

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

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

October 2025



SUMMARY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

The Military Junta Escalates Violence Against Civilians in Southeastern Burma Amid Flagrant Attempts for Recognition Ahead of its Sham Election Plans

October 2025

The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) remains deeply concerned about the junta's upcoming sham election, which has led to rising levels of extortion and violent intimidation against civilians across all targeted areas of Mon State, Karen State, and the Tanintharyi Region.

This election is not recognized by the people nor aligned with international standards. It is also neither free or fair and is costing innocent people their freedom, threatening the growing sense of widespread insecurity across the country.

In Dawei, the military junta is pressing ahead with its planned election by forcing local people to participate in "practical test votes" using newly introduced electronic voting machines. On the afternoon of September 24, residents from Oh Lote, Pain Nel Taw, San Chi, and nearby wards were ordered to gather at San Chi Monastery.

There, they were compelled to cast mock ballots as the junta's election commission demonstrated how to operate the machines.

"They showed people how to press the buttons on the machines and then made them vote for the Durian Party, the Eggplant Party, and the Watermelon Party," a Dawei resident explained, describing the farcical nature of the demonstration.

The junta's state media later reported that around 300 people attended the

event organized by the Dawei Township Election Sub-Commission. Union Election Commission member U Than Htut Thein personally oversaw the demonstration, showing how to install and operate the machines, tally results, and manage polling stations.

These staged events are taking place even as clashes between resistance forces and junta troops intensify, where checkpoints and armed confrontations have become part of daily life. Despite the worsening conflict, the junta's election body is pressing forward step by step with preparations for a military-controlled vote.

According to announcements, Phase 1 elections in Tanintharyi Region will be held in Dawei, Myeik, Kawthoung, and Bokpyin townships.

Nationwide, six political parties have registered to contest, though the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) is fielding the most candidates, 1,018. The National Unity Party (NUP), also a long-time ally of military rule, follows with 694 candidates.

For communities in Dawei, these forced demonstrations underscore how the junta is attempting to manufacture legitimacy through intimidation and control, while ordinary people continue to live under fear, displacement, and violence.

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Security measures have also been intensified across Mon State as the election approaches, with more inspections and the deployment of advanced monitoring technology.

Since September 2025, the junta has increased security checks at city entrances, exits, and intersections. Additional checkpoints have been established along major roads, and security forces have specifically focused on inspecting male travellers.

“Inspections have become extremely strict now. Security is tight at city gates, and there are more checkpoints than before. They use the PSMS (Person Scrutinization and Monitoring System) and upgraded technology. You can see many personnel at the gates. It’s likely because the election is getting closer,” said a male driver from Mon State.

The PSMS system has been expanded to city gates, road checkpoints, bridges, and intersections. Locals say that as the military applies this advanced technology, incidents of extortion and arbitrary arrests of travellers have also increased.

Security has been strengthened not only in townships where elections will be held but also in nearby areas, with local authorities instructed to arrest anyone deemed suspicious.

The PSMS application is restricted to devices approved by the junta. Developed for military security purposes with Huawei’s technology, it uses Artificial Intelligence (AI), facial

recognition, and centralized CCTV monitoring to track individuals through smart ID cards, phone numbers, bank accounts, and mobile networks.

“They check where you come from and where you go. If your ID shows Ye township, but you’re in Mawlamyine, they might find it suspicious,” said a Mawlamyine resident.

Meanwhile, resistance groups have rejected the upcoming election, calling it a sham and vowing to oppose it. Those involved in election-related activities face arrest.

Junta-backed and supported Prime Minister U Nyo Saw has also ordered that security be prioritized during the pre-election and election periods. Hotel guest lists and guesthouse records are being checked, with arrests and extortion reportedly common for those without identification.

Large numbers of troops have been deployed in Ye, Kyaikhto, and Bilin townships, where fighting with resistance forces continues. The junta’s Election Commission has announced that the first phase of voting will be held on December 28, covering 102 townships, including Kyaikhto, Kyaikmayaw, Chaungzon, Mawlamyine, and Thaton in Mon State.

Additionally, residents in Mawlamyine, Mon State, report that men are being continuously arrested as the upcoming general election organized by the junta approaches. On the night of October 21, around 10 PM, thirteen men were detained at an alcohol shop in Myaing Thar Yar Ward.

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The men were arrested as they were leaving the shop after drinking. Among those detained were two older men, aged 55 and 58.

“They are all from the Bago Region. They came here to work in construction. They drink at that shop almost every day. All thirteen of them have been arrested,” said a male eyewitness.

The arrests were made by the junta’s Pyu Saw Htee militia, along with soldiers and police officers. Even older men were detained and forced to cook for the soldiers. None of those arrested has been released. During the last two weeks of October, over 40 men have been detained across Mawlamyine Township, and locals believe many of them have been forcibly conscripted.

“They are arresting people like porters. Pyu Saw Htee members are detaining people from their neighbourhoods. Those who are taken are sent to military recruitment centers and then to training camps,” a resident explained.

According to sources close to the regime, nearly 4,000 conscripts have already been recruited in Mon State from Batch 1 to Batch 18, with around 230 people being sent to the army each month.

Consequently, many young men now fear for their safety and try to avoid travelling to reduce the risk of arrest and forced recruitment.

Airstrikes

On 5 October 2025, the junta launched an airstrike on Thae Chaung Gyi Village in

Thayetchaung Township, Dawei District, deliberately targeting civilians in an area where no clashes were taking place. Four villagers, including a ten-year-old girl and a 91-year-old woman, were seriously wounded.

The sudden attack forced the entire community to flee in fear, leaving behind their homes and belongings as the military continued its campaign of bombings, artillery strikes, and arson across Tanintharyi Region.

Local sources reported that the child sustained shrapnel wounds to her hip and thigh. A woman in her fifties was hit in the back, while the man suffered a head injury. The most severe case was a 91-year-old woman whose leg was severely wounded.

“Most villagers had no time to prepare. Everyone ran from the village with nothing, no clothes, no food, nothing. This wasn’t a battlefield. The junta used their aircraft to bomb civilians, as if declaring our homes to be war zones,” said a member of an emergency IDP response team.

Residents confirmed that junta forces have been advancing into Thayetchaung Township since late September with heavy ground troops, destroying homes and burning villages. A villager explained:

“Even when the planes are not bombing, they use heavy artillery to clear the way for their ground troops. Villages in Thayetchaung have burned down because of shelling. Most recently, near Kyauk Hlay Kar, they torched houses before pushing in with more soldiers.”

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The escalation has forced entire communities into displacement.

Humanitarian workers warn that the number of those displaced in the Tanintharyi Region could double within the next two months, especially ahead of the sham election. Observers believe the military is escalating attacks to regain lost territory and to intimidate civilians into compliance.

Residents also note that the military has been deliberately targeting civilian villages, making daily life impossible. Roads remain blocked, and food and rice supplies into Tanintharyi are cut off, leaving families hungry and unprotected.

“This is not just fighting resistance forces; it is deliberate punishment of civilians. Without urgent cross-border humanitarian assistance, people will face even more starvation and danger. International actors must not look away.”

“Cross-border aid needs to be scaled up, and ethnic resistance organizations should be supported in preparing IDP resettlement and response programs,” said a humanitarian aid worker from a Dawei-based CBO.

