



SITUATION UPDATE

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OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022
WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF BURMA - WLB



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WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF BURMA (WLB)

The horrors of the military junta's violence continue to escalate. On October 17 in Taung Myint village in the rural Magway region, a volunteer teacher, Saw Tun Mow, was **decapitated** and left in front of the school, his head impaled on the school gate.

In the absence of a strong response from the UN and ASEAN, the junta continues to commit crimes against humanity. On October 23, the junta launched a deadly airstrike on a music festival in Kachin State, **killing nearly 100 people** and injuring over 100 others, including artists and villagers who were enjoying a rare moment of celebration. The junta blocked all roads out of the village, preventing hundreds of people from accessing urgent medical treatment. The attack on the Kachin music festival claimed the highest number of casualties of any airstrike since the coup, and represents an escalation in the junta's use of air power on civilians.

According to the Institute for Strategy and Policy – Myanmar (ISP – Myanmar), as of November 15, there have been more than 7,800 attacks by the junta, with 4,394 taking place in Karen State, and 919 in Sagaing Region. Of these attacks, **57 have involved airstrikes** across 15 townships. In the first week of December, the junta launched a total of more than **30 airstrikes in northern Shan State** using 500 pound bombs.

On November 11, the junta committed its **first massacre in Rakhine State** since the coup, killing at least nine people during a raid on Sin Inn village in Ponnagyun Township. Later in the week on November 16, the junta bombed a children's barbeque in Gyt Chaung, Rakhine State. The attack injured a total of 50 people and **killed at least 11 to 13 people**, including a six and eight year-old girl.

The escalation of violence against women since the coup is being documented by the Women's League of Burma, WLB has **documented 111 domestic violence cases** and 14 rape cases by civilians, and at least 16 rape cases by the military junta. According to social media which WLB has collected, there are more than **40 reported cases of women being raped** and burned by the junta. These numbers are conservative, as many women are unable to report the violence committed against them, or fear reprisals. Many women will simply not report the violence because they know that justice will not be served. Gender based violence is deeply systemic in Burma/ Myanmar. The junta's overtly patriarchal ideology has been woven throughout the fabric of institutions and society over decades. The violence women are experiencing now is a continuation and escalation of what they have experienced for generations.

Women continue to be arrested on trumped up charges and tortured while in junta custody. A 30-year-old primary school teacher, Honey Su Kyi Zaw 30 years-old was sentenced to 10 years in prison for financing terrorism. It is believed that Honey Su Kyi Zaw was collecting donations for teachers who had tested positive for Covid-19. Nine women who were captured last year while working as People's Defence force (PDF) medics in Kalay township were sentenced to 12 years in prison on sedition and supporting terrorism. A midwife, Poe Thandar Aung, died after two months in junta custody after being arrested in October as part of a junta crackdown on healthcare workers. Poe Thandar Aung was tortured while undergoing interrogation and was vomiting blood due to the beatings she had received. Since the coup, the junta has killed 58 healthcare workers and arrested more than 700.

LGBTI activist, Sue Sha Shinn Thant received an additional 22 years prison sentence on top of her three-year sentence for allegedly financing terrorist activities. Sue Sha Shinn Thant is a well-known advocate of human rights, LGBT and Children's Rights children rights. Since her arrest, Sue Sha Shinn Thant has been sexually assaulted and tortured during interrogation. The prison guards touched her breasts and burned her with cigarette butts. The guards have refused to pass on care packages which include basic necessities such as bras.



Nearly 6,000 political prisoners were released as part of a broader amnesty to mark Myanmar's National Day(Myanmar's National Day is on 4 January 1948). The release of the political prisoners, including 4 foreign nationals, was aimed at relieving growing regional and global pressure, especially amid concerns that Indonesia might take tougher measures than Cambodia as the new chair of ASEAN. The release of the political prisoners could also be seen as a tactic to regain some legitimacy in the lead up to the Junta's sham election, planned for August 2023.

