

### *Targeted Attacks Against Civilians in Karenni State Force Local People to Live in Fear as Women and Children Bear the Brunt of the Conflict*

#### Overall Analysis:

**D**uring the last reporting period between October and December 2024, the Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG) documented evidence of a worsening human rights crisis. Civilians throughout Karenni State have been repeatedly forced to flee their homes as the junta scorches villages, plants landmines and indiscriminately fires mortar shells and artillery.

Women, children and the elderly, who are among the most vulnerable, have been repeatedly forced to flee as uncertainty consumes their overall well-being. Nearly half of the country's population has been exposed to armed conflict.

KnHRG Co-Founder Ko Banya, addressed these concerns in an interview, stating that coup leader, Min Aung Hlaing, had recently sent more soldiers to Karenni State. Many civilians are seeking safety and shelter as the junta continues to intimidate and threaten innocent people.

#### Major Quarterly Developments in Karenni State: October - December 2024

- 23+ Civilians Killed
- 53+ Civilians Injured
- 123+ Homes and Buildings Destroyed, including at least 60 homes damaged by mortar shells
- 2+ Cases of Landmines
- 20+ Cases of Mortar Shelling
- 226+ Arbitrarily Arrested
- 6+ Airstrikes

The escalation of violence has significantly contributed to the humanitarian crisis in Burma, which is further compounded by the junta's deliberate ban on humanitarian aid and access to the severely impacted areas. Since the attempted coup on 1 February 2021, many civilians have suffered, including the more than 210,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Karenni State alone.

KnHRG has observed that the conflict is having an increasingly devastating impact on women and girls. A new report found that an alarming **6 million children** in Burma require urgent support as the humanitarian crisis worsens. Children comprise 40% of the more than 3 million displaced nationwide.

Further, **findings shared** in a briefing paper by the Karenni Interim Executive Council's Department of Women and Children shared that:

*“Many school-aged children lack access to education, while pregnant women and nursing mothers face inadequate healthcare, leading to a shortage of mental health services.”*

The fear of an attack by the junta at any moment has increased concerns for families and what the future holds.

*“The real issue is that the people's alliance lacks sufficient weapons, making it difficult to combat SAC forces, which receive substantial support from China, especially drone technology.”*

– Ko Banya Khung Aung,  
KnHRG Co-Founder & Karenni  
Interim Executive Council (IEC)  
Secretary 2



Photo:

*Damage to civilian areas as a result of the firing of large weapons by the junta on 28 October 2024.*

Expectant mothers face many challenges that affect themselves and their unborn children. Pre-existing health conditions and the lack of medication available made it even more stressful for families.

A lack of reliable transportation methods, doctors, and medicine exacerbates the high risk of attempting to travel to clinics that are far and financially out of reach for many displaced people. Miscarriages and stillborn deaths happen because of the attacks by the Burma Army.

When mothers are denied nutritional food, their health is affected, and they cannot access reliable treatment. Women who can carry to term face additional fears and challenges after giving birth, including undernourishment and vaccine availability. They also worry that the infant could become sick due to the changing climate and lack of warm clothing and materials.

These concerns are compounded by insufficient food and hygiene materials in temporary shelters or camps for Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Those living in the camps mainly get their rations from donors, local markets, grocery stores, and farms. Many rely heavily on donations, but they are forced to buy supplies at significantly high prices when insufficient. Many staple items were often overpriced or out of stock.

IDPs living in various camps and shelters across Karenni State are having difficulty surviving due to widespread food insecurity. The lack of work opportunities and arable land has made it increasingly challenging to secure food. Some people rely entirely on donations and aid to eat and support themselves.

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Others have been able to return to their villages and return to farming, though this also comes with risks of being killed or injured in the junta’s attacks.

More funding is desperately needed to fill gaps and meet the needs of IDPs across Karenni State. Many shared their hopes and calls to donors in our latest report, *“Trying to Stay Strong,”* released on December 9 2024. These concerns and others are raised by communities impacted by the violence in Karenni State.

