

Displacement on the Rise in Karenni State as the Military Junta Escalates Attacks Against Innocent Civilians

Overall Analysis:

A primary concern over the third quarter has been the escalation of attacks against innocent civilians, especially as the junta attempts to reclaim lost land and territory in Karenni State, forcing more people to flee. Villagers are escaping from Western Demoso, Eastern Pekon, Moebye, and the surrounding areas. The rainy season has made the situation on the ground more difficult, particularly with mortar shelling and airstrikes.

The Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG) is increasingly concerned for the safety and well-being of children and the elderly. There are currently at least 200,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Karenni State who are in urgent need of emergency humanitarian assistance. During the reporting period, KnHRG documented that there were 63 civilians killed and 114 wounded. In July, 23 civilians were killed and 31 wounded; in August, the numbers increased to 35 dead and 47 wounded. In September, there were five lives lost due to military violence and 36 wounded.

Major Quarterly Developments in Karenni State:

July - September 2025

- **63+ Civilians Killed**
- **114+ Civilians Injured**
- **195+ Homes and Buildings Destroyed by Mortar Shells, Artillery and Airstrikes**
- **33+ Cases of Mortar Shelling**
- **108+ Arbitrarily Arrested**
- **18+ Airstrikes**

Throughout July, civilians faced serious threats to their safety and well-being, including ongoing arson by the junta. Over 60 homes were destroyed—30 by airstrikes, two by mortar shelling, and 30 by fire. The deteriorating human rights situation has created an environment of fear, with local people increasingly being unlawfully arrested and detained. On 25 July 2025, 30 people returning from Mawchee to Loikaw were arrested at the Loikaw checkpoint. Additionally, more than 40 people who fled from war to Wan Ngo from eastern Loikaw were arrested.

The Burma Army is depriving people of their fundamental rights and freedoms. The international community must act urgently to intervene and end the junta's terror on innocent civilians. According to the Karenni Interim Executive Council (IEC), so far this year, military airstrikes have caused 33 deaths and 94 injuries. Those killed include 15 men, nine women, two children, and seven unknown individuals.

The IEC also reported that heavy artillery, drone bombings, targeted shootings, and landmines have resulted in 29 civilians killed and 208 wounded. Among the dead were 18 men, three women, six children, and two individuals whose identities are unknown.

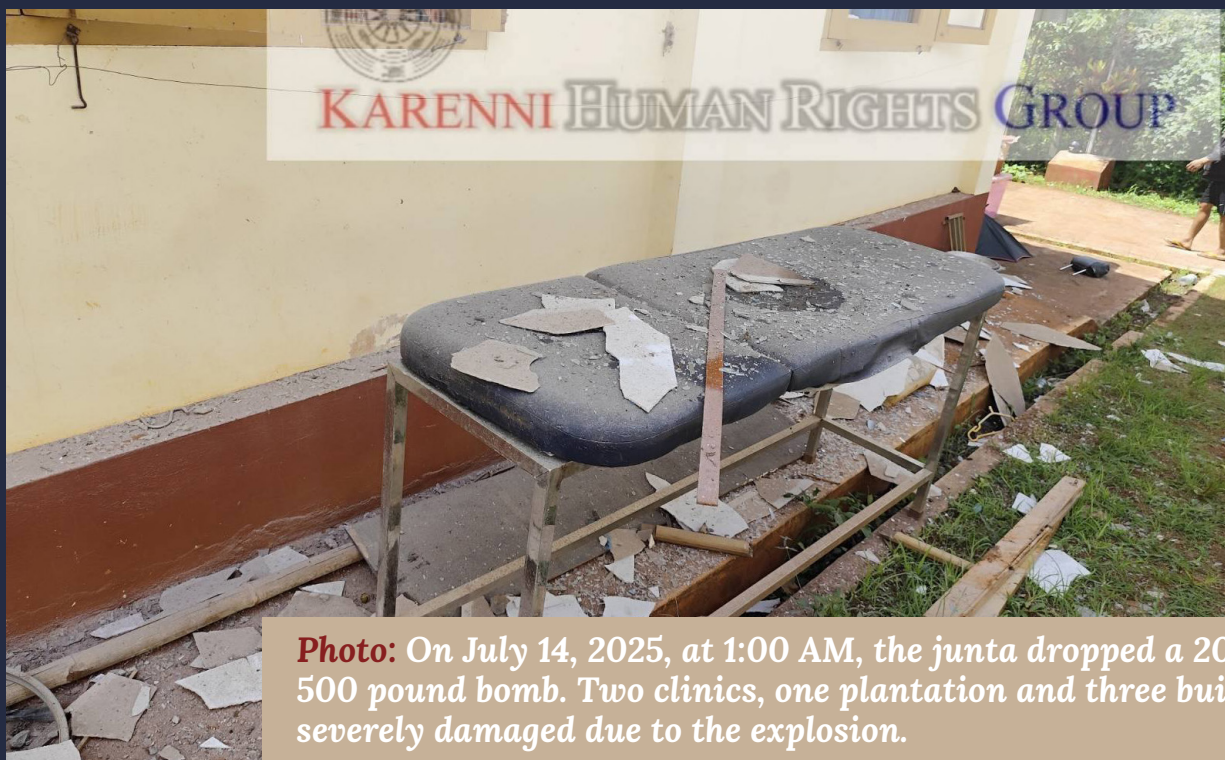


Photo: On July 14, 2025, at 1:00 AM, the junta dropped a 200 pound and 500 pound bomb. Two clinics, one plantation and three buildings were severely damaged due to the explosion.