Meanwhile, the advocacy efforts of Burma/ Myanmar civil society, and their networks across the world, have been gaining traction. Following Amnesty International's report into the supply of aviation fuel to Burma/ Myanmar, Puma Energy, the largest foreign supplier of aviation fuel to the junta, announced its decision to withdraw from Burma/ Myanmar.

On December 16, the US Burma Act passed the Upper House, now broadening the government's authority to impose sanctions against the junta. Disappointingly, the Burma Act sets out certain sanctions as 'discretionary', including sanctions against the state-owned Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise. The Act also commits the US to provide "technical support and non-lethal assistance" to Ethnic Armed Organisations, the Peoples Defense Forces, the National Unity Government and National Unity Consultative Committee.

The humanitarian crisis continues to worsen as displacement numbers rise and the junta continue to hamper humanitarian efforts by blocking roads, weaponizing aid and even burning essential medical provisions. At the end of October, the junta enacted a new Organization Registration Law which imposes mandatory registration for both national and international non-governmental organisations and associations, carrying criminal penalties for lack of compliance. While civil space has long been crushed since the early days of the coup, this law threatens what operational space was left for civil society organizations to deliver essential goods and services to those most in need.

Impact of Military Offensives and Human Rights Violations in Ethnic Areas

A total of 1,473,000 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are currently spread across 96 townships, with Demoso Township in Karenni/ Kayah State recording more than 126,000 IDPs. Serious food shortages across the country, road blocks and travel restrictions imposed by the junta have left many IDPs with little to no support.

WLB members report a shortage of medicine, food, warm clothing and shelter in IDP camps across all States and regions. In Karenni/Kayah State, health workers report a shortage of medicines in displacement camps. Health workers are carefully delivering drinking water but are fearful of arrest. In Tanintharyi region, WLB members reported that insufficient medicine and the low number of health workers has resulted in unnecessary loss of life of pregnant women and babies. In Karen State, IDPs from the battles at Lone Jar Bum Hill in Momauk are in desperate need of food. The mountain areas have seasonal sicknesses and there is a lack of health professionals and medicine. In Chin and Shan States, IDPs need blankets, shelter and warm clothes as the winter approaches.

The junta increased its attacks in Rakhine State over the last three months, with no less than 40 clashes between the Junta and Arakan Army. In October, the junta severed maritime links between major towns in northern Rakhine State and ferry services were suspended, seizing 13 ferries. Food prices have soared and farmers have been unable to harvest their paddy fields because of indiscriminate artillery strikes by junta troops. As of the November 28, the junta and Arakan Army have agreed to a ceasefire, however despite some previously blocked roads being reopened, the junta is still restricting humanitarian aid agencies from reaching populations in need. The Arakan Army have urged the junta to lift the ban on the delivery of food and medicine to Rakhine from other parts of the country.

On November 28, 14 Rohingya women were arrested at a checkpoint in Hlegu while traveling inside a truck. It is believed that the women were being trafficked by people smugglers.

Fighting also increased in Tanintharyi region. WLB members reported that 21 people were shot by the junta in November, killing two and injuring six women. On October 12, the junta fired artillery at the Kyaiktiyo Hill in Mon State, killing three women and a 5 year old child As well injuring 13 others.

CHIN STATE

Charred human remains were discovered in Pa Lon Twi village in Mindat township after the junta occupied the township for three days from November 7. Fragments of skulls and

other bones were discovered. While impossible to identify how many people the junta burned, it is speculated that it may be nine people who went missing from the area, including six IDPs.

A junta artillery shells killed two young boys and seriously **injured a six-year-old girl** in the ethnic village of Senthang in Buanlung on October 19. It is believed a drone was used to drop the shell on the village.

On November 8, the junta launched four air attacks against the Chin National Front near the **Indian border**. Local people have witnessed a significant increase in the number of military junta jets across Chin State during October and November. **Leaked documents** outlining the junta's plan to attack camp Victoria confirm fears that the junta intends to increase airstrikes across Chin State in the coming months.

The junta has completely **locked down Mutupi township**, no one is allowed to leave or enter the township. Local residents are running out of food and other essentials, such as gasoline.

