

Myanmar and the brutal incompetence of a floundering regime

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**OPERATION 1027**

**Surprise resistance  
action has Myanmar  
junta on the backfoot**

**- SPECIAL REPORT -**

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# AID OUTREACH TO PEOPLE IN NEED IN NORTHERN MYANMAR

At this stage it is unclear just how acute the humanitarian needs are for civilians in the wake of Operation 1027 launched by three armed ethnic groupings at the end of last month.

As of going to press, the total number of people displaced by the fighting as Operation 1027 seeks to dislodge the Myanmar military from their positions in northern Shan State has increased to over 30,000.

Will these people be able to go home soon? That may depend on the “success” of Operation 1027 if it able to remove the junta presence on the ground.

The United Nations Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) last week said it was worried about the evolving humanitarian situation in Shan State.

Last week, UN OCHA estimated that in northern Shan State, the total number of internally displaced people (IDPs) stood at over 37,400, with a recent surge of over 23,000 due to the escalation in fighting. This is on top of the 14,470 IDPs previously displaced, straining an already under-resourced humanitarian response.

UN OCHA concern revolves around how to get aid to those in need. Transport is difficult with roads blocked and an important bridge down. In addition, northern Shan, Bago East and Kayin have faced extensive disruptions in mobile data and telecommuni-

cation services across numerous areas.

UN OCHA says faith-based organizations and host communities are offering immediate, basic lifesaving assistance, such as shelter, food, and water. Various humanitarian partners, alongside host communities and private donors, have extended cash assistance, basic food supplies, and essential relief items to the newly displaced. However, the support provided has been insufficient to address the growing needs, while access remains extremely restricted.

Providing aid to people in need on this new battlefield front will pose serious problems for the UN, other international NGOs, and local NGOs – assuming the conflict continues. This is unclear. Operation 1027 may lead to an uneasy peace, with junta positions removed from northern Shan State.

The Myanmar junta cannot be relied on to help people in need. As it has demonstrated, the junta is reluctant to help with aid delivery in the country, blocking aid consignments with red tape, or funneling it through junta channels, favouring communities that side with the military.

So, a crucial issue to bear in mind as Operation 1027 continues and expands is the welfare of people displaced by the fighting, and ideally moves to allow people to return home and continue on with their lives.

EDITORIAL

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WEEKLY

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# CONTENTS



**mizzima** WEEKLY

## NEWS & INSIGHT

- 3** EDITORIAL
- 6** IN FOCUS
- 8** NEWS ROUNDUPS
- 10** OPERATION 1027  
Surprise resistance action has Myanmar junta on the backfoot
- 14** Women and children amongst casualties of Myanmar army's artillery shelling in Shan State
- 15** UN OCHA stresses humanitarian needs in report on Myanmar's Operation 1027
- 16** Myanmar junta vows to hit back at ethnic groups' Operation 1027 offensive
- 18** Myanmar military says lost control of strategic Shan border town of Chinshwehaw



- 20** China calls for immediate ceasefire in northern Myanmar fighting
- 21** China conducts military patrol at Kyalgaung border gate due to fighting in northern Myanmar
- 22** Myanmar's NUG Defence Minister discusses impact of ethnic militants' Operation 1027
- 24** Security Force Monitor seeks to link Myanmar military rights abuse to particular commanders

**10**





- 26** CNA claims Myanmar Army's statement of control of Thantlang Town is false

## INSIGHT MYANMAR

- 28** Myanmar and the brutal incompetence of a floundering regime
- 31** Eight civilians injured by Myanmar junta artillery shelling in KNU controlled areas
- 32** Myanmar Campaign Network calls on Australia to impose tougher sanctions against junta
- 33** Myanmar junta and Bangladesh probe Rohingya return

## ISRAEL-GAZA CONFLICT

- 34** Fierce fighting in Gaza as US envoy Blinken faces Arab anger

Cover photo of Operation 1027 fighter in northern Shan State by AFP

## COMMENTARY

- 36** Sharp uptick in fighting in Myanmar, UN humanitarians report
- 38** ETHNIC NEWS ROUNDUPS
- 39** LAST WEEK IN NAY PYI TAW

## BUSINESS

- 40** Myanmar, Thailand discuss allowing undocumented Myanmar workers to stay in Thailand with CI
- 41** Suspension of tin mining in Myanmar may affect China's tin imports
- 42** Myanmar junta orders filling in of arrival and departure cards for domestic flights
- 43** BUSINESS ALERTS

## CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

- 44** IN FOCUS
- 46** Remarkable journey through the badlands of Burma





## FAVOURED WEAPON

**T**he Myanmar junta is increasing its reliance on the use of fighter jets in its war with the Spring Revolution resistance.

Photo: AFP

# IN FOCUS



## 4,000 DISPLACED FROM SAGAING REGION'S KANTBALU TOWNSHIP

Despite storms and heavy rain, 4,000 people have fled from their homes in Sagaing Region's Kantbalu Township since 21 October, when a junta military column entered the area.

The column of about 180 junta troops, is made up of soldiers from the Kalay Township-based Light Infantry Battalion 361 and Pyu Saw Htee militia members who graduated from Military Training School 8 in Shwe Bo Township.

They launched an offensive against anti-junta forces in the area. They also targeted civilians, by killing and arresting them and destroying their houses.

The subsequent fighting forced about 4,000 people from 10 villages in Kantbalu Township to flee their homes and take shelter in the forest, despite the storms and heavy rain in the area.

A displaced woman in Kantbalu, who was concerned about the health risks posed to those sheltering in the forest said: "We have been on the run for five days now, seeking temporary shelter in the forest. This is Myanmar's rainy season, and currently, storms are frequent. It has been raining continuously for three days since 21 October. Due to the rain, we lack sufficient waterproof cover for shelter, and we can't even make a fire for cooking."

A man who had been displaced said: "Health-care is a major concern here, with the flu and eye infections on the rise. The continuous rain also raises concerns about pests. If any health issues arise while fleeing, it's not feasible to receive treatment."

Currently, the villagers sheltering in the forest are facing difficulties in accessing essential resources such as food, water, and medical assistance.

## THREE WOMEN INJURED BY MORTAR FIRE IN SAGAING'S PALE TOWNSHIP

Three women were injured by an 80mm mortar round in Tharyarkone Village, Pale Township, Sagaing Region, at around 10:00 a.m. on 29 October.

According to locals, three 80mm mortar rounds were fired into Tharyarkone Village from Inmahtee Village, which is a Pyu Saw Htee village. This means it is controlled and occupied by the junta-aligned Pyu Saw Htee militia.

"Three women were injured, and one house was damaged as a result of the mortar shells. One of the injured women is in critical condition at the hospital", said a resident of Tharyarkone Village.

According to locals, this is the third time that heavy weapon fire has hit Tharyarkone Village which is located two miles north of Inmahtee Village.

A villager from Tharyarkone Village said: "Our village is close to Inmahtee Village, so we cannot live in peace. When the soldiers and Pyu Saw Htee run out of food they resort to robbing and looting from the villagers. They even use carts to carry away the food."

According to reports, large parts of Tharyarkone Village, which originally consisted of 200 houses, have been destroyed and about 50 houses have been burnt down by junta forces.



# JUNTA REVOKES PASSPORTS OF MYANMAR DISSIDENTS IN SINGAPORE: REPORT

Some Myanmar citizens who support anti-junta forces in their homeland said the military regime has revoked their passports, according to a report by Radio Free Asia.

The military junta has been angered by the Myanmar community in Singapore due to its strong opposition to the 2021 coup.

A woman named May Kyaw Soe Nyunt told RFA that her travel permit was denied by Singaporean immigration at the airport. She said, "Immigration officials at the airport told me that my passport is no longer valid. It was revoked by the Myanmar embassy."

Some Myanmar activists in Singapore have also experienced revocation of their passports since last month, according to the RFA report.

Another Myanmar citizen whose passport was

also cancelled told RFA on condition of anonymity for security concerns, "The military regime has reportedly received the name list of supporters of anti-military resistance forces from their informants in Singapore."

The Myanmar junta made two orders in September for migrant workers—to remit 25 percent of their earnings at money-losing exchange rates, and to pay tax of at least 10 percent on their income earned abroad.

The orders will affect Myanmar migrant workers in renewing their passports as they need to show proof of tax payments or pay a lump-sum income tax.

A recent announcement from the Myanmar passport offices said expats and sailors need to submit their tax certificates when renewing their passports.

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## YOUNG GIRL CRITICALLY INJURED DURING FIGHTING IN DAWEI DISTRICT

A 15-year-old girl is in a critical condition after being hit by gunfire during fighting at a police station in Tanintharyi's Dawei District on 25 October.

People's defence forces (PDFs) launched an attack on the police station in Kyauk Myaung Ward of Thayetchaung Township at approximately 5:20 am on 25 October.

According to locals, the police and the PDFs exchanged fire for about 30 minutes. The young girl, who is about 15 years old, was hit by stray rounds whilst in her house nearby.

"There were numerous gunshots coming from the police station. As the exchange of fire ensued, residents in the vicinity took cover. A young woman was hit twice by gunfire and had to be rushed to the hospital," said a local woman who wishes to remain anonymous for safety concerns.

Currently, the girl is receiving treatment in Dawei Hospital. She is still in a critical condition.

Details about other casualties suffered during the fighting are currently unavailable.

A representative from a Thayetchaung Township said that the PDF would soon provide comprehensive information about the attack on the police station.

The situation in Thayetchaung Township has remained normal since the police station attack and the junta has not carried out any further inspections.

The Burmese Women's Union reports that over 513 women have lost their lives, and more than 3,390 have been detained by Myanmar's junta since the February 2021 coup.



A Ta'ang National Liberation Army fighter, one of the three groups that have launched Operation 1027 against Myanmar junta positions in northern Shan State. Photo: AFP



# OPERATION 1027

**Surprise resistance action has  
Myanmar junta on the backfoot**

**T**he world may largely be focused on the Israel-Gaza war but Myanmar has its own power play underway with ethnic resistance groups seeking to change the balance of power, a move that has also prompted a call for a ceasefire.

Operation 1027 was born on 27 October as the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) along with the Arakan Army (AA) and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) went on the offensive against Myanmar junta forces in Shan State.

