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MYANMAR FACEBOOK ANTI-JUNTA POSTS PLACE POSTERS IN PRISON

It is truly shocking and sad to see the number of Myanmar citizens who have been jailed for social media posts that are deemed critical of the illegal Myanmar junta.

The worst sentence handed out was 20 years in prison, just for making comments critical of the regime.

Data4Myanmar has been keeping track of the toll in the social media space. Last week they put up two interesting infographics on X, formerly Twitter. The images show that as of September 2023, a total of 1,316 people were detained by the Myanmar authorities for criticizing the junta and supporting the opposition forces on social media platforms. Most of the detainees were Facebook users. An average of 65 people were detained every month this year, Data4Myanmar notes.

The thread on X contains additional information: On January 25, 2022, the SAC announced that the public should refrain from sharing content on inciting violence and supporting the National Unity Government (NUG) and its affiliated organizations through social media. Otherwise, actions would be taken according to Section 52(a) of the Anti-Terrorism Law, Section 124-A and Section 505-A of the Penal Code, and Section 33(a) of the Electronic Communications Act.

In addition, daily newspapers and news media close to the

military junta published the news of actions taken. Most of the detainees were Facebook users, but some TikTok and Telegram users were also arrested. From May to August 2022, more than 100 people were arrested every month, amounting to 500 detainees in four months.

Almost half of the detainees are from Yangon and Mandalay regions, with more than 600 people, which suggests the social media users were closer to the arm of the law, in that it was easier to arrest them.

Data4Myanmar tells us it does not have detailed information such as the latest situation of the detainees. The data was compiled by monitoring daily newspapers and news media close to the military junta. Duplicate names were counted only once, and detainees without names, or not verified, were excluded.

Arguably, the person to be most sorry for is a Myanmar rapper. In August this year, the Myanmar junta sentenced a hip-hop singer Byu Har to 20 years in prison for a video published on social media in which he complained about electricity shortages and criticized the junta's leadership, calling Min Aung Hlaing "an incompetent fool".

Byu Har may well have been upset but he has paid a heavy price for speaking out.

EDITORIAL

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WEEKLY

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MIZZIMA MAGAZINE

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UNUSUALLY HEAVY MONSOON

People in Bago carry some of their belongings as they move to a place to shelter.

Photo: AFP

IN FOCUS



ADMINISTRATION OFFICE IN YESAGYO TOWNSHIP, MAGWAY REGION ATTACKED

One civilian and three junta soldiers were injured when the Myingyan Black Tiger Force attacked the administration office in Yesagyo Town in Magway Region, on 7 October.

The Black Tiger Force fired a 40mm mortar shell into the office and fired small arms as they retreated.

Captain Mike Khae, the leader of Myingyan Black Tiger Force said: “We utilised guerrilla tactics when we attacked the Military Council. We fired a 40 mm mortar shell directly at the office. Following the mortar attack, we fired small arms before retreating from the scene.”

He added that the junta troops responded to the attack by firing artillery and small arms. No defence

force fighters were injured but, unfortunately, a civilian was injured in the exchange of fire.

“It has been confirmed that a civilian was injured in the leg by Military Council artillery fire”, said Captain Mike Khae.

Three junta soldiers were also injured during the attack, according to local sources.

Since the attack junta troops have increased security measures in the vicinity of the administration office, according to local residents.

The Myingyan Black Tiger Force previously attacked the administration office in Yesagyo Town on 9 September. On that occasion, two junta soldiers were killed.

JUNTA STOPS FUEL ENTERING FIVE PALAW TOWNSHIP VILLAGES IN TANINTHARYI REGION

Villagers in five villages in Tanintharyi Region’s Palaw Township are unable to go fishing because the junta has banned fuel from being bought into the villages.

The situation has been ongoing for the last 20 days. Now villagers are unable to buy fuel from vendors in the villages and are unable to purchase it from other areas because they are not allowed to bring it back to their villages.

The affected villages are Lakku, MhawK-yaung, Mya Daung, Pitat, and Minhtain.

A Lakku villager said: “We are facing hardships as there is no fuel available for our fishing boats. These villages rely on fishing, and the lack of fuel is greatly impacting our livelihoods.”

As they have not been able to take their boats out for 20 days, some of the fishers have had to go find

work on other fishing boats in nearby townships.

Another Lakku villager said: “We have completely run out of fuel. As a result, our fishing boats cannot put to sea and go fishing. Also, many of the villagers are scared that if we do attempt to go out to sea, we may be targeted or attacked by the Military Council. We don’t know why they have banned fuel [in our village].”

Lakku Village and Mya Daung Village in Lakku Village tract are the closest villages to the sea and the junta have been blockading them with boats, causing the villagers to fear for their lives and flee.

Many junta soldiers have entered Palaw Township, both by land and sea. Because there are so many soldiers in the area they have frequently clashed with Palaw Township defence forces.

DISPLACED CANNOT RETURN TO THEIR HOMES IN MOGOK TOWNSHIP, MANDALAY REGION

More than 500 displaced people cannot return to their villages in Mogok Township, Mandalay because the junta has been firing heavy artillery at the villages since 15 September.

One month ago, on 10 September, heavy fighting broke out between the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the junta in Mogok Township. The fighting lasted for about five days. Since it died out on 15 September until the time of reporting, 10 October, the junta has been firing artillery into the villages, despite there no longer being any fighting in the area.

“There was fierce fighting for about five days, starting on 10 September. Currently, there is no fighting but the military has been firing artillery at the villages of

Konesan, Nyaungkon and Phyuayaung until this morning [10 October]. The villagers now want to go home because they are having difficulties getting food but they still don't dare go home because artillery shells often land in the villages”, said a source in Mogok.

Previously, on 20 September, a five-year-old boy was killed and his father was injured when an artillery round hit their house.

Talking of the displaced people a villager from Konesan said: “Most are in the nearby forest. Only a very few can run to urban areas. Nobody dares to return to their village because we are afraid of the shelling.”

JUNTA KILLS TWO LOCALS AND BURNS DOWN HOUSES IN KALAY TOWNSHIP

Junta soldiers killed two people and set fire to houses when they attacked Sekant Village in the southwest of Sagaing region's Kalay township from 7 to 10 October.

Many villagers were forced to flee their homes when the military started attacking the village with mortars and small arms fire at 8:00 a.m. on 7 October.

During that attack 67-year-old Grandmother Ngaïke Hnem and her 14-year-old grandson Salai Van Bwai Liang were killed and the junta soldiers burned their bodies according to Salai Liang Pi, a spokesperson for the Chin National Organization- Upper Chindwin Region (CNO UCR).

He said: “Some of the villagers became aware of the disappearance of Ngaïke Hnem and Salai Van Bwai Liang and attempted to reach out to the latter via phone on the morning on 8 October. Shockingly, a military soldier answered the deceased person's phone and confirmed that both of them had indeed died.”

He also said that the junta soldiers continued setting fire to the houses for four days, until 10 October.

At 6:30 a.m. on 8 October, they set fire to Sekant Village and smoke was visible until 6:00 p.m. On 9 October smoke was seen rising from four areas of the village and at about 9:00 a.m. on 10 October, another fire broke out in the village. It has been impossible to ascertain how many houses have been destroyed because junta soldiers are still stationed in the village.

Though the majority of villagers fled from Sekant Village, four people, two elderly men and two people with learning difficulties, remained in the village. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to contact them since the other villagers fled.

On the morning of 10 October, the junta soldiers left Sekant Village and started moving towards the nearby village of Shartaw, also in Kalay Township. As a result, villagers from nearby villages such as Shartaw, Myaungsone, Sintaw, and Sisan have fled their homes.



FIGHTING FOR ATTENTION

Myanmar's 'just cause' drowned out by Israel and Ukraine conflicts



The crater caused by the bomb that landed on the Kachin IDP camp. Photo: AFP

Think of the irony. Waichyai Naw, a resident of Myanmar's Kachin State, was glued to the news of the brutal Israel-Gaza conflict on his TV on the evening of 9 October when he jumped up suddenly in response to a whistling sound and large explosion.

The horrific war that broke out 7 October between Hamas and Israel has the world transfixed. But for Waichyai Naw, the war in Myanmar – a far less publicized conflict - was brought home to him personally, on his doorstep, and in all its horror.

"I heard a loud sound after 11 pm last night, October 9... from the area where the IDPs were temporarily residing," he told NGO Fortify Rights. "I was at home watching the Gaza-Israel news, and I heard a loud explosion. It felt like a strong earthquake. Not just my house but the whole town felt this. Some of the ceil-

ings at the church dropped down during the explosion. Some of the concrete from the walls fell in my house. It was very severe."

The attack on the Mong Lai Hkyet internally displaced people's camp was indeed a shock to the Kachin man, who went out with a torch in the dark to check the aftermath.

