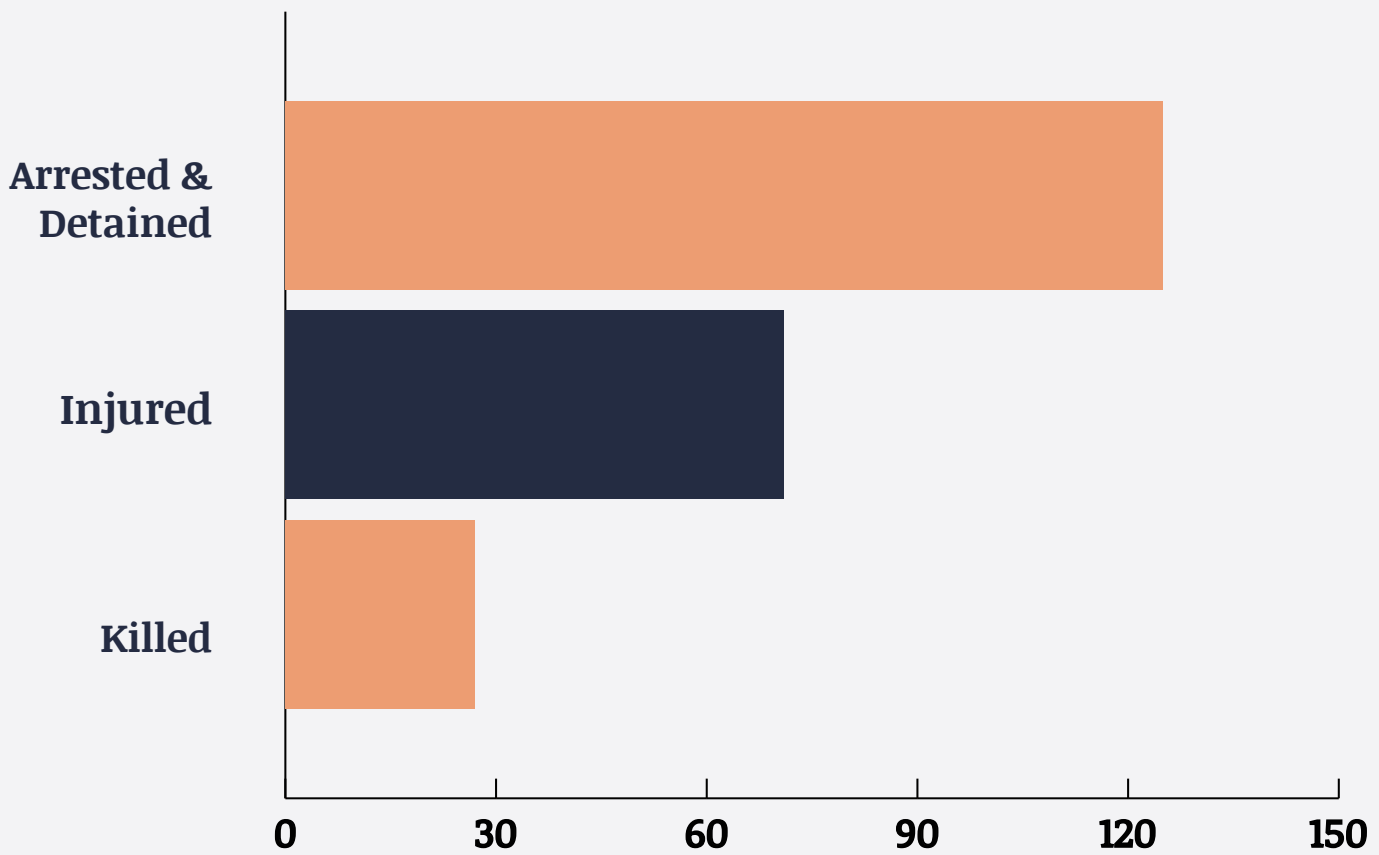
These accounts and the dozens more documented by HURFOM and other rights groups prove that the military uses funds irresponsibly to kill, maim and torture civilians. Thus, the training exercises by Russia and Burma overlook the suffering of innocent people and only seek to worsen.. They must not occur, and all invited need to boycott and not recognize the training.

