

Airstrikes, Artillery and Mortar Shelling Taking a Devastating Toll on Civilian Lives

Overall Analysis:

The fundamental rights and security of civilians in Karenni State remain under attack by the military junta. The increasing deployment of airstrikes, artillery, mortar shells, and drones has led to a growing sense of unrest, as local people feel unsafe in their homes, places of worship, schools, clinics, and other communal areas. Those who have been displaced and are living in temporary shelters are exposed to extreme weather conditions, including heat, wind and rain. This exposure has damaged their temporary homes and contributed to a rise in health-related conditions. The military's violence has further deepened their sense of insecurity about their futures.

In internal displacement camps, the lack of safe, reliable access to clean water has led to outbreaks of illness, particularly among children and older adults. Outbreaks of diarrhea and malnutrition are on the rise, creating additional strain on families.

Major Quarterly Developments in Karenni State:

April - June 2026

- **11+ Civilians Killed**
- **39+ Civilians Injured**
- **228+ Homes and Buildings Destroyed by Mortar Shells, Artillery and Airstrikes**
- **16+ Cases of Mortar Shelling**
- **7+ Arbitrary Arrests**
- **15+ Airstrikes**

In Hpruso township alone, over 400 people sheltering in a displacement camp have been affected. Malnutrition is rampant among children and pregnant women, sometimes causing more fatalities than direct conflict. In combination with the scorching heat, the immune systems of the most vulnerable are weakening. The deliberate targeting and destruction of medical clinics in airstrikes by the junta has also led to local people feeling discouraged and fearful of seeking treatment. Of additional concern is the limited supply of medicine and health care staff, who are already operating with minimal resources and facing threats to their safety.

In response to emerging health gaps, the Karenni State Interim Executive Committee (IEC) is implementing a decentralized, community-based healthcare model that includes mobile medical teams and traditional medicine to improve access. In the meantime, local health workers, including backpack teams and those from the Civil Disobedience Movement, as well as leading ethnic women's organizations, are working to close the gaps by providing basic supplies and awareness.

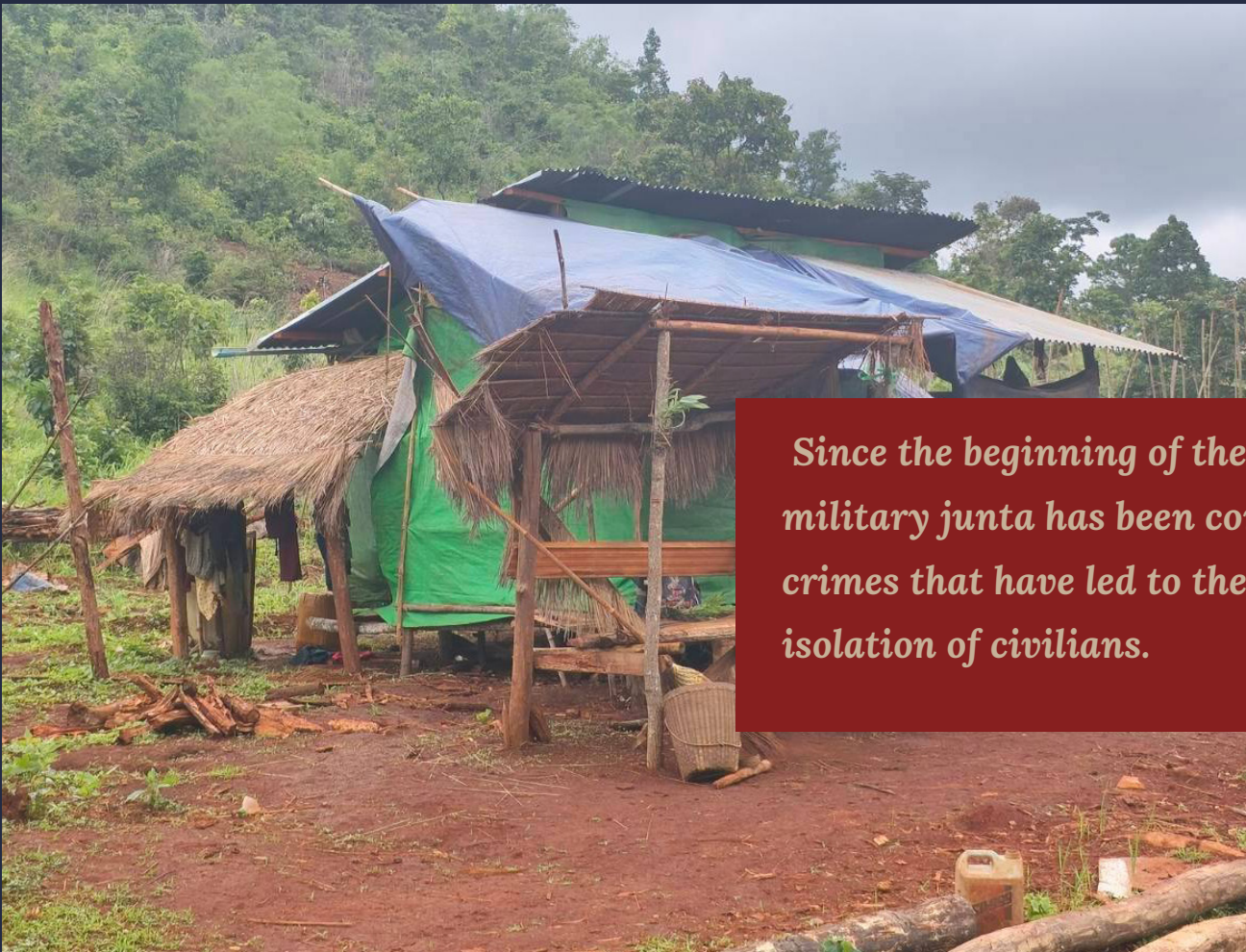
On 6 May, the Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG) issued a statement calling for urgent accountability in response to the rise in human rights violations. Since the beginning of the year, the military junta has been committing crimes that have led to the further isolation of civilians. In addition, in the latest KnHRG report, "Hanging Onto Hope," civilians repeatedly shared their ongoing struggles for survival amid continued attacks by the military junta.