"I could hear the speeding sound pheeee and then a loud bang and an explosion. People I spoke to from nearby also said the shelling exploded in three steps. The drop area was like half an acre. I saw a lot of destruction. The surrounding area of the drop site looked like a cyclone had come in. Some of the houses' roofs were blown off."

Waichyai Naw, 44, who preferred the interviewer use a pseudonym, was for a moment caught between two worlds. One moment he had been watch-



A line of coffins ready for burial. Photo: AFP



● Kachin people hold prayers at the burial site. Photo: AFP

ing the TV and the shocking news coming out of Israel. The next he was grappling with the war on his doorstep.

CIVILIANS MASSACRED

The Mong Lai Hkyet camp attack was more than likely caused by a large unguided aerial-delivered bomb, according to Amnesty International, weaponry said to be in the Myanmar junta's inventory.

A total of 29 men, women and children were killed and 57 injured in the shock nighttime attack near Laiza in Kachin State close to the Myanmar-China border.

The National Unity Government (NUG) claims this was one of 22 "massacres" carried out by the illegal junta since it grabbed power in a coup in February 2021, including an attack on a concert in Kachin State in October 2022 that killed several dozen people.

What Waichyai Naw found in Mong Lai Hkyet camp, home to around 600 people, was horrifying.

Structures of wood, corrugated metal and bamboo lay crumpled and twisted, and a wooden sign pointing the way to a local school lay lopsided in the earth. Residents working in small groups picked through the debris to salvage belongings. The blast shattered windows in the hospital at Laiza, where some of the 56 wounded in the attack were treated.

The dead were buried on the day after the attack with a crowd singing Christian hymns as wooden coffins were lowered into the ground. Some family members wept and laid wreaths of flowers before an excavator pushed earth over the resting places.

Tensions are high, the situation getting worse.

The Kachin Independence Army (KIA) controls swathes of Christian-majority Kachin State and has clashed with the military for decades. The region

has seen heavy fighting in the wake of the coup, with the military accusing the KIA of arming and training the newer People's Defence Forces that have sprung up to battle the junta.

NOT AN ISOLATED INCIDENT

The Kachin IDP camp attack was not an isolated incident. It was yet one more confirmation of the brutality of the Myanmar junta, a message that still needs to be emphasized to a wider world.

The National Unity Government (NUG) claims this was one of 22 "massacres" carried out by the illegal junta since it grabbed power in a coup in February 2021, including an attack on a concert in Kachin State in October 2022 that killed several dozen people.

NGO Fortify Rights has urged the UN Security Council to refer the situation in the country to the International Criminal Court as it is the legal authority, under Chapter VII, to mandate arms embargoes to maintain or restore international peace and security.



● Grieving parents cry over the loss of their children in the attack. Photo: Facebook

John Quinley, the director of Fortify Rights, said in a statement after this latest assault: “The Myanmar junta is a long-time threat to international peace and security, and UN member states have the responsibility to prevent and remedy the atrocities.”

He said the international community must work with the people of Myanmar and local humanitarian groups to aid those displaced by these ongoing brutal acts of violence.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Various UN players, including the UN secretary general, did speak out about the Kachin IDP camp attack, as did country ambassadors, including the USA, Canada and the UK.

The United Nations Secretary-General’s office said: “The Secretary-General is alarmed by reports of the killing of dozens of civilians – including internally displaced persons, many of them women and children – in a bombing in Myanmar’s Kachin state on 9 October. Those responsible must be held to account.

“The Secretary-General condemns all forms of violence, including the military’s intensifying attacks throughout the country, which continue to fuel regional instability. He continues to urge neighboring countries in particular to leverage their influence.

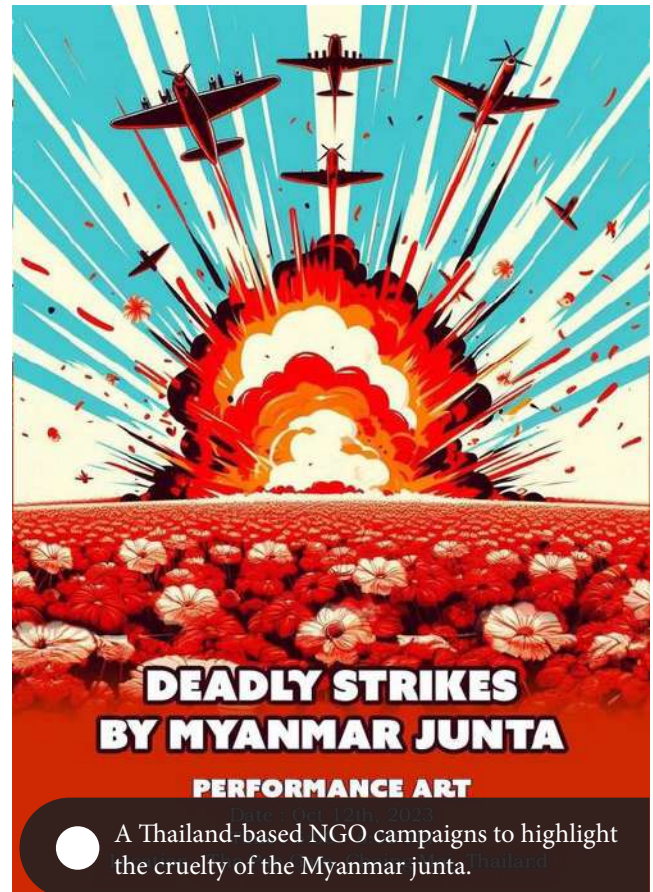
“The Secretary-General reaffirms that civilians should be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law.”

BRUTALITY

Despite the public statements on a world level, it is hard to ignore the fact that other conflicts get far more media air time compared to the brutality meted out by the illegal military junta in Myanmar.

Myanmar commentators have spoken out over how the Ukraine conflict “drowned out” the world media coverage of the Myanmar crisis. Now even Ukraine is being relegated to the sidelines as the Israel-Hamas conflict takes centre-stage in media and social media coverage.

The deliberate brutality of the Myanmar junta does need more world media coverage. But this is a tough call when other conflicts and tensions – important as they are - drown out what is happening in the Golden Land.



'MY HOUSE WAS SHAKING': DEADLY STRIKE LEAVES MYANMAR CAMP RUINED, DESERTED

Bamboo and sheet-metal shelters lie ruined in the hills of northern Myanmar after a deadly strike on a camp housing displaced people that a local rebel group says was carried out by the military.

Twenty-nine people were killed and dozens wounded in a strike late Monday night last week on the camp in Kachin state near the border with China, sparking a desperate rush to pull bodies from the debris by torchlight.

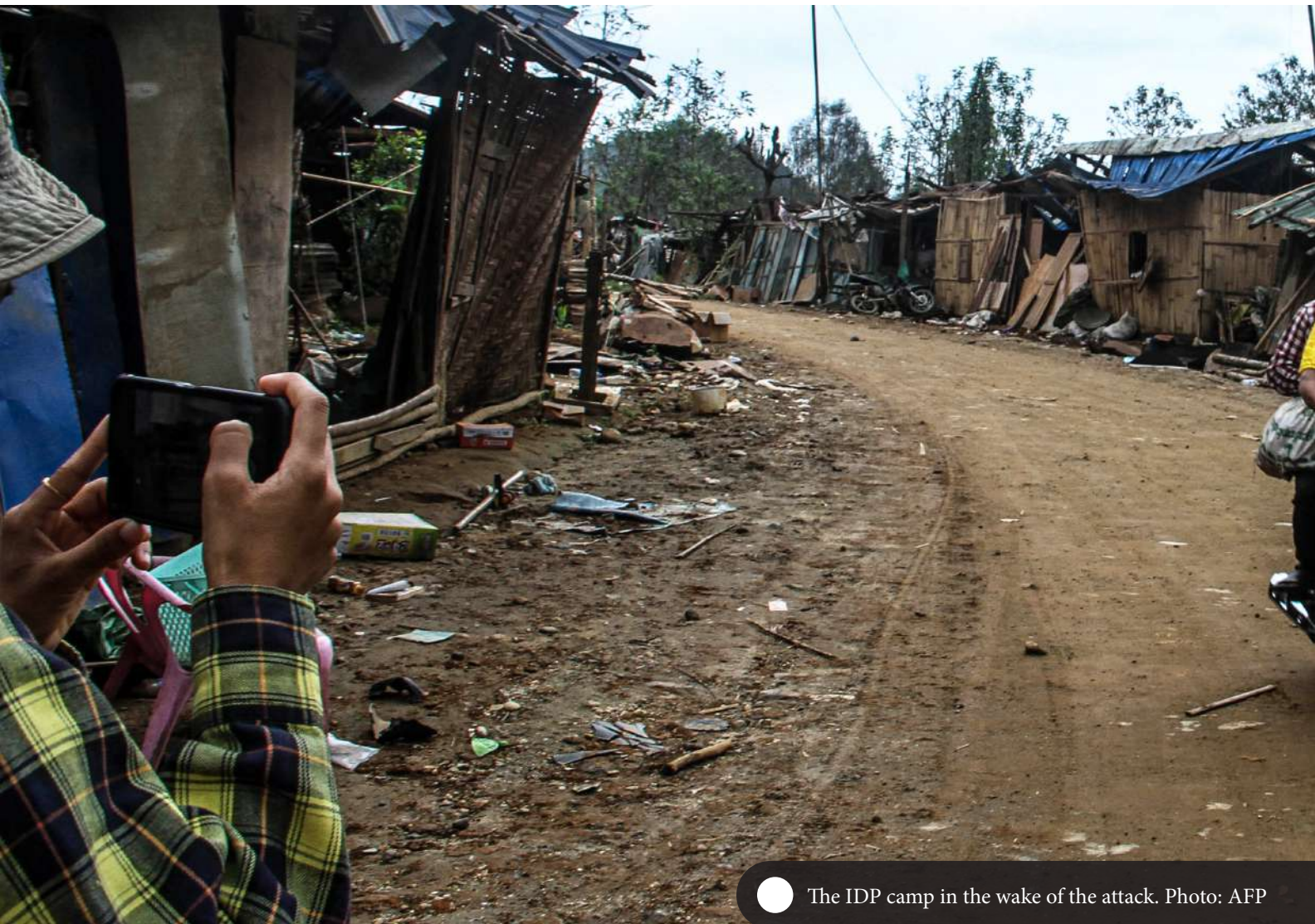
The camp is one of many in Myanmar's northern hills, home to the world's largest jade mines and a decades-long conflict between the military and eth-