HURFOM reiterates our calls for the immediate retreat of Burma Army soldiers in civilian areas and an immediate referral of the junta to the International Criminal Court to ensure justice and reparations for the hundreds of victims nationwide.

## SCALED UP HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

HURFOM fieldworkers continue to take great risks to document the human rights violations being perpetrated in target areas of Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region. By the end of **July 2023**, HURFOM recorded at least **72 arrested, 53 detained, 71 injured, and 27 killed** across all target areas.

Civilians Arrested, Injured & Killed in July 2023 in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region



3+

Pro-Democracy Activists Targeted by the Junta

11

PROTESTS ACROSS TARGET  
AREAS IN JULY 2023

8

TANINTHARYI  
REGION

2

MON STATE

1

KAREN STATE



57,500+

CIVILIANS DISPLACED ACROSS TARGET AREAS

CIVILIANS TARGETED IN MON, KAREN STATE  
& THE TANINTHARYI REGION

5+

DISMISSED FOR  
INVOLVEMENT  
IN THE CIVIL  
DISOBEDIENCE  
MOVEMENT

3+

PROTESTERS/  
ACTIVISTS  
SENTENCED IN  
JUNTA COURTS

8+

ENFORCED  
DISAPPEARANCES  
BY THE MILITARY

150+

CASES OF EXTORTION DURING  
'STOP AND FRISK' IN ALL TARGETED  
DOCUMENTATION AREAS

140+

DAMAGED HOMES



50+

BURNED DOWN

85+

CASES OF MOTORCYCLE  
CONFISCATION IN  
SOUTHERN MON  
STATE AND NORTHERN  
TANINTHARYI REGION

22+

MIDNIGHT RAIDS  
& ARRESTS ACROSS  
TARGET AREAS

24+

CASES OF RANSOMS  
DEMANDED BY THE  
JUNTA TO FREE  
VILLAGERS



14+

AIRSTRIKES IN SOUTHEASTERN BURMA





## KAREN STATE

**22,500+ Newly Displaced**

**23 Injured, 9 Killed**



Mon State



Tanintharyi Region

Since the end of June, more than 1,000 residents from Khalae, Takhon Taing, Pulain, and Nyein Chan Myaing villages in Kyarinnsaikyi Township, Karen State, have abandoned their homes and sought shelter due to the junta's artillery battalion No.318 based in Abis village in Mudon Township fired with artillery weapons almost every day.

There were frequent explosions around and nearby villages. A mother of five children from Takhon Taing village said at an IDP shelter that the shells were fired in unpredictable places, and they had to escape. A statement by the Karen National Union also confirmed that the military junta targeted civilians and opened fire on the villages and surrounding areas with artillery weapons every day. Approximately 1000 village residents evacuated, including Pulain, Khalae, Takhon Taing, and Nan Taing Thon.

According to the emergency response team, the people who fled faced difficulty with their livelihood and needed emergency health assistance due to the continuous daily rain.

“Since it is the rainy season, it is more challenging to reach people in need. In addition, diseases such as dengue fever for

children and seasonal flu are common, so there is a special need for food, medicine, and treatment teams,” said a local emergency aid group.

According to a statement by the People's Defense Force, clashes broke out between local Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) joint forces and the military junta due to the junta troops entering the village of Khalae and Takhon Taing in Kyarinnsaikyi Township in the past few days. Over 3,000 residents left their villages due to the junta troops' military offensives.

With a force of nearly 150, the soldiers have been on the offensive, firing artillery and small weapons from Nyat Phaw Taw and Ah Lu villages in Kyaik Hto Township since last July 14th. Nearly 700 households and more than 3,100 people from Zee Kone, Padauk Taw, Chan Myae, Nyat Phaw Taw, Ka Ra Way Saik and Shan Su villages evacuated to safe places after the junta troops went in.

“We had to flee when the soldiers arrived. Now it's raining continuously, so the elderly and children are suffering. They are having a lot of trouble finding safe and secure shelter,” said a resident of Zee Kone. Most fleeing locals stay in makeshift shelters in gardens and forests but struggle to survive due to limited resources and access to medicine and food.