Among the recommendations to key stakeholders are acknowledging the crisis as an emergency and providing essential assistance to alleviate the dire humanitarian situation in Karenni State and across the nation. The people of Karenni face uncertainty about their future as they fight for survival.

Justice is long overdue in Burma, but there is cause for hope. The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court *filed an application* for an arrest warrant for Min Aung Hlaing for his crimes against the Rohingya, one of the country’s long-persecuted minorities who have suffered unspeakable violence at the orders of the junta’s top commanders.

**Photo:** The latest report, *“Trying to Stay Strong,”* by the Karenni Human Rights Group.



# “Trying to Stay Strong”

A Situational Overview of the Civilian Impact of Human Rights Violations in Karenni State between January and March 2024



Around half of the children in Karenni State suffer from malnutrition due to the lack of access to nutritious food. This is primarily a result of job loss and an absence of job opportunities, making it difficult to afford proper nutrition.

Download the latest report by the Karenni Human Rights Group <https://karennihumanrights.org/reports/>

It's been almost four years since the attempted 2021 coup, and the pro-democracy movement still faces numerous challenges as it resists the junta.

The Burma Army has continued to conduct a frantic but ultimately ineffective campaign to secure legitimacy. Those in widespread opposition have remained courageous and unwavering in pursuing a federal democratic union that is for the people, by the people.



**Photo:**

*Young Children viewing human rights related materials on the Celebration of 76th International Human Rights Day.*



# Human Rights Violations

## Airstrikes & Drone Attacks

Since the failed coup, there have been more than 200 airstrikes deployed against schools, targeting children. Ko Banya Khung Aung, KnHRG Co-Founder & Karenni Interim Executive Council (IEC) Secretary 2 said:

*It has been found that the junta deliberately attacks schools established under previous governments, indicating that they are intentionally targeting already marked locations.”*

Since the third week of November, displaced people have been moving to where they believe to be safer. Meanwhile, ongoing battles in nearby Moebye and fears of airstrikes and artillery attacks on civilian areas have increased tensions.

The terrorist junta committed at least ten airstrikes in four locations in Hpasawng Township, Karenni State, on 10 November. The bombs dropped included both 500-pound and smaller bombs, injuring one person.

Despite the constant fleeing, nowhere is safe for Karenni people. Bangkok IDP camp was targeted for the eighth time by the junta on November 18th at 11 AM. A woman was killed, and two others were wounded. It was the second attack on the IDP camp since September 2024.

Many attacks against civilians in Karenni State are happening from the air as the junta increasingly loses ground. The junta is increasingly using drones to target civilians. In October, there were nine drone explosions which wounded civilians.