Concerns about drone surveillance and airstrikes remain persistent, especially for those who have been displaced multiple times and have nowhere else to go. Airstrikes are among the most frequent and brutal tactics used by the Burma Army, often targeting vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the elderly. These attacks happen suddenly, without warning, instilling fear and trauma in communities already damaged by the junta's criminal actions.

As the fight against the military regime intensifies daily, an urgent mental health crisis is emerging, driven by violence that causes trauma and increasing numbers of PTSD among attack survivors and resistance fighters. Hpasawng Township, in particular, has been disproportionately targeted because it is a critical area for communication routes.

Across Karenni State, the junta is causing destruction, including in Phekon, Hpruso, and Demoso Townships, in an effort to regain control. They continue to use motor shells, airstrikes, and drones to attack and kill civilians every month. Every month, civilians are killed and injured.

People are desperate to return to their homes in areas under military control in Loikaw. Compared with last year, the number of people resettling in Loikaw Township has increased.



Since the beginning of the year, the military junta has been committing crimes that have led to the further isolation of civilians.

However, young people who return to the city are often arrested and forcibly disappeared.

From 2021 to 2026, people have continued to move from place to place because of fighting. Protection and security programs are urgently needed for civilians and displaced people.

The gaps in the provision of health, education, and awareness-raising services on the ground are being filled by local civil society organizations, as securing sustainable, long-term funding remains a challenge. International stakeholders, including donors, must acknowledge the situation and the many areas that require financial support to assist conflict-affected communities, including refugees and IDPs.

The socio-economic conditions in Karenni State have not improved, and people continue to face food shortages. International conflicts have affected the global economy and have also worsened food and economic difficulties. Although people are struggling to survive on local resources, they still need humanitarian assistance and security protection. Food and income sources in the area have been targeted. These livelihood and food difficulties could lead to famine in the future.

Local and displaced people in Karenni State rely mainly on agriculture and day labour for their livelihoods. However, they face land shortages, water scarcity, and limited job opportunities. Prices for goods are rising, and social and economic problems persist. There is not enough food for displaced people in Karenni State, which relies heavily on rice, suffered losses last year due to expanding military operations and flooding during the harvest season, which destroyed rice fields. This year, it is difficult to plant again, and the high cost of fuel has made it challenging to invest in planting. In addition, rice prices in the State have increased in the first quarter of 2026

There were fourteen airstrikes in June, in Demoso, Hpruso and Phekon townships.



In April, KnHRG reported that four people were killed by drone strikes, and one child was killed by mortar shelling fired by the military junta. There were six people injured, including one man and a child by drones, one woman and a child by a landmine, and two unknown victims from unexploded ordnance devices. In addition, there were 13 properties destroyed, including 8 houses (6 by drones, two by mortar shelling), one school, and two livestock were impacted by drones. Two fields were destroyed by mortar shelling.

KnHRG also documented a worsening situation on the ground, as civilians are forced to confront daily bombardments and attacks by the military junta, which undermine their safety and security. In addition, as documented by the Coordination Team for Emergency Relief Karenni (CTER), in May alone, there were military raids which led to more than 1000 displaced people, exacerbating the already growing need for shelter.

On World Refugee Day, marked on 20 June, KnHRG released a statement calling for a compassionate and coordinated effort to ensure the protection and enforcement of refugee rights.

After years of advocacy by civil society organizations, Thai policy shifted in a landmark way last year, with the government granting registered refugees (aged 18 to 59) living in the nine camps the right to work legally. The announcement came not long after the fallout from US government funding cuts to life-saving humanitarian programs and social services that were being operated in the camps. While this was an important step forward, additional challenges remain to be addressed, including protection concerns.