The situation along the Thai-Burma border became highly tense on the morning of 8 October 2025 when junta aircraft carried out a heavy bombing campaign over Thit Khee village, located opposite the Phu Nam Ron permanent checkpoint in Muang District, Kanchanaburi Province. A Y-12 aircraft flew over the area for nearly an hour and dropped between 27 and 30 bombs beginning

at around 10:00 AM. The explosions struck directly on the Burma side of the frontier where Thit Khee village is situated.

The area is home to the Karen National Union (KNU) Brigade 4 and allied People’s Defence Forces (PDF). While casualty figures from Burma remain unconfirmed, the intensity of the strikes caused widespread panic among civilians.

Residents described scenes of fear as families fled toward the Thai side of the border. Many gathered at the wooden barriers near the Phu Nam Ron gate, seeking immediate refuge.

“There was no fighting when the bombing started. The plane came suddenly and dropped bombs across the village. People were terrified and ran for their lives,” said one displaced villager.

Although no injuries have been reported among Thai civilians residing near the border, the incident has raised alarm over the security of communities on both sides. Thai security agencies are now closely monitoring the border, with fears that the violence could displace more civilians if the airstrikes continue.

HURFOM notes that this assault is part of a broader pattern of escalating air and ground offensives carried out by the junta in Mon State, Karen State, and the Tanintharyi Region. Civilians remain the primary victims of these indiscriminate attacks, which violate international humanitarian law and heighten the urgent need for protection and support.

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In yet another incident, five students were killed and nine others were injured when the junta launched an airstrike on Pyin Ma Pin Seik Village, Bilin Township, Mon State, despite the absence of any fighting in the area, according to the Karen National Union (KNU) Thaton District.

At 8 PM on October 9, a military jet dropped two 500-pound bombs on the village, striking civilian homes without warning. The victims were all young students: Saw Htun Htun Min (6), Saw Lin Htet (7), Naw Mingalar Phaw (9), Naw Mu Chay Chay (10), and Naw Pu Lone (12). Nine other civilians, including a one-year-old child named Saw Tar Hey, were seriously injured in the attack.

Eleven houses were also destroyed by bomb fragments, leaving families displaced and traumatized.

“This village has never seen any fighting before. The bombing was carried out without reason, likely because the junta wants to create fear as the election draws near,” said Padoh Saw Aye Naing, Secretary of the KNU Thaton District.

The KNU condemned the strike as a deliberate act of violence targeting civilians in areas outside junta control. Pyin Ma Pin Seik Village lies under the KNU Thaton District administration and is one of several communities where the junta has failed to organize its planned sham elections.

Three civilians, including a woman, were injured when the junta carried out an airstrike on Kyauk Phyar and Nat Sin villages

in Kyike Hto Township, Mon State, on the morning of October 17. The attack occurred despite no active armed clashes in the area, causing fear and panic among residents.

A fighter jet reportedly dropped two bombs over the villages. One exploded near a house in the center of Kyauk Phyar Village, injuring two men and one woman.

“The woman was seriously wounded, while the two men sustained injuries to the head and chest. The woman was later taken to the hospital for treatment. One house was destroyed,” said a local source who witnessed the incident.

The second bomb landed to the west of the village but did not cause casualties or damage, according to residents.

This latest assault follows a series of junta-deployed airstrikes targeting civilian areas in Mon State. On August 9, bombs were dropped on Pane Nell Gone Village in the same township, killing one person and injuring four others. Five houses, three family vans, and three motorbikes were damaged in that attack.

Again, on October 9, the military bombed Pyin Ma Pin Sake Village in Bilin Township, killing five students and injuring twelve others.

Local monitors told HURFOM that the junta has intensified its “clearance operations” in Mon State and neighbouring areas through frequent airstrikes and artillery shelling, even in places far from active conflict.

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Residents believe these escalating military offensives are part of the junta's ongoing efforts to intimidate communities and secure control ahead of its planned "sham election."

At least ten civilians, including a young student, were also injured when the junta launched an airstrike on Ta Ku Village, Tanintharyi Township, on the morning of October 10.

A fighter jet dropped two bombs near the local fire brigade office and market at 9 AM, destroying buildings and wounding several villagers.

"We heard the sound of aircraft at 9:40 AM and quickly sent the children home. The bombs fell just as they were leaving, injuring one student and a woman near the market. The fire brigade office was also hit," a resident told HURFOM. Some of the injured were reportedly in critical condition.

Local witnesses confirmed there were no clashes at the time of the bombing. *"There was no fighting in Ta Ku village; the clashes were more than 15 miles away. The military also fired machine guns into the village. Shops have been closed since,"* said another villager.

Ta Ku Village lies in a zone controlled by joint revolutionary forces. The military has imposed a blockade on essential supplies, banning the transport of food, medicine, fuel, and household goods into the area, worsening the hardship faced by already vulnerable communities.

Arbitrary Arrests

Tensions have escalated in Lamaing Town, Ye Township, Mon State, after the shooting of a local ward administrator on September 28. In the aftermath, junta troops and police arbitrarily arrested around 30 young people from the town and surrounding villages, demanding large ransom payments.

U Kyaw Oo, the administrator of Ward No. 1 in Lamaing Town, was gunned down outside his home by two unidentified armed men. Soon after, joint forces of junta soldiers and police set up roadblocks and began indiscriminately detaining youths passing through the area.

"They stopped and arrested young people they saw on the streets and took them to Infantry Battalion 106 in Mawkanin. For one person and a motorcycle, we had to pay 25 lakhs [2.5 million kyats] to get them released," explained a woman close to one of the detainees.

Relatives reported that while some detainees were released after paying the ransom, others remain in custody because their families could not raise the money. By October 1, at least 10 young people had been freed, while others—many aged 20 to 30—remained detained. Their motorcycles were also confiscated, and families attempting to visit them were denied access.

The victims came not only from Lamaing Town but also from surrounding villages, including Mawkanin, Mawkanin Ywar Thit, Kaw Doot, and Taung Bone. Residents fear that those whose families cannot pay may

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be conscripted into military service. One parent, whose son was released, described the ordeal:

“It was impossible to negotiate. They demanded money, and unless we paid, our children would not come home. Many families are still desperate, trying to gather the ransom.”

On October 1, the junta troops arbitrarily arrested at least 17 civilians in Ah Luu Village, Bilin Township, Mon State, after their convoy was ambushed with landmines by resistance forces. At 2:20 PM, more than 40 soldiers assigned to guard the convoy came under attack near a plywood factory.

In retaliation, the troops arrested men ranging in age from 17 to over 50, including factory workers, shopkeepers, and customers who happened to be at the site. The detainees were taken to Infantry Battalion 8 in Bilin and, as of October 2, had not been released.

Eyewitnesses said at least three junta soldiers were seriously injured in the ambush. Troops also seized three motorcycles left near the scene. This latest incident follows a series of arbitrary arrests in the area.

On September 28, at 5 AM, junta troops raided Kayin Lay Seik Village, Thaton Township, and arrested nearly 30 residents, including children.

They were transported to the Thaton-based Training Battalion 9, where their fate remains uncertain.

“Whenever junta troops clash with resistance forces, they take out their anger on ordinary civilians. This is not crossfire; it is deliberate. Each time there is fighting, they arrest, beat, and extort people, forcing families to pay for their release, and pressuring young men into military service against their will. These abuses happen again and again.”

The junta treats civilians as if they are the enemy, punishing them simply for living in these areas. The recent arrest of civilians, including young men, is another example of this pattern; it is nothing less than a war crime,” a 55-year-old male local expressed.