In addition, most of the refugees had to run away with only one piece of clothing. As the fighting continued, there remained a need for food. On July 16, fighting broke out between the KNLA and the Burma Army. Three civilians were shot dead by the Junta troops during the battle, according to KNU Thaton District.

The junta troops have been firing artillery weapons into the villages every day since early July. However, there was no fighting in Kyaik Hto Township, and at least 20 public houses and religious buildings were damaged. A statement by the KNU of Thaton district indicated that more than 4,000 residents of eight villages fled due to the military junta firing weapons in Thaton Township, Mon State.

Starting on the morning of July 21, the military Junta's artillery battalion No. 207, based in Thaton Township, has been launching artillery fire into Kazai village and the surrounding villages for almost the entire day. The victim, a 35-year-old woman named Daw Ma Win, was injured by the shells in her left leg when seven artillery weapons were fired and exploded in Kyone Main village.

“Without any fighting happening, the junta shot weapons into the village for no reason, and no one dared to stay there. There are about 4,000 residents in 8 villages. A woman was also hit with artillery weapons,” said Pado Saw Aye Naing, secretary of KNU Thaton district.

The KNU Thaton district officials said the fleeing refugees hide in the forests near the monasteries and require humanitarian aid. On July 14, as the military Junta's troops entered Kyaik Hto Township, more than 3,000 residents of five villages fled.



***“Without any fighting happening, the junta shot weapons into the village for no reason. No one dared to stay there.”***



## MON STATE

**9,500+ Newly Displaced**

**9 Injured, 7 Killed**



**Karen State**



**Tanintharyi Region**

Residents of Mon State are always worried because artillery weapons continue to be fired and kill and injure civilians. Infantry Battalion (IB) No.31, based in Khawza, Ye, Mon State, warned people not to stay in rubber, durian and betel nut plantations around the area.

“IB No.31 made announcements with the loudspeakers to stay home. They called for us to leave immediately,” said a resident of Khawza.

In another indiscriminate attack, at 3:13 PM on June 16, 2023, the 31st local military battalion launched indiscriminate artillery attacks on Kyouk Eye (Win Ta Maw) village, Khaw Zar Sub-township, Southern Ye Township, Mon State and killed a local woman.

On June 20, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) visited the victims’ houses and financially supported her family. Local Mon people have criticized the NMSP for their conduct in this incident and are questioning their political stance with the junta.

“The revolutionary forces are active in the NMSP-controlled areas, and the military has also abused villagers there. They frequently shot and killed villagers, but the NMSP has just provided social and monetary support to the family. This makes them look like a charity group. However, as an armed

revolution group, this kind of support isn’t enough. They must stand with their people and respond strongly,” said a local villager from Khaw Zar Township.

Since June 15, the KNLA and PDFs have controlled some of the Thanbyuzayat – Ye – Dawei Highway Road. After June 20, in some Mon villages where the joint forces of the KNLA and the PDF are active, the troops have pulled down the country’s flag and replaced it with the flag of the KNU, according to a source from Thanbyuzayat Township.

“The NMSP behaves the same way in both cases where people were killed in Kan Ne village (Kaw Ka Rate Township, Karen State) and Ye Township. The party just gave monetary support and released statements. We don’t see their response militarily. To satisfy people, an armed revolution group must militarily protect its people,” said a villager from Phar Lane region, Southern Ye Township. These circumstances have complicated the situation in the area and made it difficult for civilians to know whom to trust and rely upon.

Meanwhile, civilians are caught in the crossfire of the worsening war. On July 7, six people were injured when the military junta launched artillery weapons at Shwe Yaung Pya village, Belin Township, Mon State. The victims, 5-year-old Saw Sin Min

Oo, 56-year-old Naw Mu Lar Pye, 18-year-old Naw Mi Htoo, 57-year-old Naw Tin Aye, 25-year-old Saw Ku and 9-year-old Naw Thingyan Phaw, were injured when the 314th Artillery Battalion of Junta Council fired artillery shells.

“I heard three artillery weapons being fired. One of them fell into Shwe Yaung Pya village and hit people. The other two fell outside the village,” said a resident.