KnHRG is grateful to the Royal Thai Government for this important step forward in advancing refugee rights, as well as for issuing Identification cards that permit legal employment. Recommendations from border-based groups working with and supporting refugees continue to call on neighbouring countries for support, especially amid ongoing reductions in foreign aid.

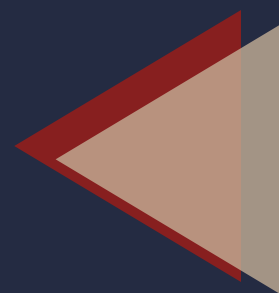
KnHRG reiterates our calls to international stakeholders to respond urgently and intentionally to the worsening situation on the ground.



Human Rights Violations in Karenni State: April 2026

KnHRG documented a worsening situation on the ground in April, as civilians are forced to confront daily bombardments and attacks by the military junta, which undermine their safety and security. The fundamental rights and security of civilians in Karenni State remain under attack by the military junta. The increasing deployment of airstrikes, artillery, mortar shells, and drones has led to a growing sense of unrest, as local people feel unsafe in their homes, places of worship, schools, clinics, and other communal areas.

Those who have been displaced and are living in temporary shelters are exposed to extreme weather conditions, including heat, wind and rain. This exposure has damaged their temporary homes and contributed to a rise in health-related conditions. The military's violence has further deepened their sense of insecurity about their futures.



Human Rights Violations in Karenni State: May 2026

In May, KnHRG expressed alarm over the rapidly deteriorating security situation. In a statement released on 6 May, it noted that since the beginning of the year, the military junta has committed crimes, including airstrikes, landmines, drone attacks, artillery fire, and more. These actions have had serious consequences, as forced displacement continues to rise.

In May, due to the military advancing into Phurso township, Htar Lae, and Pa Peh Taw, a total of 140 houses and around 7,000 people have moved to other places. The junta also arrested and tortured residents and destroyed and burned houses. During the military movement near Hpruso, Nai Phe highway, around 300 refugees and residents moved to another place.

They also destroyed and burned houses in Bawlake township, Sa Leh Lon village. KnHRG reported that in May 2026, approximately 1000 residents and refugees from the western parts of Hprurso and Bawlakhe were displaced by the war.

Two men were killed. On May 7 at 1 PM, the military entered Hpruso township when one of the victims went to take a pig for food. He heard a gunshot and was missing for 3 weeks. On May 10 in the evening, one soldier and one villager saw the military advance and attempted to return to their camp. They were shot dead.

Human Rights Violations in Karenni State: June 2026

By June, the human rights situation in Karenni had further deteriorated, with airstrikes specifically targeting children. On June 24, a drone attack carried out by the military junta against a preschool **resulted** in the deaths of two children: a ten-year-old girl and a six-year-old boy. Another child was injured in the attack. Despite early warnings from the teachers to run and hide, these young children lost their lives, facing their final moments in fear and uncertainty.

Civilians and witnesses reported no armed clashes during the strike, further fueling outrage. Later that evening, another airstrike was carried out in Demoso Township. There were no casualties reported, but there was damage to local infrastructure, including IDP shelters and farmland, caused by the impact of the bomb blast. These attacks have only continued to spur fears among communities, especially children, who are distraught at the terror and uncertainty that have consumed their childhoods.

At the end of June, the junta once again deployed an airstrike in Nanmekhon Township, Karenni State, at 1 PM on 29 June. No one was injured or killed, though it has sparked further fears as homes are damaged and anxieties are heightened over when the next attack will take place. These assaults on civilian livelihoods have been all the more concerning as funding pitfalls and gaps in protection expose the most vulnerable in Karenni societies. IDPs and refugees in particular are bearing the brunt of the conflict.

Throughout June, there were many cases of airstrikes in Karenni State. On June 4, at around 6 PM, the military junta dropped a 500-pound bomb on Htee la Thu Kho village, Wabang Plao group, Demawso Township. The bomb killed a 38-year-old religious pastor in the back of his head, and his brother-in-law, Min Tay Mon (26 years old) and another pastor, 42 years old, were injured.

Then, at the end of the month, on June 30, at 12:35 in the afternoon, the military used airstrikes to bomb Hoya village, Hoya group, Phruso Township, using two (200) pound bombs, without any warning. A 17-year-old Grade-12 student was injured in her right leg and chest.

These attacks are ongoing and threaten the protection of civilians who have suffered greatly since the worsening of the fighting following the coup. Their needs are growing as calls to the international community are amplified.