The IEC has urgently **reinforced** their calls to the international community to *'take actions such as cutting off the military's access to aviation fuel'* and have called for immediate and decisive action against the military.

Halfway through July, KnHRG had already documented six airstrikes which killed 15 people, wounded 18 and destroyed 13 buildings. KnHRG also reported that the military junta in Karenni State committed twenty-six human rights violations in July. There were seven airstrikes, nine instances of mortar shelling, one landmine incident, seventy-one people who were arbitrarily arrested, and thirty homes deliberately burned down by the junta. Civilians faced serious threats to their safety and well-being, including ongoing arson by the junta.

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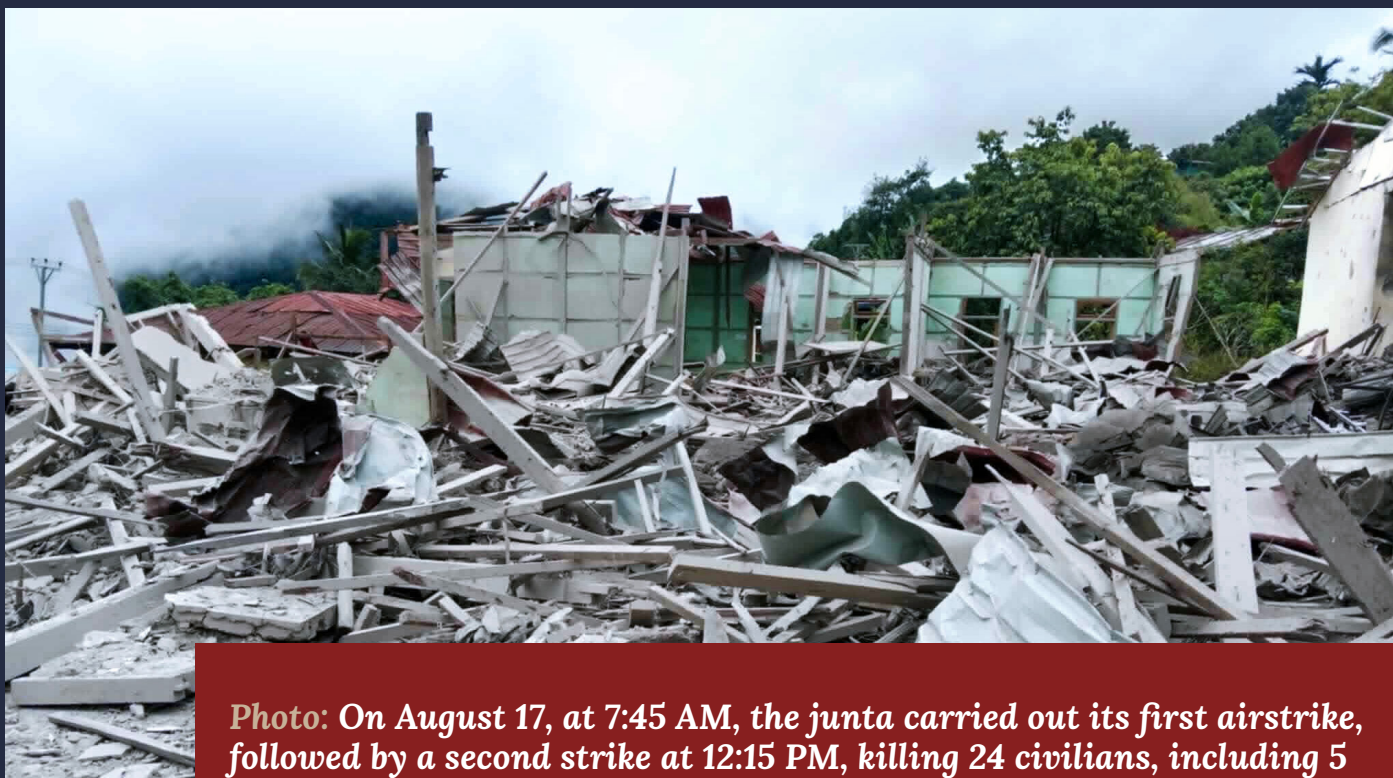


Photo: On August 17, at 7:45 AM, the junta carried out its first airstrike, followed by a second strike at 12:15 PM, killing 24 civilians, including 5 children, in Mawchi, Karenni State. Many civilians sustained serious injuries, including critical condition.

Consequently, the violence in July resulted in 31 individuals injured and 71 others arrested due to airstrikes, artillery shelling, and gunfire by the military, totaling 102 people. Additionally, 23 individuals, including nine men, 10 women, and four children, were killed due to attacks by the military and the Pa-O National Army. The deteriorating human rights situation has created an environment of fear, with local people increasingly being unlawfully arrested and detained.

Total Number of Deaths and Injuries in July 2025

Gender	Deaths	Injuries
Men	9	8
Women	10	5
Children	4	5
Unknown	0	84

The intensification of fighting in Karenni State has caused many people to become physically and mentally exhausted from war, and the number of displaced individuals has increased. It is estimated that there were 200,000 displaced people in July and August. The rise in displacement is driven by their need for emergency food and shelter. The military has increased its attacks in an attempt to regain its lost territory amid plans for its upcoming sham election. It is expanding troop movements and targeted attacks in areas where people rely on their livelihoods and income.

