



# Monsters in the sky or the junta's air threat



December, 2023

# CONTENT

Research Methodology and Process .....	<b>2</b>
The objective of this research paper .....	<b>4</b>
Introduction .....	<b>6</b>
Behind the military's airstrikes .....	<b>8</b>
Targets of airstrikes .....	<b>12</b>
Massacres of monsters from the sky .....	<b>22</b>
The military's fighter jets and air bases .....	<b>27</b>
Voices longing to be free from aerial attacks .....	<b>32</b>
Air defense capabilities .....	<b>35</b>
The role of the international community .....	<b>39</b>
When will a no-fly zone be established? .....	<b>42</b>
Analysis .....	<b>45</b>

## Research Methodology and Process

“Monsters in the sky or the junta’s air threat”. As part of the research process for this report, the Burma News International (BNI)-Myanmar Peace Monitor (MPM) carried out analysis and calculations based on collected and recorded data, events and incidents of airstrikes carried out by the military council. Interviews were conducted with civilians and resistance forces on how they experienced the military’s airstrikes.

We went to Donu Khu village Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Shadaw Township of Karenni (Kayah) State and interviewed the people who has first-hand experience of the aerial bombardment perpetrated by the military council. Resistance forces, including the Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs), have been facing

aerial attacks by the military. Leaders were interviewed exclusively for this report.

Airstrikes carried out by the military council are recorded by day and by township. For example, if two or three airstrikes were carried out on the same day, they will be recorded as two or three days. As the BNI - Myanmar Peace Monitor only records the news on the ground, it is difficult to record the frequency of airstrikes carried out by the military . However, according to recorded findings, airstrikes average from a minimum of one to a maximum of 10 per day. Therefore, it can be said that following the 2021 military coup, the number of airstrikes carried out by the military may have increased in the thousands.



## The objective of this research paper

It is rare to see airstrikes carried out by the military during the decades-long civil war in Myanmar. But since the military coup on 1 February 2021, the military has carried out aerial bombardments all over the country, regardless of time and place. The number of the military's aerial bombardments in 2023 were higher than the total number in 2021 and 2022.

This report includes the causes and targets of the aerial bombardments carried out by the military. It also includes incidents of mass casualties caused by airstrikes and the heart-wrenching voices of the people who have personally experienced airstrikes. In addition, we have tried to present the location of the military's air base and the types of aircraft used, along with evidence.

Practical safeguards and measures to escape the "monsters in the sky or the junta's air threat" is the hope of the people who have faced airstrikes. However, it must be said that international governments, including the United Nations (UN), have been able to find a way to stop the military's airstrikes.

This report traces the aerial bombardments of the military, following the 2021 military coup. Based on the events and incidents, the facts, figures and field observations, we present an approach to prevent and stop the "Monsters in the sky or the military council's air threat."

## Introduction

The aerial bombardments carried out by the military led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, is one of the side effects of the military coup on 1 February, 2021. The military's violent crackdowns on unarmed monks and peaceful protesters, pushed many towards the path of "self-defense and armed resistance."

After two years and ten months of the military coup, the resistance war of the Spring Revolution forces against the military has gained momentum. Targeted attacks on police stations, outposts and departmental buildings where troops are stationed, have become more frequent. We notice the fact that the military's columns are no longer in a position to advance without air support, in Chin State, Sagaing Region, Kachin State, Magway Region, Karen State and Karenni (Kayah) State.

Our BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor has found an interesting fact about the military's aerial bombardments. Looking at the year-by-year data, a rise in airstrikes correlates with the rise in the number of soldiers killed.

The military conducts airstrikes in retaliation for losses on the battlefield.

In addition, the military commits massacres against civilians. These were demonstrated in the airstrikes on Pazigy village in Kanbalu Township of Sagaing Region, on A Nang Pa in Hpakant Township of Kachin State, and on the Mung Lai Hkyet Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp.

The military has been carrying out airstrikes on schools and IDP camps, such as the Letyetkone village school in Depayin Township of Sagaing Region, and the IDP camp in Karenni (Kayah) State without taking an account of the lives lost.

Even so, international organizations, including the United Nations (UN), have not been able to do anything except express its concern and sympathy about these devastating airstrikes. The IDPs we interviewed, in Karenni (Kayah) and Karen States, said that being able to escape from the airstrikes is one of their most desired wishes.

## Behind the military's airstrikes

Ko Marwi, deputy commander-in-chief of the Karenni Nationalities Defence Force (KNDF), recalled that since the 2021 military coup, the people faced its first airstrike on 28 May, 2021. This is the date when the military suffered casualties in the battle near Kyauksekan, located between the villages of Konetha and Payanuoketo in Demoso Township. On 31 December, 2021 and 1 January 2022, the military repeated its airstrikes.

"At first, if they (military council troops) have already suffered losses, the air force arrives. We already know that the plane will arrive. If they lose, the plane arrives. They started bombing everything from the wards, villages, clinics, schools and IDPs," said Ko Marwi. In 2023, the military carried out aerial bombardments in wards where there was no fighting with resistance forces.<sup>1</sup>

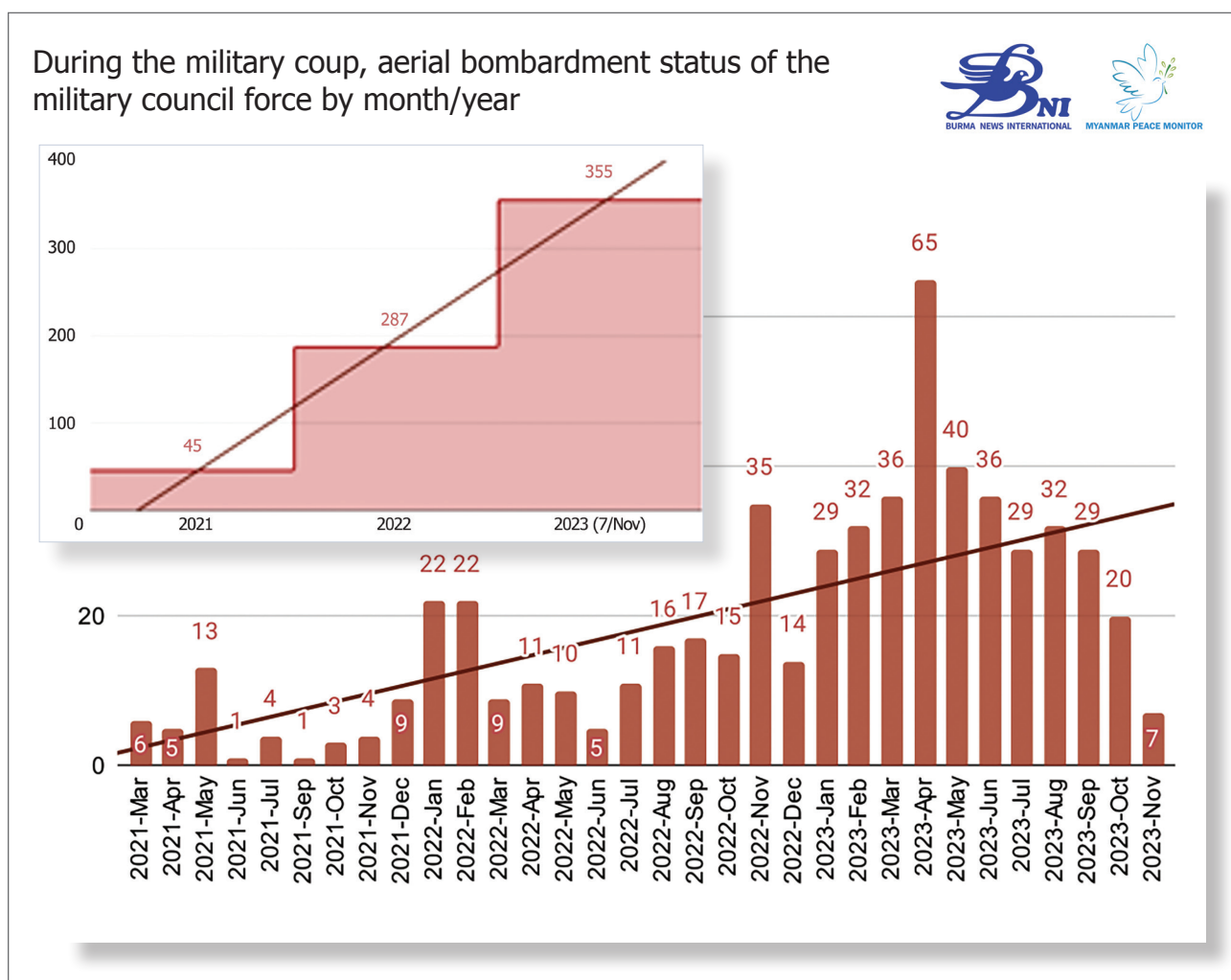
At around 2:30 pm on 4 May, a military jet fighter bombarded the village of Pikkharaya in the Taungdwinchaung area, more than 20 miles southwest of Mingin, in Sagaing Region. It killed seven civilians, including three children, and wounded 10 others.<sup>2</sup> Three bombs weighing about 500 pounds fell in the football ground behind the school in Pikkharaya village. This damaged about 20 houses, and created one- to three-foot-deep pits. Residents said that the sudden airstrikes without any fighting on the ground caused many casualties. They did not have time to flee.

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1 Interview with KNDF's Deputy Military Chief Ko Marwi. BNI-MPM, 24 October 2023.