### **WELL PLANNED**

Close to two weeks into Operation 1027, some things are abundantly clear. For starters, Operation 1027 was a well-planned undertaking long in the making, demonstrating a collaborative approach to countering the junta that two years previously would have seemed but a remote possibility.

The Shan State offensive, spearheaded by the Brotherhood Alliance of three long-standing EAOs and already having overrun dozens of junta outposts, has also incorporated elements of post-2021 coup elements: demonstrating the further congealing of op-

erations among resistance factions. On the same day of its launch, heavy fighting was reported to the south along the Asia Highway, where the KNLA and local PDFs jointly operate.

### **REGIONAL UNDERTAKING**

Second, Operation 1027 was likely designed as a regional undertaking with limited objectives, not the least of which is the TNLA's drive to secure more territory to strengthen their position in calling for a separate state within Shan State. However, Operation 1027 has quickly taken on a life of its own, gathering momentum few could have anticipated. Karenni, Chin, Kachin and NUG spokespersons have all called for further offensives in other regions of the country, while Operation 1027 itself has now expanded into Upper Sagaing, with hostilities also being reported in the Naypyidaw Capital Region.

What is less certain is the full eventual fallout from Operation 1027 – with the notable exception of more fighting in other parts of Myanmar in the coming months. Should Operation 1027 and its progeny highlight the junta's deteriorating military capability,



Operation 1027 has an estimated 15,000 fighters under arms. Photo: AFP



Operation 1027 appears to be expanding its territorial scope as other resistance groups pick up the banner. Photo: AFP

we could see drastic changes in the political dynamics in Naypyidaw. This could take the form of the removal of Min Aung Hlaing – whose star has been waning for some time – and even the advent of some kind of transitional period. On the other hand, the stymieing of Operation 1027 would bolster assessments of a continued strategic stalemate for the foreseeable future.

### **CHINA INTERESTS**

And then there is the role of China. Beijing has long coveted peace and security along its border with Myanmar, and it has not hesitated in the past to act against illicit gambling and other criminal activities. It is possible that, at China's behest, there is some truth to the Brotherhood Alliance's insistence that one aim of Operation 1027 was to suppress such activities throughout the China-Myanmar border region. But Beijing is almost certainly playing a longer game than cleaning up criminal activity on its doorstep.

China could well be growing weary of the inability of Min Aung Hlaing and the junta to restore order and protect its investments in Myanmar. If Beijing is seen as having given the green light to Operation 1027, then it could also be viewed as a means of placing pressure on the junta to adopt Chinese prescribed policy – in return for “reigning in” the Operation 1027

offensive. Certainly, China has no interest in the influx of large numbers of refugees onto its soil. At the same time, Beijing, by enhancing its influence among northern EAOs, may be situating itself to play a lead role in the future federal states of northern Myanmar.

### **IMPORTANT INFLUENCE**

As such, continual assessment of China's reactions to the latest events in Myanmar is essential. What Beijing decides may hold a key to the broader Myanmar conflict, let alone the future constitution of a post-junta Myanmar.

For now, it is still too early to assess the full impact and outcome of Operation 1027. And it should not be seen to supersede the rallying cry of “All roads lead to Nay Pyi Taw” as voiced by NUG Minister of Defense Ye Mon.

If anything, the immediate fallout from Operation 1027, with armed activities rising up in various corners of Myanmar in conjunction with and in support of Operation 1027, reinforces the underlying belief that ultimate victory for the country's resistance forces will have to come from all areas of the country.

# WOMEN AND CHILDREN AMONGST CASUALTIES OF MYANMAR ARMY'S ARTILLERY SHELLING IN SHAN STATE



Many civilians have been forced from their homes due to the fighting in northern Shan State. Photo: AFP

**A**s Military Council camps are progressively taken over by resistance forces in Northern Shan State, junta soldiers in Ye-U township are purposefully bombarding villages with no active combatants.

On 1 November, at around 4 pm, soldiers from the Military Council based in Ye-U township, Sagaing region, indiscriminately fired artillery at villages.

The Myanmar junta forces are likely responding to the resistance for attacks under Operation 1027, which began on 27 October and have resulted in the seizure of dozens of junta military positions.

Operation 1027 is led by the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), along with the Arakan Army (AA) and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA).

Tragically, one of the shells hit Letyet Kone village, in the Eastern part of Debayin Township, Sagaing region, leading to the death of two women and causing severe injuries to two others. Among the victims, two were children, according to local sources.

A Letyet Kone villager said, "The soldiers fired 120 mm mortar shells at the villages twice, and one

of them hit the compound of a house in Letyet Kone village."

He also said that the 42-year-old woman, Daw Seik, and another woman died on the spot, while a 13-year-old boy and another 14-year-old boy were also injured.

Villages in the southern, western, and northern parts of Ye-U township came under artillery attack by the Military Council. Locals have been informed that Junta soldiers are patrolling the vicinity of Ye-U township.

"A column of roughly 100 soldiers is divided into two groups of approximately 50 troops each and is currently deployed in both Ye-U Township and Debayin Township," said a soldier from local defense force.

Due to the presence of these columns, it's been reported that over 10,000 residents from villages along the Ye U-Debayin highway, including Letyet Kone, Nyaung Hla, and Aung Chan Thar, have been forced to flee their homes.

# UN OCHA STRESSES HUMANITARIAN NEEDS IN REPORT ON MYANMAR'S OPERATION 1027

**U**nited Nations Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has stressed worry over the evolving humanitarian situation as a result of the Myanmar resistance's Operation 1027 in the north of the country.

As they noted in their 2 November report, the armed conflict began on 27 October between the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF), various ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), and People's Defense Forces continues to escalate, significantly impacting the Northeast and Southeast regions of the country.

Some 25,700 individuals in Northern Shan, Bago East and Kayin have reportedly been newly displaced.

In Northern Shan, armed clashes in at least nine out of 22 townships have resulted in a surge of newly displaced persons and mounting humanitarian needs.

In Northern Shan, the total number of internally displaced people (IDPs) now stands at over 37,400, with a recent surge of over 23,000 due to the esca-

tion in fighting. This is on top of the 14,470 IDPs previously displaced, straining an already underresourced humanitarian response.

Essential transit routes connecting Northern Shan to China are currently obstructed by the MAF and EAOs checkpoints, and at least one vital bridge has been destroyed. Additionally, northern Shan, Bago East and Kayin have faced extensive disruptions in mobile data and telecommunication services across numerous areas.

In Northern Shan, faith-based organizations and host communities are offering immediate, basic lifesaving assistance, such as shelter, food, and water. Various humanitarian partners, alongside host communities and private donors, have extended cash assistance, basic food supplies, and essential relief items to the newly displaced.

The support provided, however, has been insufficient to address the growing needs, while access remains extremely restricted.

# MYANMAR JUNTA VOWS TO HIT BACK AT ETHNIC GROUPS' OPERATION 1027 OFFENSIVE

Myanmar's junta chief vowed Friday last week to strike back after an alliance of ethnic minority groups seized towns and blocked trade routes to China in the biggest coordinated offensive against the military since it seized power in a coup.

Fighting has raged for a week across a wide swathe of northern Shan state, forcing more than 23,000 people from their homes according to the UN, in what analysts say is the most severe military challenge to the junta since it seized power in 2021.

The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the Ta'ang National Liberation Army

(TNLA) and the Arakan Army (AA) said on Thursday they had captured dozens of outposts and four towns and blocked vital trade routes to China.

"The government will launch counter-attacks" against the armed groups, Min Aung Hlaing said in a speech to members of the State Administration Council (SAC), reported in the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper.

He also accused the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in neighbouring Kachin state of attacking "transport facilities" and military bases, and warned the military would retaliate.



Myanmar junta leader Min Aung Hlaing holds a meeting in Naypyidaw to discuss how to retaliate against Operation 1027. Photo: AFP



On Wednesday a junta spokesman said the military had lost control of Chinshwehaw town, a major trade hub on the border with China's Yunnan province.

### **TOWN DIVIDED**

A resident in Hsenwi, a strategic transport node some 90 kilometres (55 miles) from Chinshwehaw, told AFP that locals were cowering in their homes as clashes raged.

"It's chaos - neither the military nor the alliance groups are in control of the town," the resident told AFP by phone, requesting anonymity to protect their safety.

"There is fighting every day, with heavy artillery shelling and air strikes as well."

He said an important bridge was down, effectively cutting the town in two, and people from outlying villages were moving in to seek shelter from clashes in the countryside.

"Thousands of people are stuck in town. We still have food to eat by sharing with each other," he said, adding that 10 civilians had been killed and 10 wounded.

Communications with the remote region are patchy and access impossible while fighting rages, so AFP was unable to immediately confirm the casualty toll.

"Those who have knowledge of medicine are helping to treat the wounded - people dare not to go to the hospital although we heard it's open," the resident said.

### **TRAPPED THAIS**

Thailand said it had a plan to evacuate 162 of its citizens from Laukkai, a battle-scarred border town some 35 kilometres from Chinshwehaw, which the ethnic armed groups have hinted will be their next objective.

Fighting has been reported since the weekend around Laukkai, a key centre in a region rife with drugs, gun-running, prostitution and online scam centres, and which has been the scene of numerous previous rounds of clashes between the military and armed groups.

Thai Foreign Minister Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara said the 162 Thais were "safe under the guidance of the Myanmar government" and would be evacuated across the border to China if they wanted to leave the town.

China called on Thursday for an "immediate" ceasefire in Shan state - home to a planned billion-dollar rail link in its Belt and Road infrastructure project.

Myanmar's borderlands are home to more than a dozen ethnic armed groups, some of which have fought the military for decades over autonomy and control of lucrative resources.

Some have trained and equipped newer People's Defence Forces that have sprung up since the 2021 coup and the military's bloody crackdown on dissent.

The AA, MNDAA and TNLA say the military has suffered dozens killed, wounded and captured since Friday. An entire military battalion reportedly surrendered to the MNDAA amid the offensive. The ethnic militant groups are reportedly calling on the junta forces to defect.