The Artillery Battalion No.314, stationed in Shwe Yaung Pya village, west of Zee Won, near Ka Sai and Htee Pyo Nya Le, in Belin Township, often launches its weapons randomly.

Residents of six villages had to evacuate almost entirely because of the military junta-based battalions launching artillery weapons into Bilin Township of Mon State. Junta battalions based in Bilin, including the Artillery Battalion No.314, have been firing artillery weapons into the village day and night since early July.

“They fired artillery weapons into the villages daily, and most villagers ran into gardens and forests. Locals who can afford money run to their relatives’ houses in the city,” said a resident of Zi Wun.

The KNLA and joint forces are attacking the junta’s battalions, and the junta is targeting local people in response by firing artillery weapons into the villages. On July 7, the military junta’s Artillery Battalions launched artillery weapons into Shwe Yaung Pya, injuring six residents, including two

children.

Then, on July 12, the junta forces stationed at the monastery in Hnit Ka Yin village, Ye Township, Mon State, checked the phones and arrested the villagers they suspected on various alleged topics related to giving information to the PDF and the KNLA. In addition, it is reported that hundreds of villagers have fled their homes due to warnings from Ye-based People’s Defense Forces to evacuate. By the middle of the month, locals said that about three-fourths of the villagers of Hnit Ka Yin, which has around 3,068 households, had fled.

“Starting on the 10th of July, people moved to safety. They have moved to Thanbyuzayat, Kalagoat Island and Mawlamyine, where their relatives live. There are a few people left in the village,” a local said.

The documentation network member also reported that the operations of No.19 abducted fifteen villagers on unjust accusations of being related to the PDF. Across three days after the attack on the Hnit Ka Yin Police Station in Ye Township, Mon State, the junta troops stationed at the Monastery of Hnit Ka Yin village have been arresting the locals for two days. The arrested victims include twelve men and young women between 20 and 40. They are ordinary villagers and civilians who work in gardens and livestock. Some of those arrested were detained at the monastery of Hnit Ka Yin village by the junta troops, while some of the remaining villagers were taken to Thanbyuzayat police station.

“Among them, family members of those victims in the village have been banned from seeing each other and sending food, and some of them are being interrogated,” said a local, citing the description of close family members.

About eighteen people were abducted from 25 June until July 12, and one person had to pay two-million Myanmar Kyat in ransom. According to a person close to the released victim, some could negotiate to produce 1.7 million Kyat.

In another case, a local young man of Kyaik Hto was abducted and brutally killed by the military junta. He was taken near the intersection of the bus station in Thein Zayat town, Kyaik Hto Township, Mon State, and died the next day after his arrest.

After that, on the afternoon of July 18, the military informed the family to bring back the body of Ko Chit Lay, who had been brutally killed.

Locals said that Ko Chit Lay, who was abducted and killed by the military Junta, was an ordinary citizen who used to buy goods at Thein Zayat market every day and sell them to the villages in Kyaik Hto township on a tricycle. His wife was left behind when he died.

Some news outlets report that Ko Chit Lay was arrested and killed after his motorcycle collided with a military soldier taking security near the bus station intersection after purchasing goods from Thein Zayat Market.

Since the attempted coup in Bilin Township, the junta has arrested nearly 100 residents, most of whom were sentenced to prison. These arrests have continued and increased. On June 29, it was reported by the residents that five local villagers, aged around 20 years old, who were arrested by the military junta troops at Hnit Ka Yin village, Ye Township, have not yet been released. According to local sources, the junta troops were stationed in the newly built houses and beat the villagers on their homes searched their belongings and confiscated their phones.

Between July 10-13, 2023, the junta’s Artillery Battalion No.318, based in Ah Bit village, Mudon Township, Mon State, arrested four villagers from Ka Log Thog who were working at their plantation in Kha Lae – Da Gon Die and forced to carry military supplies along a jungle route.

“Another four migrant workers were also arrested. They had to carry things from 6 am to 10 pm. The military released them when they reached their destination. But they seized their Sim cards from their mobile phones.”