2 Mingin bombardment killed seven civilians including children and wounded 10 others. 5 May, 2023, Myanmar Now. <http://rb.gy/g5fs1>

According to the data of the BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor, from 1 February 2021 up to 7 November, 2023, there were 46 days of aerial bombardment in 2021, 187 days in 2022, and 355 days in 2023 (from January to 7 November). The number of airstrike days is higher than the total number of airstrike days recorded in 2021 and 2022 combined.<sup>3</sup> April and May 2023 were the months with the most documented aerial bombardments. During these two months, Sagaing Region, Karenni (Kayah), Karen and Chin States have seen the most airstrikes by the military council.



3 Military Regime's Airstrikes in Myanmar | Ongoing Dashboard, BNI-MPM, 7 November, 2023. <https://bit.ly/3T4CoMZ>

The People's Defense Force (PDF) captured four police outposts in Homalin Township of Sagaing Region.<sup>4</sup> The military outpost in Mau village, Taungdwin region of Mingin Township was captured by resistance forces.<sup>5</sup> There was fierce fighting between the Karenni forces and the military in east and west Demoso Township, east Loikaw Township, and Bawlakhe Township in Karenni (Kayah) State. Five military-backed Border Guard Force (BGF) camps were captured near Shwe Kokko in Myawaddy Township of Karen State.<sup>6</sup> The military's Malkhahtar hill camp on the banks of the Than Lwin River in Hpapun Township was captured.<sup>7</sup> A large number of casualties from the military in Maekanal in Myawaddy Township<sup>8</sup> increased its use of airstrikes.

Padoh Saw Khar Mae, Karen National Union (KNU) spokesperson for Nyaunglebin District, Brigade-3 Territory, said: "If they don't just use the plane and heavy weapons, we could capture the camps here in minutes. Therefore, in order to defend against this, they use aircraft. They use big weapons. The army structure has no full strength," he said.<sup>9</sup>

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4 Four police outposts from Homalin were simultaneously attacked and captured by joint defense forces. Mizzima. <https://tinyurl.com/2qavparh>

5 A military council camp in Minkin Township was attacked and captured by the local defense group. DVB. <https://tinyurl.com/2962lhn4>

6 KNLA joint forces captured five BGF camps in Karen State. DVB, <https://tinyurl.com/27tk7xvk>

7 Military council conducted air and ground offensives to retake the Malkhahtar camp. Mizzima. <https://tinyurl.com/28rjclo3>

8 During the 2-day battle in the Mekanal region, 24 soldiers were killed. Mizzima. <https://tinyurl.com/24yqwaoh>

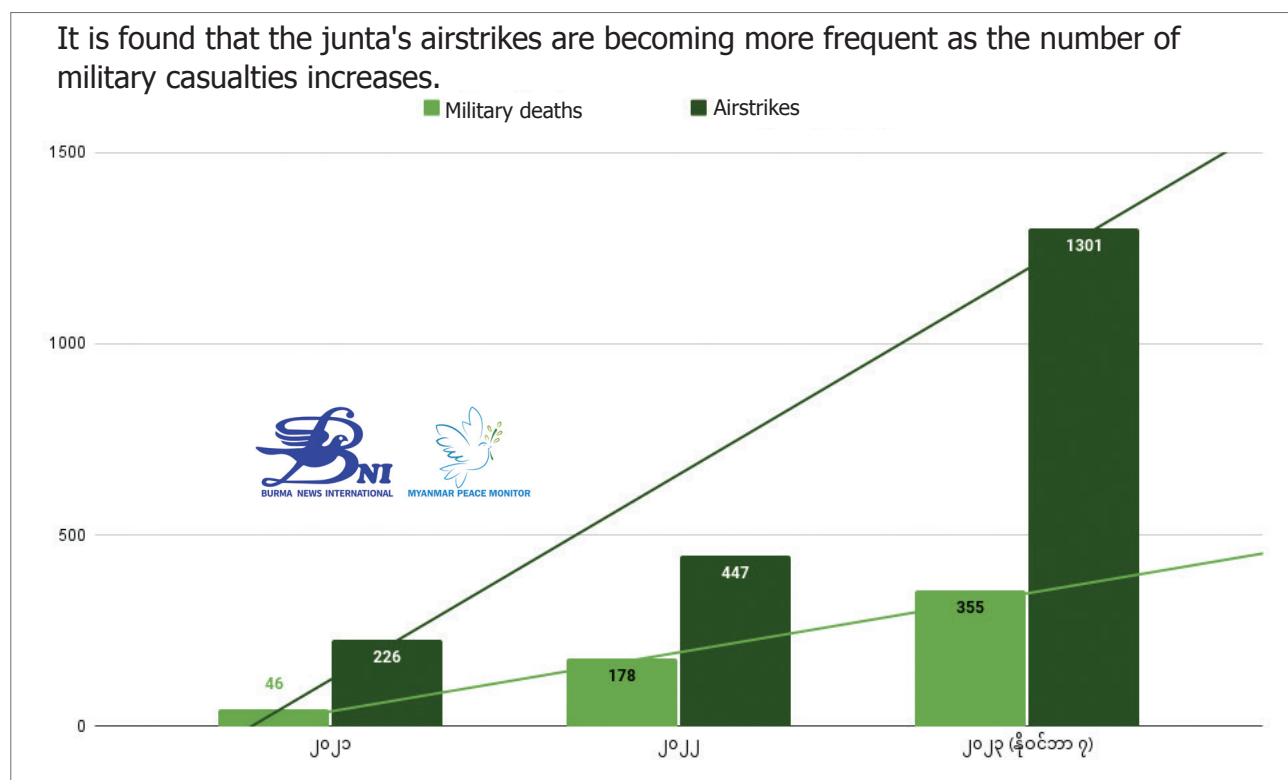
9 Pado Sawkhal Mae, spokesperson of Nyaunglebin District. KIC. <https://bit.ly/47a1iit>



Colonel Naw Bu, the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO)'s spokesperson said: "They themselves feel that it is difficult for them to march on the ground. Therefore, they mainly rely on heavy weapons and air operations.<sup>10</sup> The military council usually uses air offensive and aerial bombardments when it suffers heavy casualties in the battles," he said.

The BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor found that the more soldiers that are killed on the battlefields, the more airstrikes are being conducted.

The following line chart shows that the military casualties is linked to days of airstrikes.



10 Interview with Colonel Naw Bu, Spokesperson of KIO, BNI-MPM, 26 October, 2023.

Resistance forces, should be cautious and prepared to avoid the military's intensifying aerial bombardments, even if they are not able to protect themselves. International organizations, including the United Nations (UN), should pursue efforts to stop the military's aerial attacks.

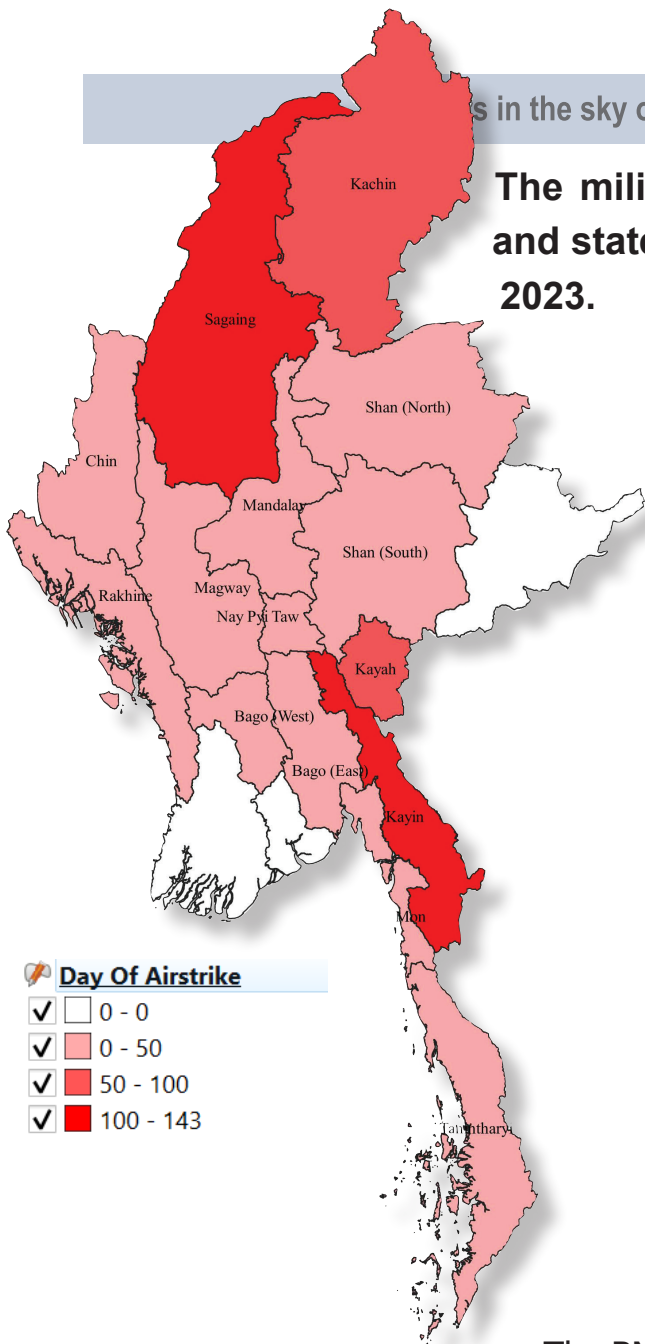
## Targets of airstrikes

Targeted areas of military airstrikes, excluding Yangon and Ayeyarwaddy Regions, is the 12 regions and states. Sagaing is the region most affected by airstrikes. This is followed by Karen State. Karenni (Kayah), Kachin and Chin states are also included.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Military Regime's Airstrikes in Myanmar | Ongoing Dashboard, BNI-MPM, 7 November, 2023. <https://bit.ly/3T4CoMZ>