**AFP, Mizzima**

# MYANMAR MILITARY SAYS LOST CONTROL OF STRATEGIC SHAN BORDER TOWN OF CHINSHWEHAW

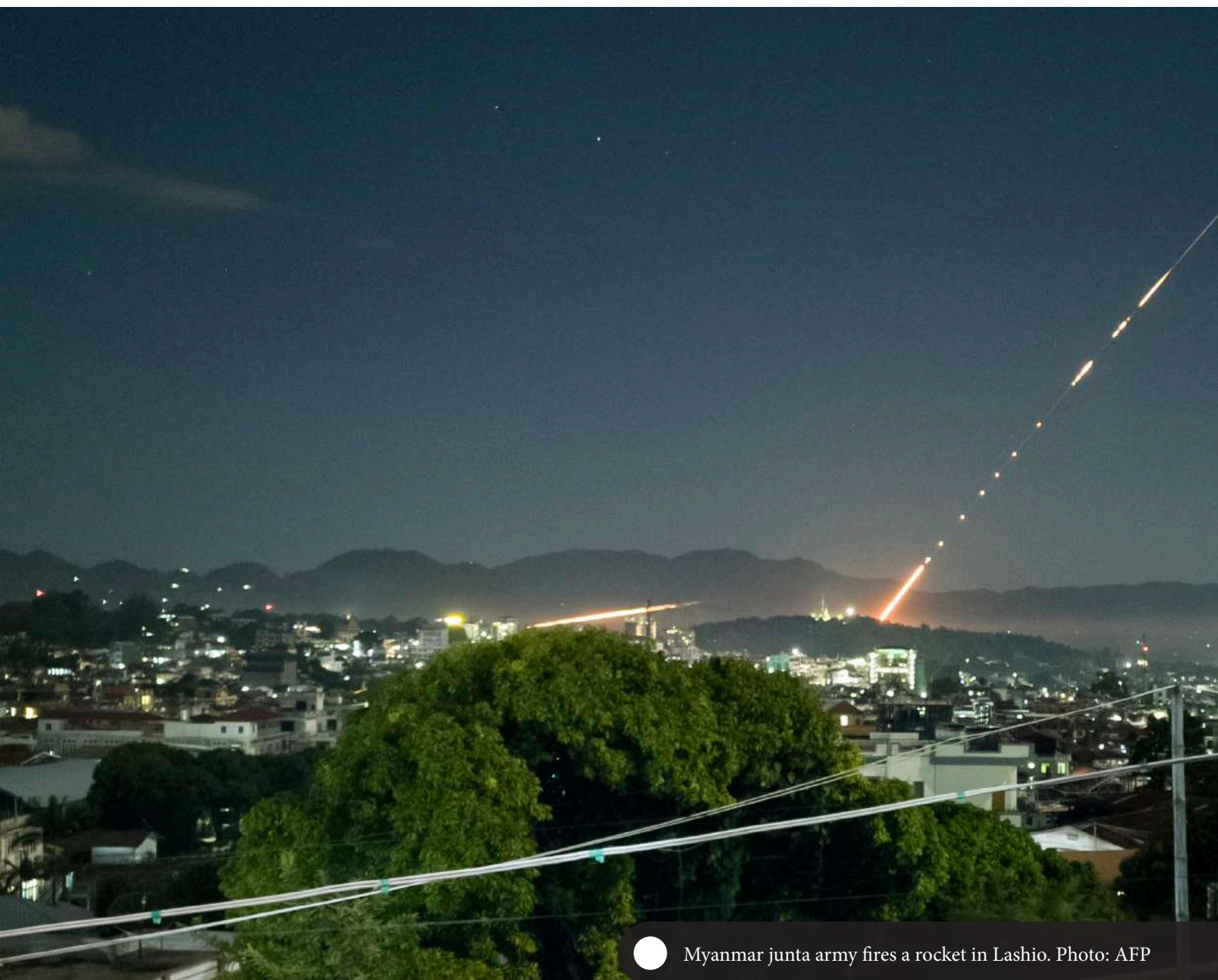
**M**yanmar's military has lost control of a strategic northern town on the Chinese border following days of clashes with three ethnic armed groups, a junta spokesman said.

Since Friday 27 October fighting has raged across a swathe of Myanmar's northern Shan state -- where a billion-dollar rail link is planned as part of Beijing's Belt and Road global infrastructure project.

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA),

the Arakan Army (AA) and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) say they have seized several military posts and key roads linking Myanmar with China, its biggest trade partner.

"Government, administrative organisations and security organisations are no longer present" in Chinshwehaw town, which borders China's Yunnan province, Zaw Min Tun said in a statement late Wednesday.



Myanmar junta army fires a rocket in Lashio. Photo: AFP

Clashes have taken place at 10 locations across Shan state over the past six days, he said, without giving details on casualties.

He accused the three armed groups of “blowing up power stations, blowing up bridges, destroying transportation routes”, without giving details.

More than a quarter of Myanmar’s \$1.8 billion worth of border trade with China from April to September this year passed through Chinshwehaw, junta-controlled media reported in September, citing the commerce ministry.

The MNDAA released footage on Monday that it said showed its fighters occupying Chinshwehaw.

A resident of Hsenwi, around 90 kilometres (55 miles) from Chinshwehaw, told AFP on Thursday that they could hear the sound of fighting outside their town.

Internet access was patchy and thousands of people had arrived in the town seeking safety, the resident said, asking for anonymity for security reasons.

The AA, MNDAA and TNLA -- which analysts say can call on at least 15,000 fighters between them -- have fought regularly with the military over autonomy and control of resources.

AFP has attempted to reach the TNLA and AA for comment.

### **THOUSANDS DISPLACED**

The AA, MNDAA and TNLA say the military has suffered with dozens wounded, killed and captured since Friday.

Analysts say both sides likely inflate or deflate casualty figures.

The United Nations says it fears thousands of people have been displaced, with some fleeing across the border into China.

On Tuesday last week China’s minister for public security met junta chief Min Aung Hlaing in the capital Naypyidaw, Myanmar state media said, for a second day of talks with top junta officials about the clashes.

They discussed attacks by the MNDAA “on security camps... with attempts to deteriorate peace and stability in the region”, the Global New Light said.

China is a top ally and major arms supplier of the junta, and has refused to label its 2021 power grab a coup.

Beijing maintains ties with some ethnic armed groups along its border with Myanmar, home to ethnic Chinese communities who use Chinese SIM cards and currency.

It has previously denied reports it has supplied the armed groups with weapons.



# CHINA CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE IN NORTHERN MYANMAR FIGHTING



China called on Thursday for an immediate ceasefire in fighting in northern Myanmar, after the Myanmar military said it had lost control of a strategic northern town on the Chinese border following clashes with ethnic armed groups.

Beijing “urges all parties to immediately cease fire and stop fighting,” foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told a regular briefing, urging warring parties to resolve “differences through peaceful means using dialogue and consultation”.

The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), along with the Arakan Army (AA) and the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) say they have seized sections of key roads to China -- Myanmar’s biggest trade partner -- since the beginning of their Friday offensive last week, and captured dozens of junta military posts since they began “Operation 1027” (named after the Friday 27 October launch

date).

On Wednesday the groups said they were in “complete control” of Chinshwehaw town on the China border and Hsenwi, which sits on the road to the China border.

**AFP, Mizzima**

# CHINA CONDUCTS MILITARY PATROL AT KYALGAUNG BORDER GATE DUE TO FIGHTING IN NORTHERN MYANMAR

**O**n 31 October, a military patrol was observed on the Chinese side of the Kyalgaung gate, which serves as a border crossing between China and Myanmar in Muse Town, northern Shan State. This military exercise appeared to be conducted by the Wujing border guard force, known locally in the area.

“The number of forces in the area remains consistent. Typically, military patrols are carried out in response to military and political circumstances. However, it’s unusual to see such a substantial deployment for patrolling. China do not use this much force when patrolling. There were six patrolling vehicles,” an official from the Muse Humanitarian Aid Network said.

Than Soe Naing, a political and military analyst, suggests that the heightened military patrolling in China may be a preemptive measure aimed at preparing for a potential influx of displaced people seeking refuge in China. This anticipatory action is in response to the ongoing intense battles occurring in northern Shan State.

“China typically enforces restrictions to prevent those displaced by military conflicts in Myanmar from entering China and seeking asylum. Now, they appear to be reinforcing these barriers,” he said.

China does not have a tradition of readily welcoming people displaced by conflicts in Myanmar. They usually accept them only when there is no alternative. However, Than Soe Naing emphasizes that China’s acceptance of displaced people may not always align with international procedures and regulations.

During the intense battle in the Chinshwehaw on 27 October, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) sent some residents to China, according to the statement issued by the MNDAA.

Than Soe Naing explains that normally, residents of Chin Shwe Haw are granted a seven-day stay in China after crossing the border gate. However, it has been observed that the Kokkang administration team permits entry into China only when the residents make monetary payments. This indicates that China does not have an official policy of welcoming displaced people.

As of 1 November, according to Muse residents, everything in Muse Town is operating as usual, with the exception of a few closed shops, which are likely shuttered due to security concerns or other reasons.

As part of Operation 1027, the MNDAA (Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army) has officially confirmed the successful capture of Chinshwehaw town in Laukkaing township and Phaung Sai town in Muse township, which are border towns on the China-Myanmar border. These achievements were made by the Three Northern Alliance Forces since the operation began on 27 October.

On Thursday last week, China called for a ceasefire in northern Myanmar.

# MYANMAR'S NUG DEFENCE MINISTER DISCUSSES IMPACT OF ETHNIC MILITANTS' OPERATION 1027



Photo: AFP

**M**yanmar's National Unity Government (NUG) recognizes the importance of the resistance's Operation 2017 and how it can help support the Myanmar resistance cause.

In the following interview, Mizzima Managing Editor Sein Win sat down with the NUG's Minister of Defence Yee Mon to discuss these developments.

Mizzima: The Three Brotherhood Alliance is conducting the offensive Operation 1027 in northern Shan State. What is the view of the Ministry of Defence of the NUG on this operation?

Yee Mon: Operation 1027 has gained success. All the military operations in the country are relating to each other. A significant point and advantage of this revolution is the strategy that is simultaneously carried out across the country, rather than only in a certain area. Due to this strategy, the resistance forces could take advantages in all the respective areas (of Myanmar).

