



Chin
Human
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Organization

WORKING FOR
THE RIGHTS OF
CHIN PEOPLE
SINCE 1995

NGO IN SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH
United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Since 2018

| AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2021 |

THE HUMAN RIGHTS BRIEFING

REIGN OF TERROR

Chin Human Rights Organization

SAC JUNTA ATTACKS ON
LIVES & PROPERTIES
IN CHIN STATE AND NORTHWEST
BURMA/MYANMAR



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SUMMARY

This briefing covers the situation of human rights, which were documented by the Chin Human Rights Organization in northwestern Burma/Myanmar, primarily in Chin State, Sagaing and Magwe Regions, between August and September 2021. Under the reign of terror imposed by the junta, hundreds have been arrested, dozens of people killed, injured and thousands exiled in a matter of months.

Evidence contained in this briefing demonstrates that there is a clear pattern of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian laws, which are being committed by the Burmese/Myanmar military junta State Administration Council (SAC) against civilian populations with complete impunity.

About the Chin Human Rights Organization

CHRO is a non-governmental organization in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations since 2018.

The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) is committed to protecting and promoting human rights through monitoring, research, documentation, education and advocacy on behalf of the Chin indigenous people and other oppressed and marginalized communities in Burma/Myanmar.

Through our work, we envision meaningful social change and the full enjoyment of human rights in a just, free and democratic society, where the equal dignity of all human beings is respected and upheld.

CHRO was founded in 1995, by a group of Chin activists committed to documenting and exposing years of systematic human rights violations by State actors, previously unreported and unknown to the international community.

INTRODUCTION

This document details human rights violations committed by SAC actors during August and September, 2021. Attacks on the civilian population and civilian infrastructure initiated by the State Administration Council (SAC) junta have become increasingly relentless in western Burma/Myanmar since August 2021. Junta soldiers operating in Chin State and parts of Sagaing and Magwe Regions, under the Northwestern Regional Military Command based in Monywa, have conducted a campaign of unlawful killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and deliberate targeting of civilian and religious infrastructure.

During August and September, the numbers of attacks on civilian and religious infrastructure in western Myanmar where Tatmadaw forces have escalated military activities against civil militias from the Chinland Defense Force (CDF) in Chin State and the various Peoples Defense Force (PDFs) operating in Sagaing and Magwe Regions has increased. These conflicts have led to radical violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, resulting in the massacres of civilians and causing civilian casualties, damage and destruction to private and public property.

These ongoing violations constitute part of what the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet described as the “human rights catastrophe” in her report to the UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva on Thursday, September 23.¹ The violations documented by CHRO and other groups have clear patterns in which perpetrators’ actions are demonstratively deliberate and intended to cause harms to civilians. The destruction of lives, livelihood and properties are directly linked to the military scorched earth counter-insurgency policy.

The notorious “four-cuts” doctrine, which has been employed in active war zones in ethnic areas for decades, is now being applied in the junta’s military campaigns in urban areas in the fight against local militia groups such as CDF and PDFs in western Myanmar/Burma. In implementing the four-cuts doctrine designed to cut off food, funding, intelligence and recruits to the resistance groups, civilians are deliberately exposed to extreme violence and livelihood destruction. The deliberate and indiscriminate nature in which the policy is being applied in the current conflict circumstance has led to unnecessary deaths, destruction of livelihoods and properties of civilians.

¹ [Top UN official urges Myanmar action ‘before it’s too late’ | Conflict News | Al Jazeera](#)



Pastor Cung Bawi Hum (31) from Centenary Baptist Church in Thantlang was shot and killed by soldiers while riding his motorbike on his way to help extinguish house-fires started by artillery shell of junta soldiers from Light Infantry Division 66



METHODOLOGY

This briefing is based on documentation compiled by Chin Human Rights Organization during the months of August and September 2021 regarding the situation of human rights as part of the CHRO's ongoing and longstanding work to document incidents of human rights abuses perpetrated by State actors in northwestern Burma/Myanmar. As with past practices, CHRO documents incidents of human rights violations primarily by gathering firsthand information via interviews, monitoring of news reports and online sources. In documenting incidents of abuses, CHRO follows a thorough verification process to corroborate information from other independent sources.