Human Rights Violations

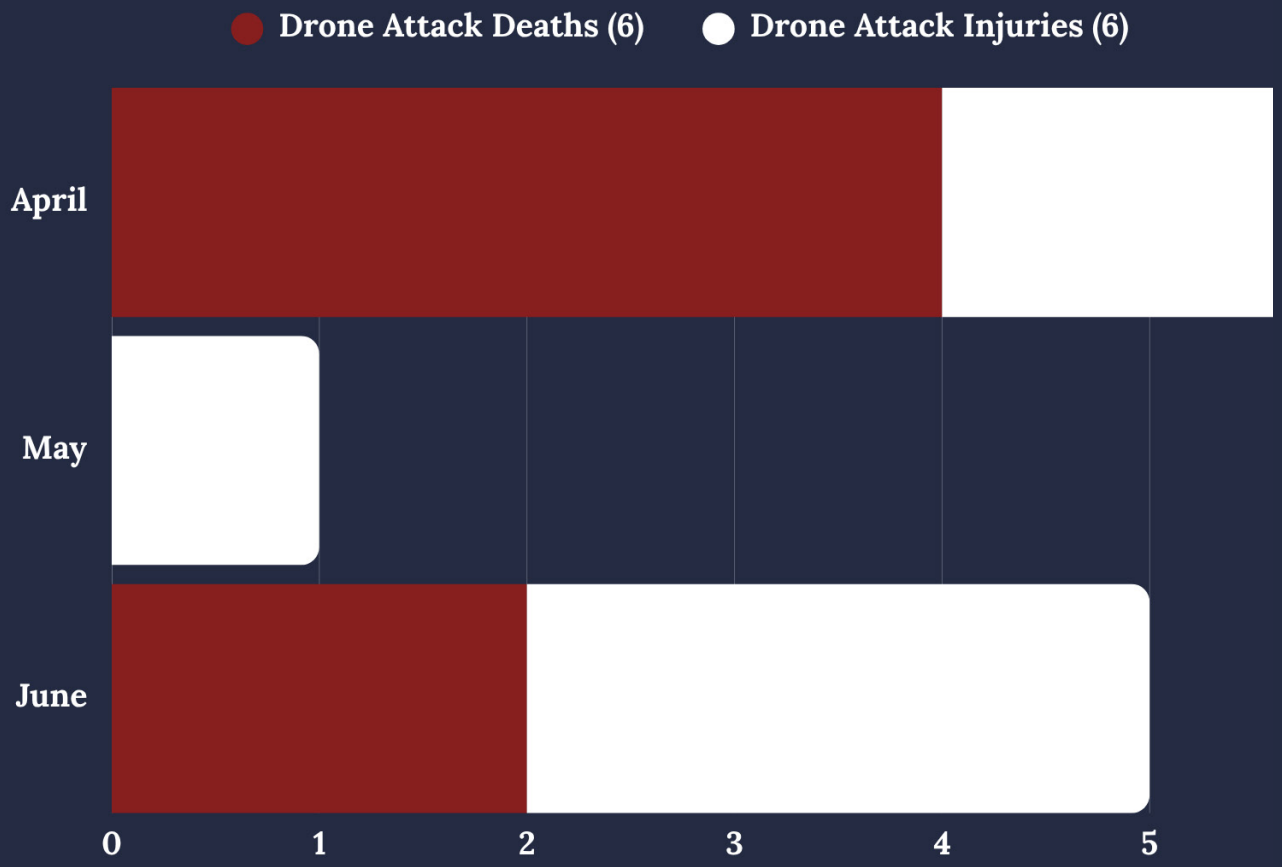
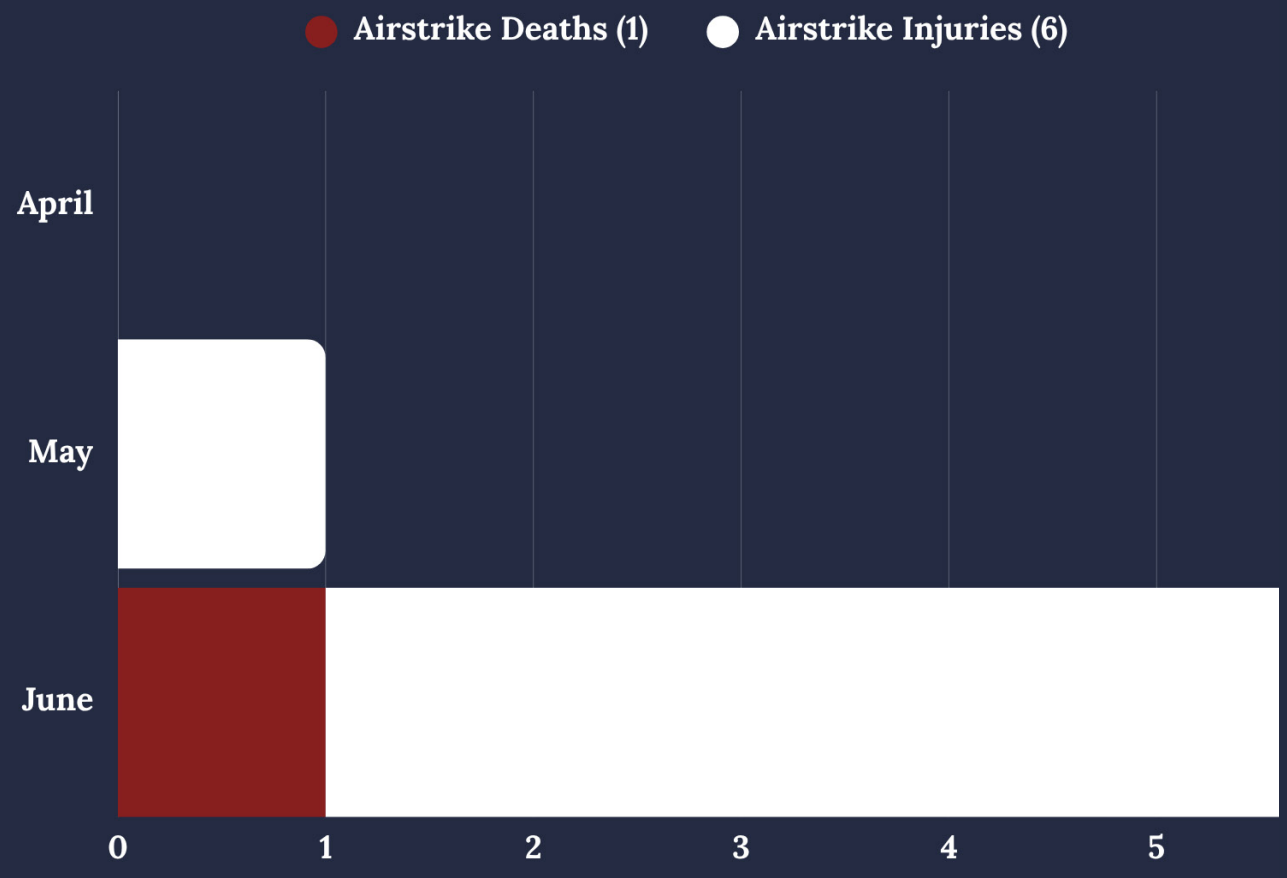
Airstrikes & Drone Attacks