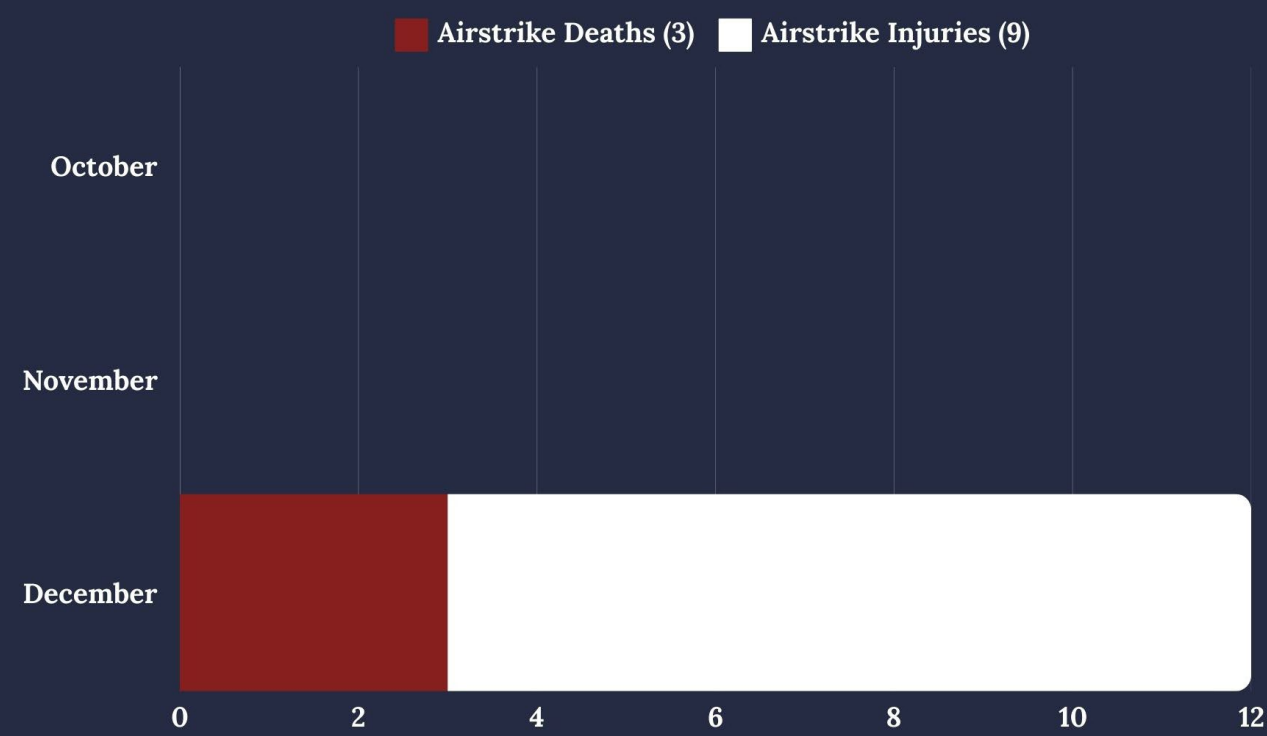
In November, drone attacks killed two people, and airstrikes damaged five buildings, including a church. In December, drone attacks killed one woman and injured five others.

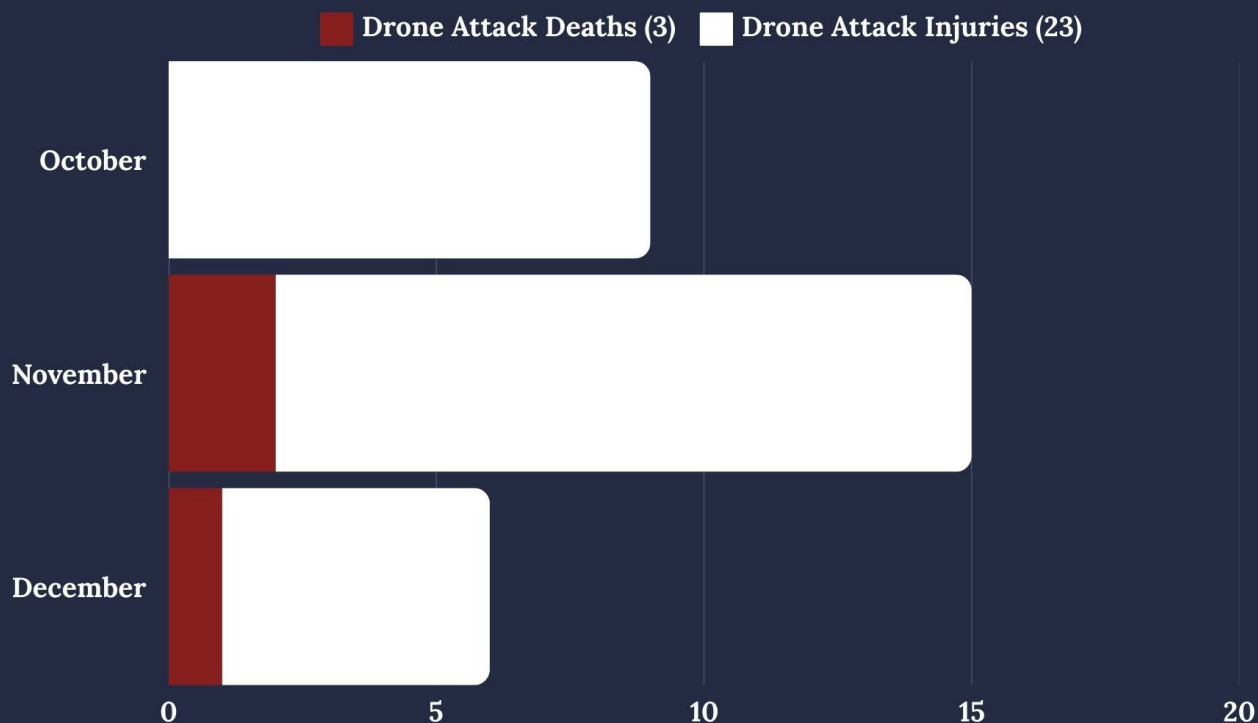
The military also targeted an IDP camp in MoeBye, near the Shan-Karenni border, on December 4 with a deliberate drone strike. Three died and three were injured.