Since the February 1 military coup, there has been a rise in incidents of human rights abuses perpetrated by State agents acting under the military junta known as the State Administration Council (SAC). Gross and systematic violations of human rights are being committed in the context of new armed conflicts and general crackdowns on fundamental human rights by the SAC junta.

SUMMARY OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

For more information
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ARBITRARY ARRESTS & DETENTION

In August and September, a total of 101 people, 85 male and 16 female, were arrested in Chin State and Sagaing Region. Since the February 1 coup through the end of September, CHRO documented the arrests and detention of 612 Chin people across Myanmar.

INDISCRIMINATE TARGETING OF CIVILIAN & RELIGIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE

During August and September, a total of 192 houses or other civilian infrastructure were destroyed as a result of shelling by junta forces in Chin State, Sagaing and Magwe Regions. Chin State saw the highest number of buildings damaged or destroyed at 98, followed by 56 in Magwe and 38 in Sagaing Regions.

UNLAWFUL KILLINGS & DEATHS

During the months of August and September, a total of 45 people were killed in Chin State, Sagaing and Magwe Regions. In Magwe Region, 22 deaths associated with the conflicts were documented. Chin State saw the second highest deaths at 17 followed by Sagaing Region at 6.

INJURY TO CIVILIAN POPULATION

A total of 32 people were injured by bullets and shell explosions initiated by junta soldiers in Chin State. With the exception of one injury in Kalay, Sagaing, CHRO doesn't have documentation of injuries from Magwe for August and September.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

At least seven churches were damaged or destroyed due to deliberate shelling and small arms fire by SAC soldiers. One pastor was shot and killed and his wedding was stolen by soldiers. Two other pastors are arrested and detained and are feared tortured under army custody in Mandalay and Matupi, Chin State.

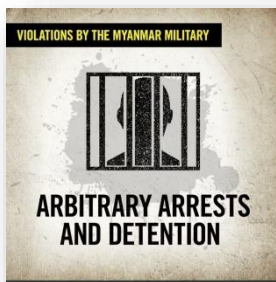
FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Gross violations of human rights in Chin State have led to approximately 30,000-35,000 people crossing into Mizoram State, India, as refugees since the coup. Approximately 20,000 people remain internally displaced in Mindat Township, and up to 10,000 people are newly displaced in Thantlang Township since 6 Sept.

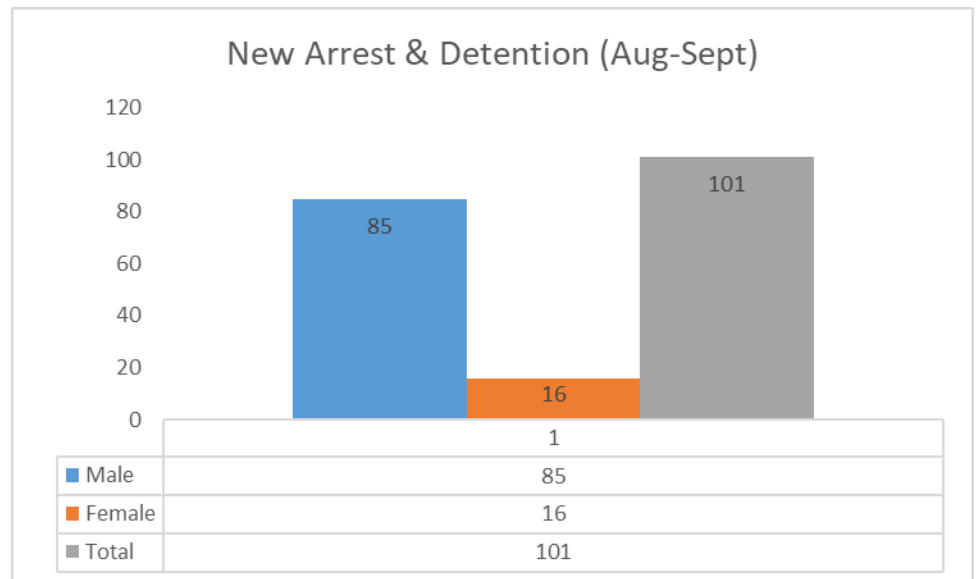
ARBITRARY ARRESTS & DETENTION

During August and September, the junta continued to arbitrarily arrest and detain civilians as part of the larger crackdown on all modes of opposition movements, peaceful and lawful protest movements, including the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), and the armed resistance movements by civil self-defense militia groups such as the Chinland Defense Force (CDF) operating in Chin State and the Peoples Defense Forces (PDFs) operating in Sagaing and Magwe Regions.