In another harrowing incident, at least 20 residents, including children, from Kan To Village remain in junta custody after being arrested on October 3, and they have not been released as of October 7.

According to local sources, the arrests took place in the morning when residents were travelling by boat from Old Kan To Village to Kan To Village to buy goods. Junta soldiers intercepted it, forced passengers onto the shore, and ordered the boat operator to leave.

Everyone on board, including children, was taken away. Families were not allowed to see or speak with them: *“They forced the people off the boat and onto the ground, then sent them away by vehicle. No one knows how they are being treated. Even children were among those arrested, and their families are distraught,”* said a villager.

Witnesses confirmed that those arrested were later transported by car along the

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Union Road to Infantry Battalion No. 557. As of midday on October 7, the group—estimated at around 20 people—had still not been released.

The same day, October 3, junta troops also raided Old Kan To Village, sparking clashes with resistance forces. Locals fear that those detained could be used as leverage in ongoing military operations.

Artillery Fire

Three civilians, including a five-year-old child, were injured when junta troops fired artillery shells into Ban Lamut Village, Tanintharyi Township, Tanintharyi Region, on the afternoon of October 14.

At 4 PM, soldiers from Artillery Battalion No. 306 reportedly fired heavy weapons indiscriminately, even though there were no ongoing clashes in the area.

One of the shells exploded in the middle of the village, injuring an 82-year-old grandmother, a 48-year-old woman, and a young child.

The elderly woman and the 48-year-old woman, who both suffered serious injuries, were taken to the Tanintharyi Township Public Hospital for treatment. The child, whose injuries were less severe, was being treated at a nearby clinic.

Residents said that most people from Ban Lamut Village have already fled due to ongoing fighting and fear of shelling. Only a few families remain, living under constant anxiety and uncertainty.

Just a few days earlier, on October 10, a junta airstrike on Ta Gu Village in the same township injured ten civilians, further highlighting the continuing danger faced by local communities in the Tanintharyi Region.

Forced Conscription

In Mawlamyine, Mon State, ten local men were forcibly arrested and taken for military conscription as part of the junta's 18th batch of the People's Military Service training course. The arrests occurred on the evening of September 23, near the traditional hospital, located between Myain Tharyar Ward and Phak Khin Ward.

Witnesses reported that junta soldiers surrounded the area at 6:30 PM, detained the men, and drove them away in a black private car to the Southeastern Military Command.

"They also arrested construction workers. They had been watching them closely and then suddenly took ten of them. All are originally from the Ayeyarwady Region but were living in Zayar Myaing Ward. Some are married, and four are over 40 years old," explained a resident from Phak Khin Ward.

This latest round of forced conscription is part of a broader campaign in Mawlamyine Township. Administrators, police, junta soldiers, and members of militia groups have been working together to seize men from the community.

Ward and village administrators under the military commission have summoned residents, raided homes, and abducted people at night. Young men have been taken

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from their workplaces, pulled off the streets, or detained while commuting.

“In August, a 16-year-old boy from 16th Street, Myain Tharyar Ward, was taken at night. They claimed it was because he wasn’t in school or employed.

Now he is in the People’s Military Unit, which already includes other underage boys and even men over 60,” said a local source familiar with the case.

The climate of fear in Mawlamyine has worsened. Residents told HURFOM that young people no longer feel safe even walking outside, knowing that soldiers and militia members can detain them at any time.

Those who stay inside are not protected either—arrests have been made directly from homes. Community members said the junta has escalated its recruitment drive in recent weeks, adopting increasingly aggressive tactics to fill its depleted ranks.

On September 30, 2025, three young men from Paw Daw Mu village, Thaton Township, Mon State, were arrested by a junta patrol team. The victims were identified as 22-year-old Oak Kar Kyaw, 17-year-old Khant Thu Aung, and 16-year-old Aung Thu Zin. At the time of their arrest, they were sitting together at a public pavilion in the village.

A resident who witnessed the incident shared:

“It was about 6:20 in the evening. The three were sitting in the pavilion when a van pulled

up. Soldiers dragged them inside. Family members immediately tried to call, but their phones had already been switched off. Their uncle went to the police station to check, but he was told that if they were not held there, nothing could be done.”

According to the source, Oak Kar Kyaw was released the next morning, October 1. The junta’s soldier recruitment team reportedly told the families that only one of the three could be freed. The two teenagers remain detained at Thaton Town Police Station.

Residents explained that over the past four months, the junta has formed “soldier recruitment teams” in Thaton Township.

These groups have been targeting young men, arresting them, and sending them to the 9th Military Training School in Thaton. Local communities report an alarming rise in cases of youth being arbitrarily detained and forcibly conscripted into military service.

Of immense concern was the case of a man taken for forced military conscription in Dawei, who died within hours of his arrest, according to residents in Thin Baw Seik Ward, Dawei Township. The victim, identified as Ko Yan Naing Oo, about 30 years old, was arrested at night. By the next morning, local authorities informed his family to collect his body.

“They only called the family after he had already passed away. I heard he had some health issues, maybe a chronic illness, but no one really knows what caused his death,” said a young man from the same ward.

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On the same night that Ko Yan Naing Oo was detained, at least six other young men from Bon Maw, Zar Yit, Daung Ngu, and Ka Yat Pyin wards were also arrested for conscription.

Residents reported that junta forces entered homes late at night and went door to door searching for men to send to military training. Soldiers also stopped and detained people at checkpoints around Dawei town.

This tragic case has deepened fear among local communities already living under constant pressure from arbitrary arrests and forced recruitment.

Although the junta officially announced that about 200 young people were recruited for Batch 18 of its People's Military Service Training in Mon State, HURFOM's field documentation shows that the actual number is higher; between 280 and 300 youths have been forcibly taken.

Many were arrested during intensified conscription operations in September and October, which targeted local men across the state. Among them are young people who fled their homes to avoid arrest and others who remain missing after being detained by the junta's forces.

The recruits were brought to the Southeastern Command Headquarters in Mawlamyine on October 17 to begin the People's Military Service Training Course No. 18 (10/2025). Senior junta officials, including Acting Chief Minister Colonel Kyaw Swar Myint and other state ministers, attended

the ceremony to encourage the conscripts. However, residents said most of the youths were forcibly taken from homes, workplaces, and streets.

“The militia group, local administrators, and police–military joint forces constantly monitor young people. They arrest them at city gates, pull them off vehicles, or even enter homes to seize them,” said one local man.

A 45-year-old eyewitness from Mudon Township told HURFOM reporters that conscription raids have become widespread in recent weeks:

“Since early September until now, junta troops and recruitment teams have focused their operations on young people. We have seen it happening along the main roads between our township and Kyaikmayaw. Some local youths — especially students travelling toward Kyun Village — have gone missing. Parents have been visiting military camps to ask about their children.

Many of those who disappeared left home by motorcycle and never came back. Soldiers and police are also arresting young men at long-distance bus gates and checkpoints, even when they have done nothing wrong.”

Parents across Mon State said village administrators are now targeting local men directly, as they can no longer find substitutes to meet the junta's recruitment quotas.

“There's no safety anymore, not even at home,” said a mother from Mawlamyine.

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“Both day and night, people live in fear.”

Conscription training now takes place every month, and as the junta pushes ahead toward its planned sham election, the campaign to recruit new soldiers has intensified.

Those detained are rarely released; most are sent directly into service unless they can pay large bribes or have connections with military officials.