Mizzima: Is it possible that there will be an escalation of armed conflicts in other areas following Operation 1027?

Yee Mon: The NUG/MOD and MDY PDF are fighting together with Operation 1027 in northern Shan State. Meanwhile, in other battle zones, local PDFs and EROs are carrying out offensives collaboratively and harmoniously.

PDFs have been fighting courageously more than two years with all possible weapons across the country. It is undeniable that the Military Council is in an overwrought state due to the armed confrontations across the country. Our forces will take advantage in

this situation.

Mizzima: Is the Operation 1027 related to the "All Roads to Nay Pyi Taw" operation that you have already announced?

Yee Mon: We made serious discussions with our alliances to adopt operation "All Roads to Nay Pyi Taw". So, the operation in northern Shan State is a key strategy of our alliances, and it is related to "All Roads to Nay Pyi Taw".

Mizzima: To what extent has NUG established cooperation with EROs?

Yee Mon: The NUG has cooperated and coordinated with ethnic armed organizations in the aspects of revolution in the aspects of political and military affairs. The MOD is responsible for military cooperation. We all have determined to root out military dictatorship and establish a federal democracy.

Mizzima: In previous revolutions, the resistance forces receive arms and ammunitions from the Indo-China region. However, these military supplies were reportedly imported from the northeastern region. So, will the policy change of China affect the revolution?

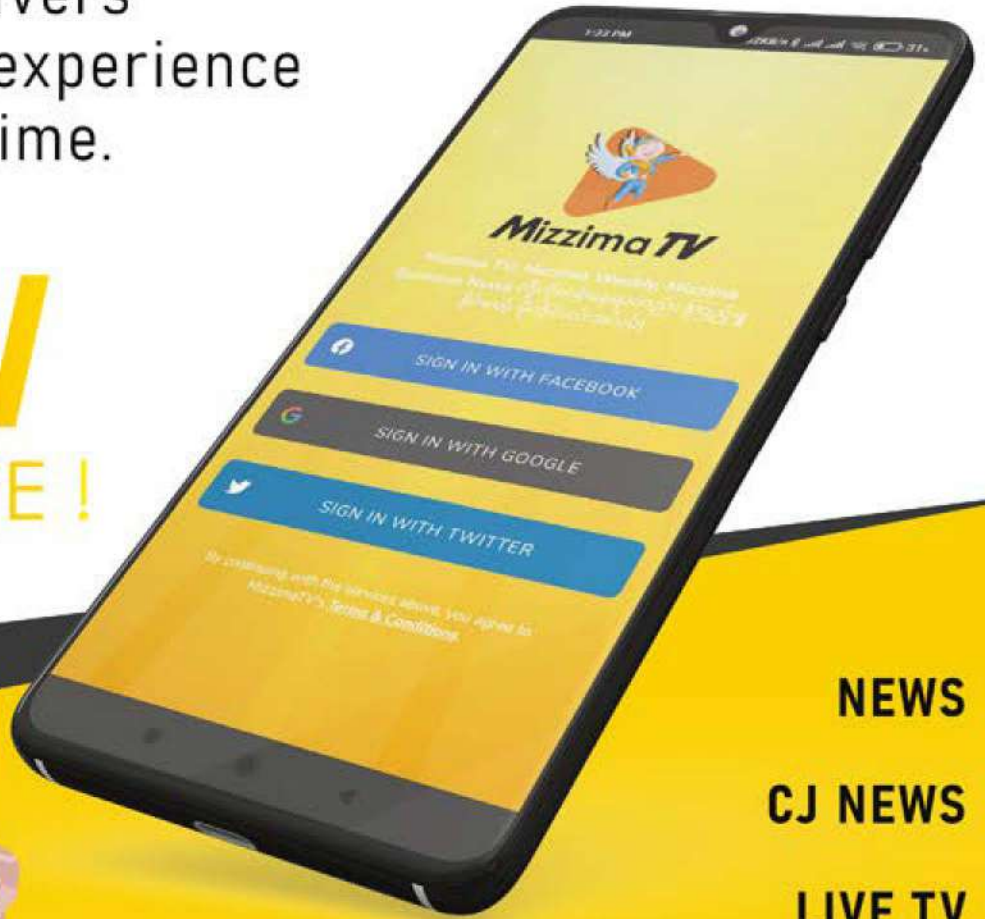
Yee Mon: We receive weapons and ammunitions from various areas. We coordinated with alliances in foreign affairs and relationship with neighbouring countries. As every EAO expect the establishment of a new Union of all ethnic people in a dignified manner, the future of our country will be very promising.

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# SECURITY FORCE MONITOR SEEKS TO LINK MYANMAR MILITARY RIGHTS ABUSE TO PARTICULAR COMMANDERS

For the first time, extensive research has mapped the Myanmar Army's entire Chain of Command and technically who amongst the military may be responsible for incidents of human rights abuse.

A report by Security Force Monitor (SFM), a project of the Columbia Law Human Rights Institute in the US, has published a study entitled "Under Whose Command?" that covers a period of 12 years until March 30, 2023 and reveals the links between low-level soldiers accused of human rights abuses against civilians and their commanding officers and beyond.

The report says that in many areas of the country, almost every single person who ever held command had disappearances, killings, rape or instances of torture allegedly committed by units under their command, and notes this is particularly true in areas of longstanding conflict and concern for human rights abuses.

Looking at thousands of data sources from March 30, 2011 when Senior General Min Aung Hlaing became Commander-in-Chief, the research found 64 per cent (51 of 79) of all senior army commanders had alleged disappearances, killings, rape or instances of



Research seeks to link particular Myanmar military commanders with human rights abuse incidents in Myanmar. Photo: AFP



torture committed by units under their command.

In addition, 54 per cent (28 of 51) of the commanders were promoted in rank after at least one alleged disappearance, killing, rape or instance of torture was committed by the units under their command. Of the others, nine could not be promoted in rank further.

The research suggests the killings were “part of a pattern” and that in the past 12 years, five of the six commanders of Southeastern Regional Military Command had had at least one allegation of killing, rape, or torture committed by units under their command.

The research also documents the entire chain of command behind the 2015 rape, torture and killing of two Kachin teachers in northeastern Myanmar. At the time, local villagers said the army’s 503rd Light In-

fantry Battalion was stationed near the village when the women were killed.

It is hoped the research can help support legal action and ensure justice for those who had lost loved ones as a result of the military’s actions.

The research details the hierarchy and control exercised by senior commanders over hundreds of units throughout a twelve-year period.

Through this project, the entire chain of command is clear and it is possible to identify who was in command when each alleged human rights abuse occurred between 30 March 2011 and 30 March 2023.

Proving individual responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity is a complex task. This is especially true in Myanmar, where secrecy around the army’s structure has long hampered efforts for accountability.

On 30 March 2011, Min Aung Hlaing became Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Myanmar, otherwise known as the Tatmadaw. The Myanmar Army is by far its largest and most powerful branch of the armed forces. Since Min Aung Hlaing took command of the military, the United Nations, human rights groups and others have accused the Myanmar Army of committing genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes across the country.

During the same period, Myanmar initially appeared to be on a path towards greater democracy and civic participation. That ended in February 2021. Led by Min Aung Hlaing, the army ousted the democratically-elected government, headed by the National League for Democracy party, in a coup d’état. Civilian protest was met with a wave of violence unleashed by the armed forces. Today, the army is accused of continuing to enact a brutal crackdown including arbitrary arrest, torture, enforced disappearances and mass killings.

Since 2011 more than 60 per cent of the senior commanders of the Myanmar Army have had disappearances, killings, rape or torture allegedly committed by units under their command.

This research shines new light on the control exercised by senior army commanders over the conduct of individual army units.

The vast majority of senior army commanders over a twelve-year period can be linked through the chain of command to allegations of disappearances, killings, rapes and torture.

The report can be found at:

<https://myanmar.securityforcemonitor.org/>



# CNA CLAIMS MYANMAR ARMY'S STATEMENT OF CONTROL OF THANTLANG TOWN IS FALSE



Aerial view of Thantlang on fire in Chin State. Photo: AFP

According to the Chin National Army (CNA) and the Chinland Defense Forces, the Myanmar junta statement claiming restoration of control of Thantlang Town by the junta forces and arrangements for the return of the residents is propaganda.

As of 30 October, the Military Council declared full control over Thantlang following a 90-day assault, claiming complete dominance over the area.

However, CNA spokesperson Salai Htet Ni informed Mizzima that this announcement is misleading and untrue, calling it “false conspiracy news”.

“Chinland Defense forces have not engaged in any clashes with the military troops in Thantlang for approximately a month. Both groups remain stationed in Thantlang town up to the present day. The statement made is propaganda, involving misleading news,” Salai Htet Ni told Mizzima.

Chin Defense soldiers stated that the junta may have released false information about Thantlang Town in an attempt to boost the morale of its troops, which have been facing significant challenges due to Operation 1027 led by the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and the Arakan Army (AA), a week-long offensive in northern Shan State.

Salai Htet Ni clarified the situation in Thantlang Town, where the junta has established four additional locations in addition to its main base camp. Meanwhile, the CNA and the Chinland Defense Forces control approximately half of the town.

The junta’s announcement included photos of seized small and large arms and the dead bodies of the Chin forces during the capture of Thantlang Town. Although the photos are indeed of their fallen soldiers and their arms, they are not from the Thantlang battle. The junta falsely published photos of the Lungkhar battle, between Hakha and Thantlang, which took place over five months ago, Salai Htet Ni added.

He added that the military forces employed heavy ammunition and launchers, and even conducted airstrikes, causing extensive damage to the town, including the torching of numerous residential houses and buildings.

Thantlang is a town with a former population of around 10,000 people and approximately 2,000 houses. Because of the conflicts following the 2021 junta coup, the residents were forced to flee to neighbouring villages and into the Indian state of Mizoram. As of now, they have been unable to return to their homes.

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# MYANMAR AND THE BRUTAL INCOMPETENCE OF A FLOUNDERING REGIME



Zachary Abuza

Analyst Zachary Abuza has a tight handle on Myanmar's worsening crisis. As he points out to Insight Myanmar in a newly-released Podcast, the Myanmar military appear to have bitten off more than they can chew.