The deteriorating human rights situation has created an environment of fear, with local people increasingly being unlawfully arrested and detained.

Due to these targeted attacks, displaced people are facing significant challenges in securing their livelihoods and supporting their families. In the future, displaced people may face food shortages.

The election has also posed additional security concerns, especially for anyone viewed as opposing or contesting it by the military junta. In Loikaw, the military **filed charges** against five people, including three minors, for allegedly ‘disrupting and obstructing the election.’ They were charged under Article 23(a) of the Law on the Protection of Elections from Interference, Destruction, and Disruption. The provision allows for a minimum prison term of three years and a maximum of seven years, as well as the possibility of fines.

Conflict-affected groups are being **forced to return** to their villages in Bawlakhe by the junta amid the sham election plans. This comes as the Burma Army desperately tries to present the situation as usual in the country, even though violent attacks are occurring daily. Civil society has **repeatedly called** on the international community to reject the election, declared as a sham effort to assert the junta’s unearned legitimacy.

Airstrikes are among the most common and violent types of attacks carried out by the Burma Army, often targeting innocent and vulnerable communities on the ground. These assaults occur without any prior conflict and have caused fears and trauma in communities that are already suffering from the junta’s criminal actions.

On 7 July 2025, an airstrike on internally displaced people in Pekon township killed at least three civilians, including a child. KnHRG Co-Founder, Ko Banya, **told** Myanmar Now: ***“A 29-year-old man died on the spot. A four-year-old girl and a 26-year-old woman later died from their injuries.”***

Three people, including a 30-year-old pregnant woman, also sustained injuries. A couple of days later, on 9 July, another airstrike on Lehlohtee Village in the Mawchee area of Pasaung Township killed five family members, with the military reportedly using a 500-pound bomb. All five victims were from the same household. Ko Banya told local Karenni media:

“As far as we know, they were all from a single family. The victims included a 3-year-old girl, an 8-year-old girl, a 28-year-old man, a 28-year-old woman, and a 57-year-old woman.”

KnHRG **condemned** the onslaught of airstrikes in a statement on 16 July. As of then, KnHRG had already documented six airstrikes that killed 15 people, wounded 18 and destroyed 13 buildings, including three homes belonging to internally displaced people.

Photo: Statement from the Karenni Human Rights Group on 16 July 2025, condemning the airstrikes targeting civilians.



KARENNI HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP

The Karenni Human Rights Group Condemns Airstrikes Targeting Civilians and Calls for Immediate Action

16 July 2025

For Immediate Release

The Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG) is alarmed by the increase in frequency and scale of the airstrikes targeting civilians in Karenni State by the military junta. Halfway through July 2025, KnHRG has already documented six airstrikes which have killed 15 people, wounded 18 and destroyed 13 buildings, including three homes belonging to internally displaced people. In the last two weeks, the junta has carried out airstrikes in West Demoso, Maw Chee, and Saung Cherry IDP Camp, Phe Khong Township. These attacks are a serious violation of international norms and clearly show a disregard for the sanctity of human life.

KnHRG strongly condemns the aerial assaults, which have traumatized innocent civilians already suffering amid ongoing attacks by the regime. With airstrikes happening every day, there is an urgent call to the international community to respond with meaningful and coordinated action by immediately invoking a global arms embargo to stop the flow of aviation fuel to Burma and to impose sanctions.

According to the Karenni Interim Executive Council, from the start of the year until 9 July 2025, junta-deployed airstrikes have killed 33 people and injured an additional 94. Furthermore, data from Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica states there have been more than 3292 airstrikes since the attempted coup in February 2021, resulting in over 1,749 fatalities, including women and children. The ongoing series of attacks continues to endanger internally displaced people and conflict-affected communities, who lack protection and interference from the aerial bombs.

People in Karenni State live in constant uncertainty, unsure of when the next airstrike will occur or if they will survive. This has caused unprecedented fear and widespread trauma, worsened by the lack of action from global stakeholders in responding to the ongoing national crisis within Burma. KnHRG strongly urges international partners to break the cycle of violence by referring the human rights situation to the

International Criminal Court and working with locally-led organizations to seek accountability for the regime's decades of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

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The Karenni Human Rights Group is a community organization dedicated to reporting on the current situation on the ground in Karenni State and the human rights abuses committed by the junta.



In the last two weeks of July, the junta carried out airstrikes in West Demoso, Maw Chee, and Saung Cherry IDP Camp, Pekon Township. Safety concerns have particularly affected those living in Mawchee, as civilians were forced to evacuate in July, due to fears of looming airstrikes by the junta.

The military has carried out at least nine aerial bombardments in the Mawchee region since the start of 2025. These attacks are a serious violation of international norms and clearly show a disregard for the sanctity of human life.

On August 8, an airstrike on a Karenni school injured three children in Hpasawng Township. KnHRG Co-founder Ko Banya stated, **“A Y-12 aircraft dropped bombs on the school while students were taking their tests,”** said Banya Khun Aung, adding that one of the victims, a 12-year-old boy, sustained a serious injury to his thigh and is in critical condition. Deliberate attacks on civilians are considered war crimes and may also qualify as crimes against humanity. KnHRG’s previous reports have documented several cases where the junta targeted schools, leaving families distraught with loss and trauma.