A source close to the military estimated that from Batch 1 to Batch 18, nearly 4,000 youths from Mon State have been forcibly recruited under the junta’s People’s Military Service program. This campaign continues to devastate families and communities.

Over the past two months, junta forces and police have arrested 411 young men in Thaton Township, demanding 5 million Kyats per person for their release. Those unable to pay were reportedly sent to military training camps.

Captain San Win Aung, a member of the township administrative council, and Deputy Police Chief Myint Naing of Thaton District, led the coordinated arrests.

Between early September and October, both officials allegedly ordered the arrests of youths, business owners, and other residents believed able to pay large sums of money.

“The Pyu Saw Htee militia under Captain San Win Aung is mainly responsible. They patrol every night, arresting people from their homes or on the streets.”

If you can pay, you’re released — if not, you’re sent to training. So far, around 411 people have been arrested, mostly workers and business owners,” a resident told HURFOM.

Family members of those detained described the ordeal as extortion-driven and terrifying. One relative said their son was arrested in early October and sent to Military Training Batch 18 after they failed to pay the ransom.

Sources close to the junta confirmed that around 300 detainees were released after paying, while more than 40 were sent to military camps. Arrests continue daily, with an estimated 100 to 200 young men detained each month in Thaton under forced conscription orders.

“In Thaton, the Pyu Saw Htee, soldiers, and police target people who have money — mostly business owners. It’s been ongoing for two months, and the number keeps increasing,” said another local source.

Families are now living in fear, with many young people fleeing to avoid being taken for conscription.

Sexual Violence

HURFOM has confirmed another appalling case of sexual violence committed by junta troops in Bokpyin Township, Myeik District, where a young woman was repeatedly raped after being arrested.

On September 20, soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 358 forced two married women from Sakan Thar Village

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(locally known as Yae Bet Village), under Htawng Sone Ma Hek village tract, to accompany them as guides.

The troops were camped nearby in Bodaw Village. The soldiers beat one of the women, aged around 30, before releasing her. The other, a 20-year-old woman whose husband was not at home, was taken away and raped multiple times:

“They took her away deliberately. This was intentional — they wanted to commit sexual violence. She was violated again and again,” said one villager who asked not to be named.

The perpetrators belong to LIB 358, a battalion notorious in Bokpyin Township for its abuses against civilians. Local people said soldiers frequently burn down houses, loot property from families who have fled, and destroy homes and belongings with impunity.

This case is part of a more exhaustive and systematic pattern of sexual violence used by the junta as a weapon of war. Women and girls across Mon, Karen, and Tanintharyi have endured rape, sexual assault, and harassment at the hands of soldiers.

Survivors are left traumatized, families are silenced in fear, and communities live under constant threat.

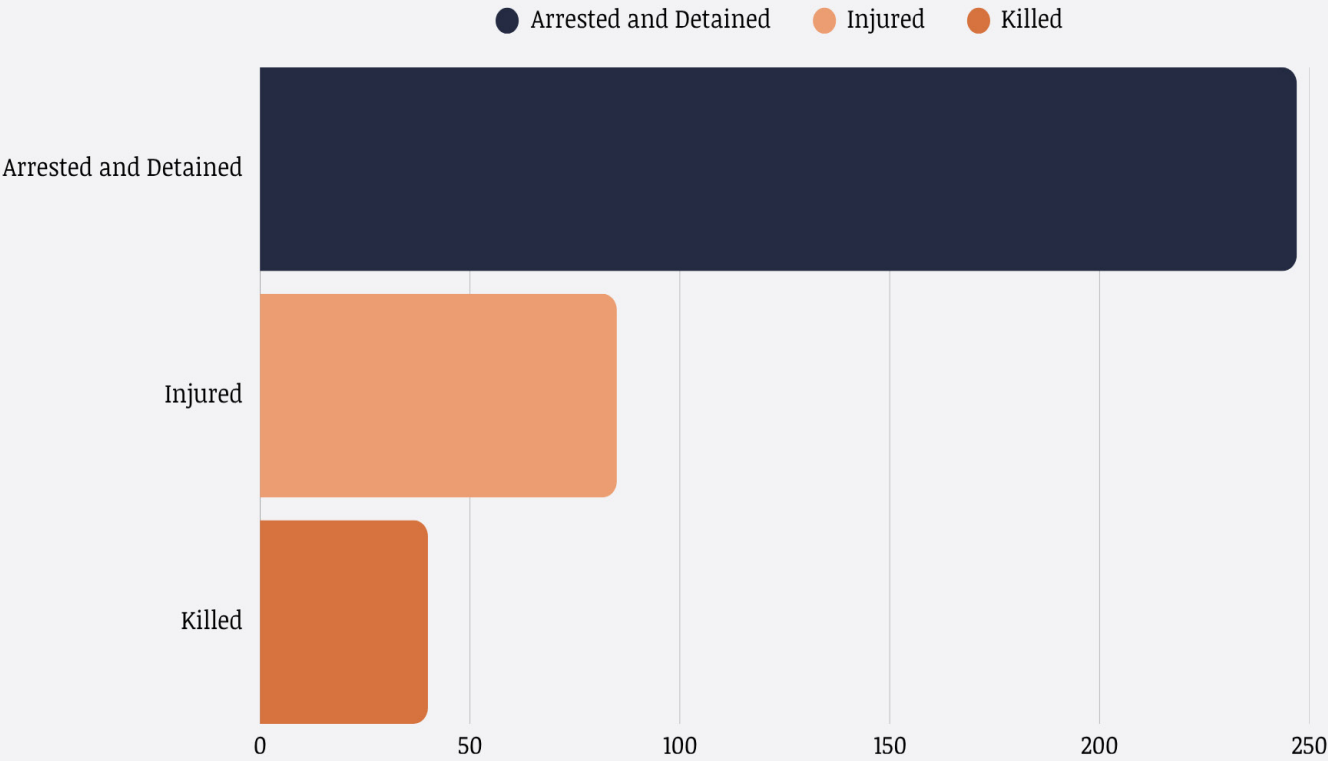
The use of sexual violence as a weapon violates both domestic and international laws, including the Geneva Conventions. Yet, under military rule, survivors are denied justice, while perpetrators act with complete impunity.

HURFOM continues to call attention to these crimes, which target women simply because of their vulnerability in conflict zones. Protecting women’s rights and dignity must be at the forefront of any response to the ongoing crisis in Burma.

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 October 2025, HURFOM recorded at least 135 people arrested, 112 detained, 85 injured, and 40 killed across all target areas.*

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



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

11+

Protests Across Target Areas in October 2025

4

MON STATE

1

KAREN STATE

6

**TANINTHARYI
REGION**



62,380+

CIVILIANS NEWLY DISPLACED ACROSS TARGET AREAS

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

3+

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

2+

**ACTIVISTS
SENTENCED IN
JUNTA COURTS**

15+

**ENFORCED
DISAPPEARANCES
BY THE JUNTA**

125+

**CASES OF RANSOM PAYMENTS REPORTED IN
HURFOM TARGET AREAS**

235+

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



30+

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

80+

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

480+

**IN OCTOBER 2025, AT LEAST 190 YOUNG
PEOPLE WERE FORCIBLY CONSCRIPTED
INTO MILITARY TRAINING**



KAREN STATE

22,100 Newly Displaced
28 Injured, 14 Killed

Mon State



Tanintharyi Region



The junta has escalated its campaign of violence in Karen State by targeting villages and schools near Lay Kay Kaw, Myawaddy Township, with airstrikes, heavy artillery, and kamikaze drones.