Check out the podcast on Insight Myanmar here: <https://player.captivate.fm/episode/4517b69e-a04d-4b6d-aead-f4a95cc81b5c>

“Just look at the number of fronts that [the Burmese military] is fighting,” says Abuza, who joins the Insight Myanmar Podcast for a fourth interview. “They’re fighting in Chin state, Magwe, Mandalay, different parts of Shan states, Kayah state, they’re just fighting everywhere right now. There are very few parts of the country that are free of violence.”

## **TIMELY ASSESSMENT**

Abuza offers a timely assessment as an ethnic alliance in northern Shan State makes news headlines with their “Operation 1027” that is sweeping up junta military outposts.

In the Podcast, Abuza starts off by noting the multi-front war that the junta is waging across the country, where it is simultaneously facing more foes than ever before. “You have these new battlefields that the military seems unprepared for and certainly doesn’t have the manpower or resources,” he says. “And yet they’re fighting! They’ve chosen to fight in these places.”

## **BATTLE FOR THANGLANG**

In Chin State, for example, he explains how the military has been undertaking a last-ditch effort—unsuccessful so far—to retake Thantlang. Then the Kachin Independence Army has started an all-out offensive, and Abuza says the generals are terrified of losing their hold on the highly profitable jadeite mines there.

Meanwhile, Karen forces have been battling them to a standstill, and Kayah fighters have begun launching a series of coordinated attacks. To make matters even worse for the coup leaders, several di-

visions of the once-aligned Border Guard Forces have defected. Abuza also discusses how even when soldiers are able to take over a village, for example, they rarely gain control over the roads leading in and out, and are totally unable to offer any real local administration, in contrast to the services that the NUG and ethnic forces have begun looking after.

Here Abuza references the insights of the acclaimed French journalist, Bernard Fall, who pointed out in the 1950s that although French forces in Vietnam had far greater military capacity, local militias were still able to continue collecting taxes and administering local services, which to Fall was a key indicator that the French would never be victorious there.

### **STEPPING UP PRESSURE**

With few options left now in Myanmar, “the military has no option but to intensify attacks, even though they’re running short on manpower.”

Abuza explores various facets of the present state of the Myanmar military. “Without a doubt, the PDFs are better armed,” Abuza notes. “They’re getting a steady supply of ammunition. There are battlefield losses, and we also know that the military doesn’t really have great battlefield medicine. So people that are wounded, [and] who should live, are often dying. It’s what they call ‘The Golden Hour,’ and they’re losing troops they should not lose.” Adding that exact defection numbers are hard to come by, he says one thing is for certain, that fewer soldiers are choosing to leave their positions. Partly this is because many soldiers’ families are held as virtual hostages within military housing camps, and would be severely punished were the soldier to defect.

### **DECADES OF ABUSE**

But also, Abuza suspects that many doubt they would ever be welcomed back into Burmese society, aware of the terrible atrocities and war crimes the army has been committing for years now throughout the country. “There’s this sense right now of either ‘we hang together or we hang separately,’” he explains. “And never forget the power of indoctrination! They’ve always been told that they are the only people that can hold this otherwise fractious country together. This has

been literally beaten into them since the first day they join the military.”

Yet while defection numbers may be down, Abuza finds that more and more commanders are simply refusing to follow orders, leading to a series of high-level disciplinary measures and replacements.

### **FUNDING PROBLEMS**

An even more worrisome concern for the generals is how to continue to fund their terror campaign. After allocating themselves a 50 per cent increase in military spending, they are committing a whopping \$2.7 billion towards waging this bloody war. But Abuza points out that much of this figure will be siphoned off in corruption, and with state-owned factories not producing high quality products or spare parts, and with jet fuel getting increasingly hard to come by, he believes that their available monies won’t actually go very far. And he also points out that this huge budget allocation does not actually mean there is more money available to pay for it.

“The military doesn’t know what they’re doing!” he exclaims. “When they give themselves a 50 per cent increase in their military budget, it’s not because they have more revenue. For that, they’ve taken money away from other departments and other social services. They’re cutting back education and public health.”

### **POOR TACTICS**

Moreover, Abuza explains that besides their dwindling supplies, the military’s tactical and strategic skill, from top to bottom, is as poor as ever. “The one thing you can say about them is that they haven’t changed their tactics at all. Here we are, over 30 months since the coup, they control less territory than before, and the NUG is increasingly able to arm and provide a steady stream of ammunition to their fighters,” he explains. “There’s been no fundamental reassessment of their strategy. What they’re doing is simply more of what they had done previously: more attacks on civilians, more arson, and more of the Four Cuts strategy to terrorize the population into submission. And this has failed.”

Indeed, leaked minutes from a recent meeting

involving the major architects of the military's strategy revealed an awareness that their military campaigns are not achieving their objectives, but again, there was no capacity for thinking how to innovate or fight in a different way. "There's been no reassessment of the fundamental military strategy, and they cannot sit there and think that they're winning!"

## **RESISTANCE ADVANCES**

On the flip side, the resistance forces are faring better than ever, achieving recent victories in ground conflicts. "They deserve a lot of credit for battlefield innovation and improved tactics. But all that said, that strategy is not going to bring the military to their knees anytime soon."

The real question, then, is how long can the military continue to hold on? And the answer, unfortunately, is that there may be no real resolution coming anytime soon, as the regime is able to continue selling off its natural resources to neighbouring countries.

In addition, investment from Thailand and China has not slowed down; money is also sent from Singapore where it gets incorporated and returned to Myanmar to buy up "distressed assets." The real estate market in urban areas remains hot as homes are bought as tangible assets in the face of high inflation; however, the military has set up a system that intentionally makes it hard to trace the money and know who is doing the buying, though it is most likely cronies of the regime.

## **ASSET FREEZE?**

For Abuza, the only significant game-changer would be if the military's nearly six billion dollars in foreign holdings is frozen, but he suspects that there is slim chance of that happening. "The economy is going to continue to weaken, and the country is going to fall further and further behind its ASEAN neighbours. And it's heartbreaking."

In this same vein, Abuza notes that the Burmese economy has contracted by 12 per cent. This is "a decade's worth of economic growth that was just eviscerated by the avarice, the greed, the desire for power of the military! You now have nearly 60 per cent of the population living beneath the poverty line, and food insecurity is growing."

The numbers are staggering, with inflation

hovering between 14-20 per cent (by comparison, a 5 per cent inflation rate is a major political issue in a developed country), and the kyat has declined 300 per cent since the coup. Because of the diminished value of the kyat combined with the high inflation rate, a new, 20,000 kyat bill was just introduced by the junta, which will only further damage the monetary value.

"They can't provide any macroeconomic stability," Abuza notes of the military. "They run the Central Bank not as a normal bank that's trying to deal with economic growth and controlling inflation. They're using it as a wartime bank to support the war effort!"

On top of this, those top bankers and experts who have not already fled the country have mostly been arrested, meaning that these financial decisions are likely being made by individuals with no background in managing a national economy.

## **URBAN DECAY**

Urban areas in Myanmar are now being transformed not only by this massive investment offsetting the collapsing economy, but also by a sharp spike in crime and illicit narcotics, which Abuza attributes to the city's dwindling police forces as they get re-assigned to quell PDF and ethnic attacks in the countryside.

Meanwhile, he notes that in rural regions, the everyday bravery of fighting against the military's tyranny continues.

"From the northernmost part of the country to the southernmost, and from east to west, despite the threat of arrest, of terrible treatment upon arrest, whether sexual violence or rape, being tortured to death, people are protesting military rule," Abuza says. "Every day, there are flash mobs in villages around the country protesting military rule! The courage of the people of Myanmar to do this for 30 plus months, it is astounding."

Check out the podcast on Insight Myanmar here: <https://player.captivate.fm/episode/4517b69e-a04d-4b6d-aead-f4a95cc81b5c>

# EIGHT CIVILIANS INJURED BY MYANMAR JUNTA ARTILLERY SHELLING IN KNU CONTROLLED AREAS

**M**yanmar junta soldiers from the Light Infantry Battalion (20) based in Nyaunglaebin Township and Infantry Battalion (264) based in Peinzalote Township, Bago Region, carried out sustained artillery shelling using 120 mm and 81 mm mortars on 30 October, injuring a number of civilians.

Regarding the shelling, Karen National Union (KNU) Central has reported that eight local residents, including three children from two villages, sustained injuries, and houses in the areas were damaged.

A source in Nyaunglaebin said on 31 October: “On the night of 30 October, junta soldiers-initiated artillery shelling on the villages without any ongoing battles with resistance forces. The shelling occurred without apparent justification, resulting in numerous injuries among the local population.”

The people who sustained injuries from artillery shells include Min Khant Zaw, a one-and-a-half-year-old toddler, his 28-year-old mother Khin Moe Wai, three-year-old toddler Yoon Yoon, and 27-year-old Yan Win Aung, all are from Yayphyukan village. Currently,

they are receiving medical care at Nyaunglaebin Township People’s Hospital.

Furthermore, on 30 October, at approximately 3:00 pm, soldiers from the Infantry Battalion (264), stationed at Peinzalote Town, launched two 120 mm mortar shells from the Tharyarkone Military Camp. This incident resulted in injuries to four local residents from Taung Khin village in Kyaukkyi Township, Bago Region.

The victims were a 13-year-old girl Ei Shwe Sin, an 18-year-old girl Thun Shwe Sin, 55-year-old Daw Thay Thay, and 58-year-old U Htwe Tin.

During October 2023, 23 people including 13 women, suffered injuries, while one toddler and one woman lost their lives as a result of heavy weapons fire from the Military Council in areas under the control of KNU Brigade (3). This information was provided by Karen National Union (KNU) Central.

# MYANMAR CAMPAIGN NETWORK CALLS ON AUSTRALIA TO IMPOSE TOUGHER SANCTIONS AGAINST JUNTA



Photo: Caleb

**T**he Myanmar Campaign Network (MCN) has requested the Australian government impose tougher sanctions against the Myanmar military regime.