nic Kachin rebels that has escalated since the junta seized power in a 2021 coup.

The explosion was felt in the town of Laiza, around two kilometres (1.2 miles) away, an activist based there told AFP.

"Even my house was shaking when the bomb hit the camp," she said, asking not to use her name due to security concerns.

Mong Lai Hkyet camp - home to around 600 people - was largely deserted on Wednesday, with soldiers from the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), which controls the area, restricting access to the scene.



The IDP camp in the wake of the attack. Photo: AFP

Structures of wood, corrugated metal and bamboo lay crumpled and twisted, and a wooden sign pointing the way to a local school lay lopsided in the earth.

Residents working in small groups picked through the debris to salvage belongings.

The blast shattered windows in the hospital at Laiza, where some of the 56 wounded in the attack were treated, the activist said.

The dead were buried on Tuesday afternoon; a crowd sang Christian hymns as wooden coffins were lowered into the ground.

Some family members wept and laid wreaths of flowers before an excavator pushed earth over the resting places.

The KIA controls swathes of Christian-majority Kachin state and has clashed with the military for de-

cedes.

The region has seen heavy fighting in the wake of the coup, with the military accusing the KIA of arming and training the newer People's Defence Forces that have sprung up to battle the junta.

'NEED TO RESETTLE'

A KIA investigation had determined the military had used a drone carrying "a huge bomb" in the attack, KIA spokesman Colonel Naw Bu told AFP.

The military has denied it was involved.

On Wednesday it said the blast was a result of an explosion at a KIA warehouse containing around 105 tonnes of ammonium nitrate and weapons.

The military added that it was still investigating what had set off the blast.

Laiza, nestled against the Chinese border, is the headquarters of the KIA, where it has trained and equipped other ethnic rebel groups battling the military in their homelands.

Military air strikes on a concert held by the KIA's political wing in October last year killed around 50 people and wounded 70.

The junta said reports that the air strike killed civilians were "rumours".

"Our people have lost their lives, their properties and their lives have been threatened," said the activist from Laiza.

"We urgently need to resettle people and find new livelihoods for the wounded, and it will be very hard to do this."

AFP



LARGE UNGUIDED BOMB LIKELY USED IN DEADLY MYANMAR STRIKE: AMNESTY

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



Myanmar's military used a large unguided aerial-delivered bomb in a deadly attack on a camp housing displaced people in the country's north, Amnesty International said Friday.

The ruling junta has been accused of carrying out multiple bloody attacks on civilians as it struggles to crush resistance to its 2021 coup.

The latest incident on Monday night saw 29 bodies and 56 wounded pulled from the debris at a camp near the northern town of Laiza, on the border with China, according to the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) ethnic rebel group.

An Amnesty International weapons expert analysed photos and videos of the aftermath of the attack that "show evidence of a single massive blast that flattened dozens of nearby buildings — including a church, preschool and many homes — and started fires".

"The size of the crater and observed damage is consistent with the largest aerial-delivered bombs known to be in the inventory of the Myanmar military," the rights group said.

"Amnesty International believes the Myanmar military almost certainly used an unguided bomb, which is an inaccurate weapon completely inappropriate for use in the vicinity of civilians."

The statement said the incident "may amount to a war crime".

"The blast wave caused catastrophic over-pressure and fragmentation injuries to the victims, including fatal wounds to heads, lacerations that exposed organs, and the removal and pulverisation of limbs," the rights group said.

The junta had said bombs belonging to rebels in the area caused the explosion without giving evidence.

But Amnesty International said the military's "explanation is at odds with consistent witness accounts, which noted the explosion served as the start of a coordinated attack".

"The bomb fell on a large open field with regular vehicle traffic, unlikely to be an ammonium nitrate storage area," the rights group added.

The KIA controls large parts of the Christian-majority Kachin state and has clashed with Myanmar's military for decades.

The region has seen intense fighting since the coup, and the junta accuses the rebels of training People's Defence Forces that have sprung up in resistance.

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was "alarmed" by the incident and that "those responsible must be held to account".

AFP

ESCALATING JUNTA ABUSES IN NORTHERN MYANMAR LINKED TO CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

Escalating abuses by junta troops in Kachin and northern Shan State are linked to the junta's attempts to secure transport routes to expand China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), according to a new report by the Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT).

The report documents a sharp increase since mid-2022 in the number of casualties of aerial bombardment, up to nearly 200, and in the number of villagers forced to be human shields, up to 221, compared to the previous fifteen months.

Other widespread junta abuses documented by KWAT include thirty incidents of shelling into populated areas, inflicting 61 civilian casualties, and arbitrary arrest of 441 people, including Kachin religious leader Dr. Hka Lam Samson. Dozens of those arrested have disappeared.

Mapping shows most junta abuses clustered along the main transport routes in northern Myanmar, vital gateways for the development of BRI infrastructure. KWAT analyses this as a deliberate strategy of collective punishment to secure control of key transport arteries.

"With conventional warfare failing against resistance forces, the regime is increasingly resorting to attacks against civilians," said KWAT spokesperson Ja Ing

The KWAT report exposes that the devastating airstrike on a concert in Hpakant last October, which inflicted over 170 casualties, was direct retaliation for heavy junta losses suffered a day earlier during a failed attempt to seize KIA positions on Lung Ja mountain – the highest vantage point in southeast Kachin State, overlooking key transport corridors to China.

The attacks and abuses have fueled fresh displacements of nearly 14,000 villagers during the past fifteen months, even as the regime has been pushing ahead with plans to close down existing camps in northern Myanmar housing over 107,000 IDPs.

KWAT is calling urgently for increased diplomatic and economic pressure on the junta regime to stop its attacks on civilians throughout Myanmar, and for donor countries to step up aid to existing and newly displaced IDPs, prioritizing cross-border channels.

KWAT also calls on China to halt its planned acceleration of BRI projects in Myanmar.

"China is taking a huge risk by pushing ahead with BRI projects in partnership with the military regime," said Ja Ing "There are no guarantees of security, and China will find itself complicit in the mounting atrocities associated with the planned projects."

US AMBASSADOR TO UN CONDEMNS JUNTA ATTACK ON CIVILIANS IN KACHIN STATE

The United States (US) ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, released a statement on 10 October condemning the junta's 9 October attack on innocent civilians Munglai Hkyet in Kachin State.

Below is the statement:

The United States condemns yesterday's attack by the Burma military regime on the Kachin State town of Munglai Hkyet, which hosts a camp for internally displaced persons, killing and injuring dozens, including women and children.

This latest attack by the Burma military regime is yet another example of its disregard for human life and underscores the need for the UN Security Council to act beyond Resolution 2669. We underline our commitment to using all tools at the Security Council's disposal to support ASEAN's efforts to find a peaceful

resolution to the crisis, a commitment affirmed by the vast majority of the Security Council.

We reiterate our call on the regime to cease all forms of violence, free all those unjustly detained, allow unhindered humanitarian access, and respect the democratic aspirations of the people of Burma. The regime must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, including with regard to the protection of civilians.

The United States will continue to support peace, human rights, and the establishment of a path toward a genuine and inclusive democracy in Burma through our work with members of the Security Council, other UN Member States, and regional partners, including ASEAN.