WLB members report significant food shortage issues, with prices of commodities almost triple compared to the rest of the country. Organisations and people wanting to help IDPs are required to provide 20% of the humanitarian aid to the junta.

KACHIN STATE

The military junta increased its ground offensives and **airstrikes** along the Kachin-Sagaing border. Currently, intense battles are still ongoing in Momauk. The KIA reported the junta is using **chemical warfare**, after a junta airstrike in Lone Jar Bum released a cloud of gas, reportedly leaving the soldiers feeling intense fatigue.

Momauk farmers are experiencing daily shelling from junta forces when harvesting their rice paddy fields at the foothills of Lone Har Bym Mountain. **A woman was killed in a crop field** on October 29 near Mankon village after being hit by junta artillery shell.

A total of 500 houses have been destroyed by multiple **junta arson attacks** in early December. Around 15,000 civilians were displaced from 25 villages. The junta destroyed 837 houses in Baw K Htar village, Pa Dae Kaw and Ma Bi villages, displacing 4077 local people and forced another 500 people to flee from Dooplaya Kyar Inn Seik Kyi township and Win Yaw township. Another 300 households were forced to flee their homes because of the fighting in Shwe Gu Naung Latt and Win Wa villages.

WLB members reported many incidences of women sustaining injuries as a result of junta shelling. Daw Aung Nan, a 45years-old woman was hit in the mouth with a piece of shrapnel.

On October 29, Daw Aye Mar, a 60 years-old woman and Ma Su Myat Noe, a 13-year-old girl were also injured. On October 30, Ma Myint Khite, a 24-year-old woman sustained injuries and on November 11, Hpaure Brang Li was also hit, injuring both of her legs.

WLB member also reported the arrest of a 36-year-old woman Daw Tin Ma Ma Soe on November 5, who lives in Mya Kyun Thar ward, Ho Pin City. She was arrested by six police officers after she shared a post on social media discussing the economic collapse of the Burma/ Myanmar economy.

Two women were killed and two injured by junta forces on September 29 at Nyaung Lay Pin district, Kyauk Kyi Township, Baw Ka Htar Camp after the junta shot heavy weapons at the village. On October 7, in Mutraw District, Dawe Lo Township, the junta randomly shot at the village, injuring a woman from K'ler Ko village. Similarly, on October 11, junta forces, led by General Kyaw Win Oo shot heavy weapons, injury one woman and one man.

KAREN STATE

There were **286 deaths and 6 airstrikes** during the month of October. The junta continues to target innocent civilian villages with bombs and heavy weapons. A **monastery was destroyed** on October 6 following a junta airstrike.

According to WLB member organizations, 60 civilians were arrested in Karen State in October, among of them 23 were women. During October and November, eleven women were injured and seven women were killed.

On November 12, 8,315 people from 13 villages in Kyauk Gyi and 15,356 people from 12 villages in Shwe Kyin were forced to flee as junta and Border Guard Forces (BGF) troops attacked their village with heavy weapons. A 27-year-old man and **7-year-old girl died** as a result of their injuries on November 18.

Data released by Karen community-based organisations indicates that the number of people displaced in southeastern Burma/ Myanmar may be more than double indicated by previous UN figures. The Karen Peace Support Network estimates that there are more than **347,000 people who have been forced to flee** their homes as a result of military junta offensives through seven districts of Kawthoolei. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported a total of 169,700 IDPs in the region, including Karen and Mon State, eastern Bago and Tanintharyi region. WLB member reports that of the 347,000 IDPs who need humanitarian assistance, 100,000 need emergency humanitarian assistance.

Many villagers from The areas under KNU control, District (6), Dooplaya district, borrowed money from a Thai company to grow corn. However, due to continued attacks by junta troops, and landmines, the villagers have been unable to harvest their crops and cannot pay off their debts. Lemon and Lime farmers are struggling to make a profit, the commodity price has drastically dropped as traders' factor in the cost and dangers of transportation.