Hpasawng township was targeted in a series of airstrikes that KnHRG also condemned. The military junta carried out airstrikes on 17 and 19 August 2025 in Mawchee, Hpasawng Township. The series of aerial attacks was the latest in the regime’s relentless terror from the skies, as innocent civilians are forced to face overwhelming fear in their final moments.

KnHRG documented that thirty-two lives were lost in the airstrikes on 17 April. Among those killed were eighteen men and eight women. There were seven injured, including six men and one woman. On the morning of 19 August at 6 AM, Y12 jets fired upon two areas in Mawchee, wounding four men, two of whom were critically injured.

According to the Karenni Interim Executive Council (IEC), this was the 11th airstrike this year in Karenni State. This serious violation of human rights calls for accountability. In an op-ed following the series of attacks, Ko Banya penned,:

“What made this brazen attack on civilians even more shocking was that it came at a time when there was no active fighting or military operations on the ground. But this has now become commonplace for the junta. Dropping bombs on civilians even when armed groups are nowhere to be found.”

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Airstrikes in August 2025

Gender	Deaths	Injuries
Men	18	14
Women	9	3
Unknown	6	7

In early September, in the latest airstrike in Demoso Township, three children were among those injured when the junta bombed an IDP camp. Since early August 2025, the military junta troops have been advancing into Demoso, leading to daily clashes with revolutionary forces. This was yet another attack that came at a time when there was no active fighting, leaving displaced communities increasingly fearful and concerned.

Mortar Shelling in August 2025

Gender	Deaths	Injuries
Men	1	4
Women	0	3

Heavy artillery strikes and mortar shelling also significantly undermined civilian safety. In mid-July, the junta **shelled** multiple villages in eastern Pekon Township, resulting in the deaths of at least five civilians. This is part of a continued offensive aimed at taking control of a crucial highway connecting Loikaw, with military-controlled regions in southern Shan State.

The forcible shutdown of roads and key transportation routes has also hindered the safety and security of displaced communities. As a result of the military junta’s control over the main road from Moebye to Moebye-Loikaw on the Shan-Karenni border, villagers on the east side of Pekon Lake have become trapped with no escape routes to avoid the fighting, as all road exits are blocked. Thousands of residents from Pekon Township have fled their homes due to ongoing fighting, seeking safety in Demoso Township, Karenni State, and surrounding areas.

Shot on Sight, Landmines and Arbitrary Arrests in August 2025

Violation	Impact	Location
Landmines	1 man	Pekon Township
Shot-On-Sight	1 man	Demoso Township
Arbitrary Arrest	15 civilians	Demoso Township

Local human rights workers have reported that food and shelter for IDPs are severely limited and urgently needed, especially during the monsoon season. The circumstances have made it nearly impossible for IDPs to find safety as they remain **unable to flee** while fighting intensifies along the Shan-Karenni border. Consequently, they are struggling amid ongoing shortages of food and shelter.

New and long-term displaced people from Karenni State require assistance and support, especially following the full-scale military operation on November 11, 2023, as they are forced to face natural disasters, such as flooding during heavy monsoon rains.

In early August, when some IDPs from Pekon township attempted to return to their villages, they found their homes in ashes. According to the Pekon Shan Youth Network, junta troops burned 27 houses in Nargon Village, Narhee Village Tract, Pekon Township, and about 30 homes in Hsantswea Village, Bantpyin Village Tract, Nyaungshwe Township, southern Shan State. The attacks displaced an estimated 200 people. Military troops advancing towards Demoso have also burned down civilian homes in a deliberate act of arson, despite there being no active clashes in the surrounding areas.

In addition to the violence, the situation in the temporary shelters, including IDP and refugee camps, is rapidly deteriorating. US funding cuts continue to negatively affect local livelihoods, prompting activists to urge the Royal Government of Thailand to take action.

“The main issue is livelihood—food, shelter and survival. Without that, domestic issues will follow,” a resident of Karenni Camp 2 said.

The shelter crisis has worsened due to heavy monsoon rainfall and a lack of access to reliable and affordable healthcare. Ongoing attacks by the junta have led to an increase in illnesses among IDPs.

The Burma Army is depriving people of their fundamental rights and freedoms. The international community must take urgent action to intervene and end the junta’s terror being imposed on innocent civilians. People in Karenni State live in constant fear, never knowing when an airstrike might happen or if they will survive. This has led to severe fear and trauma, made worse by

the lack of response from the international community to the ongoing crisis in Burma. Meanwhile, Karenni IDPs in Shan State are struggling amid ongoing shortages of food and shelter.

The circumstances have been detrimental to the availability of social services, which are becoming increasingly more difficult to access in the wake of the junta's attacks. As the fight against the military dictatorship intensifies daily, the risk of missed opportunities due to restrictions on education becomes even more concerning for Karenni communities. Education is essential in building and maintaining a federal future.

Throughout September 2025, the safety and security of civilians living in Karenni State remained under constant threat. IDPs residing in temporary camps were regularly shot at, increasing their risk of death or injury. Those from the western part of Pekon Township, where families have once again been **forced to flee** following joint offensives by the junta forces and the People's Militia Force of the PNO, are especially vulnerable.

Due to the number of increased attacks by the military along the Shan–Karenni border and eastern Pekon Township, in 2025 alone, an additional **30,000 people** have become displaced. Relief groups have faced difficulties ensuring the safe evacuation.