**The military's aerial bombardments in regions and states from 1 February 2021 to 7 November, 2023.**



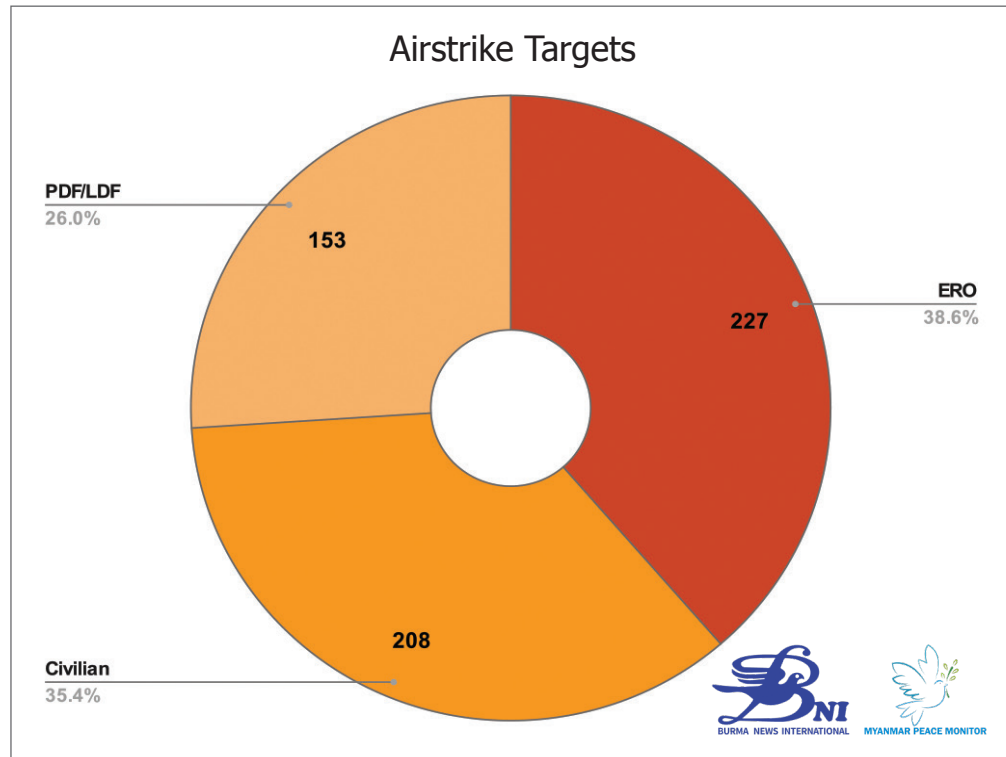
**Day Of Airstrike**

- ✓  0 - 0
- ✓  0 - 50
- ✓  50 - 100
- ✓  100 - 143

Sagaing	143
Karen	122
Karenni	73
Kachin	66
Chin	46
Shan (North)	34
Magway	25
Shan (South)	24
Bago (East)	21
Arakan	16
Mon	10
Mandalay	4
Bago (West)	2
Nay Pyi Taw	1
Tanintharyi	1

The BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor conducted a study of targeted aerial bombardments by designating three groups the Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs), the People's Defense Forces/Local Defense Forces (PDFs/LDFs) and civilians. From 1 February, 2021 to 7 November, 2023, 38.6 percent of the aerial bombardments across the country targeted (EROs). Another 35.2 percent of attacks targeted civilians. A further 26 percent of attacks targeted the PDFs/LDFs.

Therefore, facts and figures indicate that the first target of aerial bombardment attacks is the EROs. The second target is the civilian population. The third target is the PDFs/LDFs.



- **EROs, the first target**

The EROs are the Karen National Union (KNU), the Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (KIO/KIA), the Karenni National Progressive Party/Karenni Army (KNPP/KA) and the Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA). All condemned the 2021 military coup and cooperated with resistance forces. These groups were most affected by the military's aerial bombardment.

The military also carried out targeted airstrikes on the United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA), the Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (PSLF/TNLA), the Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party/Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNTJP/MNDAA), the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), and the Karenni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF).

On 10 and 11 January 2023, the military bombarded Camp Victoria, the headquarters of the Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA) in Thantlang Township. It was the first ERO to join with National Unity Government (NUG) following the 2021 military coup.

"The main cause of the airstrike on Camp Victoria is because it is the starting point of the Spring Revolution. It is also a military camp which gave military training to the PDFs," said U Zo Moe Mone, the Chinland Defense Force (CDF)-Tonzan Spokesperson.<sup>12</sup>

Salai Htet Ni, CNF/CNA spokesperson recounted the airstrike on its headquarters.

"On our side, five people sacrificed their lives. I still remember the faces of the innocent people who are in the hospital, who are afraid and rely on us," said Salai Htet Ni.<sup>13</sup>

At 10 pm on 23 December 2021, Lay Kay Kaw, which is known as the "Peace City" located in the KNU-controlled area, was bombed by fighter jets. Locals and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Lay Kay Kaw area had to flee artillery fired by the military stationed at Mal Htaw Tha Lay hill.

"All ran away. When the plane was flying, we had to hide like chickens," said Daw Tin Aye, 50, a resident of No.6 ward in Lay Kay Kaw.

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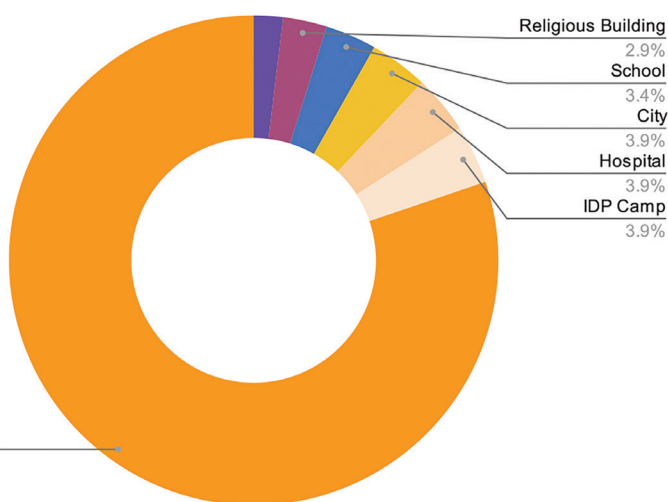
12 The CNF headquarters was attacked for defying the election and supporting the CDF, the RFA. <https://bit.ly/482d2mW>

13 Interview with Salai Htet Ni, Spokesperson of CNF, BNI-MPM, 30 October 2023.

## • Targeted attacks on civilians

The BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor has analyzed 207 days of targeted aerial bombardments carried out by the military on civilians following the 2021 military coup until 7 November 2023.

An analysis of the airstrikes targeting civilians

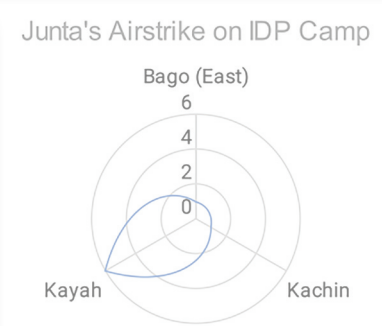
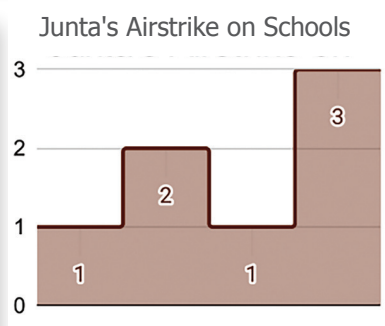
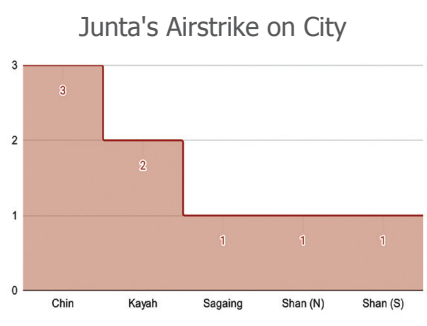
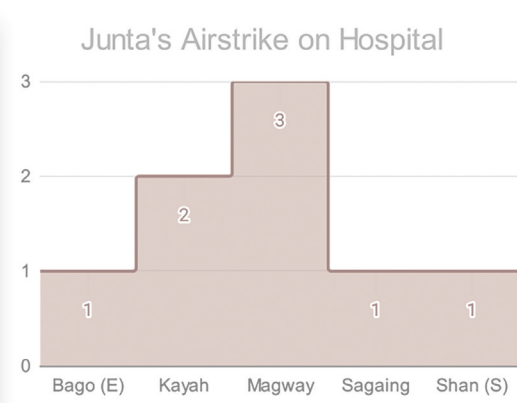
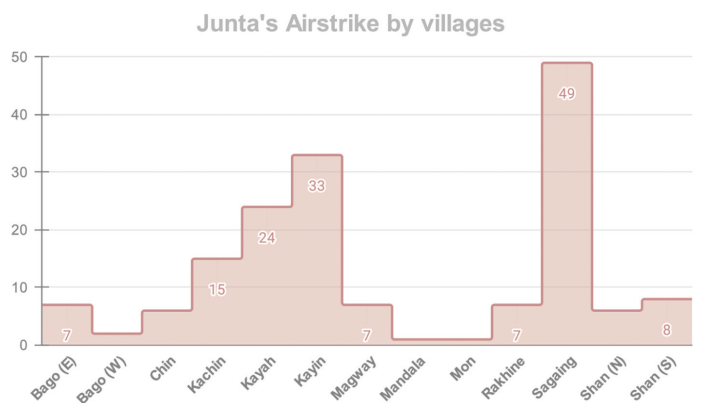


Business	4
Religious Building	6
School	7
City	8
Hospital	8
IDP Camp	8
Village	166

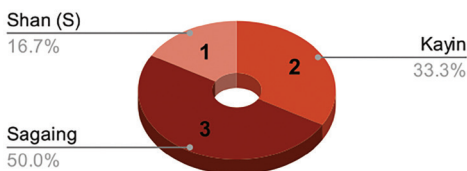


More than 80 percent of the targeted airstrikes against civilians were carried out on villages across the country. The airstrikes have targeted Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), hospitals, clinics, wards, schools, religious buildings and work sites.