! KARENNI/ KAYAH STATE

According to local news agency, Karenni's Voice, 24 civilians were injured by junta shelling in the first half of November in Loikaw and Demoso townships. A five-year old girl was killed and eight others injured when the junta fired on a kindergarten in Karenni/ Kayah State's Demoso Township on November 20. The girl and her family had been sheltering at the kindergarten since fleeing their home in Kone Thar five months ago. The junta know that IDPs seek refuge in schools and religious buildings, this was an intentional act to scare IDPs back to the cities and townships where the military junta has control.

In October, there were 57 clashes between junta troops and KNDF-led resistance forces. Some villages and displacement camps were hit, killing nine civilians, including a Karenni/ Kayah health worker, three children and five elderly persons. Another 19 people were injured during the attacks.

A pregnant woman and her husband were among four people injured by heavy artillery shells when the junta stormed their village in eastern Karenni/ Kayah State. The woman received abdominal injuries and her husband was in a critical condition.

Junta road blocks have restricted movement as villagers fear arrest or death. WLB members report that junta soldiers order women to take off their clothes at road blocks and security gates.

! SAGAING REGION

The fighting continued to escalate in Sagaing region with an increase in clashes occurring in the city. In the anti-junta stronghold of Depayin Township, the military torched 2,000 homes across 19 villages since November 30. In Ma Yoe Kone, 400 households were burned and three civilians died, including an 80-year-old woman named Daw Paing, who was found dead inside her burned home.

On November 23, the junta carried out a series of airstrikes and attacks on several villages along the border between Khin-U and Kanbalu and Ye-U townships. A 40-year-old woman named Mya who fled from her home in Mone Hla—was killed by artillery fire in Pin Sein Khin. Kyi Su, a predominately Muslim village of around 1,000 households has been attacked in the past, however the latest attack completely destroyed what was left of the village.

Military junta shelling in Shein Makar village, Wetlet township seriously injured three generations of the one family; the grandmother, a 30-year-old mother and her 3 year-old daughter. A 50-year-old woman died in a targeted attack on Catholic village, Mone Hla.



In early December, nearly 10,000 people were forced to flee their homes in a military operation to secure the area around a Chinese owned copper mine in Letpadaung. The copper mine, Myanmar Wanbao Copper Mining Ltd, and other companies involved in the mining project are sanctioned by the US State Department.

The high prices of goods have forced many shops to close. Women have resorted to small businesses, such as selling basic supplies, and traditional foods (Moke Hinkar, fried foods).

SHAN STATE

The military junta ordered all IDP camps in northern Shan State to close all IDPs told to return home by the end of October. Approximately 15,000 IDPs are taking shelter in 26 IDP camps in northern Shan State and the fighting continues, making it unsafe for IDPs to return.

The junta launched a series of airstrikes and ground attacks in northern Shan State during the first week of December. Six days of fighting between the Ta'ang National Liberation Army and junta forces have almost destroyed all of the houses in Namhsan Township, northern Shan State. Ten children and 30 elderly people are missing after they fled from the frontline, it is believed they are missing in the jungle.

Four students are suffering from serious injuries in Kutkai, northern Shan State after the junta shot at them with heavy weapons.

The military junta has been shelling Kon Thar village, Namsan Township, Northern Shan State in December and all house-hold were burnt. More than 2000 IDPs has been fleeing to Namsan Township and they need emergency aids for shelters, food and other supplies.

WLB AND MEMBERS' SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

Over the last three months, the WLB has actively engaged in international and national advocacy, including an anti-election campaign and the 16 Day of Activism campaign, to raise awareness of violence against women.

WLB delivered federalism training, peace and conflict training, and hosted monthly webinars.