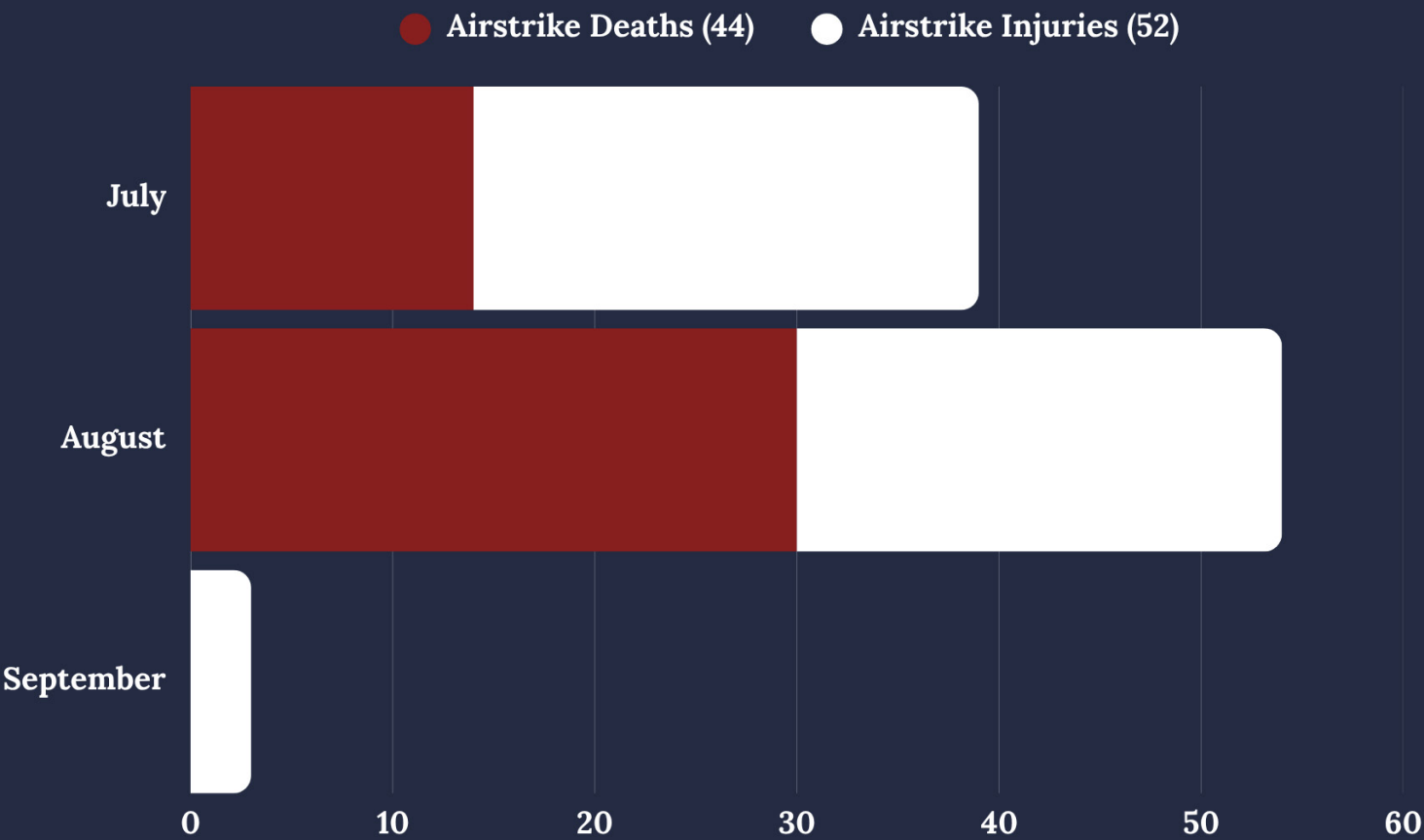
KnHRG calls on global partners to break the cycle of violence by referring the human rights abuses to the International Criminal Court and collaborating with local organizations to seek justice for the regime's long history of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Human Rights Violations

Airstrikes & Drone Attacks

In July, there were seven airstrikes; as a result, there were fourteen people killed (three men, eight women and three children). There were 25 people wounded in airstrikes, including two men, four women, five children and fourteen unknown.