There were six airstrikes in the last month of the year. In a single incident on December 27th, one woman and two children were killed when the junta bombed Sin IDP camp, Loikaw township and Pekon township, Peking village. Three women were injured in the attack as the regime continued to target civilians. Throughout the month, airstrikes by the junta wounded nine civilians, including one child.

Even on New Years Eve, a holiday period where many spent hiding in caves for fear of attack, the junta deployed an airstrike in Karenni State which killed a three-year-old child during in an IDP camp in Loikaw. According to the IEC, junta warplanes carried out two airstrikes at 4 PM.

These attacks have led to the worsening displacement of innocent civilians who are facing increasing challenges. When the junta fires from the air, there is nowhere to run that guarantees their safety.





## Mortar Shelling

Over the last quarter, KnHRG documented a notable rise in the number of cases in mortar shelling by the junta. Several civilians were killed and wounded during indiscriminate firing into local villages and towns.

In October, one man was killed by the junta from mortar shelling in Pekon Township, Moe Bey. A four-year-old child was also killed when the military dropped 120mm of bombs onto the Van Mauk village in Southern Shan State, which is along the border of Ping Laung and Pekon.

Throughout the month, a total of five men were injured by mortar shells, and nine people were wounded when the junta carried out drone attacks. Mortar shelling also destroyed at least eight buildings, including local schools.

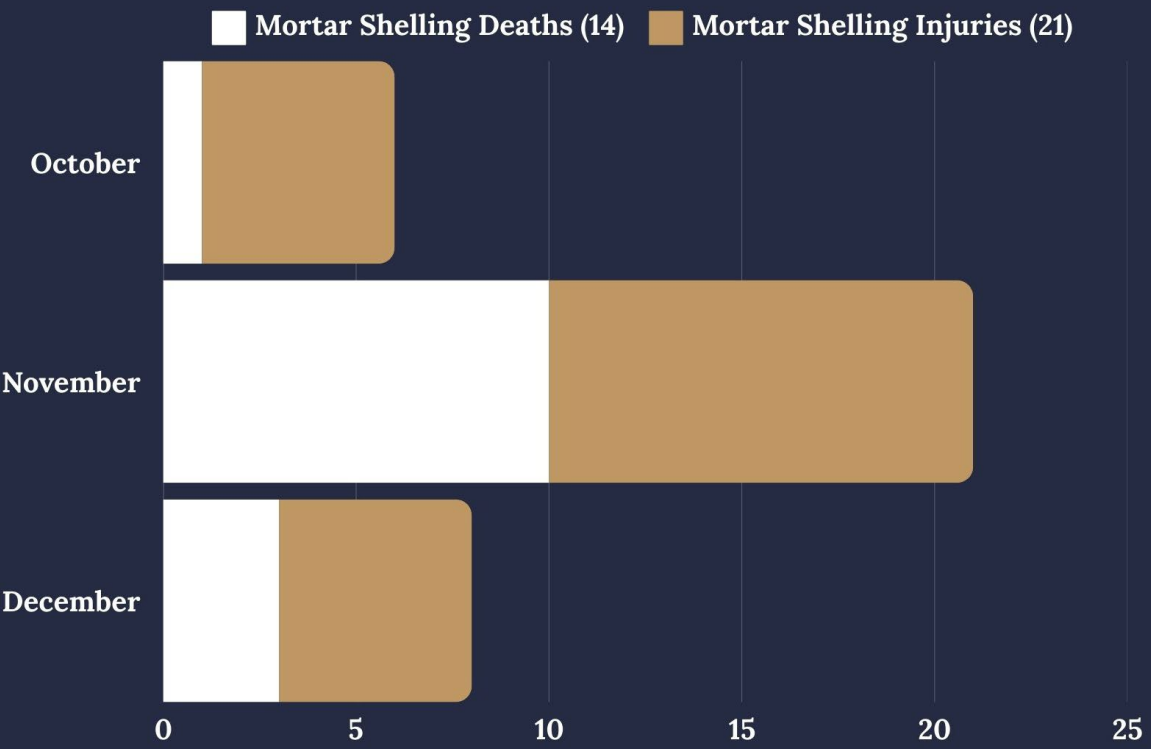
By contrast, in November, at least thirteen cases of mortar shelling documented by KnHRG led to the deaths of ten civilians, 11 wounded and two destroyed properties.