AS VIOLENCE INCREASES IN SOUTHEAST MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL AID DECREASES



A bombed church in the south. Photo: AFP

International responses to the multiple crises unfolding in Myanmar have dramatically slowed, yet the violence has not, according to the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM).

As the third anniversary of the Myanmar military coup approaches HURFOM remains deeply concerned about the state of human rights in Myanmar. In the areas of southeast Myanmar where HURFOM operates people continue to suffer.

Inflation has crippled livelihoods, and ongoing conflict has made survival a daily struggle. Anyone, at any time, could be killed. This reality has resulted in widespread fear and uncertainty.

On 25 September 2023, the junta's 306th Artillery Battalion based in Eastern Maw Tone Village, Tanintharyi Township, in Tanintharyi Region, indiscriminately launched numerous artillery attacks that killed a villager. The Battalion shot 81 mm artillery weapons at least ten times, targeting the Eastern Maw Tone Village Tract. One of the artillery shells dropped and exploded in a house and immediately killed a 30-year-old victim.

"He tried to close his front door as he heard artillery gunfire. The artillery shell dropped and exploded directly where he was. We called to send him to hospital, but he died of excessive bleeding within minutes," said a villager from Eastern Maw Tone.

Artillery explosions also took place in Eastern Maw Tone, Za Lone, Htone Nwe, and Ban La Mut villages, and two houses in Eastern Maw Tone were

destroyed by artillery. There were no armed clashes in the area before the indiscriminate artillery attacks occurred, which is often the case for many junta artillery attacks.

During the first week of October, more than 30 homes and nearly 20 vehicles were destroyed by the military junta, and five local residents were shot in Pu Law, Tanintharyi Region.

Myanmar Army troops who entered Latt Ku and Toe villages burned down 33 houses in Pu Law Township, Myeik District. Seventeen houses were in Latt Ku Village, seven in Pyin Phyu Village, four in Mya Dong Village, and five in Pe Tud Village in Toe Village Group. Almost 20 vehicles and equipment, such as motorcycles, cars, tricycles, and tractors, were also destroyed in fires deliberately set by the junta.

In addition, the local residents reported that five civilians were shot and killed by the military junta troops. No less than 10 houses were damaged by artillery weapons and homes were destroyed in the two villages. On the fourth day, when the military reinforced their troops, there were fierce battles with the People's Defense Forces (PDF) and eight casualties from the PDF side.

Meanwhile, the ongoing arbitrary arrests, followed by baseless charges, are of additional concern to HURFOM. Two locals arrested by the military in Mawlamyine and Thaton in Mon State have been charged under the Anti-Terrorist Act, according to people close to their families.

MYANMAR MILITARY MARKS NCA REBEL CEASEFIRE DESPITE REBEL CLASHES



The attendees of the NCA meeting in Naypyidaw. Photo: AFP

Myanmar's junta blocked roads and deployed heavy security in the military-built capital Naypyidaw on Sunday to mark the anniversary of a 2015 rebel ceasefire that its critics say is now defunct.

Over a dozen rebel groups have fought Myanmar's military for decades over autonomy and control of lucrative resources, but ten had signed a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

Critics of the NCA say it is in tatters since the junta's 2021 coup, which unleashed a bloody crackdown on dissent and sparked renewed fighting with some of its signatories.

Officials from seven of the ten signatories attended the event in Naypyidaw, where barricades and plainclothes security were deployed.

Diplomats from Russia and China -- allies and arms suppliers of the internationally isolated junta -- also attended, as did a representative from India, which has been accused by rights groups of supplying the military.

Timor-Leste sent a representative, weeks after the junta ordered the expulsion of its top diplomat over a meeting his government held with a shadow "National Unity Government" working to overturn the

coup.

Several rebel groups have trained and armed anti-coup fighters battling to overturn the military regime.

Two groups -- the Chin National Front (CNF) and the Karen National Union (KNU) -- said last week that the coup had made implementing the agreement "impossible."

The KNU and the CNF have regularly fought with the military since its takeover, in the far east and west of the country respectively.

The Kachin Independence Army -- which did not sign the 2015 accord -- also accused the military last week of bombing a camp for displaced people on its territory in northern Myanmar, killing 29 and wounding dozens.

The military was "making necessary preparations for the holding of free and fair multi-party general elections," junta chief Min Aung Hlaing said on Sunday.

But the junta has pushed back a timetable to hold fresh polls several times since ousting civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi's government over unsubstantiated allegations of election fraud.

AFP

NO TIME TO CELEBRATE PEACE EVENT WHEN BRUTAL KILLINGS CONTINUE IN MYANMAR: NUG HEAD

The Myanmar military is brutally killing civilians, including children and the elderly, and the regime will never bring about a genuine peace, said Acting President of the National Unity Government (NUG) on 14 October.

Speaking one day ahead of military junta's 8th anniversary event of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), NUG's Acting President Duwa Lashi La said, "I earnestly urge the international community and ethnic armed groups that it's not the time to participate in the (8th) anniversary celebration of the NCA organized by the terrorist Military Council leader. This is not the time to celebrate about the NCA; this is a time to review what happened."

He said the Military Council lacks the authority to host the annual NCA event as the treaty was signed by the relevant stakeholders including the government and the parliament, together with the 10 ethnic armed organizations—Karen National Union (KNU), Chin National Front(CNF), All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO), Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), Karen National Union/ Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council (KNU/KNLA-PC), Lahu Democratic Union (LDU), and New Mon State Party (NMSP).

The first three signatories—KNU, CNF and ABSDF—have publicly declared nullification of the NCA, and withdrew from the agreement after the 2021 coup, and are fighting against the military together with the resistance forces.

The acting president also blamed the military for the bombing of Mung Lai Hkyet IDP village near Laiza, Kachin State, killing about 30 civilians, including 13 children, and injuring 75 others, and pledged to bring justice for the victims.

"This is a very inhumane act and a war crime against humanity. In the wake of these shattered lives,

grieving families, and suffering individuals, it is imperative that justice be upheld. We must collectively strive towards this noble cause," he added.

KNU'S STATEMENT ON THE NCA

The Karen National Union (KNU), one of the strongest resistance forces fighting the Myanmar military, made a statement on 15 October that the NCA agreement is no longer valid anymore as the military had violated all the agreements.

P'doh Saw Taw Nee, the spokesperson of the KNU and its CEC member said in the statement, "The heart of the NCA is clearly stated in Chapter (1) where it says political problems must be solved through political means. It is not acceptable for us when the military itself violated the agreement that they signed off on. In fact, the Myanmar military was already violating various terms agreed in the NCA even before the coup."

He also quoted Chapter 3 and 4 of the agreement, which were also violated by the military, for example, entering into the KNU's territories, Brigade 3 and 5, and starting road construction without consulting with them.

P'doh Saw Taw Nee pointed out the military's failure to protect civilians as per Chapter 4 of the NCA, and prohibiting NCA signatories, except the KNU, from holding state or sub-national level national political dialogue, with violating Chapter 5 of the treaty, in addition to the military's negligence to consult signatory parties before carrying out the activities in each other's territories in line with Chapter 6 of the agreement.

He remarked that the Myanmar military is the main obstacle in establishing a genuine federal democratic system in the country, and the military must stop atrocities first for any meaningful peace talk or political dialogue, and must withdraw from the politics and stay under civilian rule.

TWO ALLIES OF MYANMAR JUNTA CHIEF MIN AUNG HLAING JAILED FOR HIGH TREASON

Two allies of Myanmar's junta chief have been jailed for 20 years for "high treason" including corruption and abuse of power, the military said on Tuesday.

Moe Myint Tun and Yan Naung Soe were "sentenced to twenty years imprisonment, equal to a life sentence" by a military court, according to a statement from the junta's information team, reported by AFP.

Moe Myint Tun - former chief of Myanmar's investment commission and head of the body regulating foreign exchange - had committed "high treason by... taking bribes", it said.

He had been found "receiving bribes from companies" and "possessing foreign currencies illegally".

Last month a military source told AFP that Moe Myint Tun - viewed in some circles as a protege of junta chief Min Aung Hlaing -- was under investigation for corruption.

The same month he was removed from the ruling State Administration Council -- as the junta calls

itself.

Yan Naung Soe is a former joint secretary of the junta-stacked trading committee.

The statement did not say when the men had been sentenced.

Myanmar's economy has slumped since the military's 2021 power grab, with the local kyat currency plunging against the dollar and business sentiment and forex reserves hammered by roiling conflict and sanctions.

The official exchange rate for the kyat is currently just over 2,000 per dollar, but in recent months the greenback has fetched up to 3,600 on the black market.

Authorities revoked the licenses of 166 money changers between March to September, for failing to comply with central bank regulations, state media reported last month.

AFP

RECORD OCTOBER RAIN BRINGS FLOODS TO SOUTHERN MYANMAR



Many areas of Myanmar have seen unusually heavy rain, possibly due to El Nino and the depressions it typically brings. Photo: AFP

Floods sparked by record October rain hit parts of southern Myanmar on Monday, inundating roads and fields and sending residents fleeing for higher ground.