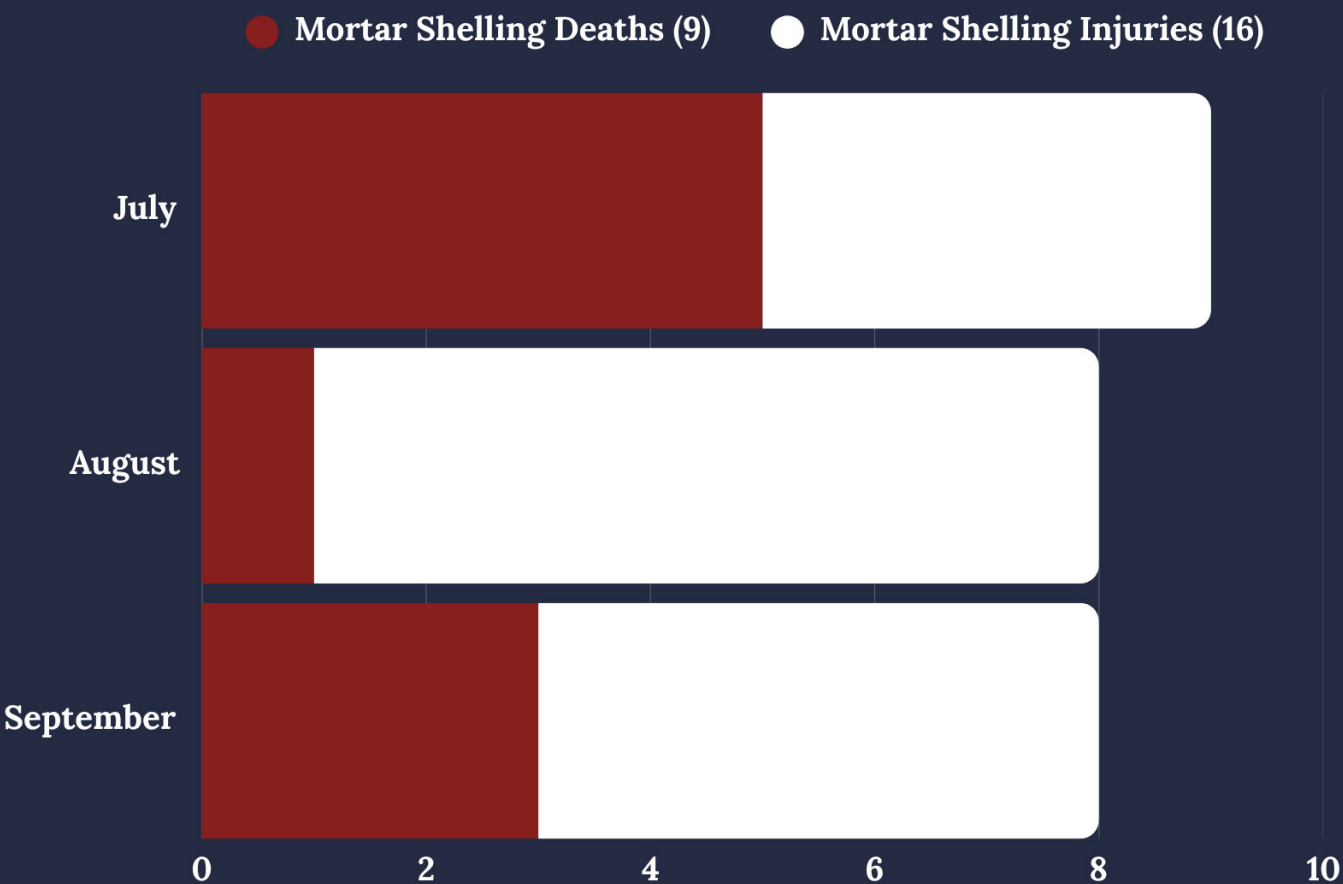
Sixteen men, eight women, and three children, along with three individuals of unknown identity, died in airstrikes in August. In addition, ten men, two women, five children, and seven unknown individuals were wounded from airstrikes. In September, KnHRG documented that there were two airstrikes in Demoso Township, resulting in the injuries of two women and a child.



Mortar Shelling

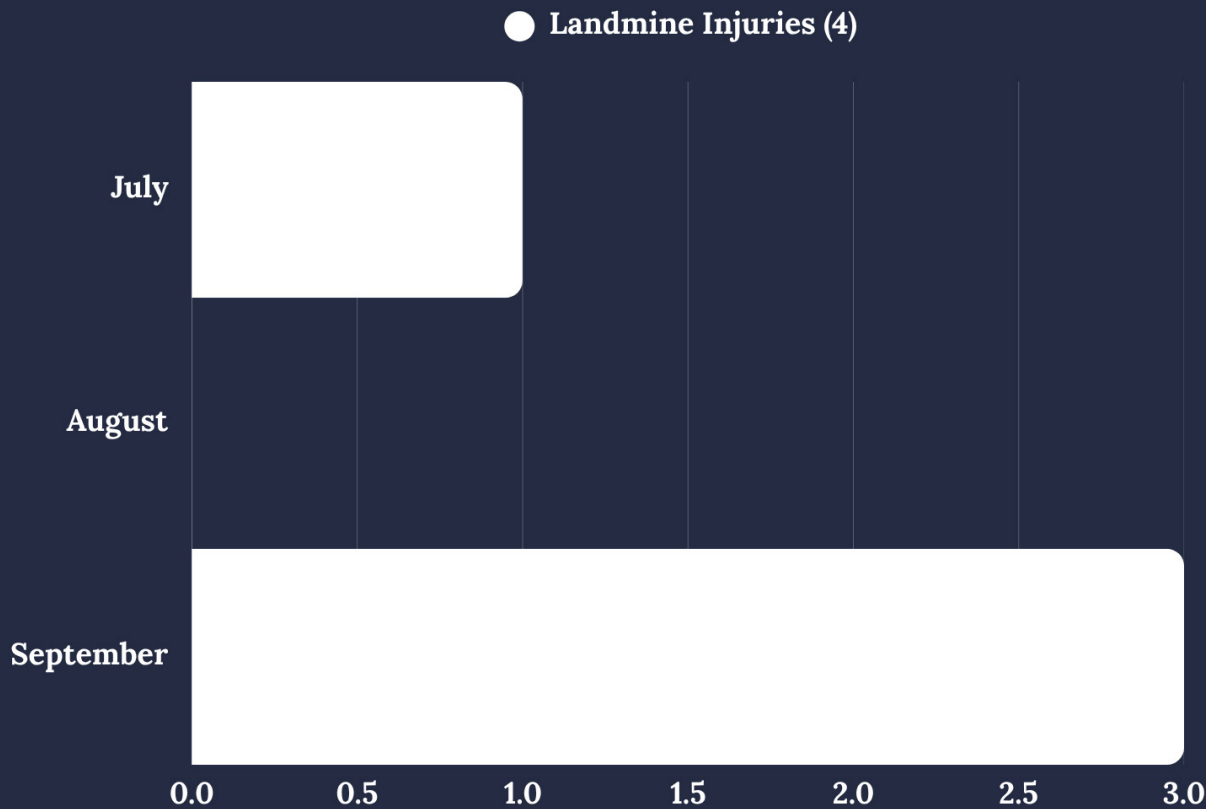
There were nine instances of heavy weaponry fire in July, leading to the injuries of three men and one woman and two men were wounded when they were shot on sight. Mortar shelling also killed five people, including three men and two women. In addition, there were two men and one child shot on sight.