No	Title	Summary of the Event	Date	Held By
1.	Situation of Gender Based Violence	Nang Moet Moet – WLB (JGS – I) Attended the event.	21st October 2022	Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security
2.	To against any political outlet of the military junta	WLB host the event to share the	25th October 2022	WLB Page, Khit Thit Media, Myanmar Pressphoto Agency, Mizzima, Than Lwin Khet
3.	16 Day activism Virtual event	WLB held panel discussions, created 13 videos including survivors' voices, and released statement. Also, WLB did bottle campaign.	25th November to 10 December 2022	WLB page, Khit Thit Media, Myanmar Pressphoto Agency, Mizzima, Than Lwin Khet

Burmese Women's Union published and launched their book, 'Women Trailblazers Call for New Era of Reform'.

Kachin Women's Association Thailand provided emergency relief to survivors and IDPs, collected data and documentation of human rights abuses, delivered training to women on how to make handmade goods to earn an income and provided medicines to IDPs.

Karenni National Women's Organization provided IDPs with essentials, including training in soap making and cash assistance to women for food and health support. Delivered MHPSS training in safe space and held 16 days of activism for VAW in IDP camps.

Kayan Women's Organization provided IDP camp management training and engaged in alliance planning meetings. Kayan Women's Organisation participated in the 16 days of activism campaign and Violence against Women(VAW-Day).

Kuki Women's Human Rights Organization continued to support IDPs with food supplies as well as pregnant women, people with disabilities, children under the age of two and women survivors.

Lahu Women's Organization held discussions with alliances and Lahu leaders inside Burma/Myanmar and internationally. Delivered training and provided support to CDM, WHRD, HRDs and internally displaced people (IDPs.)

Pa-O Women's Union conducted training on digital security training to WHRD, HRD and Women activities, basic and advance federal training to different ethnicity short video documentary about human rights violation under the military coup. transactional justice training to youth and other organization. PWU collected data on human rights abuses, and provided support CDM members and WHRDs.

Shan Women's Action Network supported IDPs who could not return home with rehabilitation. Support for some CDMers and also supported field health workers in order to help and solve some of the lack of healthcare in those areas. At the same time, we also support cases survivors with things such as their medical costs, transportation costs, and basic needs. We are now doing data collection on GBV in Shan State for further documentation and to assist with the necessary requests as we can.

Tavoyan Women's Union underwent human rights documentation and digital security training and psycho-medical first aid training. provided support IDPs, providing food and essential items.

Women for Justice held awareness raising discussions with women in Sagaing region on gender and violence and held a VAW event and White Ribbon Day. WJ continued to collect data on the security situation in Chin State and Sagaing region and supported Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and political activities.

CONCLUSION

Over the last three months the junta increased its air power against civilians, causing massive loss of life and devastating communities. The junta will continue to cause mass atrocities if the international community continues to provide the military with weapons and aviation fuel.

The exit of Puma Energy from Burma/ Myanmar, and the passage of the US Burma Act, are positive steps, but the international community needs to do more. There are still many UN Nation States that **support the junta, either directly and indirectly**. The international community must impose sanctions against the military junta now. A global arms embargo against the junta is essential to starve the junta of the weapons it uses to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The amnesty of political prisoners, including the release of foreign political prisoners, was a great relief to many. However, many innocent people remain imprisoned by the junta, subjected to torture and sexual abuse. The international community must not fall for the junta's deceitful tactics; this amnesty was not an act of a legitimate regime. The junta plans to hold sham elections in August 2023 and the international community must not support this process. It will not be free, and it will not be fair. The junta must be sent a message that they stand alone.

International Community Must



**REJECT MILITARY
COUP/SO-CALLED**
State Administrative
Council



REFERRAL TO ICC
for its crimes against
humanity



**GLOBAL ARMS
EMBARGO**

- **SUPPORT** local rights defenders who are providing safe houses/ shelters for peaceful protestors, especially women human rights defenders.
- **SUPPORT** those in the country by ensuring a political space for women's rights organisations and civil society.
- **SUPPORT** our advocacy to end system of impunity for all forms of violence against women and girls including conflict-related sexual violence and sexual assault & sexual harassment in custody.



WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF BURMA

The Women's League of Burma is an umbrella organization comprising 13 women's organization of different ethnic and political backgrounds. WLB was founded on 9 December 1999.

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