In April, four people were killed by drone strikes, and one man and a child were wounded. In May, one man was hurt in an airstrike and another by a drone. In June, an airstrike injured a child and four men, and another drone killed a man. An airstrike in June killed a 38-year-old religious pastor and wounded his brother-in-law, Min Tay Mon (26 years old). Another pastor, 42 years old, was injured. On June 30, a 17-year-old Grade-12 student was injured in her right leg and chest by an airstrike.

On June 15, at 9:30 AM, the military junta in Pagoda Ni village used a drone to drop an 81 mm drone bomb on Phong Taw village, Pagoda Phyu group, Demoso township. U Maung Than, a 42-year-old who was eating breakfast, was injured on the right side of the neck, and Maung Si Thu Khan, 35, was injured by the bomb in the abdomen and neck

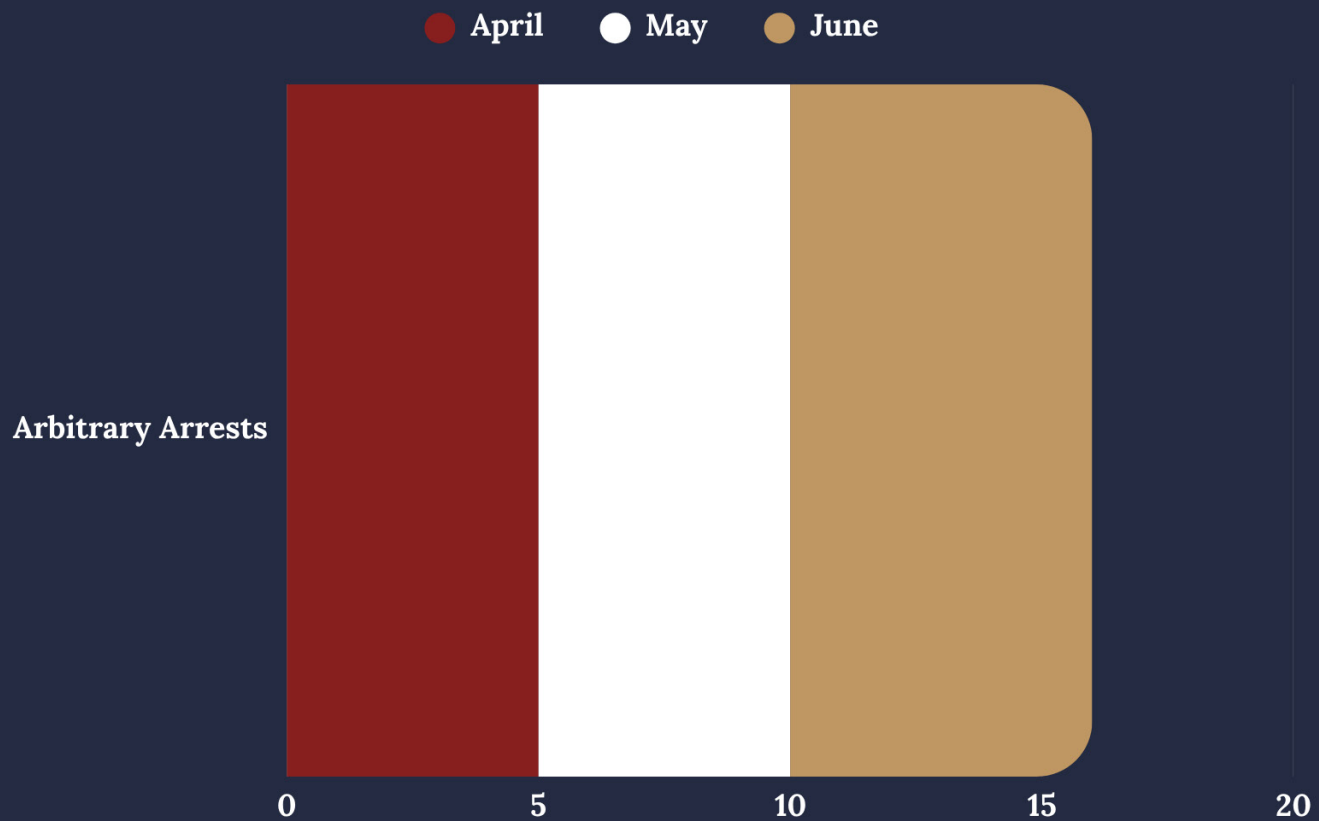