According to local sources, these attacks are deliberately hitting areas where no active fighting is taking place, leaving civilians increasingly vulnerable.

On the morning of 29 September, junta forces launched kamikaze drones at Minn Lat Pan village, striking the village school. *“The school was closed at the time, so no one was hurt, but the building was badly damaged,”* explained a member of the Hpalu IDP camp committee.

The assault followed a string of similar incidents in recent days. On 26 September, drones dropped bombs on Hpalu village, damaging a Buddhist monastery and nearby classrooms. The following evening, 27 September, another drone strike again hit Minn Lat Pan’s monastery.

On 28 September, junta jet fighters dropped two bombs near Mae Htaw Talay and Lay Kay Kaw new town.

Locals reported that while there were no immediate casualties, families were

forced to flee to the banks of the Thaung Yin River for safety: *“These strikes are terrifying. People are running from their homes again, hiding in the forests and by the river. Schools are destroyed, monasteries are damaged, and daily life is no longer possible,”* said a village leader from Hpalu.

Despite heavy shelling from Light Infantry Battalion No. 275 in Myawaddy and positions at Kyauk Gu hill, junta ground forces have failed to make significant advances against Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) troops and their allies.

Instead, the regime has turned its firepower on civilian areas, deepening fear and displacement.

“It has been three days now. There are no reinforcements on the ground, but artillery fire continues from their bases. People cannot return to their homes,” said a KNLA frontline source.

The situation in Myawaddy Township remains volatile. Fighting continues across key strategic locations, including Thangyan Nyi Naung, the Asia Highway, Daw Na Mountain, Lay Kay Kaw New Town, and Wawlay.

Beyond Myawaddy, clashes between the junta, KNLA forces, and breakaway DKBA units have spread into Kyainseikgyi, Kawkareik, and Kyone Doe, further endangering villagers in southern Karen State.

The human cost is mounting. Families who had already been displaced once before are now uprooted again. Children are unable to attend school, monasteries once considered safe havens are under attack, and hundreds are seeking shelter along the Thai-Burma border.

These tactics are part of the junta's ongoing strategy to terrorize civilians, undermine community structures, and prevent the re-establishment of everyday life in areas slipping from its control.

On September 28, a junta regiment stormed Karen Lay Sake village, Thaton Township, Mon State, and arrested nearly 30 teenagers. The unit, consisting of about 70 soldiers, entered the community at 5 AM and forcibly took children from their homes.

Those arrested included at least five boys aged 13, eight girls aged 16, and 15 other boys whose ages could not be confirmed. All of them were sent to the 9th Military Training School in Thaton Township, where they remain in detention as of October 2, 2025.

A villager described the fear as soldiers raided their homes:

“We saw them take our children, but we did not dare to speak up. They entered the houses, pointed guns at the children, and dragged them away. Now, I only want to leave my village. I am afraid they will return and arrest more children.”

This latest incident follows a similar case in July 2025, when more than 40 residents, including children, were arrested in Pa Thein Yoe village, also in Thaton Township. Those within the age range of military service were conscripted by force.

The systematic arrests highlight the junta's growing reliance on forced conscription, targeting even underage boys and girls in violation of international law. Communities across Mon State remain gripped by fear as the army continues to prey on children and youth to fill its dwindling ranks.

On October 20, junta forces launched indiscriminate artillery fire on Phar Baung Village in Hpa-An Township, Karen State, killing four civilians and injuring at least ten others. Residents confirmed that there had been no active clashes in the area at the time of the attack.

According to HURFOM field sources, the junta regiment based in Ka Ma Maung Town fired three heavy artillery shells into the village late in the afternoon.

“The shelling started at 5:30 PM. Four villagers were killed on the spot. The

injured were taken to Ka Ma Maung General Hospital for emergency treatment,” a local source reported. Among the victims were men and women who had been at home when the shells struck.

The attack caused widespread panic among nearby communities. Phar Baung and surrounding villages, which fall under the 5th Brigade of the Karen National Union (KNU) in Phar Pon District, have been repeatedly targeted by junta forces through artillery and air assaults.

Later that night, junta forces also dropped bombs from a Y-12 aircraft over Htee Phoe San Village in Kaw Ka Rate Township, destroying a monastery, a pagoda, a local school, and several homes.

Residents told HURFOM that since February 2025, the junta has been reinforcing its troop presence in Ka Ma Maung Town, intensifying military activity and heightening fear across Hpa-An and nearby townships. Civilians continue to live under constant threat of violence, with no safe zones remaining in the conflict-affected areas of Karen State.



MON STATE

**7,500 Newly Displaced
22 Injured, 11 Killed**

Karen State



Tanintharyi Region



In Ye Township, Mon State, the military junta has once again resorted to brutal tactics, abducting six local men and forcing them to serve as human shields during their ongoing operations.

Beginning on September 25, nearly 300 junta soldiers divided into three columns and launched raids from Kyaung Ywar village into surrounding areas, including Adain, Wae Yee Hine, Kwin Shay, Sone Padauk, Taung Soon Ywar Thit, and Ywar Kalay villages.

According to a woman from Sone Padauk village tract, the troops arrested six men who had been tending their gardens near Adain and Wae Yee Hine villages.

“Six men, all over the age of 50, were taken. They are being forced to walk in front of the soldiers as human shields. All of them are from Wae Yee Hine Village,” she explained.

The detainees were held for two days and only released in the evening of September 27. Despite pushing their operations toward Taung Soon Village, no clashes with resistance forces have been reported so far.

However, the junta continues to terrorize civilians through its presence.

By September 29, local resistance groups confirmed that the military had set up new security posts and checkpoints, while blocking and searching roads in and around Kyaung Ywar Village.

The abduction and use of civilians as human shields is a clear violation of international humanitarian law, yet it has become a recurring tactic by the junta in Mon State. Community members say fear remains high, with villagers unable to tend to their livelihoods without the risk of arbitrary arrest.

In Lamaing Town, Ye Township, Mon State, the situation has become increasingly tense following the killing of the township administrator. In response, junta troops from the Light Infantry Battalion No. 106 arbitrarily arrested 30 young residents, including those merely passing by.

While most have since been released after their families paid large ransoms, one man remains in detention.

On the morning of September 28, two armed men shot and killed U Kyaw Oo, the administrator of Ward No. 1, in front of his home in Lamaing. Following the attack, junta forces and police launched a series of raids.

They set up roadblocks at the town's entrances and exits, arresting young men travelling on motorcycles or walking nearby.

“They stopped people on the road and took them to Infantry Battalion 106,” said a woman close to one of the detainees.

“Families had to pay between 1 and 2.5 million kyats to get their loved ones released. Those who couldn't pay remain detained.”

As of October 8, one man from the group was still being held at Infantry Battalion 106 in Mawkanin, according to a local source. The detainees, aged between 20 and 30, came from Lamaing Town and nearby villages, including Mawkanin, Mawkanin Ywar Thit, Kawk Dot, and Taung Bone. Many of their motorcycles were confiscated during the arrests.

Residents said the junta's actions have created fear throughout Lamaing and the surrounding areas. *“People are afraid to travel. Even going out to buy food has become dangerous,”* another villager told HURFOM field reporters.

The arrests followed similar incidents elsewhere in Mon State. On the same day, September 28, junta troops raided Kayin Lay Seik Village in Thaton Township and detained several residents, including children.