“They didn’t beat anyone,” said a recently released villager. The Ah-Bit village-based artillery battalion has frequently launched attacks targeting Kha Lae – Da Gon Die villages. The military’s attacks and forcing villagers to be porters have led thousands from the area to flee their homes.

Since June 26, from Taung Klay village in Kyaikmayaw Township in Mon State to

Pulain and Nyein Chan Myaing villages in Khalae Takun Taing village tract in Kyarinnsaikyi Township, there has been intense fighting between the military junta troops and the PDs.

The police station in Khalae Takun Taing in the area of Brigade 6 of the KNU and the junta forces stationed in Nyein Chan Myaing village are often attacked by the revolutionary forces with drones, and the military junta forces are also retaliating with artillery weapons.

In addition, the junta troops stationed in the village raided the houses and arrested locals. Fearing the fighting would continue, three-quarters of the villagers had to leave their homes.

Those who fled their homes went to the villages of their close relatives in Ye Township, Mawlamyine, Mudon and Thanbyuzayat, and the monasteries, guest rooms, and houses in the city, and most of them needed urgent help.

“On July 13, those who fled dared not to return. Those who don’t have sons and daughters abroad stay in the monasteries because they don’t have food. Adults aged 60 and children under five years old suffer more. Older people have mental illness and are receiving medical treatment,” said a victim.

Hnit Ka Yin village is in a state of insecurity. The shops and schools are quiet as only a few people are left in the town.

“There is no government in Mokanin village, Lamine Town in Ye Township and Hnit Ka Yin village anymore. Theft and sexual violence have increased. The villagers are worried and need help,” a local added.



***“Theft and sexual violence have also increased. The villagers are worried and need help.”***



## Tanintharyi region

**25,500+ Newly Displaced**

**29 Injured, 11 Killed**



Karen State



Mon State

The situation in the Tanintharyi region also threatens civilian safety as junta soldiers mobilize and increase their presence. The junta forces in Yebyu, Dawei, have also increased the area and movement restrictions.

On July 1, the Southern Operation Management Command issued a notice not to travel between 6:00 pm and 6:00 am on the main road of the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway and old road, Bago-SitTaung Road, Yangon-Muttama Road and Yangon-Pha An Road in Mon State.

Then on July 3, at about 5 a.m., the junta again blocked access to the road connecting Kanbauk-Kalain Aung, Yebyu, and Dawei. According to the drivers, the junta troops stationed on the Kanbauk exit road stopped the cars travelling and ordered them to turn back all around.

“We thought we could go normally, but the road was closed when we arrived on the road and met the junta troops. All the cars turned back and told us to go back,” said a driver.

The details of the situation as to why the junta military closed the Kanbauk - Kalaing Aung road are not yet known. How many days it will be closed is also still being determined. The road between Kanbauk - Kalaing Aung is about 18 miles long, and the primary road exports consumer goods from Yangon – Myawaddy - Mawlamyine – Htee Khee – Dawei.

From July 1 to 3, more than 3,000 residents of five villages, including Banlamut, Kanto, Ranpho and Nyaung Pingkan, have fled and are gradually fleeing the fighting due to the junta troops raiding and shooting. The inspection has become stricter since the military reopened the Kalain Aung-Kanbauk Road, Yebyu, Dawei, which has been closed.

According to residents of Kanbauk, the military Junta has allowed the stuck trucks and cars to travel again since the morning of July 5.

Kanbawk-Dawei passenger lines are running again, and the junta troops patrolling in civilian clothes are still conducting strict checks on the Kalain Aung-Kanbawk road.

“The junta military’s vehicles still go around the village like a parade. They checked here and there, closed and inspected. Civilians also have to pay every time they are inspected. Sometimes the payment is from one thousand kyat to ten thousand kyat,” said a local of Kanbawk.

“Once the military restricted the entry and exit, the prices of goods in Kanbawk immediately doubled. For ordinary civilians, there are many hardships because the prices of goods keep increasing,” said another Kanbawk resident.

Since the morning of July 3, the military has restricted the entry and exit of the Kanbawk-Kalain Aung road section after the news of the escape of junta troops from the Mawrawati Navy.