On June 24, at 12:30 noon, a drone explosion followed by mortar shelling injured a 19-year-old who went to help a child who had been hit by artillery in the shoulder, stomach and thigh. The first bomb fell in the northern part of the village. causing no damage. The second bomb hit Ma Ju Sphing , age 15, who was returning home from planting peanuts in the peanut field and died on the spot. In addition, Maung Kaung Thant Oo, 5 years old, who was returning home from kindergarten, was hit in the right side of the head and died on the way to the hospital.





Arbitrary Arrests

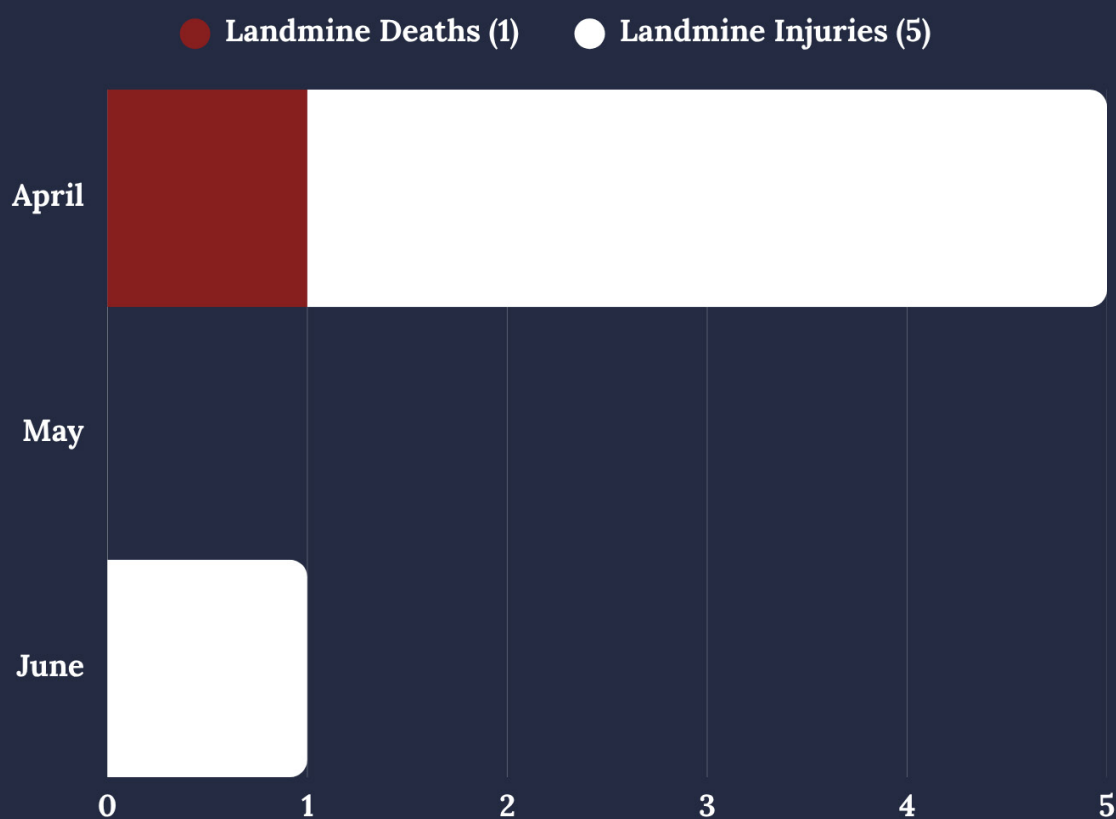
Five people were arrested in April and May. Six people were arbitrarily arrested in June. On June 4, military troops invaded Zaryat Phyu village, Ma Htaw Khy group, southeast of Loikaw, and arrested a nun, a driver and two others who were returning to Zaryat Phyu. On June 30, two young men were arrested at the military checkpoint on the outskirts of Loikaw because they shared a birthday message to Aung San Suu Kyi on their mobile phones.