On Sunday authorities reported that 200 mm (almost eight inches) of rain had fallen in the previous 24 hours in Bago region northeast of commercial hub Yangon - a record for October.

The rainy season typically brings months of heavy downpours, but scientists say man-made climate change is making weather patterns more intense.

"Most of my belongings are ruined as they are floating in the water in my house," Bago resident Aye Kyi Ma, 47, told AFP from a boat on a submerged street.

"Now, I have to stay somewhere else," she said.

"There is no electricity and the water is not clean. So we have to buy our meal as we can't cook."

Rescuers said they recovered the body of one 60-year-old man in Bago.

In Pha Yar Gyi, near Bago, vehicles drove along roads where floodwaters reached bumper levels. Some residents floated along the water on makeshift rafts.

"In some places, the tide is as deep as a person's height," Aung Phyo Kyaw, a member of a local rescue team in Bago city told AFP.

People had moved to higher land and buildings such as monasteries and homes of their relatives to escape the rising waters, he said.

The military and police were also working with rescuers to reach people in flooded areas, he added.

The state-backed Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper said the nearby Bago river could exceed its "danger level" by almost a metre in the coming days, warning local residents to take precautionary measures.

Flooding began in July and has affected nine of Myanmar's states and regions, including Rakhine, Kachin, Karen, Mon and Chin.

Myanmar is in the grip of a bloody civil conflict between the junta, which ousted the government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021, and armed groups opposed to its coup.

AFP

14,000 DISPLACED IN MYANMAR'S BAGO AFTER RECORD RAIN SPARKS FLOODS



Looking down on flooded Bago. Photo: AFP

Residents of Myanmar's flood-hit Bago city salvaged food and belongings from their water-logged homes on Tuesday after record rainfall triggered floods that authorities said have displaced 14,000 people.

The rainy season typically brings months of heavy downpours to the Southeast Asian country, but scientists say man-made climate change is making weather patterns more intense.

In eastern Bago city residents waded down streets through waist-deep water or floated along in boats or on rubber tyres, as ripples lapped at shuttered shops and houses.

"This is the first time my house has been flooded in my life," Phwar Than Hme, 101, told AFP from the monastery where she was taking shelter.

"I was standing on a chair while my house was being flooded.

"My neighbour and rescue people told me not to stay at home and to go to the camp. They carried me on their backs and brought me here."

On Sunday authorities reported that 200 mm (almost eight inches) of rain had fallen in the previous 24 hours in Bago region northeast of commercial hub Yangon -- a record for October.

Heavy rain continued through Monday night.

"I didn't expect this level of water here," said Chit Nyunt, 69, told AFP as he waded down the street holding a pair of sandals and an umbrella.

"I have never seen anything like this."

State broadcaster MRTV said 14,000 people had been displaced across Bago region, northeast of commercial hub Yangon.

Almost 5,600 people were being accommodated in local government temporary relief centres, according to the state-backed Global New Light of Myanmar.

The lower floors of Bago's general hospital had been flooded, a resident told the newspaper, and three of Myanmar's four telecoms providers were not working in the area.

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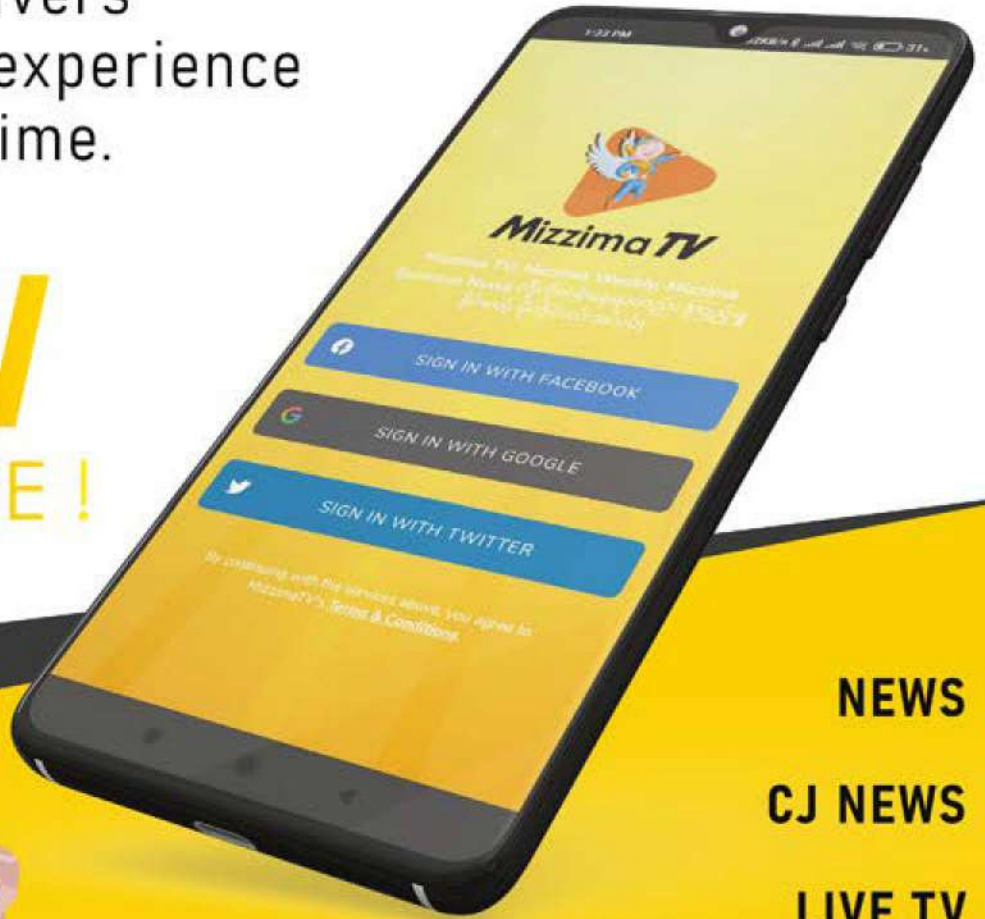
AFP

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MYANMAR TRUCKERS SLOG ON AS CONFLICT CLOGS ASIA HIGHWAY

Standing beside his cargo of Thai fruit and furniture, truck driver Ko Cho steels himself for a journey to Myanmar's Yangon that will demand bribes, dodging landslides and navigating a raging civil war.

The commercial hub is just 400 kilometres (250 miles) away, but a round trip from Myawaddy on the Thai border can take more than 10 days of slogging through checkpoints and paying backhanders to the military and its allies.

The main route linking Myanmar with its second biggest trading partner is part of the United Nations-backed Asia Highway project to create a road network from Tokyo to Istanbul.

But this section of "AH1" runs through Karen state, home to a decades-old conflict between ethnic

rebels and the military that has escalated since the generals' coup in 2021.

Air strikes and artillery barrages regularly fall near the road, further choking a major artery of an economy on life support since the putsch.

"When we hear the gunfire is very close, we immediately stop and hide under the truck," said 43-year-old driver Ko Zaw, a pseudonym.

Ko Cho, also a pseudonym, was waiting at a gas station when AFP spoke to him in September, travelling in a group of five trucks for safety.

"We have to stop and wait on the road when there is a battle," he said. "It's happened twice this month."

Drivers always have ID cards, licences, cash and phones at the ready in case something happens,



A traffic jam at a checkpoint on the highway. Photo: AFP

Aung Htoo, a truck owner who works the road, told AFP.

“Because we can’t turn the truck back, we have to leave and run away.”

‘PAY EVERYONE EVERYWHERE’

Even getting onto the highway is a task.

In the border town of Myawaddy, truck owners pay a fee of 120,000 kyat (\$65) just to “quickly” enter the loading zone where their cargoes are inspected, Aung Htoo said.

“It can take one month to enter the zone if we don’t pay,” he said. “All cars pay.”

Myawaddy, a drug and human trafficking hub largely controlled by a junta-allied militia, has been caught up in the junta’s raging conflict with its opponents.

In September, anti-junta fighters used drones to drop bombs on a government compound, killing five officials and wounding 11 policemen.

Once a truck is safely out on the road, “check-

points” run by the military or its militia allies demand fees of roughly 150,000 kyat (\$75) per truck per journey to Yangon, Aung Htoo said.

From Myawaddy, the road winds up towards monsoon-soaked hills that periodically shed rocks and earth onto the tarmac, burying parts of the route for days.

Passenger buses crawl up inclines or hiss and lurch around washed-out corners, English-language lettering on their sides announcing “Man of the Year” or “Shopaholic”.

At one corner, an 18-wheeler truck lies tipped over, its crew waiting while a recovery vehicle works.

Every two hours or so there is a checkpoint, Ko Zaw said.