There are frequent minor clashes between Kalain Aung and Yebyu Township on the road. According to another villager, due to the news that the PDF joint team had arrived in the village of Kanbawk, the Kanbawk-Kalain Aung road had been blocked by junta troops from Mawrawati Navy.

“The lieutenants at the bottom of the military Junta are taking advantage of this time of conflict to conduct inspections and extort money. There are inspections every day in the Kanbawk area,” said a local woman. This road is connected from the Union-Highway Road to the Kanbawk area and has a distance of 9 miles and 6 furlongs.

On the 4th of July, around 8 AM, artillery battalion 306 shot four artillery shells at the center of Banlamut village. The junta military’s troops have been reinforced with weapons, and the People Defense Forces have announced that the road sections in Tanintharyi Township have been designated as the red level for safety and no traffic at night.

The Southern Operation Management Command No. 2 issued travel restrictions to prevent vehicles from passing through the road from 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM. Due to the limitation, the commodity price goes up immediately.



The people also suffer from violence by the junta. On July 3, according to locals, between 9:00 pm and 10:00 pm, the junta military's artillery battalion in Tanintharyi Township fired more than 20 rounds into surrounding villages without a fight, injuring five residents from East Mawton village.

Artillery Battalion 306, based in East Mawton village, fired many artillery weapons toward East Mawton, West Mawton, Zalon Pyin Yo, and Ak Daw Kang. As a result of the shooting, the mortar shells hit a woman living in the bridge construction industry in East Mawton village, three men, and another woman from a nearby house.

"I heard that an elderly woman working on the bridge construction was seriously injured. The rest of the people were slightly wounded in the arms and legs," said a local.

Armed clashes have frequently occurred in Southern Ye Township, leaving local fruit plantation owners unable to go to their plantations. Many have now abandoned their plantations.

"About one-third of our durians are left to harvest. And there are mangosteens and rambutans to be harvested for the second time. Plantation owners dare not go to their plantations. They are afraid to stay (and work) at their plantations. So all plantations have been abandoned," said a durian plantation owner in eastern Maw Ka Nin village, Ye Township.

Plantation owners are facing a substantial financial loss. "The economy of Ye has depended on fruit plantations. We can't go to the fruit plantation, so our livelihoods are destroyed. We have a bad economy and a high commodity price, so we'll surely be in trouble," said a plantation owner from Sone Na Thar village, Southern Ye Township. Burmese soldiers and other thieves pluck fruits from nearby plantations without permission from the owners.

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According to local sources, on July 11 at 7 a.m., around 300 residents fled after a clash broke out when junta soldiers entered the Dawei Deep Sea Port in Nabu Lae, Yebyu Township.

Villagers again had to leave for their homes for fear of air and ground attacks.

“We heard gunshots of a battle on the Shan Bridge side of Kan Kher. The fighting could happen at any time. When it happened in the past, the military shot it with a plane. Now there are no more villagers; they are avoiding them,” said a local.

“If we hear the sound of gunfire on the ground, we can run ahead, but if the military Junta uses airstrike to fight, there is no way to escape, so we must flee. We are not the only village in this Nabu Lake area; the residents of Htain Gyi, Lae Shaung, Kamout Chaung, Wat Chaung, and Ayekarry villages are leaving for safety. I think there are about 300 people who are fleeing in our village alone,” said a resident of Nabu Lae village.

Pro-revolutionary forces are also targeted. Locals said that the arrested young men, 22-year-old Nay Lin Zaw and 17-year-old Thein Htwe, were found with The three-finger salute images on their phones and were severely beaten and detained for a day at the Kanbawk Police Station, Yebyu.

“They checked all the phones of 8 people. The two of them were punched many times because they wrote 2021 in the text “military dog” and the old photo of a three-finger salute on Facebook’s Messenger app. They were beaten with a cable. The injuries were to the eyes, head, leg, and whole body. They can’t even eat rice,” said a family member.

The two youths were brutally tortured, receiving medical treatment at their homes due to face, leg, and head injuries.

Abductions are frequent and on the rise. On July 15th and 16th, nine families of grocery store owners, relatives, friends, and workers arrested in the Kanbawk area have not yet been released. Within two days, nine grocery store owners, prominent business families, and workers were abducted.