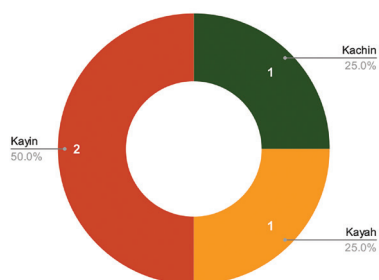
Targeted airstrikes on civilians by regions and states.



Junta's Airstrike on Religious Building



Junta's Airstrike on Business



The military bombarded hundreds of villages in 11 states and regions across the country. Villages located in Sagaing Region, Karen State, Karenni (Kayah) State and Kachin State were hit the hardest by airstrikes. Aerial bombardment targeting IDP camps is most common in Karenni (Kayah) State. Magway Region, Shan State (South), Bago Region and Sagaing Region have also had aerial bombardments targeting hospitals and clinics. Aerial bombardments on wards and towns have been



reported in Chin State, Karenni (Kayah) State, Sagaing Region, Shan (South and North) State. Targeted aerial bombardment on schools have been reported in Sagaing Region, Karenni (Kayah) State, Karen State and Chin State. Targeted aerial bombardments on religious buildings have been recorded in Sagaing Region, Karen State and Shan (South) State. Targeted aerial bombardments on work sites have been reported in Karen State, Karenni State (Kayah) and Chin State.

At midnight on 15 November 2022, three civilians were killed at the Thabyu antimony mining site near Makathar village in Phayatonesu Township, an area under KNU control.

"The plane flew twice and dropped bombs twice. Everything was burnt to ashes. All the materials in the factory are burned down. Two vehicles were also destroyed. Three people died," said a mining worker.<sup>14</sup>



<sup>14</sup> Three civilians were killed and four wounded due to the military council's bombardment of Thabyu mining site. KIC. <https://bit.ly/48lf9TI>

Padoh Saw Taw Nee, the KNU spokesperson, said that the actions of the military was a war crime and condemned it. The KNU has 14 departments. The mining department is one of them. Padoh Saw Taw Nee explained that mining operations are being carried out from Taungoo District to Tanintharyi, Myeik and Dawei districts. Among those wounded by the airstrike is Chinese citizen Zu Jin May, 52.<sup>15</sup>

As previously mentioned, the military uses airstrikes whenever it loses on the battlefields. The military targets schools, monasteries and music concerts, claimed Padoh Saw Taw Nee.

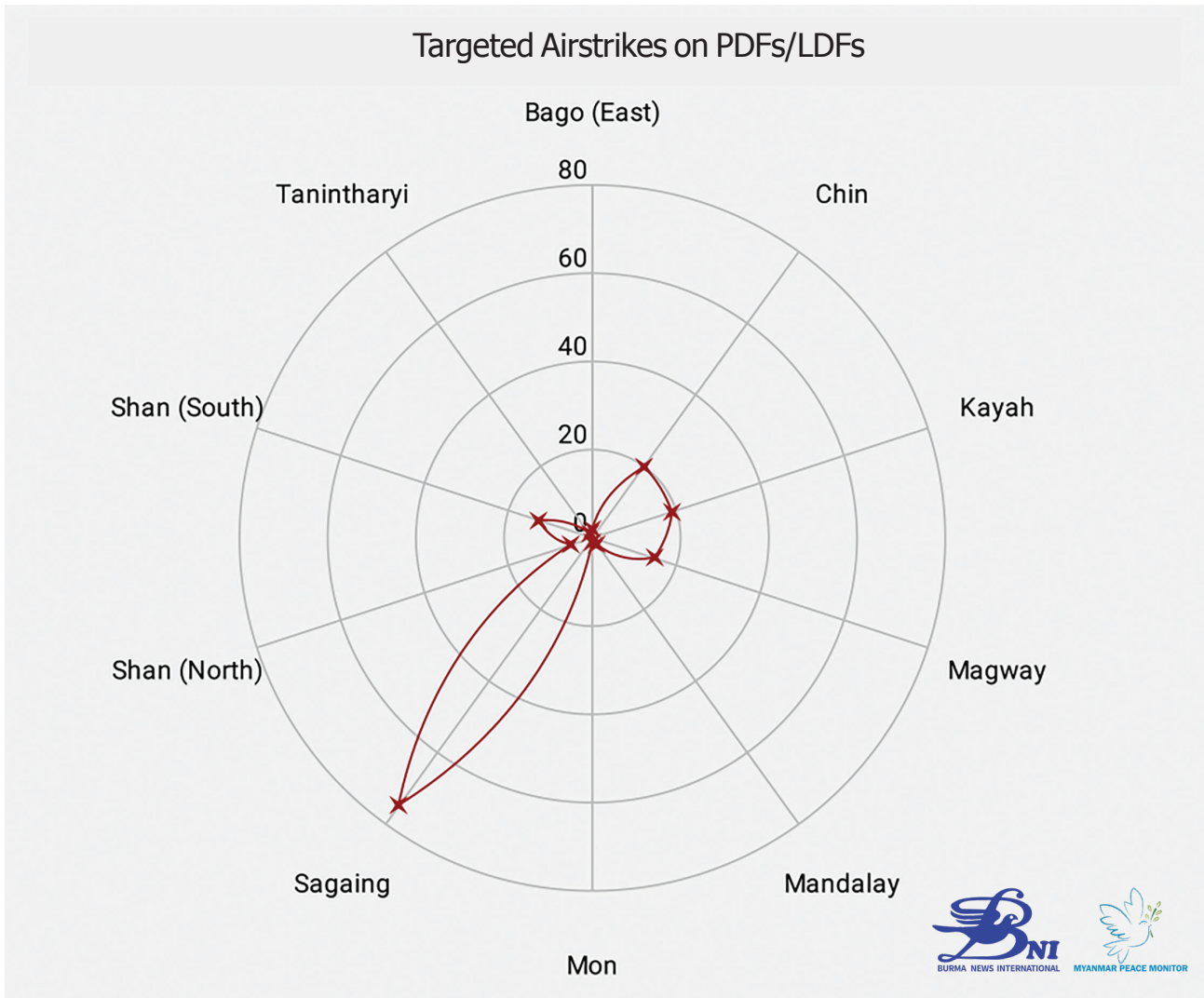
"The military council starts attacking the public as it faces huge losses on the ground," he said.

- **Targeted attacked on PDFs/LDFs**

Hundreds of the PDFs/LDFs are based across the country. They are fighting with the stated goal of ending military dictatorship. They have gained the support of the public and the Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs). This means they are targets of the military's airstrikes.

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Padoh Saw Taw Nee, Spokesperson of KNU (Central) about the bombardment of the mining site. RFA. <https://bit.ly/3RbEbNw>



If you look at the Radar Chart mentioned above, it shows that the PDFs/LDFs in Sagaing Region, Chin State, Karenni (Kayah) State, Magway Region and Shan State (South), were the most affected by the military's aerial bombardments.

The BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor states that the military's aerial bombardments targeted the PDFs/LDFs in 53 townships from nine regions and states. Demoso Township of Karenni (Kayah) State and Pekon Township on the Shan-Karenni border were the most affected by the military's aerial bombardments. Tamu and Homalin Townships in Sagaing Region, along with Mindat and Falam Townships in Chin State were the second most affected by the military's aerial bombardment.

On 27 May, 2023, two females and two males from the Medic Unit (Demoso) who were providing medical treatment on the frontline in Karenni (Kayah) State were killed in an airstrike in Demoso Township. The four medical personnel were aged between 17 and 23. Ko Lin Lin, the Karenni Revolutionary Union (KRU), information officer, said.

“Our side suffered casualties as the military council ramped up constant airstrikes in the fighting. We are not ready for air defense.”<sup>16</sup>

The BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor found that the resistance forces, the EROs, and the PDFs/LDFs, are targets for military airstrikes. Civilians have also been targeted by the military's airstrikes.

The Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF), deputy commander-in-chief Ko Marwi said: “The junta's targeted attacks on the public aim to make the people afraid and scared as the revolutionary groups are the people-based ones. They seem to see that it is more effective to attack the people. But this is wrong.”

Ko Marwi added that the military's targeted airstrikes is a deliberate attack on the civilian population.

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<sup>16</sup> Four medical personnel from the Medic Unit (Demoso) were killed due to air attack. Mizzima. <https://bit.ly/47HP2pE>

## Massacres of monsters from the sky

The BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor states that the total number of civilians killed by airstrikes from the date of military coup up to 7 November, 2023 was 566. Among this number, there were 23 massacres, which is the killing of five or more people.