One man died from mortar shelling in August, and mortar shells injured four men, two women, and one child. There were eleven instances of mortar shelling which occurred in Loikaw, Demoso and Hpruso in September, which led to the deaths of three people (one man and two women), in addition to two men, one woman and two children injured.



Landmines

In July, there was one documented landmine case in Demoso Township. One man was hit and injured by a landmine in August. In September, there were two landmine cases in Demoso and Loikaw, resulting in one man, one woman and one unknown sustaining injuries.

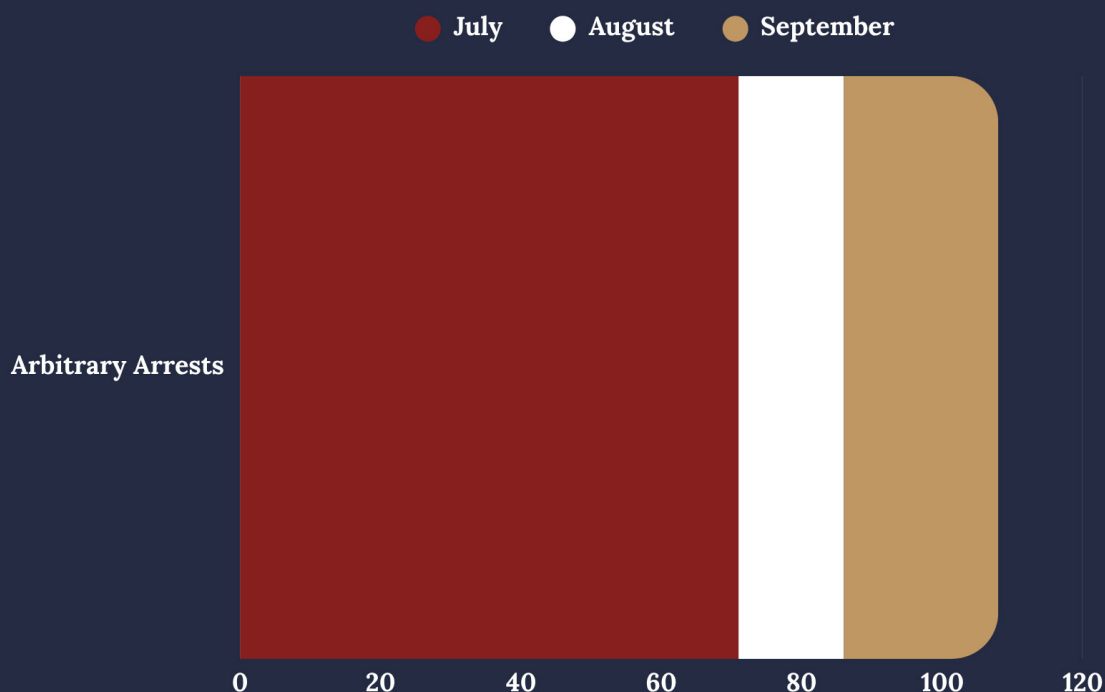


Arbitrary Arrest

There were three cases of arbitrary arrests in July, resulting in seventy-one people detained. There were additional injury-related incidents from the arbitrary detention of six men and nine women in August. In September, KnHRG documented 22 arbitrary arrests, including six men, three women, three children and ten unknown.

On September 16, three civilians, including a disabled man, were arrested by the military while harvesting rice in a field near Saw Hin Daw village, Noe Koe group - Loikaw township. They released the disabled man and said that if they saw him again, they would shoot. However, he had to swim back to the other side to reach his village. He is old and can't swim; the area is also close to the military. After five days, two civilians were freed but with many injuries; they had been tortured by the military.

On September 18, two men and three women returning from a rice harvest were arrested by the military in Loikaw township. On September 22, three adults (aged 18) and two men were arrested by the military in Loikaw, accused of trying to disrupt the election process. On September 23, ten civilians were arrested by the military and PNO in Phruso township.