“We have to pay everyone everywhere - on the road, on the bridges, at toll gates, at the trade zones.”

If they try to negotiate the price, he said, the drivers are told “go back if you don’t have money”.

‘WORRIED FOR OUR LIVES’

Descending from the hills the road enters the town of Kawkaik - last year the target of a major assault by Karen National Union ethnic rebels that was only beaten back when the junta called in multiple air strikes.

Pickup trucks carrying heavily-armed troops swerve between the lumbering lorries while camouflaged fighters patrol on foot, barely visible against the jungle.

Hours later, across the plains at Nyaung Kar Shay, dozens of trucks line up for inspection at one of the last major checkpoints before Yangon.

A wait of at least half a day is normal there, Ko Cho said -- unless a further bribe of around 100,000 kyat (\$50) is paid.

In Yangon, the goods are unloaded at warehouses before the drivers turn their trucks back towards Myawaddy.

All for a wage of around \$100 plus food expenses per trip.

“The truck owners worry about drivers, the spare man, the truck and also about the goods we are carrying,” Ko Zaw said.

“We drivers are also worried for our lives.”



AFP

EU AND ASEAN MARK START OF GREEN DIPLOMACY WEEKS 2023

Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to ASEAN, H.E. Sujiro Seam, the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community H.E. Ekkaphab Phanthavong and the Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines to ASEAN, H.E. Hjayceelyn Mancenido Quintana, officially launched the start of the EU-ASEAN Green Diplomacy Weeks 2023 on 15 October in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Over 300 people, representing officials from ASEAN, the EU and its Member States, youths, and people with special needs, marked the occasion with a symbolic ride, run, and walk along the route of Jalan Sudirman to Gelora Bung Karno, Senayan Jakarta.

The event marked the start of the first region-wide activities for the EU-ASEAN Green Diplomacy Weeks 2023. EU Delegations across ASEAN are



hosting a series of events in ASEAN Member States to enliven the EU Green Diplomacy Weeks 2023, starting from 15 to 22 October 2023. The series of events is designed to provide a platform for ASEAN youths to actively engage in green transition activities such as interactive discussions on climate change issues, online competitions, workshops on waste segregation and plastic recycling, upcycling, young climate heroes campaign, biodiversity and wildlife education.

“The European Union is committed to supporting our partners in their respective green transitions, including ASEAN,” said the EU Ambassador to ASEAN, H.E. Sujiro Seam. “This event shows our commitment to continue working together with ASEAN towards a greener future. It is an opportunity to celebrate the progress we have made, and to encourage individuals, communities and organisations to take stronger action in future – to protect, preserve and restore our environment, for now and for future generations,” he added.

“I am confident that this event will enhance ASEAN-EU collaboration and particularly encourage the public and youth to step up and take bolder climate action for the betterment of ASEAN and the Sustainable Planet,” said Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Ekkaphab Phanthavong. “I would like to invite everyone to take this opportunity to reflect, engage, and motivate others to join in climate action to ensure a sustainable and resilient ASEAN Community,” he added.

H.E. Hjayceelyn Mancenido Quintana, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines to ASEAN, who is also Country Coordinator for ASEAN-EU Dialogue Relations, said that “Climate action is one of the Philippines’ priorities as Country Coordinator for ASEAN-EU Dialogue Relations. Climate action and environmental sustainability are also central to ASEAN’s priorities. Each one of us has the ability to make a significant impact to the environment through our own individual actions and steps,

and also by inspiring others to follow suit. Cycling, taking public transport and other eco-friendly alternatives are small but concrete steps that each of us can take to reduce air pollution,” she added.

First introduced to the public in 2019 as Climate Diplomacy Weeks, this initiative has become a landmark annual event where the EU Delegations and embassies of the EU Member States around the world host events to foster dialogue and cooperation on climate change. Re-named “Green Diplomacy Weeks” as of this year, the event still aims to serve as a platform showcasing success stories and inspire further actions.

In Myanmar, a Young Climate Heroes Campaign will be launched both online and offline on 16 October 2023. The campaign aims to empower the young people of Myanmar to take active actions in mitigating the impacts of climate change. Comprising a total of five modules over the course of two days - 21 and 22 October 2023 - the online campaign will focus on the topics of climate advocacy, climate actions, sustainable climate initiatives, project management, and climate leadership.

The full schedule of the EU-ASEAN Green Diplomacy weeks can be accessed here: <https://euinasean.eu/gdw2023/>

MYANMAR'S YOUNG CLIMATE HEROES PROMOTE GREEN DIPLOMACY WEEK

Myanmar's Young Climate Heroes Campaign is launching a drive this week to highlight climate and pollution concerns under the EU and ASEAN sponsored "Green Diplomacy Week".

First introduced to the public in 2019, Climate Diplomacy Week has become a landmark annual event where EU Delegations and embassies of EU Member States around the world host events to foster dialogue and cooperation on climate change. Called "Green Di-

plomacy Week" this year, the event still aims to serve as a platform to showcase success stories and inspire further action.

In late 2022, the EU launched the Global Gateway strategy, a new global strategy to build resilient connections with the world, with sustainable connectivity and green transitions as its main two pillars. In this context, Green Diplomacy Week 2023 will also serve as an opportunity to continue to build the momentum



● People taking part in the event in Jakarta.



● People taking part in the event in Jakarta.

for the new global strategy.

A series of events will be prepared online, offline and in hybrid. Events will include panel discussions, exhibitions and clean up sessions, as well as a fun walk/run/cycling event. The events will focus on engaging with ASEAN youth and public.

A total of 10 events (online, offline and hybrid

will be organised by the EU Communication and Visibility for ASEAN project in cooperation with EU Delegations in ASEAN Member States, EU-ASEAN partners, communities and youth organisations in ASEAN Member States.

CHINA CLAIMS ISRAEL ACTING 'BEYOND SCOPE OF SELF-DEFENCE'

Israel's actions in Gaza have gone "beyond the scope of self-defence" and the Israeli government must "cease its collective punishment of the people of Gaza", China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in remarks published Sunday.

Wang's remarks, made on a call to his Saudi Arabian counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan on Saturday, came as Israel appeared poised for a ground offensive against Hamas militants in Gaza.

"Israel's actions have gone beyond the scope of self-defense," Wang said according to a foreign ministry readout

"It should listen earnestly to the calls of the international community and the UN secretary general, and cease its collective punishment of the people of Gaza," he added in the strongest stance China has expressed so far on the conflict.



A bomb explodes in the Gaza Strip.
Photo: AFP

More than one million people in the northern part of the crowded enclave have been ordered to flee ahead of the expected assault, an exodus that aid groups said would set off a humanitarian disaster.

The cramped and impoverished territory, where 2.3 million residents live on top of each other, has been under a land, air and sea blockade since 2006.

After Hamas fighters broke through the heavily fortified border between the Gaza Strip and Israel to gun down, stab and burn to death more than 1,300 people, Israel launched a massive retaliatory bombing campaign targeting the Islamist group that has killed

over 2,200 in Gaza.

Most of those killed on both sides are civilians.

Wang told Prince Faisal that “all parties should not take any action to escalate the situation and should return to the negotiating table as soon as possible.”

Wang Yi also said in a separate call with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Saturday that Washington should “play a constructive and responsible role” in the conflict, and urged “the convening of an international peace meeting as soon as possible to promote the reaching of broad consensus”.

SPILLOVER FEARS

China’s official statements on the conflict have not specifically named Hamas in their condemnations of violence, leading to criticism from some Western officials who said they were too weak.

The country’s state broadcaster CCTV said on Sunday that China’s special envoy Zhai Jun will visit the Middle East next week to push for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas conflict and promote peace talks.

Zhai “will visit the Middle East next week to coordinate with various parties for a ceasefire, to protect civilians, ease the situation, and promote peace talks,” CCTV said in a video posted to its official social media account on Sunday.

Zhai said in an interview with CCTV that “the prospect of further broadening and outward spillover (of the conflict) is deeply worrying”, according to the broadcaster.

Zhai met Friday with the Arab League’s representatives in China and said Beijing supported the regional group “in playing an important role on the Palestine issue”, according to a foreign ministry statement.

He told the bloc that Beijing would “make unremitting efforts to get the Middle East peace process back on track”, the statement added.



AFP

AI REVEALS WORLD'S TOP 3 UNIVERSAL CONCERNS

World leaders have spoken, and the UN listened. Climate, development, and peace emerged as universal areas of concern, according to a new study driven by artificial intelligence (AI).

“It is important that we understand the issues of concern to Member States not only at the global level, but also regionally, noting the differences in priority and emphasis,” said Joachim Harris, Chief of the Digital and Promotion team in the UN’s Department of Global Communications.

His team data crunched all speeches made at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in late

September from the 178 world leaders and ministers who laid out what matters most to them.

Capturing the results, his team began with a global analysis then moved across geographical regions.