Five or more people were killed by aerial bombardments in Nyaunglebin Township of Bago Region, Falam and Thantlang Townships of Chin State, Hpakant and Waingmaw Townships of Kachin State, Demoso Township of Karenni (Kayah) State, Hpapun Township of Karen State, Laukkai Township of northern Shan State, Maungdaw Township of Arakan State, and Gangaw and Phaungpyin Townships of Magway Region. Massacres were reported in ChaungU, Kalay, Kanbalu, Katha, Mingin, Pale, Sagaing, Depayin and YeU Townships of Sagaing Region.

Among these, Pazigy, ANang Pa, Let Yet Kone, and Mung Lai Hkyet, had the highest number of casualties.

### • Pazigy<sup>17</sup>

At 7:45 am on 11 April 2023, the aerial bombardment on Pazigy village-tract in Kanbalu Township of Sagaing Region killed 168 civilians. According to the NUG's press statement on 16 April, among those killed were six children under five, 19 children between the ages of 5 and 14, five children between the ages of 14 and 18, and 10 children whose ages couldn't be determined. There were 97 adults between the ages 18 and 31 who couldn't be identified.

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<sup>17</sup> May Pazigy Be Blessed With Merits Shared By The Whole Country, WNR – Issue 100, BNI-MPM, <https://bit.ly/47KZFbk>



According to the statement, there were 16 seriously-wounded people - five children under 18, including an eight-year-old.



*The ruins and remains were found in Pazigy village in the east of Kanbalu Township of Sagaing Region where the military council conducted an airstrike on 11 April.*

U Nay Phone Latt, NUG Prime Minister's Office spokesperson, said among the 168 victims killed in Pazigy village were 12 members of the community-level People's Defense Force (PDF), two members of the People's Security Force and four members of the People's Administration.

### • **ANang Pa** <sup>18</sup>

At around 9 pm on 23 October 2023, the military bombarded the A Nang Pa area of Hpakant Township, where a music concert was held to commemorate the 62nd anniversary of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO). Three fighter jets dropped three bombs on the festival, where hundreds of people were gathered.

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18 The Junta's Airstrike Which May Lead to Mass Killings, WNR – Issue 77, BNI-MPM, <https://bit.ly/3RbPBB7>

More than 50 people were killed and hundreds of others were injured.

Some people bled to death due to the lack of medical treatment as the military blocked access to the area for three days after the airstrike, the Kachin News Group (KNG) reported.



On 25-26 October, more than 60 bodies of those who died were in Bawsardi village, above Ginsi village of Hpakant Township, on the other side of the Uru River. On 26 October, three more died, bringing the death toll to 66.

A survivor from Hpakant said: "The death toll could be higher. Skulls and flesh spread to the mountain. Some people disappeared. Body parts were scattered more than a hundred feet from where the bomb fell. The people were blown away."



- **Let Yet Kone** <sup>19</sup>

On 16 September 2022, the military's aerial bombardment of a self-reliant school run by locals in Letyetkone Township, Depayin Township of Sagaing Region, killed six school children and wounded many others. Two fighter jets carried out attacks, and military ground forces abducted about 20 students and teachers trapped inside the school. It took them along with the wounded children, to YeU Township.

"The wounded children from the monastery were taken to YeU by car. These dogs (military council soldiers) directly sent wounded children and the dead bodies to YeU as they wanted to hide the information about the children. An eye-witness said that four dead children were put in the bag. Two more children died when they arrived in YeU," said a Let Yet Kone village resident to Burma VJ on 17 September.

- **Munglai Hkyet** <sup>20</sup>

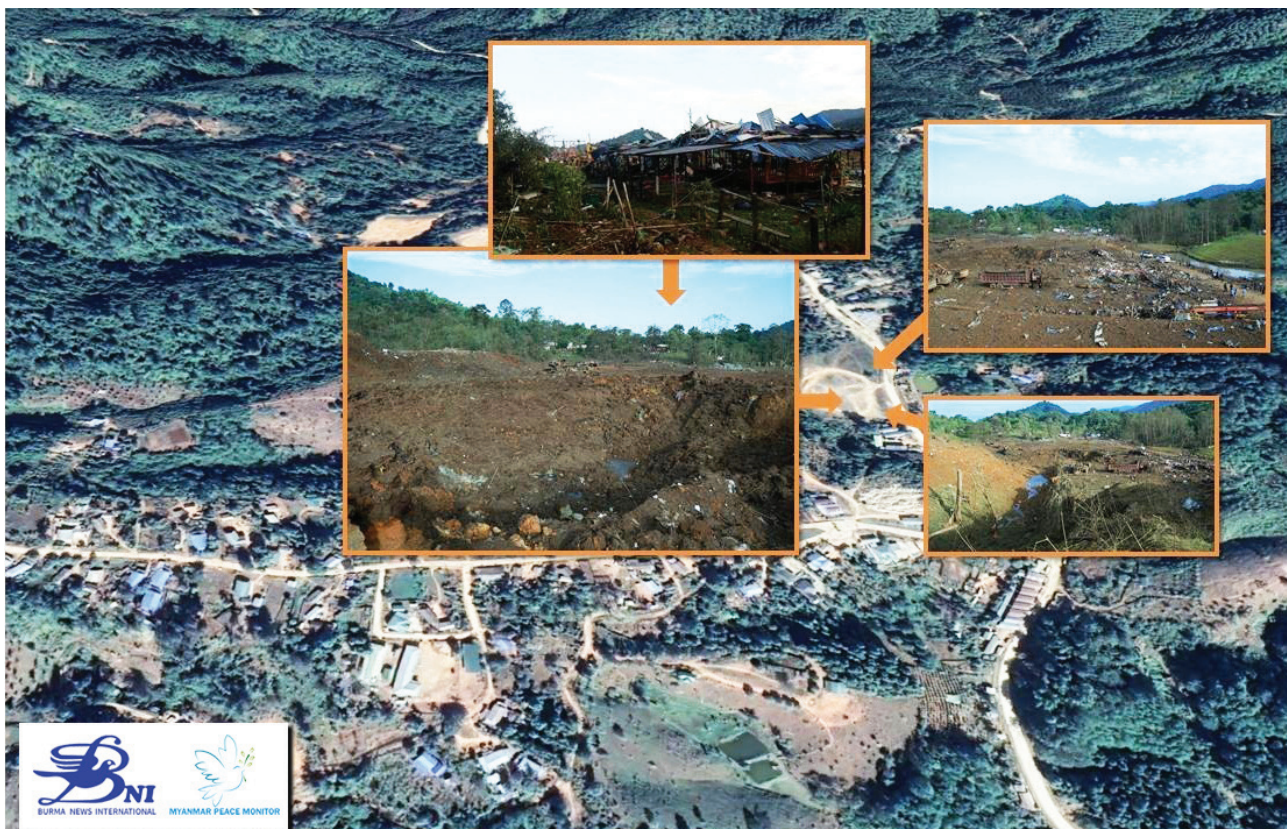
On the night of 9 October 2023, 29 civilians, including 11 children, 15 women, and three men, were killed in a bombing on Munglai Hkyet Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp near Laiza, Kachin State. As many as 57 people were seriously injured and sent to Laiza Hospital for treatment. Most of the injured have now been discharged but 20, including eight children are still receiving treatment, a BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor reporter confirmed on 12 October.

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19 The Day of Tragedy in Let Yet Kone Village, WNR – Issue 72, BNI-MPM, <https://bit.ly/47I4RfM>

20 Deadly Bombing of Munglai Hkyet IDP Camp, WNR Issue 125), BNI-MPM, <https://bit.ly/3uGh3ix>

With 168 households, the Munglai Hkyet IDP camp is a village under the control of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) in Laiza Township. About 658 people, along with IDPs, live there. The IDP camp is located near the Nam San Yang-Laiza road in the KIO-controlled territory.



"The explosion was so strong that they thought it was dropped from a plane. But when we asked local villagers, no one heard the plane. They said they heard three loud bangs - boom, boom, boom. The whole village was destroyed. There are no houses left undamaged," said the BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor reporter.

He added that in over two years of reporting from the KIO-controlled Laiza Township area, he has never seen anything that could cause an explosion near the Munglai Hkyet IDP camp.