Those killed included a 24-year-old woman, two infants, a teenage girl and a 40-year-old man in Kuyin village. The firing of mortar shells also destroyed two houses. Mortar shells fired by the junta also injured three men, three women, two children and two unknown victims.

In December, mortar shelling fired by the junta was the cause of widespread destruction. There were five instances of mortar shelling, resulting in the death of three people including one man and two children, and injuring five others. Mortar shells also destroyed 60 homes.

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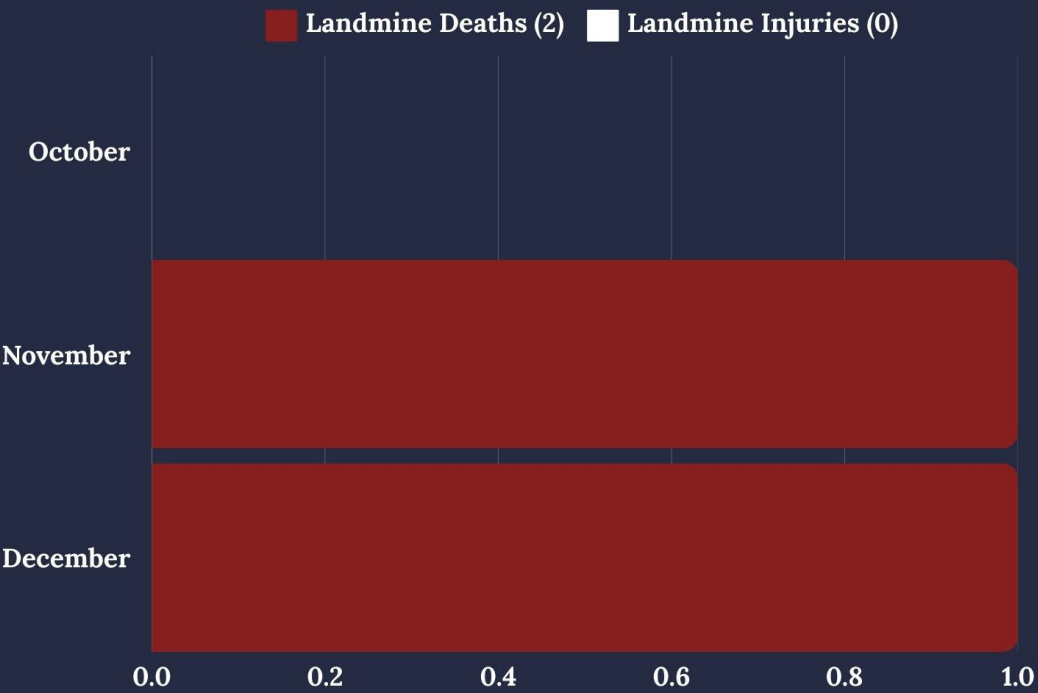


## Landmines

Burma has recorded the most deaths from landmines globally, a devastating reality that demonstrates the harmful impact on local communities. A staggering 1,003 people died from landmines in 2023, with this number only continuing to rise. In December, KnHRG reported that one man died from a landmine.