Among Member States from Africa, climate and development featured prominently, as did security, but Africa itself was the most mentioned topic.

Here’s what they found:

AFRICA

Among African world leaders, climate and development featured prominently, as did security. But,





Photo: Matan Levanon

KARENNI STATE

Karenni states sees a total of 270,000 people displaced

A total of 270,000 people have been displaced in Karenni State since the February 2021 coup and they are facing food shortages according to the Karenni State Interim Executive Council (IEC).

Since the end of September 2023 about 10,000 people have been displaced, according to Banyar, a second secretary of the Karenni State IEC.

He said that even when food can be provided for IDPs it can only be given to them in an emergency, meaning that conditions in IDP camps where food is being supplied are particularly bad.

In the past week, many more IDPs in Karenni State have become sick because there has been heavy rain.

According to a recent United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN

OHCA) statement its delivery of aid is being held up.

Also, since late September 2023, villages along the Shan Kayan border are facing shortages because the main transport routes to the villages have been blocked.

Fighting in Karenni State has been ongoing since the coup. There have been over 820 battles in Karenni State since the coup., according to a 1 October report by the Progressive Karenni People Force (PKPF).

The total population of Karenni State is more than 390,000 according to the 2019 census that was carried out by the National League for Democracy government's General Administration Department.



ABSDF SUSPENDS 3 MEMBERS FOR ATTENDING JUNTA-LED NCA CEREMONY

The All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) has suspended three members for attending a junta-led celebration of the 8th anniversary of the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), local news outlets reported.

This shows that the ABSDF is committed to its principles of opposing the military regime and fighting for democracy, said a political analyst.

ABSDF vice-chair Myo Win, central executive committee member Saw Maung Maung Oo, and member Min Zaw defied their organization's boycott to attend the NCA anniversary event in Nay Pyi Taw.

The ABSDF is a student-led armed group that has been fighting against the military regime in Myanmar for decades. It was founded in 1988, after the 8888 protests in Yangon.

The armed group and two other ethnic armed groups have refused to participate in the NCA ceremony and have made it clear that they will not negotiate with the military junta until it stops committing violence against civilians.

The NCA is a ceasefire agreement that was signed by the military regime and several ethnic armed groups in 2015. However, the military regime has continued to violate the ceasefire and commit atrocities against civilians.

MYANMAR'S RISING DOMESTIC RICE PRICE CAUSES DECLINE IN RICE EXPORTS, MRF SAYS



Photo: Pierre Bamin

The Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) said that rising rice prices in the domestic market was one of the factors of rice export decline.

On the other hand, the rising dollar exchange rate had also had an impact on the rice export so they presented this issue to the officials concerned, the MRF said.

The rice export trade figures released by MRF shows that out of this financial year's export target of 2 million tonnes of rice and broken rice, only over 23% has materialized in the first half of this financial year.

In this fiscal year from April to the end of September, MRF said that they could export just over 460,000 tonnes of rice and broken rice and could earn US\$210 million only, MRF announced.

MRF Chairman Ye Min Aung said that they would accelerate the rice and broken rice export in the

last three months of this year, namely October, November and December.

They expect to export up to 700,000 tonnes of rice in this 3-month period.

The MRF trade figures show that rice export in this year was nearly 500,000 tonnes lower than the corresponding period in last year.

The 6-month period from October this year to March next year will be the strongest months for export and in this October alone the country earned over US\$ 40 million from rice export.

Before the military coup, under the rule of the National League for Democracy-led government, the rice prices in the domestic markets were about 30,000 Kyats per bag (approx. 50 Kg) for Pawsan and around 29,000 Kyats per bag for Paw Kywe and then they soared up 4-fold after the coup.

MYANMAR JUNTA AND RUSSIA DISCUSS BUILDING GAS PIPELINE IN MYANMAR

The Russia Energy Ministry says a Myanmar delegation and Russian energy officials discussed building a gas pipeline in Myanmar, reports Reuters and Russian media.

The Myanmar Minister for Energy attended the 3-day Energy Forum being held in Moscow from 11 to 13 October and some Russian media reported that they discussed the project for building a gas pipeline to Yangon.

But Myanmar did not disclose yet in detail of how this pipeline would be built or if they would be cooperating in drilling gas wells in Myanmar.

The Myanmar Military Council has bought oil products from Russia since last year and the media reported that Myanmar would pay for oil and gas in the Russian currency, the Ruble.

And at the same time, Interfax News reported that the Russian nuclear energy corporation Rosatom announced that the company and Myanmar signed a MoU for Myanmar nuclear infrastructure assessment and development.

Russia usually holds this Energy Week Forum on 12 October every year.

Rosatom is conducting a preliminary study for building a modular nuclear reactor in Myanmar for power generation.

Myanmar signed an agreement with Russia in February this year for cooperating in building a modular nuclear reactor in Myanmar for power generation.

Currently the Myanmar Military Council is buying oil and gas from Russia and some news reports said that China was buying Russian oil from Myanmar.

Russia and the Myanmar Military Council discussed cooperation in trade, economics and energy sectors and recently they resumed direct flight between two countries.

Myanmar Minister Ko Ko Lwin said at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Energy Forum held from 3 to 6 October that Myanmar had limitations in producing energy though they had abundant energy resources.

RESTRICTIONS IN TRADE POLICY CAUSES MAUNGDAW BORDER TRADE WITH BANGLADESH TO FALL



Maungdaw, Rakhine State. Photo: AFP

Myanmar traders say that the new restrictions on Myanmar-Bangladesh border trade export by the Myanmar Military Council has caused Maungdaw border trade in Rakhine State to almost stop.

The Military Council's Directorate of Trade called for a stop to exporting agricultural produce such as rice, broken rice, pulses and beans, sesame, groundnut, peanut, onion, etc. and freshwater and seawater fishes from Maungdaw border trade post to Bangladesh starting from 4 September. These goods must be exported from the Sittwe border trade post only.

Traders note a crucial difference. It typically takes 18 hours to export Rohu (carp) fish by sea from Sittwe to Bangladesh, so this can cause heavy damage to the fish stock, whereas it takes only 20 minutes from the Maungdaw border trade post and therefore there is very little damage to the goods, the traders say.

Moreover, starting from 1 October, each batch of export from Sittwe to Bangladesh must consist of at least 40 tonnes. Vessels had to turn back in bad

weather and traders are facing many difficulties in their trade.

There are nine border trade posts in Myanmar and this Maungdaw border trade post is using US dollar as the major currency in trade settlement and it is one of the biggest trade posts.

In the first half of this fiscal year the trade value of the Myanmar-Bangladesh border trade reached US\$ 9.482 million and trade statistics showed that the Maungdaw border trade post alone had a trade value of US\$ 6.445 million.

Rakhine State Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RSCCI) said that currently Bangladesh reduced the import of Myanmar freshwater fish and that the border trade between two countries was in decline.

The statistics of RSCCI showed that the export of Rohu fell to about 70 tonnes in September 2023 and the export value was just US\$1.4 million.

Fish traders urged the responsible officials from both countries to let them export Rohu from both Sittwe and Maungdaw border trade posts.

Penrose Thitsa

DKSH SIGNS EXCLUSIVE DEAL WITH DRAGON VICTORY TO EXPAND MMK HOME CARE PRODUCTS IN MYANMAR

DKSH, a Swiss holding company specializing in market expansion services, has signed an exclusive agreement with Dragon Victory Company Limited, to Expand Footprint for MMK Home Care Products in Myanmar, according to the company's press release published on

Under the agreement, DKSH Myanmar will provide full market expansion services, including marketing and sales, distribution, and logistics services for MMK home care products.

MMK was launched in 2020 and offers a range of products, including dishwashing liquid, liquid bleach, and liquid detergent.

"We are delighted to partner with DKSH to expand our footprint and offer our extensive MMK products across the Myanmar market," said Khin Maung Win, Managing Director of Dragon Victory Company Limited. "With DKSH's unwavering commitment and proven expertise, we are confident that this partnership will enable us to extend our customer reach."

According to a report by Euromonitor International, the Myanmar home care market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.2% from 2022 to 2027. This growth is being driven by a number of factors, including rising urbanization, increasing disposable incomes, and growing awareness of the importance of hygiene and cleanliness.