## The military's fighter jets and air bases

The Myanmar Air Force, which came into being with the enactment of the Armed Forces (Air) Act, possesses a total fleet of 797 military aircraft. There are 91 fighter jets, 75 attack helicopters, 93 training aircraft, 31 transport planes and helicopters, 5 BN-2 aircraft used for special operations, according to the Global Fire Power's 2024 Military Strength report. The report also stated that the military plans to acquire four more advanced Sukhoi Su-30 fighter jets, nine JF-17, and 50 K-8 trainer and attack fighter aircraft. <sup>21</sup>

2024

WORLD AIR FORCES

Z-9	2	Combat helicopter	
Training aircraft/helicopters			
EMB-312	5	Mi-2	1
SF-200	2	Mi-8	1
<b>MEXICO</b>			
Mexican Air Force			
Type	Active	Ordered	
Combat aircraft			
F-5E	3		
PC-7	33		
Special mission			
Citation I (Rocco)	2		
ERJ-145 (AEW)	1		
ERJ-145 (MPA)	2		
King Air 350 (Rocco)	2		
Transport			
737	3		

<b>MONGOLIA</b>			
Mongolian Air Force			
Type	Active	Ordered	
Transport			
An-26	3		
Combat helicopter			
Mi-8/171	6		
Training aircraft/helicopters			
MIG-29	2		
<b>MONTENEGRO</b>			
Montenegrin Air Force			
Type	Active	Ordered	
Combat helicopter			
Bell 412	3		

<b>MYANMAR</b>			
Myanmar Air Force			
Type	Active	Ordered	
Combat aircraft			
A-5	20		
F-6	1		
F-7	20		
FTC-2000	6		
JF-17/B	7	9	
MIG-29	28		
Su-30	2	4	
Special mission			
BN-2 (MPA)	5		
Transport			
ATR 42/72	6		
Beech 1900	7		
PC-6	5		

24 FlightGlobal

Directory
**World Air Forces**

Y-8	6
Y-12	7
Combat helicopter	
Bell 205	2
Bell 206	3
Bell 212	1
Mi-2	22
Mi-8/17	13
Mi-24	9
SA316/SE3160	13
W-3	12
Training aircraft/helicopters	
FT-7	6
G-4	3
G120TP	20
H120	3
K-8	12
MIG-29	5
PC-7	16
PC-9	10
Yak-130	18
United Wa State Army	



The Netherlands has selected the H225M to replace its aged Cougar transport helicopters

<b>Netherlands Defence Helicopter Command</b>			
Type	Active	Ordered	
Combat aircraft			

21 2024 World Air Forces directory, flight global, <https://bit.ly/3T7sdHv>

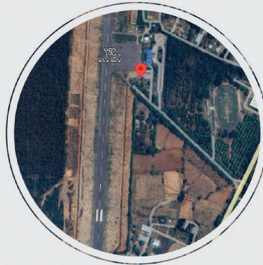
Myanmar Witness, a group monitoring and documenting the military's aerial attacks and other crimes since the 2021 coup, has identified that the it frequently uses Yak-130, MiG-29 and K-8 fighter jets for aerial bombings. The military has about 20 Yak-130 jets numbered 1801-1820, 37 MiG-29 jets numbered 2701-2037, and 16 K-8 trainer jets numbered 3906-3934.<sup>22</sup>

Yak-130 attack aircraft have been spotted at Hmawbi, Tada-U and Shante air bases, while MiG-29 fighter jets have been seen at Hmawbi, Shante, as well as Magway and Taungoo air bases, according to Myanmar Witness. K-8 jet trainers have been spotted at Taungoo, Shwetaung and Myitkyina-Nampong air bases. (See map for the locations of the two air bases across the country.)

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22 AIRCRAFT, Myanmar Witness, <https://bit.ly/3RbVm1o>

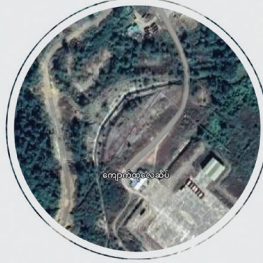




**Monywa Airport, Sagaing Region.**



**Myitkyina Airport, Kachin State.**



**Kyaukhtu Airport, Chin State.**



**Lashio Airport, Shan State (North).**



**Meiktila Airport, Mandalay Region.**



**Namhsan Airport, Shan State (South).**



**Magway Airport, Magway Region.**



**Nay Pyi Taw Airport, Mandalay Region.**



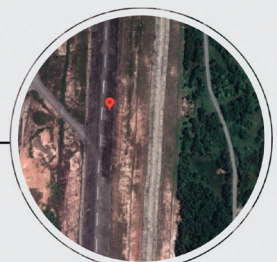
**Patheingyi Airport, Ayeyarwaddy Region.**



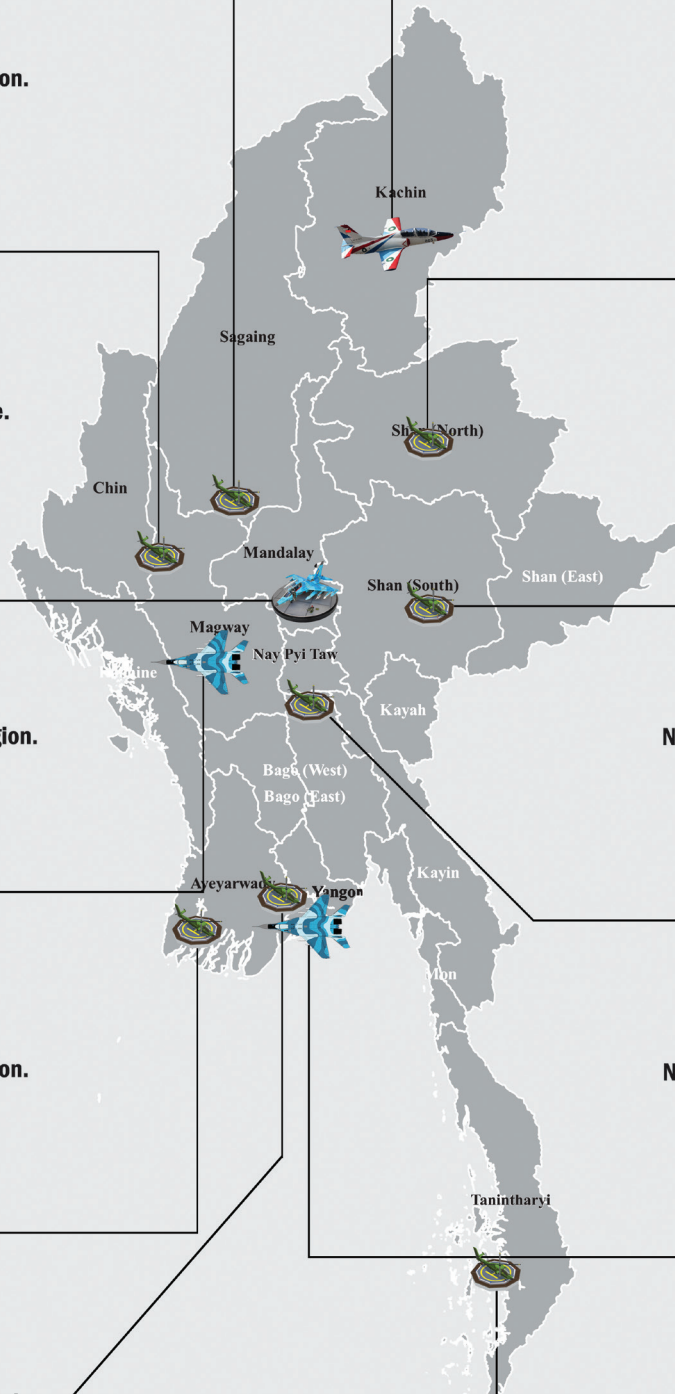
**Hmawbi Airport, Yangon Region.**



**Mingaladon Airport, Yangon Region.**



**Myeik Airport, Tanintharyi Region.**



# 12 LOCATIONS OF THE MILITARY JUNTA'S AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS

According to the CNF/CNA spokesperson Salai Htet Ni, most of the jets attacking Chin State are Mi-35s, Yak-130s, A5 bombers and SU-30s, coming from Naypyidaw, Meiktila, Tanintharyi, Monywa and Kalay air bases.<sup>23</sup>

In Karenni (Kayah) State, Mi-35s, helicopters and Yak-130s are seen most often, but since December 2022, SU-30 fighter jets and brown reconnaissance drones have also been spotted, explained KNDF Deputy Commander-in-Chief Ko Marwi.<sup>24</sup>

“The SU-30s are faster and possess more firepower. Their engines are very loud. They usually come in pairs, high and low. We also sometimes encounter large transporter planes,” said Ko Marwi.

Most planes attacking Karenni fly from Namhsan, Naypyidaw and Taungoo air bases, he added.

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23 Interview with Salai Htet Ni, Spokesperson of CNF, BNI-MPM, 30 October 2023

24 Interview with Ko Marwi, Deputy Commander of KNDF, BNI-MPM, 24 October 2023







## Voices longing to be free from aerial attacks

“Even when we hear motorcycle or car sounds, we get paranoid and rush to hide in a trash can. They fire from the sky. We don’t even know where to run to. We’re more afraid of aerial bombings,” said Ko The Reh, 31, a father of two from Loikaw Township.<sup>25</sup>

He has personally experienced aerial bombings by the military before fleeing on foot to Dawnoeku IDP camp in Shadaw Township. “There’s so much I want to say...inside me. I want to cry when I talk about it. We can’t have proper meals. If I can ask, I want to ask. Can they provide a safe place for us?” said Ko The Reh.

The BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor spoke to IDPs in Dawnoeku village IDP camp in Shadaw Township of Karenni State. Some IDPs there have personally experienced aerial attacks.

Ma Mar Ri, 27, fled to Dawnoeku from Dawtahay village in Loikaw Township after a military raid.

“When we first arrived, I felt safe. But I don't feel safe anymore. I’m feeling paranoid whenever I hear planes,” she said. The air force bombarded Dawnoeku village around midnight of 12 July 2023, which hosts around 5,000 local villagers and IDPs, including her. The sight of the aerial attack still haunts her.