Young men are increasingly targeted by the junta and forced to join the Burma Army through mandatory conscription.

Landmines

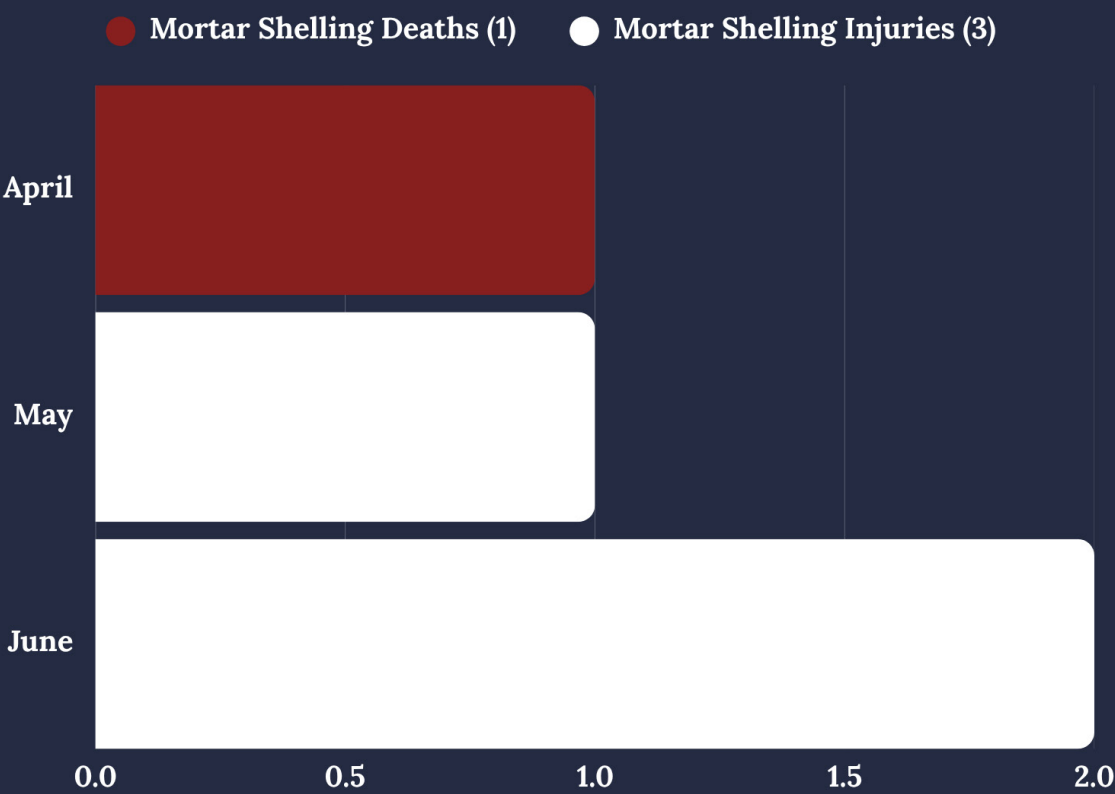
In April, one woman and a child were injured by a landmine, and two unknown victims were wounded by unexploded ordnance devices. One man was also killed. On June 21, at 1 PM, a 30-year-old man, Khun Daw Min, was spraying pesticides on a paddy field near Loi Yin Yaung Che village. Moebey, Phekhn Twonship, stepped on 14 landmines planted by the military junta, causing injuries to his left leg and his left palm.



Landmines, particularly in areas where the junta had previously occupied and left, have made villagers vulnerable to explosions.