In their open letter to Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong on 2 October, the MCN commended Australia for joining its democratic allies in coordinated efforts to impose targeted sanctions on entities and individuals crucial to financing and sustaining the junta's actions.

The MCN is an Australian national coalition that was established following the 2021 coup in Myanmar. It is composed with human rights organisations, international aid NGOs, Myanmar diaspora organisations, trade unions and faith-based organisations.

The coalition's open letter, signed by 414 organizations, includes the proposed sanctions against state-owned enterprises, banking sector and cronies, arms manufacture and procurement, aviation supply chain, junta leadership and Union Election Commission, as these entities and individuals are directly or indirectly responsible for the loss of over 4,000 lives,

25,000 detentions, and widespread reports of torture and conflict-related sexual violence, 86,000 burned homes, 1.9 million internally displaced persons, both within Myanmar and as refugees to neighbouring countries, and the worsening the human rights and humanitarian crisis.

The press release MCN on this open letter also said that despite the Australian Government's implementation of targeted sanctions on 16 individuals and two entities in February

2023, the coalition highlights that these sanctions represent only two percent of the international sanctions imposed on Myanmar.

In conclusion, the coalition suggests the Australian Government take principled steps to address the Myanmar crisis effectively, reaffirming Australia's commitment to these values as Australia can play a pivotal role in restoring democracy and alleviating suffering in Myanmar.



# MYANMAR JUNTA AND BANGLADESH PROBE ROHINGYA RETURN



Rohingya refugee representatives wait in Teknaf, Bangladesh for visiting Myanmar junta officials. Photo: AFP

**M**yanmar officials arrived in Bangladesh on Tuesday last week to meet with Rohingya refugees as part of a long-stalled repatriation scheme now backed by China. Bangladesh is home to around one million Rohingya refugees, most of whom fled a violent 2017 crackdown by the Myanmar military that is now subject to a UN genocide probe.

The stateless and persecuted minority live in overcrowded, dangerous and under-resourced relief camps, and several previous attempts to broker their return home have failed due to reluctance from Myanmar and the refugees themselves. The living situation in the camps is difficult, including a cutback in donor rations, but the refugees appear to be in two minds about a return home.

The team of Myanmar officials arrived at Teknaf, a river port just across from their shared border with Bangladesh, to meet with several dozen Rohingya families. Bangladesh officials said Myanmar plans to take back around 3,000 refugees by December as part of a pilot repatriation scheme brokered in a three-way meeting between the two countries and China in April.

“They are ready to accept them. But the Rohingya are not ready to go. That’s the challenge,” one Bangladeshi government official said. Rohingya community leaders have long said they would only return if they were granted citizenship and resettled on their own land.

“We are interested to go back to our country if Myanmar takes us back to our place of origin, gives us dignity, and fulfils all our rights,” Khin Maung, a prominent Rohingya leader, said. “But if our rights are not given, we have questions.”

The Rohingya are widely viewed in Myanmar as interlopers from Bangladesh, despite roots in the

Southeast Asian country stretching back centuries, and are stateless after Myanmar stopped recognising their citizenship.

Violence is a fact of life in the Bangladesh camps, with rival armed groups battling for control of territory. Malnutrition is also widespread, with the UN food agency saying a funding shortfall this year had forced it to cut rations by a third. The desperate situation has prompted thousands of Rohingya to embark upon dangerous and often deadly sea trips to South-east Asian countries to escape the camps.

A repatriation plan agreed in 2017 failed to make significant headway in the years since, partly over concerns the Rohingya would not be safe if they returned. Progress ground to a complete halt during the COVID-19 pandemic and after the military overthrow of Myanmar’s civilian government in 2021.

Bangladesh has repeatedly said any repatriation would be voluntary, but several Rohingya earmarked for the return programme told AFP they had been threatened into joining.

Assessment: At this stage, the picture is not clear but the plan appears to involve sending a number of refugees to live in newly-built settlements, with, it is assumed, some land to farm. They would not be returning to their home area. There is no indication that they would be given citizenship, which suggests they would largely be confined to the settlement area, or possibly with some travel rights within Rakhine State. In essence, this suggests they would effectively be second-class immigrants with limited rights, potentially subject to harassment.

**AFP, Mizzima**

# FIERCE FIGHTING IN GAZA AS US ENVOY BLINKEN FACES ARAB ANGER

Israel battled into the fifth week Saturday of its war to crush Hamas, showing no signs of letting up even as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken faced a rising tide of anger in meetings with Arab foreign ministers.

Blinken reaffirmed US support for “humanitarian pauses” in the fighting in Gaza to ensure desperate civilians get help a day after Israel’s hawkish Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave the idea short shrift.

However, US President Joe Biden said progress had been made on securing a so-called “humanitarian pause”, without elaborating.

At a news conference last weekend in Amman about sparing civilians and speeding up aid deliveries, Blinken said: “The United States believes that all of these efforts will be facilitated by humanitarian pauses.”

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, whose country has been acting as the sole conduit for foreigners to escape the Gaza Strip and for aid to get in, called for an “immediate and comprehensive ceasefire”.

Hamas said late Saturday the evacuation of dual nationals and foreigners from Gaza was being suspended until Israel lets some wounded Palestinians reach Rafah so they can cross the border for hospital treatment in Egypt.

Israeli chief of staff Lieutenant General Herzl Halevi visited troops inside Gaza on Saturday after they completed encirclement of its largest city.

Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said Israeli forces were fighting “hard” inside Gaza. He said they were “operating from south and north (of Gaza City) and have entered populated areas”.



● A child injured in the Israel-Gaza conflict. Photo: AFP

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas in punishment for its brutal October 7 attack on communities and military outposts near the Gaza border, which killed more than 1,400 people, mainly civilians.

### **Netanyahu 'written off'**

The health ministry in Gaza, which is run by Hamas, says more than 9,480 Gazans, mostly women and children, have been killed in Israeli strikes and the intensifying ground campaign.

The ministry said at least 12 people had been killed when Israel struck a United Nations school where thousands of displaced Palestinians were sheltering.

"Bombs were falling on us, people got cut into pieces," said Sajda Maarouf, a Palestinian woman sheltering in the school. "We want a truce, please, we are exhausted."

The fighting has provoked anti-Israeli protests around the world, and political opposition from key regional powers, including influential Turkey, which on Saturday recalled its ambassador from Israel.

Palestinian ally Turkey had been mending torn relations with Israel until last month's start of the Israel-Hamas war.

But Ankara's tone hardened against both Israel and its Western supporters - particularly the United States - as the fighting escalated and the death toll among Palestinian civilians soared.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told reporters he held Netanyahu personally responsible for the growing civilian death toll in Gaza.

"Netanyahu is no longer someone we can talk to. We have written him off," Turkish media quoted Erdogan as saying.

Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Lior Haiat said the move was "another step by the Turkish president that sides with the Hamas terrorist organisation".

Hamas hailed the move and urged Ankara to "put pressure on President (Joe) Biden and his administration" so that "humanitarian and medical help can reach our besieged people in the Gaza Strip".

Blinken is to begin a two-day visit to Turkey on Sunday, the US State Department said. Thousands demonstrated in Istanbul on Saturday against his visit.

### **'Targeted raid'**

The Israeli military describes Gaza City as "the centre of the Hamas terror organisation", but the US special envoy for aid assistance, David Satterfield, said between 350,000 and 400,000 civilians remained in the city and adjacent areas.

Overnight, Israeli ground forces launched "a targeted raid" to map tunnels and clear explosive traps in southern Gaza, where it has struck before but rarely sent in troops, the military said.

"The troops encountered a terrorist cell exiting a tunnel shaft. In response, the troops fired shells to-

ward the terrorists and killed them," it said.

Israel says it has struck 12,000 targets across the Palestinian territory since October 7, one of the fiercest bombing campaigns in recent memory.

A key focus of Blinken's visit to Israel on Friday was to convince Netanyahu to enact "humanitarian pauses".

Netanyahu rebuffed the proposal, saying he would not agree to a "temporary truce" until Hamas releases more than 240 Israeli and foreign hostages it abducted during its October 7 attack.

Inside Israel, thousands of people protested on Saturday as pressure mounts on Netanyahu over his government's lack of preparedness for the October 7 attacks and its handling of the hostage crisis.

### **Ambulance hit**

In Gaza City, an Israeli strike on Friday hit an ambulance convoy near the territory's largest hospital Al-Shifa, killing 15 people, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent and the Hamas-run health ministry.

Israel's military said it had targeted an ambulance used by a "Hamas terrorist cell" and had "neutralised" those inside.

An AFP journalist saw multiple bodies beside the blood-splattered Palestinian Red Crescent vehicle.

The Red Crescent said a convoy of five vehicles had been destined for the Rafah border crossing with Egypt, when they were struck multiple times.

One vehicle had been transporting a 35-year-old woman with shrapnel wounds.

A senior White House official said Hamas had tried to use a US-brokered deal opening the Egyptian border crossing to get its cadres out.

"That was just unacceptable to Egypt, to us, to Israel," the official said.

### **Shuttle diplomacy**

Blinken on Saturday held talks in Amman with his counterparts from Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, all key players in the crisis.

In his talks with Blinken, King Abdullah II of Jordan underlined that "the only way to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is to work towards a political horizon to achieve a just and comprehensive peace based on the two-state solution".

The US administration has said that it too backs a Palestinian state alongside Israel, but Netanyahu's hard-right government is implacably opposed.

The Amman talks came amid mounting Arab anger over the civilian death toll in the war.

Jordan, which in 1994 became only the second Arab country after Egypt to make peace with Israel, recalled its ambassador from Israel on Wednesday for the first time since 2019.

AFP

# SHARP UPTICK IN FIGHTING IN MYANMAR, UN HUMANITARIANS REPORT

**M**yanmar witnessed a sharp escalation in fighting between the military and opposition groups last week fuelling a surge in new displacements, the UN humanitarian wing has said.

Clashes intensified on 29 October and continued through the week, significantly impacting north-east and southeast Myanmar and forcing over 48,000 people from their homes, amid rising needs, according to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

There are also reports that an alliance of three rebel groups seized towns in the country's north,

overrunning and occupying over 90 army outposts. The military has reportedly acknowledged the loss of at least three towns.