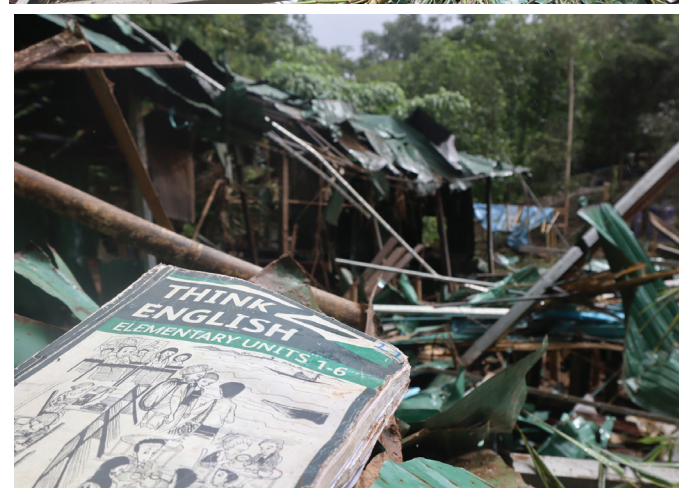
“We feel like we’re already dead with nowhere left to run. Everyone was fleeing in panic. It was like a nightmare, absolutely horrific,” recounted Ma Mar Ri .<sup>26</sup>

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25 Interview with Ko The Reh, 31 years old, (Dawnoeku village, visitor) from Loikaw Township, BNI-MPM, 7 November 2023

26 Interview with Ma Mar Ri, 27 years old, (Dawtahay village, visitor) from Loikaw, BNI-MPM, 7 November 2023

Daw Boe Mel, 40, fled Honar village in eastern Loilem Township to Dawnoeku village. She described the aerial attack on July 12:



*Some scenes after the aerial bombardments in Dawnoeku village on 12 July 2023.*

*(Photo-CTER Karenni)*



"A bomb exploded first. We got very scared. We couldn't even use a flashlight. We just fled wherever we could. Our lives were in God's hands," she recounted.<sup>27</sup>

U Tee Reh, 54, from Taneelarle village in Demoso Township arrived at Dawnoeku village after his village was shelled with artillery. Houses in Taneelarle were burned down by the military during raids on the village.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Daw Boe Mel, 40 years old, (Dawnoeku village, visitor) from Konar village in eastern Loilem Township, BNI-MPM, 7 November 2023



“I’m more afraid of planes than heavy weapons. They even have maps, nowhere is safe from them,” he opened up.<sup>28</sup>

U Saw Ri Du, 46, from Thaysule village in Demoso Township said the number of aerial attacks he had witnessed were so many that he couldn’t remember the exact number.

“Before they (military columns) came, planes would bomb first. Then their troops would fire heavy weapons from Loikaw. Everyone had to flee. There’s nobody left in Moebye, Demoso, Hpruso and in nearby villages.”<sup>29</sup>

Out of the 10 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor interviewed at Dawnoeku village IDP camp, there were five women and five men originally from various villages in Demoso, Shadaw, Loikaw, and Loilem Townships. Despite the fact that most have had their homes burned down, they wished to return one day. They live in constant fear of bombings and wish to escape

across the border to Thailand, believing it will free them from the danger of aerial bombardments.

“We took refuge in Thailand for about three months. It felt slightly safer there. They sent us back saying we were too close to their water source. If possible, we want to go



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28 Interview with U Tee Reh, 54 years old, (Dawnoeku village, visitor) from Taneelarle village in Demoso Township, BNI-MPM, 7 November 2023

29 Interview with U Saw Ri Du, 46 years old, (Dawnoeku village, visitor) from Thaysule village in Demoso Township, BNI-MPM, 7 November 2023

somewhere safe from planes, even a third country will do," added Ma Mar Ri.<sup>30</sup>

## Air defense capabilities

For this report, some of the ethnic armed revolutionary organizations (EROs) and resistance forces that BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor spoke to directly said they do not yet have the capability to defend themselves against the air threat from the military.

"To be frank, we don't have anything to fight back against aircraft. If there are aerial attacks, we can only avoid getting hit ourselves. If such aerial attacks occur, all we can do is evacuate people as quickly as possible to avoid casualties. Things like preparing bomb shelters," said Marwi, KNDF deputy commander Marwi.<sup>31</sup>

Salai Htet Ni, spokesperson of the Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA) also said "What we can mainly do now is communications and building secure places."<sup>32</sup>

Retired Captain Zay Thu Aung, a former Air Force Reconnaissance Aircraft Squadron No. 45 pilot in Naypyitaw, advises resistance forces to dig bomb shelters wherever they are located, in their vicinity.

"Most of the bombs dropped from aircraft do not explode midair, they explode when they hit the ground. They explode in mushroom

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30 Interview with Ma Mar Ri, 27 years old, (Dawtahay village, visitor) from Loikaw, BNI-MPM, 7 November 2023

31 Interview with Ko Marwi, Deputy Commander of KNDF, BNI-MPM, 24 October 2023

32 Interview with Salai Htet Ni, Spokesperson of CNF/CNA, BNI-MPM, 30 October 2023

blossoms, so it spreads to the sides. So we need to duck down on the ground. If you have bomb shelters, it provides about 60 percent security,” said Captain Zay Thu Aung, who has over 17 years of military experience.

Captain Zay Thu Aung defected from the military with his family and joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) on 15 February, 2022. He was one of the first air force officers to defect to the CDM.<sup>33</sup>

For example, the Mi 35p helicopter can fire a minimum of three times and a maximum of six times while airborne, whereas fighter jets can only fire a maximum of three times within a 10-minute period. He mentioned the need to be mindful of the situation and timing.

The KNDF Deputy Commander-in-Chief Ko Marwi has called for communication devices and technological support to help protect civilians from the aerial threat.

“If we get five or ten minutes advance warning, we can save many civilian lives. If we want to do more, we need technical support such as a radar system,” said Ko Marwi.

The BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor’s monitoring of the military’s flight routes on the Telegram channel “Enemy Air Route Channel”, we observed that within one hour from 13:35 pm to 14:15 pm on 5 December 2023, MiG 29s, Y-12s and K-8Ws took off from Naypyitaw Air Base, Namsang Air Base, Tada-U Air Base, Meiktila - Shante Air Base and Taungoo Air Base.<sup>34</sup>

33 Interview with CDM Air Force Captain Zay Thu Aung (Last installment), Khit Thit, <https://bit.ly/3uJRFJ1>

34 “Enemy Air Route Channel”, <https://t.me/enemyairroute>

“  
We need  
technical  
assistance  
like a radar  
system.”



Colonel Phone Naing, 77, the adjutant general of the Karenni Army (KA) said that the military's emphasis on air power indicates a significant erosion of strength within its ranks. "We can't yet defend against aerial attacks but we intend to decisively defeat the military council. For now, we have 0.5 caliber machine guns but have not used them yet," he said.<sup>35</sup>

On the first day of Operation 1111 in which the resistance forces in Karenni State were cooperating, the KNDF BO1 and KA managed to shoot down a Chinese-made K-8 fighter jet using 0.5 caliber anti-aircraft guns. On 12 November, a crashed K-8 fighter jet model was found between Kamdi Poli and Mayaw Poli villages in Thandaunggyi Township, Karenni State. On 19 November, fighter jet pilot Major Khaing Thant Moe was arrested while his co-pilot Lieutenant Zarni Maung escaped, announced the Karenni State Interim Executive Council (IEC) on 21 November.<sup>36</sup>

On 30 June 2023, the Karenni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF) also announced the downing of a K-8W fighter jet (plane code - 3935) near Ywarthit town in Karenni State.<sup>37</sup>

Traditional weapons like Tumees rifles, catapults, homemade guns and daggers have been proven on the battlefield. But resistance forces across the country still face a huge need for better

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35 Interview with Colonel Phone Naing, Adjutant General of the Karenni Army (KA), BNI-MPM, 7 November 2023

36 Statement regarding junta's fighter jet pilot, IEC, <https://bit.ly/3urNGka>

37 KNPLF statement regarding additional evidence on downed fighter jet incident and pilot, Kantarawaddy Times, <https://bit.ly/485GPeu>

weapons and funds. Despite this, targeted attacks on military command headquarters are also becoming more frequent.

On 25 and 27 March 2023, combined forces of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and People's Defense Force (PDF) fighters attacked the Taungoo Air Force Base north of Taungoo, Bago Region, using eight unguided rockets.<sup>38</sup> On 22 October 2023 at around 9 pm, the Yangon-based Urban Special Operations (USO) attacked the military base in Hmawbi Township, Yangon Region, using unguided rockets.<sup>39</sup> On 24 September 2023 around 8 am, the Northern Alliance attacked the military base Myitkyina, Kachin State, using four 90mm and 107mm unguided rockets.<sup>40</sup>

"Attacking military bases is very important but we still can't do it yet," said the KA military commander.<sup>41</sup> CNF spokesperson Salai Htet Ni also said that while they still lack heavy weapons to shoot back at military jets, attacking military bases is very crucial but care must be taken to avoid civilian casualties.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, it can be concluded that ethnic armed resistance groups employ methods like building bomb shelters, sharing intelligence and attacking military bases and using 0.5 caliber anti-aircraft guns to shoot back at jets, in order to defend against the military's aerial attacks.

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38 Debris from fighter jet from Taungoo Air Base, RFA, <https://bit.ly/3RusEKC>

39 Hmawbi Air Base attacked with unguided rockets, RFA, <https://bit.ly/3uLd3NX>

40 Hmawbi Air Base attacked with unguided rockets, RFA, <https://bit.ly/3uLd3NX>

41 Interview with Colonel Phone Naing, Adjutant General of the Karenni Army (KA), BNI-MPM, 7 November 2023

42 Interview with Salai Htet Ni, Spokesperson of CNF/CNA, BNI-MPM, 30 October 2023



"We are not asking the international community for weapons to attack, only for the means to defend. So far no one has responded or provided assistance," stated Ko Marwi, issuing an appeal to the international community.<sup>43</sup>

## The role of the international community

According to Colonel Phone Naing, Adjutant General of the Karenni Army (KA), even though no heavy shells have landed in Thailand during the military's aerial bombardments, they have made frequent aerial incursions into Thailand without any public response from the Thai government.