HURFOM continues to document these widespread abuses, which form part

of the junta's systematic campaign of intimidation and collective punishment against civilians.

HURFOM field sources confirm that young people in Thaton Township, Mon State, are being arbitrarily arrested, detained, and extorted for ransom payments by junta authorities and pro-military militia forces, leaving families traumatized and financially devastated.

Residents report that Major Sann Win Aung, a member of the Thaton Township Administrative Council, and Deputy Police Lieutenant Colonel Myint Naing, the district police chief, are working together to lead these coordinated crackdowns.

Dozens of young men have been kidnapped from streets and homes, then forced to pay as much as 5 million Kyat (approximately 50 lakhs) for their release. Those unable to pay are sent directly to military training camps as forced conscripts.

A local activist and resistance member from Thaton described the worsening situation:

“Young people are being grabbed both day and night. They come to houses claiming to check guest lists, but instead, they pull people out and detain them.”

Within three to five days, families are told to pay 5 million Kyat to get their loved ones back. If they can't pay in time, the youths are sent straight to military training schools.”

The joint forces of pro-junta Pyu Saw Htee militia, military troops, and local police are said to be conducting these operations around the clock.

Residents said the militia groups, often armed and trained by the junta, are notorious for their brutality, routinely harassing, beating, and intimidating villagers, especially the poor.

A witness told HURFOM:

“The militia under Major Sann Win Aung is out every night. They patrol the streets and assault anyone they see, whether it’s an adult or a teenager. If a young man fits the age for conscription, they arrest him immediately.”

One family in Thaton shared their ordeal after their son was taken from the town center earlier this month:

“He was arrested for riding a motorcycle without a helmet. They told us to pay 5 million Kyat to release him. We couldn’t afford it, so on October 13, he was sent to Batch 18 of military training.”

HURFOM sources estimate that between 150 and 300 young men are being arrested each month in Thaton Township under the pretext of military service.

Many families have been forced to sell land, gold, or property to pay ransom for their loved ones, while others have lost contact entirely with detained relatives.

Long-serving junta officials in the area, including Major Sann Win Aung and Deputy Police Chief Myint Naing, are reportedly well known for their corruption.

They are said to target wealthier families and business owners for repeated extortion, using arrest and conscription threats as leverage.

Residents told HURFOM that the pattern of abuses, arbitrary arrests, extortion, and forced recruitment has created a climate of fear. Parents now restrict their children from leaving home, and communities across Thaton live under constant tension, uncertain who might be taken next.



TANINTHARYI REGION

27,500 Newly Displaced

35 Injured, 15 Killed

Karen State



Mon State



Violence across the Tanintharyi Region continues to threaten local livelihoods and survival. On the evening of September 28, junta troops launched an assault on Minn Pyin Village, Palaw Township, setting homes ablaze as terrified residents fled for safety. According to HURFOM's field network, the raid began shortly after 8:00 PM when the junta forces advanced into the community and deliberately torched houses.

"The whole village has been forced to flee. The soldiers began setting our homes on fire. We still cannot confirm if anyone has been detained or hurt," said a resident.

The attack followed recent clashes in the area. On September 26, heavy fighting broke out between Junta troops and resistance forces, leading to road closures from Mee Laung Chaung to Magyee Gone, a stretch of more than 20 miles.

Skirmishes along this route have become frequent, often accompanied by artillery fire that endangers civilians. HURFOM's ground team continues to investigate the scale of damage, potential civilian harm, and related human rights violations

In a separate incident, at least 73 homes were destroyed after junta troops set fire to Kyauk Hlay Karr village, Tha

Yet Chaung Township, Dawei District. According to a statement released by the Karen National Union (KNU) Brigade 4, Department of Public Relations and Information, the arson attack followed clashes between junta troops advancing from Uttu village towards Inn Pyar and Kyauk Hlay Karr villages and resistance forces on September 29 and 30.

"After the fighting broke out, they burned the houses. The soldiers are torching one village after another," said a resident who witnessed the destruction.

The KNU confirmed that at 7 AM on September 30, KNLA Battalion 12 under Brigade 4, together with allied resistance groups, launched an ambush on junta forces advancing deeper into northern Tha Yet Chaung Township near Kyauk Hlay Karr.

In retaliation, the junta responded with collective punishment by setting fire to 73 houses in the village, despite no civilians being involved in the battle. The arson was carried out by a joint military column made up of junta battalions 403, 404, and 405.

The attacks are part of a wider pattern of deliberate destruction of civilian property across Tha Yet Chaung. On August 17,

troops burned down one house and a car in Uttu village. Days later, on August 22, 19 homes were torched in Moe Shwe Kone village, followed by 58 houses in Saw Phyar on August 25. On September 7, more than 30 homes in Yan Taung and eight homes in Thin Kyun were also set ablaze.

Once again, the junta's actions demonstrate a strategy of terror against communities by systematically targeting villages, burning homes, and displacing families who are already living under constant threat. A former village committee member, now displaced with his family in Tha Yet Chaung, explained the junta's strategy:

“The military has targeted Dawei District as a main focus. They seek to eliminate all resistance before the election to establish full control. They employ two tactics: in areas where they want polling stations, they work aggressively with troops and weapons until they dominate. But in places they cannot fully control, they destroy everything.

They kill people, burn entire villages, and erase livelihoods so no one remains. It is unbelievably cruel. In the two months before their sham election, we fear how many more human rights violations they will commit.”

Clashes between junta forces and allied resistance groups have raged for two consecutive days near Aye Kani village, located inside the Dawei Special

Economic Zone (SEZ) in Yebyu Township, Dawei District. The violence has forced residents from at least six surrounding villages to flee.

The first outbreak of fighting began early on September 30, at 5 AM and lasted until midday, involving roughly 100 junta soldiers. The clashes reignited the following morning, October 1, and continued throughout the day.

“All the villagers have fled. Some people who were arrested earlier were released,” one resident explained.

The escalation followed a string of military raids days earlier. On September 27, junta troops reached Pa Gaw Zun village and arrested about 30 residents. After spending the night there, the troops advanced on September 28 to Wek Chaung and Khamaung Chaung villages.

Although most of those detained in Pa Gaw Zun were released when the soldiers left, at least one man was taken away in custody, a local woman reported.

On September 29, soldiers occupied Khamaung Chaung Monastery before moving toward Aye Kani village the next morning. Their advance triggered panic across the area, displacing hundreds of civilians.

As a result, villagers from Wek Chaung, Khamaung Chaung, Aye Kani, Wa Zun Taw, Kone Thaya Inn, and Ya Nge have abandoned their homes. Others nearby

remain on high alert, monitoring Junta troop movements as fighting shows no signs of abating.

This latest round of violence adds to an already worsening humanitarian crisis in Yebyu Township.

Over the past 15 months, more than 8,000 residents from villages including Mu Du, Yae Line, Pa Gaw Zun, Wek Chaung, Khamaung Chaung, Aye Kani, Ya Nge, Wa Zun Taw, Pain Shaung, Daung Shaung, and Sin Phunit have been repeatedly displaced due to ongoing junta offensives.

HURFOM has documented how military raids, arbitrary arrests, and scorched-earth tactics in these areas have left families unable to return home. Villagers who once relied on farming and fishing for their livelihoods are now scattered, living in temporary shelters or hiding in the forests, with limited access to food, medicine, and safety.