Reports of fresh displacement in Shan (North), Myanmar. Some figures are under verification.

OCHA Reports of fresh displacement in Shan (North), Myanmar. Some figures are under verification.

## ***Routes cutoff***

In a flash update issued late on Thursday last week, OCHA reported that vital transport links connecting northern Shan to China had been obstruct-

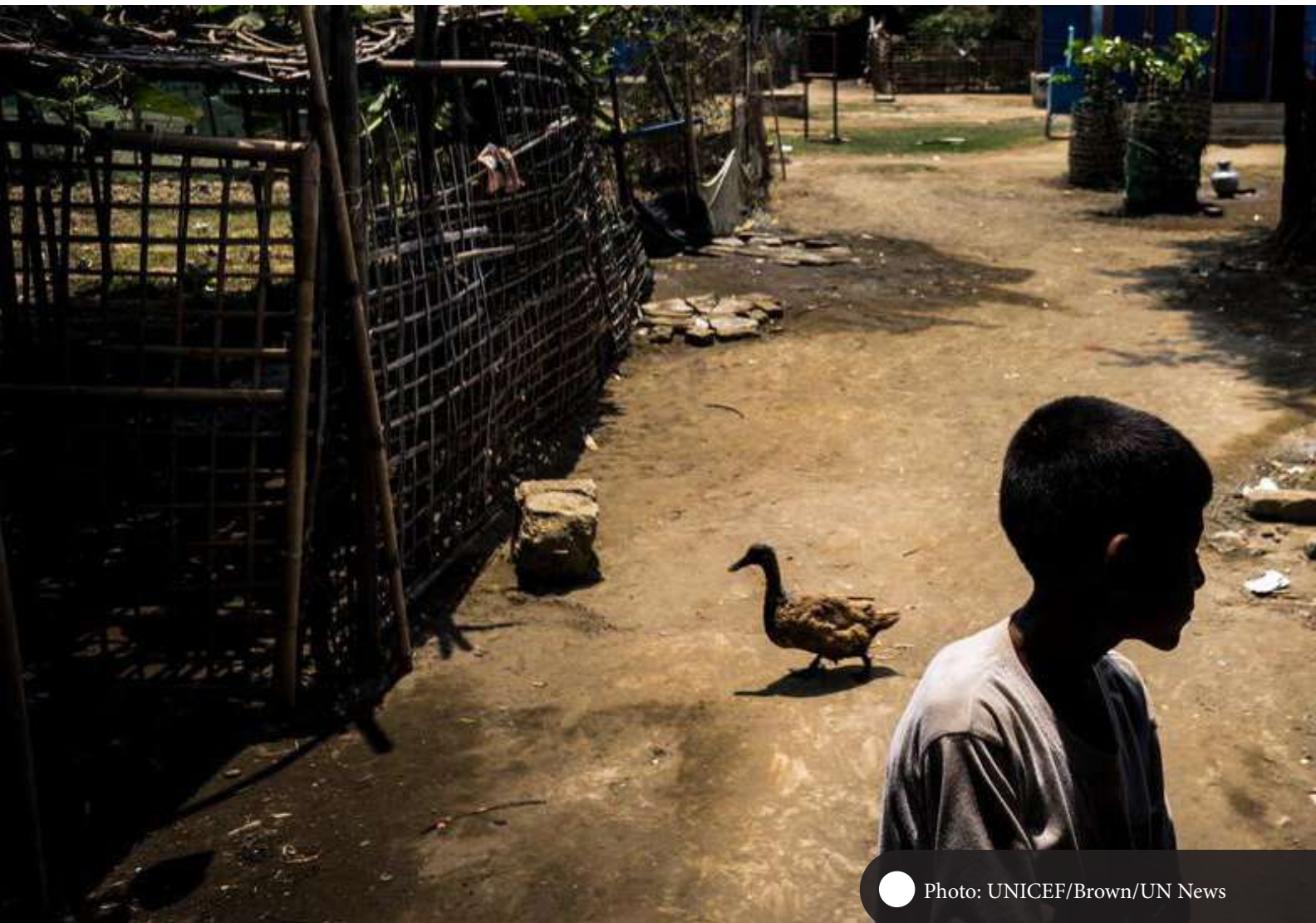


Photo: UNICEF/Brown/UN News

ed by the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) and Ethnic Armed Organization (EAOs) checkpoints.

At least one critical bridge had been destroyed, with numerous places in northern Shan, eastern Bago and Kayin states facing “extensive disruptions” in mobile data and telecommunications.

Thirteen civilians, including children, lost their lives in the fighting in various locations, and a further two died after they were unable to access emergency medical services, according to the flash update. Several people are reported to have been injured.

### **HUMANITARIAN NEEDS**

According to OCHA, in northern Shan state, faith-based organizations and host communities are delivering immediate assistance, including shelter, food, drinking water, hygiene supplies and non-food

items.

Almost all of the people newly displaced since 27 October are seeking refuge in religious compounds and few are known to have entered pre-existing Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) sites.

### **GAPS AND CHALLENGES**

OCHA underscored the need for secure and unimpeded humanitarian access to deliver timely assistance. It added that disrupted telecommunications, particularly in northern Shan, is hindering relief work.

“Ongoing hostilities, coupled with the existence of checkpoints, road closures, and structural damage to bridges, are severely restricting the ability of humanitarian agencies to reach affected people, conduct verification of needs, and transport vital supplies,” it said.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION**

Meanwhile, the human rights crisis in the country “is bad and is getting exponentially worse”, Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews said.

In an interview with UN News last week in New York, on the margins of his report to the General Assembly, the independent human rights expert described the situation in the country, adding that no one is safe.

**Courtesy of UN News**





Photo: Drzayar Min

## SHAN STATE

### *Roads to Chinese border in northern Shan State closed*

Trucks are currently unable to travel to the Myanmar-China border due to ongoing fierce fighting in northern Shan State that started on 27 October.

Roads to the Chinese border have been closed since the morning of 27 October when The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MND- AA), which is fighting the junta in northern Shan State, announced that no vehicles would be allowed to travel along roads going to the Chinese border crossings at Muse in the north or Chinshwehaw in the northeast of northern Shan State.

These include Highway 3 from Lashio to Muse and Highway 34 from Lashio to Chinshwehaw.

According to truck operators, trucks are now not allowed beyond the outskirts of Pyinoolwin Township in Mandalay Region.

A truck driver stranded in Lashio said that currently the national highways connecting Muse, Seinni, Lashio, Kunlong and Chinshwehaw were still closed for security reasons. He said that truck drivers and travellers are stranded on these roads and facing difficulties.

Another truck driver said that Myanmar nationals who had crossed the border into China using Temporary Border Passes (TBPs) to seek employment may now be stranded in China following the break out of fighting on the Myanmar side of the border.

Since the fighting broke out in northern Shan State on 27 October all bus terminals and airports in the area have been closed. According to reports, many trucks and interstate buses are currently stranded on the closed roads.



## NAY PYI TAW LAUNCHES MYANMAR RICE ONLINE WEBSITE AMIDST INDUSTRY CHAOS

**A**midst widespread condemnation of the junta's disastrous handling of Myanmar's economy, the junta's Department of Consumer Affairs of Ministry of Commerce and the Myanmar Rice Federation have jointly launched the Myanmar Rice Online (MyRO) website in a desperate attempt to salvage the country's rice industry, which has been severely crippled by the junta's inept policies.

The launch event, held in Nay Pyi Taw on November 3, was attended by over 200 people, including government officials, businesspersons, and media, according to the junta-controlled state media.

However, the event was overshadowed by growing public anger towards the junta's mismanagement of the economy, which has resulted in skyrocketing inflation, and widespread job losses.

Speaking at the event, the junta's Union Minister for Planning and Finance Win Shein said that the registration of storage warehouses and rice millers at MyRO website would help enhance stability in domestic rice prices and ensure the calculation of a balanced level of domestic rice sufficiency for rice export.

However, his remarks were met with skepticism from industry experts, who pointed out that the junta's arbitrary policies, such as the imposition of price controls, have caused widespread disruption to the agricultural supply chain, leading to shortages and price spikes.

Ye Min Aung, president of the Myanmar Rice Federation, expressed hope that MyRO would help enable the government to effectively regulate rice storage and prevent market manipulation.

The junta's coup in February 2021 has plunged the country into chaos and uncertainty, leading to a sharp decline in foreign investment and a collapse of the banking system.

As a result, farmers have struggled to access essential inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides, while rice millers have faced difficulties obtaining financing and exporting their products.

The situation has been exacerbated by the junta's ongoing crackdown on dissent, which has resulted in the displacement of thousands of farmers and the disruption of agricultural activities in many parts of the country.

As a result of these factors, Myanmar's rice production is expected to fall in 2023, according to industry estimates. This will further exacerbate food insecurity in the country.

# MYANMAR, THAILAND DISCUSS ALLOWING UNDOCUMENTED MYANMAR WORKERS TO STAY IN THAILAND WITH CI



Myanmar migrant workers in a factory in Thailand. Photo: AFP

**M**yanmar and Thailand reportedly discussed letting the undocumented workers in Thailand work and stay with a Certificate of Identity (CI) issued by the Myanmar embassy.

Myanmar Union Minister of Labour Myint Naung discussed this issue with Thai Labour Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn in Thailand for Myanmar migrant workers' affairs.

The Myanmar Minister met and talked with the Thai Labour Minister during his stopover at the Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok on his way to the ASEAN-China Forum held in Nanning, China from 3 to 4 November.

They discussed issuing work permit cards (pink card) to migrant workers who registered for work and a temporary stay permit and to let the undocumented Myanmar migrant workers stay and work with

a CI issued by the Myanmar embassy.

The two Ministers discussed the signing of the renewal of cooperation in labour affairs MoU between the two countries, sending fresh workers with an MoU, resending old workers under MoU U-turn system and other bilateral cooperation work.

Myanmar and Thailand signed a Bilateral Labour Affairs Cooperation MoU on 21 June 2013 and the Recruitment of Workers Agreement on 24 June 2016. The Myanmar Labour Ministry said that they worked to send Myanmar workers officially with the MoU after signing these MoU and agreements.