"We know about the plane crossing the border into Thailand. But they (Thailand) don't say anything about it."<sup>44</sup>

Colonel Phone Naing urges international actors like the United Nations (UN) to find ways to deter the military's intentional aerial bombings targeting civilian populations instead of military targets. India has also been silent on the military's aerial bombardments landing on the Indian side of the border during attacks on the CNF headquarters. "I think the international community only gets involved when their interests are threatened, like denying outright the fact that Victoria headquarters was bombed and bombs dropping inside India," said CNF spokesperson Salai Htet Ni.

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43 Interview with Ko Marwi, Deputy Commander of KNDF, BNI-MPM, 24 October 2023

44 Interview with Colonel Phone Naing, Adjutant General of the Karenni Army (KA), BNI-MPM, 7 November 2023

Since the 2021 military coup, at least \$1 billion USD worth of military weapons and equipment from Russia, China, Singapore, India and Thailand, have arrived in Myanmar, revealed Tom Andrews, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. In his 17 May 2022 report titled “The Billion Dollar Death Trade” submitted to the UN Human Rights Council, he outlined that the military has bought Russian Mi-35 attack helicopters, MiG-29 fighter jets, Yak-130 combat jets and Chinese K-8 fighter jets.<sup>45</sup>

On 31 August 2023, the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) announced a new round of sanctions prohibiting US individuals and businesses from providing financial services to Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), which is under military control and is its greatest source of revenue. The new sanctions targeted banking, lending, insurance, investment and other services to MOGE.<sup>46</sup>

According to the statement, the U.S. government, like the U.K. and Canada, has imposed sanctions on five individuals associated with Myanmar's military, as well as three entities that have facilitated the procurement of Russian and other military equipment for it.

“As one of Myanmar’s largest revenue earners, MOGE provides the Myanmar military junta with hundreds of millions of dollars annually that fund its campaign of violence with purchase of military

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45 The Billion Dollar Death Trade: The International Arms Networks that Enable Human Rights Violations in Myanmar, UNHRC, <https://bit.ly/3GtI2BO>

46 Treasury Prohibits Financial Services with Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise and Imposes Additional Sanctions on Burma Military Regime Officials and Supporters <https://bit.ly/3T98RS7>

arms and equipment from abroad. By imposing these financial service sanctions on MOGE, the Myanmar military can no longer access U.S. financial systems and does not have the capacity to continue committing the atrocities and violence against people," said U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.<sup>47</sup>

A report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted to the UN Human Rights Council's 54th regular session from 11 September to 6 October 2023 featured the military's aerial bombings, ground offensives, and arson attacks and how it impacted civilians across Myanmar. It highlighted intentional targeting of civilian homes, schools, hospitals, places of worship and public gatherings.

In Article 63 of the report, the UN Security Council called for referring the full scope of the current situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court (ICC). In Paragraph (a), it also recommends that (Member States) ensure that no direct and indirect supply of weapons, ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, dual-use goods, and military jet fuel is provided or made possible through provision of access to foreign currency to the military for such purposes.<sup>48</sup>

Amnesty International also released a report "Deadly Cargo" on 3 November 2022 urging governments to stop aviation fuel from reaching Myanmar's military, since it is perpetrating serious violations of international human rights law across the country. It

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47 US, UK, Canada impose further sanctions on MOGE and other individuals and organizations, RFA, <https://bit.ly/4ajc0VQ>

48 Situation of human rights in Myanmar - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/54/59), UNHRC, <https://bit.ly/482i8Qm>



It can be prevented if no-fly zone is designated.



calls on the UN Security Council and foreign governments to impose sanctions until robust enforcement mechanisms to prevent aviation fuel whether directly or indirectly supplied, sold, transferred, brokered, shipped, financed or facilitated to Myanmar.<sup>49</sup>

Sergeant Zayar, an air force pilot who defected from the military's aerial defense force to the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), said that the military procures most of its aircraft and related parts from Russia, China, Belarus, Israel and India. He added that even if Russia and China cannot be deterred, strict sanctions should be brought against Israel and India.

"Will they use the Yak-130s or new Su-30 fighter jets to carry out strikes? If we designate a no-fly zone, we'll be able to prevent these things," said Sergeant Zayar.<sup>50</sup>

## When will a no-fly zone be established?

The military's aerial attacks are intentionally targeting civilians while indiscriminately bombing any persons or groups in defiance of a return to military rule. Countries and international actors vocal in their support for Myanmar's people and resistance forces must now step up to protect and support efforts beyond mere words and statements.

On 20 January 2022, the Karen National Union (KNU), Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and Chin National Front (CNF)

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49 Myanmar: Deadly Cargo: Exposing the supply chain that fuels war crimes in Myanmar, AI, <https://bit.ly/47OzsZh>

50 Are anti-aircraft weapons the only means to stop junta's aerial threats?, BBC, <https://bbc.in/3sXbewX>



jointly appealed to ASEAN and the international community to "impose a ban on military flights across Myanmar". They stated that the military's aerial assaults pose grave threats to the safe delivery of much-needed humanitarian assistance to displaced communities.<sup>51</sup>

On 25 February 2023, around 300 members of Myanmar's diaspora in the U.S., marched in Washington, D.C. to call for a "No Fly Zone" to be imposed over Myanmar. The protesters also urged the U.S. government to take legal action under international law against Myanmar's military for intentionally targeting civilians using aerial power.<sup>52</sup>

From shooting peaceful unarmed civilians, to massacring people, burning villages, carrying out arbitrary arrests and killings,

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51 Three EAOs jointly appeal to UN body to protect civilians and provide assistance, Kantarawaddy Times, <https://bit.ly/3GwanGA>

52 Protest in front of White House urging effective US sanctions on Myanmar and imposition of a No Fly Zone, Khit Thit, <https://bit.ly/3NbsBRt>

the military has also escalated indiscriminate aerial bombing raids. The international community, vocal in support of Myanmar's people against the 2021 military coup, must step in to protect civilians.

In 1991, the U.S. and its allies imposed two no-fly zones in Iraq to protect certain ethnic and religious groups from attack without UN endorsement. In 1992, the UN adopted a resolution banning unauthorized military flights over Bosnia. In 2011, a no-fly zone over Libya was authorized by the UN Security Council as part of the military intervention in Libya due to threats against protesters in Benghazi by Gaddafi's forces. The NATO alliance took responsibility to enforce the Libyan no-fly zone.<sup>53</sup>

The no-fly zone imposed on 7 March 2011 was scheduled to end on 31 October 2011 before midnight. Despite requests from Libya's Transitional Council, the UN Security Council confirmed its decision to terminate the mission.<sup>54</sup>

Imposing a no-fly zone aims to restrict the use of military aircraft from intentionally targeting ground-based military targets and civilians. Therefore declaring it is not a straightforward decision but involves pragmatic responsibilities like patrolling and enforcing the zone by shooting down planes violating its boundaries.

Hence in the case of aerial attacks by the military, while villages, towns, hospitals, schools, religious buildings and IDP camps - essentially all civilian targets - are intentionally bombed, the

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53 Have no-fly zones been used before? BBC, <https://bbc.in/3t3Zxoa>

54 Libya lifts no-fly zone designation, BBC, <https://bbc.in/3uI4JhL>

feasibility of declaring and enforcing a “No Fly Zone” remains extremely difficult.

Miemie Winn Byrd, a retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel and Professor at Hawaii Pacific University Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, said:

“If the international community declares a No Fly Zone, who will enforce it? It has to be neighboring countries. Will they do it? If planes start flying again violating the No Fly Zone, who will take on the responsibility to enforce it?”<sup>55</sup>

## Analysis

Since the 1 February 2021 coup, aerial attacks by the military have escalated year on year. According to BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor records, which show that “the military council is using more airstrikes as it suffers more casualties”, the military council’s aerial bombardment shows no sign of abating and is likely to continue to increase.

The military is set to continue aerial bombing campaigns without discrimination between civilians and ethnic armed groups. Evidence shows that aerial firepower is focused more on targeting Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) rather than People’s Defense Forces/Local Defense Forces (PDFs/LDFs).

If the air force cannot be deterred, there is no guarantee against repeats of the ANang Pa, Pazigyi or Munglai Hkyet massacres where civilians were bombed indiscriminately from “monsters in the sky or the junta’s air threat”.

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<sup>55</sup> How can the military council's aerial attacks be stopped, RFA, <https://bit.ly/46TJMy4>





It is the most desirable hope for the displaced civilians to avoid monsters in the sky or the junta's air threat".



To defend against aerial attacks, resistance groups can only systematically build bomb shelters and share intelligence. But there is a lack of technology and equipment for early warning systems. Shooting down military planes and attacking bases also have severe limitations in countering the military's aerial firepower.

Despite its inability to enforce a no-fly zone, the international community and the UN must make special efforts to prevent aviation fuel from reaching Myanmar, which if unchecked, can enable its monsters in the sky to continue to claim countless lives. Countries and international actors vocal in their support of Myanmar's people against the 2021 military coup must step in to protect civilians.

Stopping the "monsters in the sky or the junta's air threat" remains the ultimate hope for civilians and survivors of the military's aerial attacks.

**It is the most desirable hope  
for the displaced civilians to  
avoid monsters in the sky or  
the junta's air threat.**