The targeting of communities within and around the Dawei SEZ reveals a consistent pattern: the junta is employing indiscriminate violence and forced displacement to try to secure control over strategic areas, regardless of the devastating toll on civilians, including children who are vulnerable to diseases.

More than 300 displaced villagers, many of them children, are suffering from skin diseases and urgently need medicine in Laung Lon Township, Dawei District, Tanintharyi Region.

The outbreak began around June 2024 among internally displaced persons who fled their homes after the junta attacks. It has since spread widely, with children the most severely affected.

“The disease has hit the children the hardest, but older people are also suffering. Most of these IDPs are from Nyaung Pin Village, which the junta almost completely burned down,” explained a local woman.

At present, a medical team from the People’s Defence Force, in coordination with the Laung Lon Township People’s Administration Team (PAT), is providing treatment. However, supplies remain extremely limited, and the need for medicine is urgent.

The displaced families are primarily from Oat Kyauk Wut and Nyaung Pin villages, both of which were destroyed when troops burned entire communities.

The outbreak began after survivors were forced to live together in cramped, makeshift shelters, where overcrowding and poor conditions worsened the spread of disease.

Troops from the military junta have burned down at least 11 houses in Min Pyin Village, near Pala Town in Palaw Township, Myeik District. The attacks took place on October 8, as part of the junta’s ongoing campaign to regain control of Union Highway No. 8, which runs from Palauk and Pala to Myeik,

and to prepare the area for its planned sham elections. A local woman told HURFOM that the destruction targeted civilians with no links to the resistance movement:

“Even though the villagers have no connection with any revolutionary forces, their homes were burned. The military is clearing the area along the Union Highway and is still stationed near Min Pyin Village, close to Pala.”

The military’s operations in the area have intensified in recent weeks. According to residents and members of the People’s Defence Forces (PDF), fighting has been ongoing for more than two months in and around Pala Town, including in Min Pyin and neighbouring villages.

Earlier in the month, the junta carried out multiple arson attacks: three houses were burned on October 4 in Myok In Ward, followed by seven more houses on October 6, and another round of destruction on October 8.

The air and ground assaults have been relentless. On October 2, junta aircraft dropped two bombs on Min Pyin Village, followed by heavy machine gun fire and artillery shells launched from nearby waterways.

As a result, hundreds of residents from Pala, Min Pyin, and nearby communities have fled their homes, joining the growing number of IDPs in southern Tanintharyi.

Local humanitarian workers have reported that civilians are now facing severe shortages of food, medicine, and shelter materials as the military continues to target populated areas under the pretext of “security clearance.”

These repeated attacks on civilian homes and communities once again demonstrate the junta’s systematic pattern of collective punishment, destroying lives and livelihoods to instill fear and regain control over resistance-held areas.

Intense fighting broke out near Launglon Town, Dawei District, on the morning of October 10, forcing residents to flee as junta troops clashed with resistance forces. The battle reportedly lasted for more than two hours, with gunfire still echoing through nearby villages the following morning.

Junta forces had entered Nyin Maw Village, located close to Launglon, early on October 9 and arrested five migrant workers before moving further toward the outskirts of the town. The arrests created panic among residents already living under constant fear of military operations.

“Around 10 AM, heavy gunfire erupted, and it continued for hours,” said a woman from Launglon.

“We don’t know exactly what’s happening, but people had to run. The shooting hasn’t stopped.”

The confrontation is part of a broader escalation in Tanintharyi Region, where the junta has intensified both air and ground attacks as it pushes to regain control ahead of its planned sham election. Local humanitarian networks warn that renewed clashes are driving more families into displacement, worsening an already fragile situation for civilians in conflict-affected areas.

Fierce fighting between the military troops and resistance forces broke out near Launglon Town, Dawei District, on the morning of October 10, forcing hundreds of residents to flee their homes. Local sources told HURFOM that the clashes lasted for more than two hours, with gunfire continuing intermittently until the next day.

Before the fighting, junta troops from Light Infantry Battalions (LIB) 406 and 408 entered Nyin Maw Village on October 9, where they arrested five migrant workers who had been living there for farm work. As of October 13, the men, identified by family members as Ko Thet Oo (44) and U Toe (50), among others, remain missing. Their relatives have received no information about their whereabouts or condition since they were taken away.

A 35-year-old man close to the victims' families said, *“The military entered early in the morning and took away five migrant workers who were not from our village. They came here more than two years ago to work in the fields. Since they were arrested, we haven’t heard anything. We’re very worried because in past clashes, the junta used villagers as human shields or forced them to walk in front of their troops.”*

Fighting continued until the afternoon of October 13 as the junta pushed deeper into the area. More than 200 villagers have since fled their homes to seek safety. A former village committee member told HURFOM that arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances have become common.

“The military deliberately positions itself among civilians, using them as cover during battles. It’s a clear pattern of crimes

against humanity. Over the past two years, at least ten people from our area have been taken and never returned.”

As the junta’s election commission prepares for its planned polls, military operations and airstrikes have intensified across Tanintharyi Region. Local monitors report that the number of IDPs has now exceeded 20,000, with entire communities uprooted amid the military’s escalating attacks.

Cases of extortion also remain on the rise. Residents of Min Thar Village, in the Kanbauk area of Yebyu Township, Dawei District, reported that members of a junta-backed Pyu Saw Htee militia have been extorting money from men whose names were drawn for forced military conscription.

According to a local woman from Min Thar village tract, militia members informed villagers that the selected men were chosen in the junta’s conscription lottery in September and were required to serve in the military. Those who refused to serve were told to pay at least 300,000 kyats to avoid recruitment.

“They first demanded about one million kyats, but because most people couldn’t afford that much, they lowered it to 300,000. Around ten men have already paid,” she said.

Since 2024, the Navy Training School under the Mawrawaddy Naval Base, located near Thingan Taw Village in Thae Chaung village tract, has been training new conscripts. A source close to the base said that some of the recruits are not initially from Kanbauk but from other regions.

Since 2022, the junta has armed and deployed Pyu Saw Htee militia groups across several villages in the Kanbauk area, including Faung Taw, Maw Gyi, Thae Chaung, and Min Thar, where they continue to operate alongside junta troops to enforce military recruitment and suppress local communities through fear and extortion.

Residents from Za Di Village Tract, located in the Kanbauk area of Yebyu Township, Dawei District, have been fleeing their homes since the second week of October as troops advanced into the area.

Beginning around October 12, soldiers from Infantry Battalion 273 (based in Kanbauk) and Light Infantry Battalion 409 (from Kalein Aung) launched an operation from Phaung Taw Village, moving through Maw Gyi Village and along the Maw Gyi road toward Za Di. At the same time, troops from the Mawrawaddy Naval Base advanced by boat from Kyauk Htaran Village to join the operation.

Although no direct clashes have been reported so far, troops destroyed parts of the road inside Za Di Village and briefly detained and questioned several residents before releasing them. *“Some villagers were stopped and questioned but not arrested,”* said a woman from Za Di Village Tract.

As of October 15, about 100 soldiers from ground and naval units were seen marching along the Thout Wa–Bawa road near Nabulae, reportedly joining forces with Junta troops stationed in the Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ). Around 50 more soldiers are positioned near Kyauk Htaran Village, close to Za Di village.

Fearing renewed fighting, locals from Kaung Pyan, Deik Ta Kaw, and Thout Wa villages have fled once again. Za Di residents say this is not the first time they have had to escape; many have been displaced multiple times since the Kanbauk Reservoir battle in December 2024. Some who had only recently returned home have now been forced to flee again.