Displaced communities have suffered immensely and yet continue to face challenges surrounding their livelihoods and earning an income as landmines are planted in surrounding community areas. Before the coup, approximately 70% of people living in rural areas depended on farming as their primary source of livelihood - now, these systems have been utterly destroyed by the junta.

Over the last year in particular, KnHRG documented cases of displaced villagers returning to their areas to forage for food and other materials when they were killed or injured by landmines planted by the junta. For locals, the junta’s crimes are impacting them even off the battlefield.

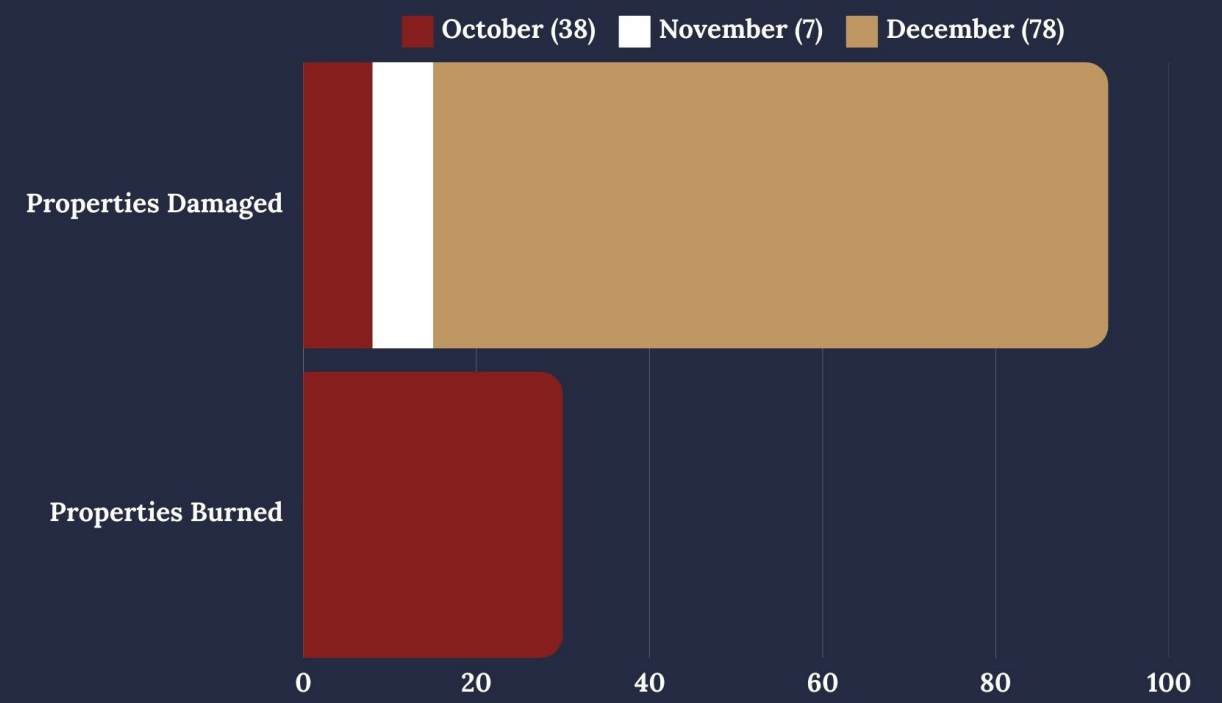


## Destruction of Properties

More than 50 religious buildings have been destroyed in Karenni State since the failed coup, with most ruined due to airstrikes, heavy artillery and arson.

Nearly 30 homes were burned down by the junta in October near a public hospital in Pekon Township, and mortar shells fired by the military destroyed eight buildings, including schools. In November, mortar shells destroyed two houses, and airstrikes damaged five buildings, including a church. By December, KnHRG reported that 78 properties were destroyed throughout Karenni State, largely by airstrikes and mortar shells.