Mortar Shelling

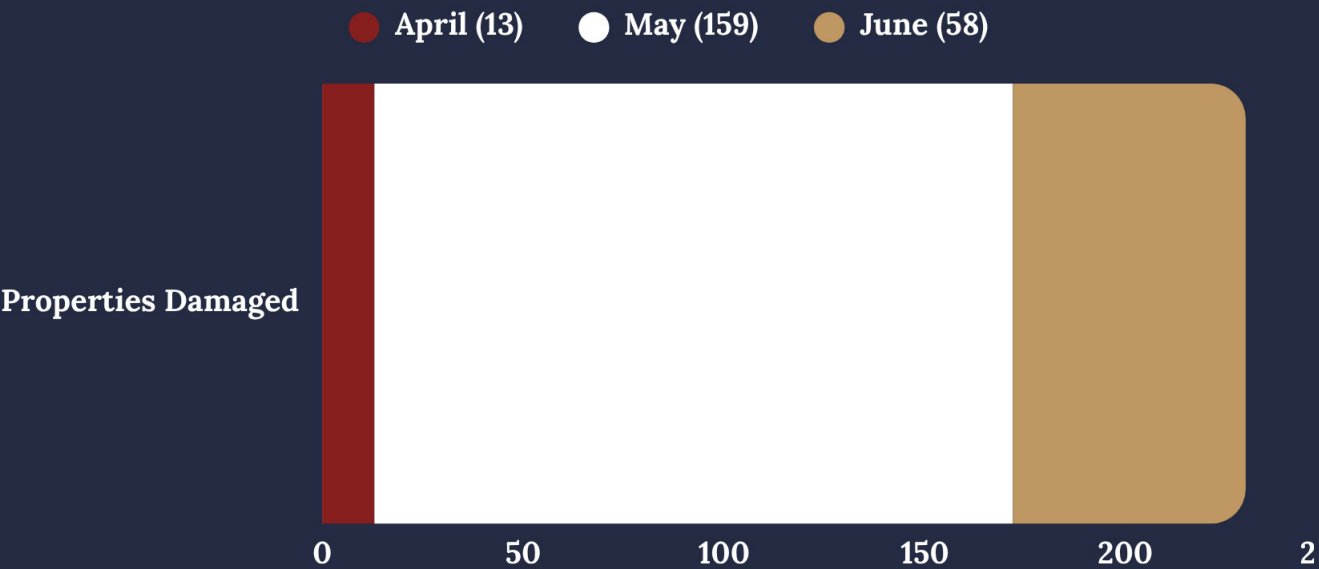
In April, one child was killed by mortar shelling fired by the military junta. In May, one man was injured. In June, a 19-year-old woman was injured by a mortar shell at 4 PM and another man was also injured.



Funerals for families of loved ones are common as the attacks by the junta deprive the most innocent of their right to life.

Destruction of Properties

In April, there were 13 properties destroyed, including 8 houses (6 by drones, two by mortar shelling), one school, and two livestock were impacted by drones. Two fields were destroyed by mortar shelling. In May, there were 120 damaged properties, including 96 houses, one religious building, a school, five public buildings, and 17 vehicles. There were 85 homes and 16 cars burned down. By June, 58 properties had been destroyed, including 35 houses, 1 religious building, 5 vehicles, 14 fields, and 3 other properties. The majority of the homes (25) were damaged by junta airstrikes.



Feature:

The following interview by KnHRG demonstrates the everyday struggles and pain experienced by people in communities across Karenni State.

Daw Angelar (39-years-old) from Loikaw Township told KnHRG:

“We have concerns about securing our livelihood. Every household faces many difficulties in different situations. Most of us do not have enough food. I have a broken leg, so it is not easy for me to work. My son is the only one who has to look for food and take care of me. This is the harvest time, so my son works on the farm. I also have to buy rice, and if we can’t buy rice, we borrow 1 or 3 bags from others or from other neighbours. We have to find other work when the rice we borrowed runs out, because we need to pay it back.

We plant rice, but it’s difficult to grind it, so we exchange it for old rice from others and grind it. We have to pay back the rice we have borrowed.

In our camp school, children are attending as usual. However, there are not enough handbooks and notebooks for children. For notebooks, they have to buy them in town, and it is difficult to bring them back to camp. For a dozen notebooks, we have to pay 18,000 kyat. Some students are not able to pay. In an emergency, the school closes. At that time, students are using phones and playing games with their friends. Then they lose interest in school lessons. Some drop out of school, some enter the military, and some move to Thailand to make money.

There are also ongoing health concerns. I have a broken leg, so I have a lot of difficulty getting around. There is no clinic. So if I need medicine, I have to buy it from a nearby pharmacy. When I broke my leg, I went to Toungyi for treatment. At the time, the cost was high, so I had to borrow money from friends and relatives. There is a self-clinic, but it costs a lot to keep it running regularly. In an emergency, we have to go to Loikaw for treatment, and it costs a lot.

Sometimes it is difficult to travel when it rains. The road has not been repaired, so travel is difficult in some places. If you use another road, it is very far. There used to be telephone lines in the communication area, but now they are cut off, making it difficult to connect. If we need to communicate, we have to go up the mountain to the west. There is also a time limit for communication.”

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.