Those displaced along the Kanbauk–Nabulae road, which links the Dawei SEZ and nearby natural gas fields, are struggling to find safe shelter amid heavy rains, with many exposed to the weather and lacking basic protection.

Residents from at least five villages in the Kyauk Zin village tract of Launglon Township were forced to flee after junta

troops launched a military advance into the area. Local sources confirmed that the soldiers arrested several villagers and used them as human shields during their movement.

The military column, estimated at over 100 troops, entered Thabot Seik village, adjacent to Kyauk Zin village, on the morning of October 20. According to a resident from Thabot Seik, some villagers were captured while travelling on local roads.

“They came by boat and spent one night in Kyauk Zin. The next morning, they moved toward Thabot Seik and arrested locals they met along the way to use them as human shields. Everyone is extremely worried,” said the villager.

Local sources reported that the troops arrived at Kyauk Zin from the western sea by navy vessel on the morning of October 19. The following afternoon, at least two artillery shells were fired from the navy ship positioned west of Kyauk Zin village. Fearing escalating violence, residents from Kyauk Zin, Thabot Seik, Pyin Gyi, Kayin Gyi, and Kanpanee villages have fled to safer areas.

On October 20, the navy vessel repositioned from west of Kyauk Zin to waters near Myaw Yit Pagoda, close to Kanpanee village. This marks the first military incursion into the Kyauk Zin village tract in 2025, following a previous operation in August last year. Locals said they fear renewed raids and arbitrary arrests as the junta intensifies its offensives across Laung Lone Township.

Following a clash between junta troops and resistance forces in the Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Yebyu Township, Dawei District, junta soldiers set fire to more than 16 civilian houses in Khamaung Chaung and Wek Chaung villages, according to residents.

A villager from Khamaung Chaung told HURFOM that nearly 100 junta soldiers advanced from Dauk Lauk Village toward Khamaung Chaung on the evening of October 18, where

fighting broke out between the two sides along the road between Khamaung Chaung and Wek Chaung.

“All of us fled the village when the fighting started. That night, the soldiers set fire to ten houses in Khamaung Chaung,” he said.

Two days later, on October 20, the same column of troops continued burning homes, torching seven more houses in nearby Wek Chaung Village.

Local communities say the junta has reinforced a large number of troops inside the Dawei SEZ area in recent weeks. Soldiers have also been repairing the highway that links the SEZ to the Dawei deep-sea port and the Thai border, signalling preparations for expanded military movement.

Meanwhile, the junta has strengthened both its land and river operations, deploying nearly 500 soldiers along the newly repaired route. A separate naval column of about 100 troops from the Mawrawaddy Naval Base in the Kanbauk area has been moving between coastal villages since mid-October. On October 20, the naval troops reached Thabot Seik Village in Launglon Township, forcing residents to flee in fear.

MONTHLY FEATURE

Vetting Matters: Calls Grow to Bar Rights Abusers from Junta's Election in Mon State

As the junta prepares to hold its planned 2025 election, political observers and rights monitors in Mon State are warning that without proper vetting of candidates, individuals with a history of serious crimes, corruption, and human rights violations could once again gain power.

They are urging the public to carefully assess who they vote for and to reject those who have previously participated in abuses, exploitation, and collaboration with the Junta's repressive system.

"Vetting is not just a political process; it's about protecting people's rights and dignity. If known abusers or corrupt officials return to power, it will be a disaster for ordinary civilians," said one political observer in Mon State

Although the vetting of candidates is difficult in areas under the junta's tight control, such as Mon State, rights advocates emphasize that citizens can still make informed choices by examining each candidate's record, behaviour, and links to repression.

Many Union Solidarity and Development Party candidates running in Mon State are reportedly former junta administrators, military officers, and collaborators directly involved in arbitrary arrests, extortion, land grabs, and local surveillance.

In Mawlamyine Township, residents have identified notorious figures such as U Thet Htwe, the Mon State USDP Chair, and U Tin Cho, the Township Party Chairman, among those contesting in the upcoming election.

“Both of them are known criminals. Their human rights violations continue even today. U Tin Cho acts like a thug leader. He’s involved in illegal gambling networks, unlicensed lotteries, and land confiscations. He’s also behind the extortion of young men being forced into military service,” said a 40-year-old Mawlamyine resident who previously worked with the township election commission.

According to the Election Commission’s latest announcement, U Tin Cho has been nominated as a proportional representative candidate for the Mon State Parliament (Constituency No. 1) under the USDP ticket, a move that has deepened local fears.

A source close to the Mon State administration confirmed that several other USDP candidates are widely known for illegal gambling operations, drug trafficking, and organized extortion networks.

“Some already have plans to secure top government positions if they win — like becoming ministers or senior department heads,” said the source.

In Mudon Township, informants told HURFOM that USDP officials U Min Aung Myint and U Zaw Myint have allegedly accepted bribes and are promoting their allies in exchange for loyalty.

“In the villages, they’re threatening those who oppose the election with harsh punishment. They alter voter lists anytime they wish to make the process chaotic and untrustworthy,” said a youth from Mudon Township.

USDP loyalists have also formed gang-like groups, and some are reportedly armed and supported by the junta under the guise of local security.

In Mawlamyine, ward administrators appointed by the Party’s Chair are all USDP members, earning

millions of MMK in illegal monthly income and paying to higher officials, according to a local community worker. These administrators profit from illicit businesses such as restaurants, karaoke bars, massage parlours, drug sales, gambling, land speculation, and recruitment fees for conscription.

Since early 2024, gambling venues have reopened openly across Mawlamyine, bringing increased profits to junta-linked local officials. Local civil society networks and legal experts stress that vetting electoral candidates is a necessary step to prevent human rights abusers from holding public office again.

“Under international law, vetting helps ensure accountability and trust in public institutions,” explained a young lawyer and CDM activist based in an ERO-controlled area.

“Even if we can’t stop the junta’s election, we can still refuse to legitimize it by voting for known criminals. It’s our responsibility as citizens. If these people return to power, the consequences will be unbearable.”

Election observers and civil society monitors in Mon State have urged Mon nationality voters to understand and exercise their political and citizenship rights by refusing to participate in the junta’s upcoming election and ensuring ethnic political party candidates are properly vetted.

According to HURFOM field sources, the recommendation was made after observing several ethnic political parties and their candidates who plan to contest seats in both the State Parliament and the National Parliament.

“In Mon State, we have seen many candidates representing ethnic parties, Mon, Karen, and Pa’O — listed by the Election Commission to compete in the

junta's planned December election. But it is difficult to understand how these parties can participate in an election that is neither free nor fair and entirely led by the military," said a 50-year-old voter education trainer from the Mon political community.

He emphasized that voters must carefully examine the backgrounds of ethnic candidates who claim to represent their people.

"When we vet our ethnic representatives, we must ask, is this person a supporter of the Junta, an opportunist, or someone who has been involved in past human rights violations? Or are they just running for personal gain in a future military-controlled government?"

If so, then our right as citizens will be lost the moment we cast a vote for them," he explained.

The source added that some of the candidates running under ethnic party banners were formerly active in CSO fields during the previous administrations.

"Today, their current positions and loyalties must be carefully reviewed. Before giving our vote, we need to examine their actions, their values, and whether they still stand for the people they once claimed to serve," he continued.

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**

OCTOBER 2025