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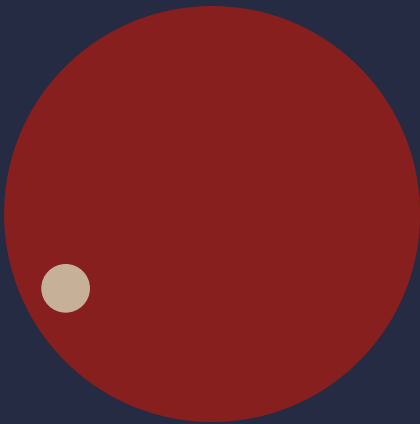


## Arbitrary Arrests

In addition to being forced to flee violence and attacks on their homes, Karenni people are being arbitrarily arrested, detained, and violently interrogated in military custody or shot on sight.

In November, in Southern Shan State, 200 civilians who were returning from farming in Puchel village, Pekon Township, were arbitrarily arrested and detained by the military.

## Shot-On-Sight



In November, a monk was shot to death by the junta in Loikaw.



**Feature:**

KnHRG spoke to a civilian impacted by the ongoing conflict in Karenni State as unmet needs and calls were addressed:

As the Burma Army continues its targeted attacks on the people living in Karenni State, the displaced community continues to suffer. In an interview from August 2023, an IDP highlighted issues with camp supplies, donor support, and livelihoods—issues that persist nearly a year and a half later. While the interviewee shared the benefits of a medical clinic and the presence of two doctors, not all displacement camps have access to these fundamental rights. Unfortunately, due to the deteriorating situation, most basic rights have become a distant reality.



We are facing food hardship in our camp. We're just waiting and hoping for donors, but they haven't been able to provide for all of our needs. Some of us have run out of rice. If possible, we need donors to come. In terms of water, we have to purchase clean water because there hasn't been very much rain. The cost of (1,200) gallons of water is 40,000.

The camp offers education from elementary school to high school. It's only three days a week of school. We have to go to elementary for three days and then to high school for three days. For the teachers' wages, we give them what we receive from the donors so the students don't have to pay.

There is a health clinic in the camp with two female doctors. Many people, both adults and children, are sick with the flu this season. In terms of livelihood opportunities, there are no jobs. Most men returned to the villages and worked in their gardens and fish tanks. For the garden, those with some starting money are working on it. Some depend on grinding peanuts.

The war has calmed down considerably lately in our area; however, this is not the case everywhere. Not many planes are flying over us, and we haven't heard much of the noise of big machines. We've been having some quiet and peaceful times but are unsure how long it will last."

*Some of us have run out of rice. If possible, we need donors to come.*

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Throughout 2024, each feature has consistently highlighted the shortage of supplies in various displacement camps and the need for donor support. With the Burmese junta actively preventing access to life-saving aid, the international community and private donors must support these vulnerable populations and the organizations working tirelessly to provide assistance.

Thousands across Karenni state and millions across the country are suffering at the hands of the junta's injustice. Unfortunately, the gap is widening as key supporters and policymakers remain slow to act on the pressing human rights concerns unfolding daily in Burma.

To make a significant impact, the recommendations offered by Karenni Human Rights Group and other civil society organizations must be seriously considered and implemented. It is well past time for action.

*\*Name and locations removed for safety and security.*

## Recommendations

1. Direct coordinate emergency humanitarian aid provision efforts, including through cross-border channels, for the aid to reach the vulnerable population of more than 200,000 Karenni IDPs resulting from the military violence and airstrikes, and combat COVID-19 by providing resources and working in equal and meaningful partnership and collaboration with ethnic and community-based humanitarian and civil society organizations;
2. Impose further targeted sanctions against the military and its leadership and military businesses, including specifically targeting Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprises (MOGE), military-linked business partners and a network of arms dealers;
3. Impose a coordinated global arms embargo on the Burmese military;
4. Sanction the supply of jet fuel to the Burmese military to end airstrikes and impose a no-fly zone;
5. Recommend the International Criminal Court to accept the declaration lodged by the National Unity The government of Burma, under Article 12(3) of the Court's jurisdiction concerning international crimes committed in Burma territory since 1 July 2002;
6. Formally designated safe zone for internally displaced persons under United Nations agencies management, which the Burmese military is not allowed to have access to.