Many Myanmar people left the country for neighbouring countries to seek jobs. Thailand is the major destination of Myanmar migrant workers. Many undocumented Myanmar workers are arrested in Thailand.



# SUSPENSION OF TIN MINING IN MYANMAR MAY AFFECT CHINA'S TIN IMPORTS



Photo: AFP

China's tin import from neighbouring Myanmar has been stopped since September last year as the autonomous Wa State in Myanmar suspended its tin mining operation in the state.

After the Wa State suspended tin mining the import of tin from Myanmar by China has significantly declined.

The United Wa State Army (UWSA) is one of the strongest ethnic armed forces in Myanmar. It has suspended all tin mining, smelting and refining works since early August last year in order to carry out a comprehensive audit of the business.

The tin mines in Wa State produces over 70% of tin mining in Myanmar and also it is the third largest tin mining in the world.

They supplied tin ores to tin smelting and refinery factories in China as the major source of tin raw materials.

The suspension of tin mining is still imposed until today so that the flow of tin raw materials to China's tin smelting and refinery factories has been significantly lowered.

China imported only 7,300 tonnes of tin in September last year and it is the smallest import since February 2019.

Before this tin mining suspension order was issued in August last year, Myanmar exported 1,412 tonnes of tin and it was a slight increase in comparison with previous months.

Currently China may import tin from Mawchi mine in Kayah State and Heinda mine in Tanintharyi State, not from Wa State.

These alternative tin mines cannot supply tin ores to China as much as the tin mines in the areas controlled by UWSA supplied.

The Wa State gave prior notice of the tin mining suspension by giving enough time for import and accumulating stocks of both tin ore and refined tin so that this suspension has little impact on the tin mining and refining in China and its price until today as the stock in the hand is high and demand in global market is low.

The International Tin Council (ITC) estimates that the use of tin will fall in the world by 3.2% and it may fall further by 1.6%.

# MYANMAR JUNTA ORDERS FILLING IN OF ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE CARDS FOR DOMESTIC FLIGHTS



Photo: AFP

**T**he Military Council has issued a new regulation for domestic flight travellers on Yangon-Mandalay sector flights. The domestic flight passengers must fill in the arrival and departure cards.

The Military Council's Department of Civil Aviation issued a new regulation which says that from 1 November onwards all passengers travelling on Yangon-Mandalay and Mandalay-Yangon flights must fill in the cards.

According to this new regulation, the passengers must fill in the departure form first before boarding the Yangon-Mandalay flights and Mandalay-Yangon flights. The regulation also advises the passengers to bring their National ID and other official travel documents along with them.

Previously this civil aviation department exempted filling the departure and arrival forms starting from 12 August 2018 in their tourism promotion and to attract more foreign tourists.

This new regulation was issued for domestic passengers starting from November this year.

The new regulation comes after Operation 1027 was launched by ethnic militant groups in northern Shan State.

**Penrose Thitsa**

## CHEVRON'S LINGERING PRESENCE IN MYANMAR

**D**espite announcing its exit from Myanmar two years ago, U.S. energy giant Chevron still maintains a presence in the country, reported Reuters.

The company holds assets, including a portion of an offshore gas field, through a venture with Myanmar's state energy company.

Chevron's stay has drawn criticism from human rights groups who argue that the company is indirectly supporting the military junta that seized power in 2021. The junta has responded to protests and a nationwide resistance movement with a brutal crackdown, killing hundreds of civilians and imprisoning thousands more.

In January 2022, Chevron announced its intention to exit Myanmar, citing the country's deteriorating political situation and human rights concerns. The company subsequently agreed to sell its assets to Canada's MTI Energy for an undisclosed price.

However, Chevron has yet to complete the sale, so still retains ownership of its Myanmar holdings. The company has not provided a timeline for the completion of the sale, nor has it indicated whether there are any difficulties in finalizing the deal.

But, the company is ensuring its exit from Myanmar is "conducted in a planned and orderly manner," Reuters reported citing a company's spokesperson.

"We have signed an agreement to sell the company's interest in all Myanmar assets and exit the country. The terms of the agreement are confidential," the spokesperson told Reuters.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

# IN FOCUS





## TAKING TIME OUT

A Buddhist pilgrim takes time out to pray.

Photo: Julie Ricard

# REMARKABLE JOURNEY THROUGH THE BADLANDS OF BURMA



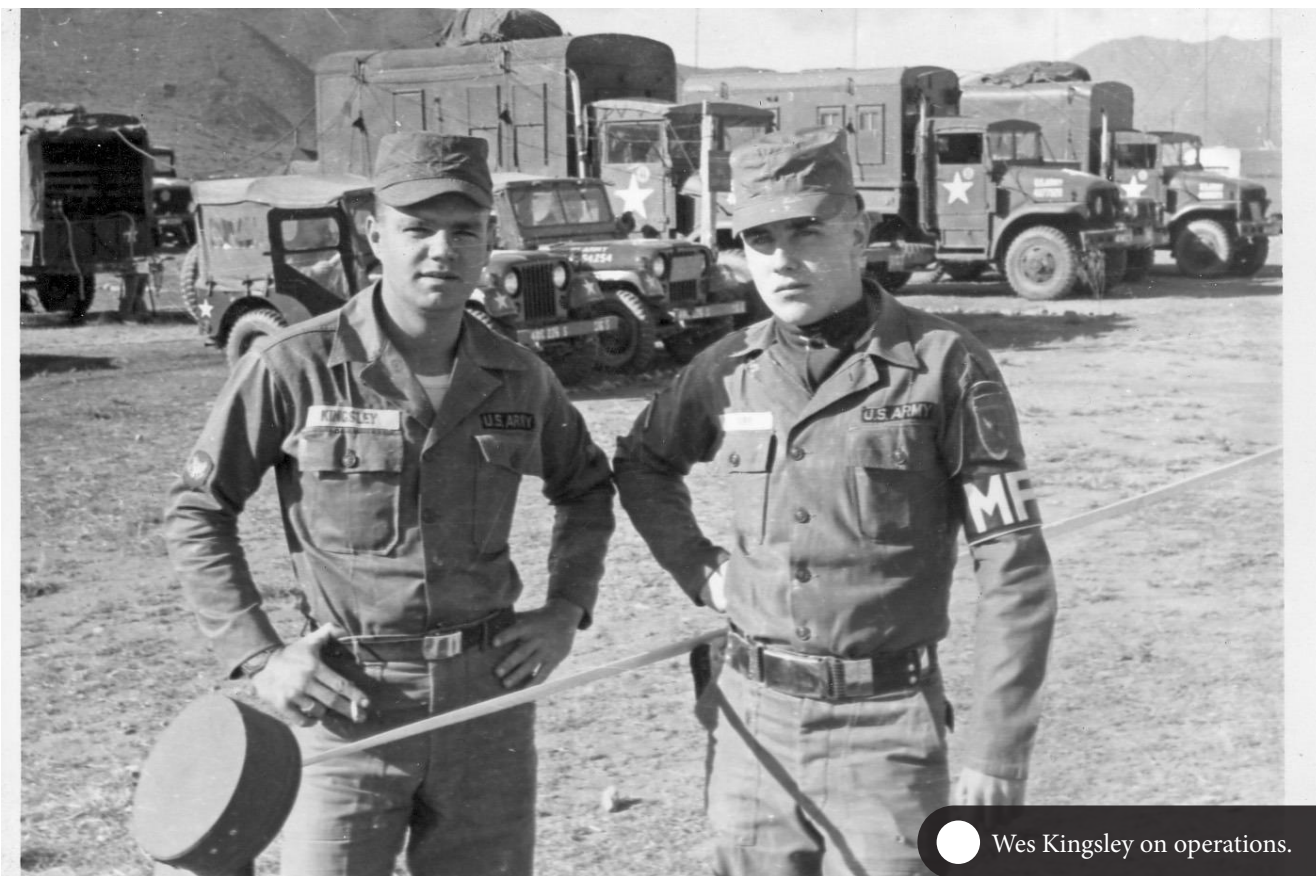
For most people, spending years working for America's CIA in Burma at a time when General Ne Win ruled the country with an iron fist would not be considered a calm or quiet period of time. But then, Wes Kingsley is not "most people." His years in the Golden Land were but a brief respite from a very full life that included missions against foes ranging from Simba rebels in the Congo to the Vietcong in Southeast Asia... and even assassins in Jamaica.

In a fascinating podcast for Insight Myanmar, Kingsley's remarkable journey takes us through his CIA assignments in various conflict-ridden regions, such as post-independence Congo, and Southeast

Asia during the Vietnam War. It also takes us to Burma, which holds a special place in Wes's heart amid all his other adventures, as that is where he met his future wife and developed an appreciation of Buddhism.

Check out the Insight Myanmar podcast here: <https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2023/9/28/episode-198-wes-kingsley>

Kingsley's first CIA stint was in Eritrea, in Africa. During his time there, the Simba Rebellion in the Congo was heating up. A crisis developed in which American hostages were taken, and he was dispatched there to try and rescue them. Kingsley then



Wes Kingsley on operations.

went to Vietnam, experiencing the brutality of war and narrowly escaping attacks by the Vietcong, eventually leaving Saigon on one of the very last flights out of the besieged city. Choosing Rangoon as his next destination, he hoped for a quieter atmosphere while combating the narcotics trade in the badlands of Burma.

Kingsley witnessed the violent 1974 crackdown on student protests over the burial of U Thant's body, but he says he found solace in the peaceful nature of the Burmese people. The uncommonly adventurous nature of his life even extended to his Burmese wife-to-be. Due to her inability to get a passport to leave the country, she escaped with gem smugglers to Thailand. Kingsley had to bribe Thai officials to marry them. Later, during his assignment in Jamaica, working for the State Department, he was "outed" as having worked for the CIA in Africa, resulting in an assassination attempt on him and his family.

From Paris to Liberia to Central America to Manila, Kingsley's adventurous life continued. But amid all the countries he visited and dangerous chal-

lenges he faced, the peaceful nature of the Burmese people and Buddhism still shine brightly in his memory.

Check out the Insight Myanmar podcast here: <https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2023/9/28/episode-198-wes-kingsley>





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