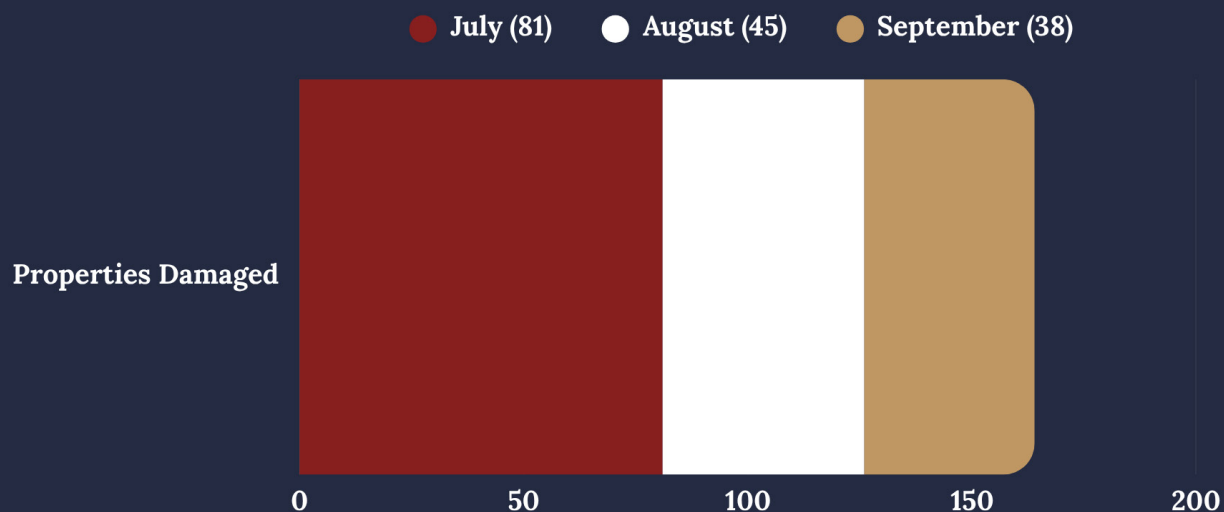
Destruction of Properties

In July, there were 81 damaged properties due to firing by the military junta, including 62 homes, one school, two clinics, one religious building, one public building, four vehicles, five fields and five livestock. Attacks by the junta resulted in seven airstrikes, nine cases of mortar shelling and one landmine case.

In August, it was also reported that joint forces of the military junta and the Pa-O National Army (PNO) deliberately set civilian homes on fire in Hsihseng Township, southern Shan State. They have also been driving villagers out of their homes and looting household belongings.

In addition, throughout August, the attacks by the junta led to 45 houses damaged by airstrikes and seven by mortar shelling. One religious building was hit in an airstrike, and two schools were ruined by mortar shelling. Three clinics, one public building, and a vehicle were destroyed in airstrikes. Five other cars were ruined by mortar shelling. Three fields were ravaged by airstrikes, and six by mortar shelling.

By contrast, in September, there were thirty-eight damaged properties, including eighteen houses, six religious sites, two schools, one public building, two vehicles, five fields, and four livestock.



Feature:

The Karenni Human Rights Group documented several cases of the challenges faced by internally displaced people. Among the main challenges they face are a lack of jobs, no income, worries from airstrikes, mortar shelling, and drones, as well as overall concerns for their security and for their children's future. They are suffering from trauma-related disorders, including depression, and are facing a lack of food and clean water. The overall sentiment is one of hopelessness.

Name – Daw Lu Meh

Age- 47

Location– Shar Daw Township

“There is nothing to eat, no more rice; I have to borrow from others to eat. The food and living conditions are not good. We are refugees, so we have no shelter. In this challenging situation, I have to struggle to find food. No job and no income. When my children are sick, I can only cook jackfruit seeds to feed them. I want my children to study, but I can't provide for their school needs, such as school uniforms, books, and pens. I try my best, but it's not enough. There are many difficulties in the village that I have to face.

My youngest son gets sick very often; he is not as healthy as he was when he was born. He has to take medicine every day. There is no medicine in the camp, not even a shop. I want to give up.”

“I try my best, but it's not enough. There are many difficulties in the village that I have to face.”

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Name- U Thel Reh

Age- 45

Location- Phurso Township

“Before the military coup, I worked in agriculture and part-time in construction. Now, the situation has changed; I have no job, and my income has decreased while the prices of goods are high. There are a few donors. In 2025, I received rice from IEC just once. Every year, we face more difficulties. I can’t buy meat or fish; I can only eat vegetables that we grow at home. I feel tired and want to give up. Moreover, I also have to worry about my children. I

have three daughters, all of whom are students, and I struggle to support their school needs. There are few teachers’ salaries, so they no longer want to teach.”

Name - U Shar Sein

Age- 55

Location - You Lee Kho village, Phurso Township.

“There are many difficulties in my family. I have many children, and they are all students. Before the military coup, we could provide for our children’s needs. Now, we can no longer do that. Since there are no jobs, we have to move to another village. We have to borrow money just to buy food. When we work and earn money, we have to pay it back, but even then, it’s not enough to cover our basic needs, such as food.

I am upset for my children because I can’t buy everything they need. I want to escape from this situation.”

Recommendations

1. Direct and 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, 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.
7. For international courts, including those in Argentina, to issue international arrest warrants for coup leader Min Aung Hlaing, who is responsible for genocide against the Rohingya. Additional international accountability pathways must be established and pursued to ensure justice and reparations for all victims and survivors of the junta's ongoing war crimes and crimes against humanity.