In the two days between July 15th and 16th, the arrested people were the families and workers of local businesses, and the security forces of the military junta came to their house and abducted them after finding explosive items.

Since the morning of July 15, junta forces have thoroughly checked everyone at the intersection of the Thit-Taw road. More than ten young people were detained on the side of the road, and they were released. However, among those arrested in the last two days, the nine people reported here are accused of being in connection with explosive devices. The Mawrawaddy Navy officers came and stopped them themselves,” said a local youth.

There were two arrests. The first case was on the evening of July 15; four members of the grocery store owner’s family and two workers in Kanbawk market, Magin ward, Kanbawk area, Yebyu Township, a total of six, were arrested by junta forces of Mawrawaddy Navy. The second case occurred around noon on July 16; two young women were abducted again in Kanbawk. The arrested grocery store victims are the four families, Daw San Myint, Daw Mee Cho, Ko Kyaw Oo and Ko Kyaw Kyaw, and the two workers, Ko Min Thu Aung and Ko Aung Paing Soe.

In addition to this, two military junta vehicles arrived at an electrical goods store in Kanbawk and arrested the shop owner’s daughter, Ma Aye Aye Thu, who is around 35 years old, and Ma Thazin Lwin, who helps at the shop.

“The nine people arrested are family members from the grocery store, and they are relatives. The workers were also arrested. The junta called everyone in the shop. Daw Dee Duk was taken from the house. The reason is that a bomb exploded in their yard on Forest Road,” said a local.

While entering and arresting the people from the grocery store, the military junta closed the road between Kanbawk Market and the High School.

# KEY OBSERVATIONS

1. Inflation across all target areas has devastatingly affected civilians who cannot meet their basic needs.
2. Mon women's groups are warning of increased child sexual abuse incidents in villages across Mon State with no action being taken by the authorities.
3. Clashes have led to forced internal displacement in Burma as instability and tensions move people from their homes.
4. Police and junta-backed militias continue to initiate door-to-door checks and arrest those on their wanted lists.
5. Motorcycles, mobile devices, and money are confiscated and extorted from civilians at checkpoints stationed by the junta deliberately along critical routes. Civilians are forced to pay excessive bribes to retrieve their possessions. However, very few were able to afford the high costs.
6. Torture remains rampant in Burma and across target areas where innocent civilians are subjected to gruelling, horrifying acts by the junta to extract information.
7. The international community, including UN bodies and ASEAN, is not responding swiftly enough to the situation in Burma, which demands urgent attention and consequences for the junta.
8. Military impunity remains deeply ingrained in the institutions representing the Tatmadaw, which only encourages the junta to continue perpetrating human rights violations.
9. Children are targeted by the military junta and deprived of basic needs, including medical attention, food, education, and the right to live safely.
10. The junta's arbitrary arrests and unlawful detention are ongoing, as are warrantless raids and indiscriminate firing into civilian areas.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A referral of the situation on the ground in Burma is to be made immediately by the United Nations Security Council to the International Criminal Court.
2. Concerted and coordinated action by global actors for an urgently mandated global arms embargo which would prevent the free flow of weapons into the hands of the murderous junta.
3. Aviation fuel sanctions to put an effective end to the airstrikes in Burma, which have contributed to significant loss of life, particularly among innocent civilians.
4. Targeted sanctions on military junta officials and their families and holds on their financial assets and possessions undercut their ability to conduct corrupt business dealings abroad.
5. Strengthened and renewed protection mechanisms grant civilians who are vulnerable and at risk of assault a position where they can access justice referral and accountability pathways.
6. Renewed and continued funding support for local organizations responding to the needs of their communities on the ground. Cross-border aid pathways must be accessed, and all humanitarian aid in the hands of local actors.
7. Foreign investors in Burma must immediately cease their operations and withdraw their involvement from all development projects in the country, including but not limited to airports, seaports, and cement businesses.
8. An abrupt and immediate halt to the use of torture by the military junta, and further, we call for investigations to probe the unlawful deaths of civilians in Burma who have been tortured to death, as well as those who have been forced to endure trauma and long-term injuries as a result.

# MONTHLY OVERVIEW

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

JULY 2023

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