CELEBRATING A WIN

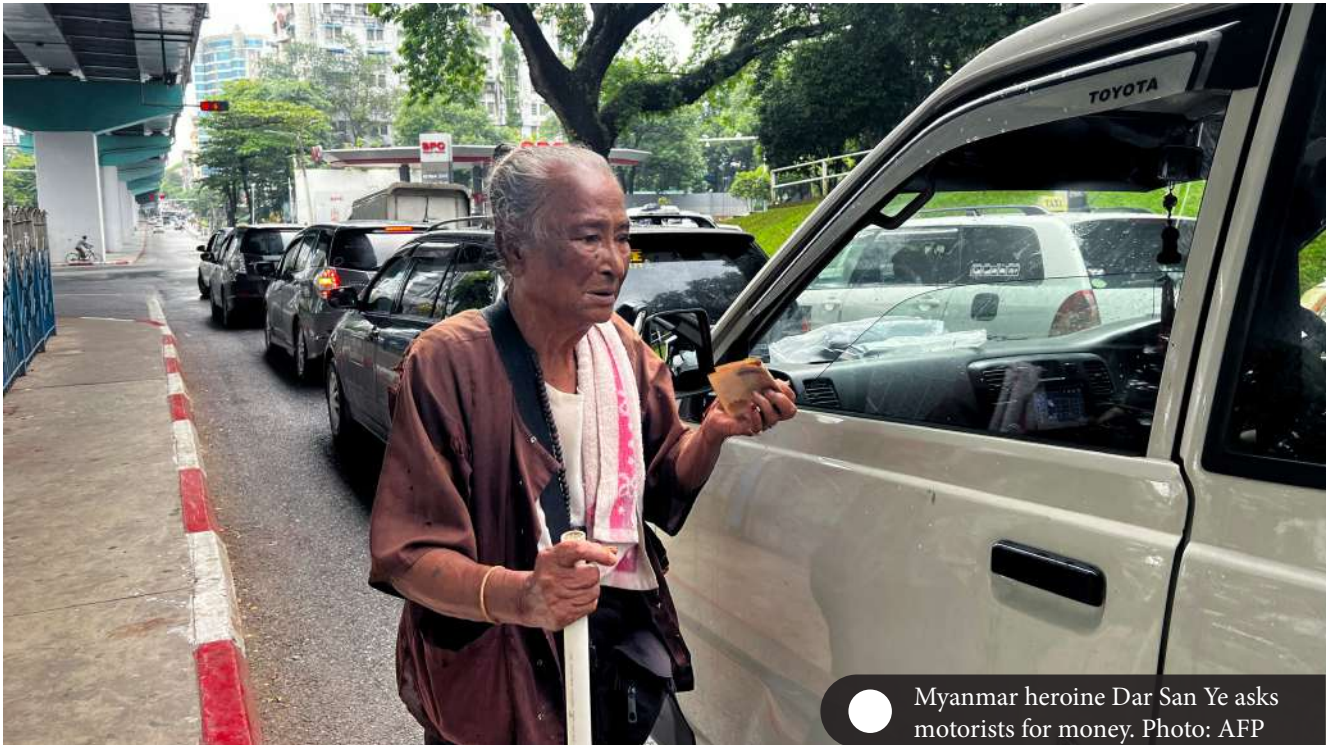
Zaw Zaw (L), chairman of the Myanmar Football Federation greets players after winning the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualification soccer match between Myanmar and Macau in Yangon, Myanmar, 12 October..

Photo: EPA

IN FOCUS



THE BURMESE BARMAID WHO NABBED A NORTH KOREAN ASSASSIN



Myanmar heroine Dar San Ye asks motorists for money. Photo: AFP

Forty years ago, Myanmar barmaid Dar San Ye stood in a river running through Yangon, squaring up to a North Korean agent gripping a live grenade.

Hours earlier on October 9, 1983, a huge explosion had shattered the peace of the capital city as a Pyongyang hit team detonated bombs to try to assassinate visiting South Korean president Chun Doo-Hwan.

Seventeen Korean officials, including the foreign minister, and four Burmese nationals died when the blast ripped through a mausoleum housing the remains of Myanmar's founding father and independence hero Aung San.

President Chun himself was not there, however, having been delayed at a previous engagement. The bombers fled the scene, with Yangon plunged into chaos.

Now 87 years old, she spoke to AFP in her home on the outskirts of the city, recalling her role in the drama as she puffed on a cigar.

"I heard the Martyrs' Mausoleum had been blown up by some foreigners," she said.

Customers in her bar on the banks of the Pazundaung River could talk of little else, she said.

"I asked people if they (the attackers) had

been captured... They said no," she recalled.

"I told them the bombers will be captured later because we are Buddhist Myanmar and our good spirits will guard us."

Little did she know she would be the one to do it.

'I PUNCHED HIM'

Dar San Ye finished her shift and returned home as evening began to fall, with the city still on edge and a hunt for the perpetrators under way.

Suddenly, she heard shouts that there was a thief in the river. She rushed out and saw a crowd of around a hundred people gathered on the bank.

Pausing only to hitch up her nightdress, she waded in, not quite sure who the man in the water was.

"The guy was standing waist-deep in water," she said. "I called him: 'Come here! Come here!'"

"He just stared at me. I realised he wouldn't understand Burmese. I remembered an English phrase that I used to use to make fun of English people.

"I asked him: 'Are you my friend?'"

Desperate for sympathy as he found himself surrounded, he replied: "Yes, yes! Are you Chinese?"

The barmaid recalled that he then reached out to try to shake her hand.

But when three men from the crowd joined in to help Dar San Ye, he began to fight back, pushing her and the others away and running to the end of a pier.

There he took out a grenade and pulled the pin, but it failed to detonate fully.

“His left hand was blown off. On his right hand, four fingers were blown off and only the thumb remained,” she said.

“After that, he jumped into the water again and I also jumped in... When he appeared above the water again, I punched him in the neck.”

HANGED AFTER TRIAL

The agent, Kim Jin-su, was one of the three-man hit team.

Thanks to Dar San Ye, he was captured by authorities. He refused to cooperate with interrogators and was hanged after a trial.

The two other assassins, Shin Ki-chol and Kang Min-chol, were tracked down by security forces just outside Yangon.

Shin died in the ensuing firefight but Kang was captured alive and sentenced to life in prison after confessing.

He died there after almost 25 years behind bars.

A CIA report said there was “very strong circumstantial evidence” linking Pyongyang to the mausoleum bombing.

It said alleged North Korean agents had used similar radio-detonated explosives in a 1970 plot to kill then-president Park Chung Hee as he visited a cemetery in Seoul.

A delegation from Pyongyang had also visited the mausoleum less than two months before -- “an excellent opportunity to survey the scene and plan an operation”.

A North Korean ship unloading aid equipment in Yangon port two weeks earlier “would be consistent with the dispatch of an agent team,” it said.

A court in Burma ruled that the attack was “the work of saboteurs acting under instructions of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.”

Its then junta cut off diplomatic ties with Pyongyang that were not restored until more than 20 years later.

WELL-KNOWN FIGURE

Shortly after the bombing Dar San Ye and the three men who helped her were feted at a government

ceremony and given clothes and money in compensation.

“Since then, they have never come to see me,” she said, with a copy of a faded and creased “Record of Honour” certificate all she has left to link her to the day.

Myanmar re-established ties with North Korea in 2007, when both countries were under a slew of Western sanctions and branded “outposts of tyranny” by the United States.

Under the current junta, the rebuilt Martyr’s Mausoleum is all but closed off - barring select diplomats invited to pay their respects to Myanmar’s independence hero.

Dar San Ye is a well-known figure in Yangon, and has been the subject of several documentaries and feature articles in Myanmar media.

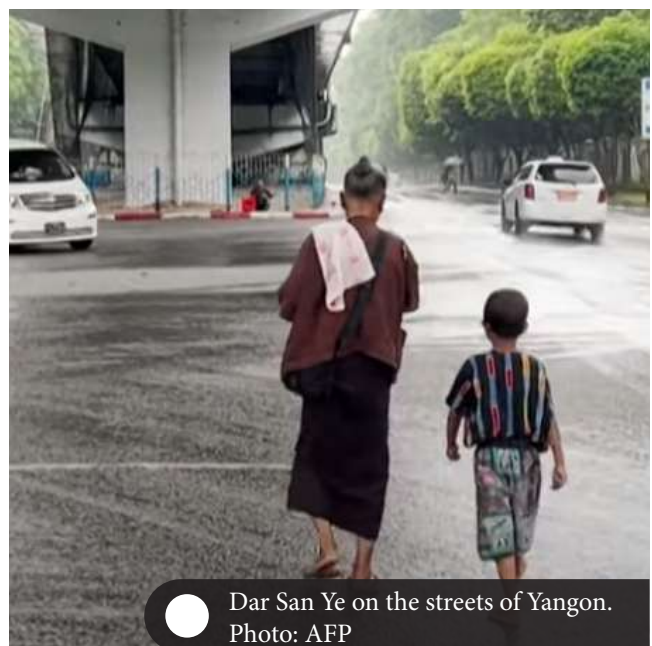
But with most of her family dead and little other support she lives off donations from charitable neighbours that come to around 30,000-40,000 kyat (\$15-19) per day.

She has no regrets about the risk she took in the river that day.

“I tried to catch him just for my country. Once, our General Aung San was assassinated. Then his grave was destroyed again. So I went down to catch him.”

“I can’t let them insult my country.”

AFP



Dar San Ye on the streets of Yangon.
Photo: AFP



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