A total of 102 people, 85 male and 16 female, were arrested in August and September in Chin State and Sagaing Region. There was no recorded data for arrests and detention taking place in Magwe for the same period.



A total of 101 people were arrested of which 32 people were released and 10 are unaccounted for

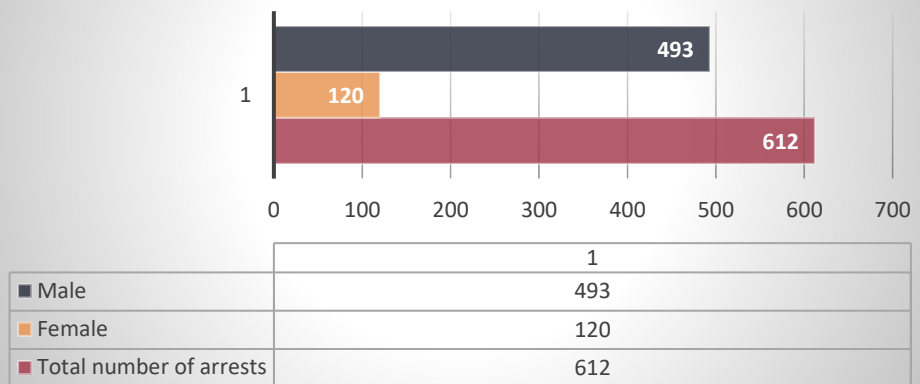




Pastor Ngai Cung of The Church remains under incommunicado detention without charge at Light Infantry Battalion 140 base near Matupi where he is feared tortured under army custody

Since the February 1 coup through the end of September, CHRO documented the arrests and detention of 612 Chins across Myanmar. However, CHRO has been unable to keep track of the status of all the individuals who have been arrested during this entire period. There remains difficulty in getting an up-to-date list on the number of people who have been released or who remain in detention across the country.

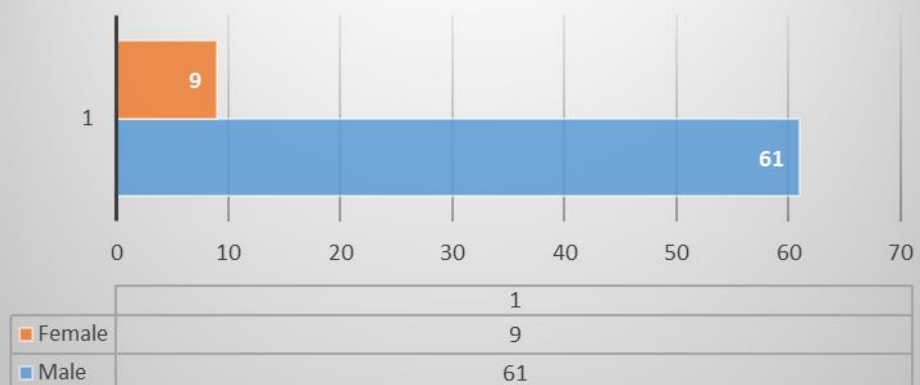
Arrests & Detention of Chin nationwide (Feb.-Sept. 2021)



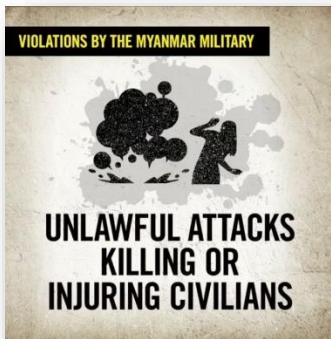
612 Chins have been arrested since the coup to date, of which 70 arrests took place in August & September

In August and September, a total of 70 arrests took place in Chin State alone of which 61 were male and 9 were female. During this period, the junta arrested at least three Christian pastors, two in Matupi Township and one in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region. On September 23, Pastor Ngai Cung of the local independent denomination, The Church, was arrested and detained near Matupi. Four other people arrested with him were later released. Pastor Ngai Kung remains held, incommunicado without charge at Light Infantry Battalion (140) military base where he is feared tortured under army custody.

New Arrest & Detention Chin State only (Aug-Sept)

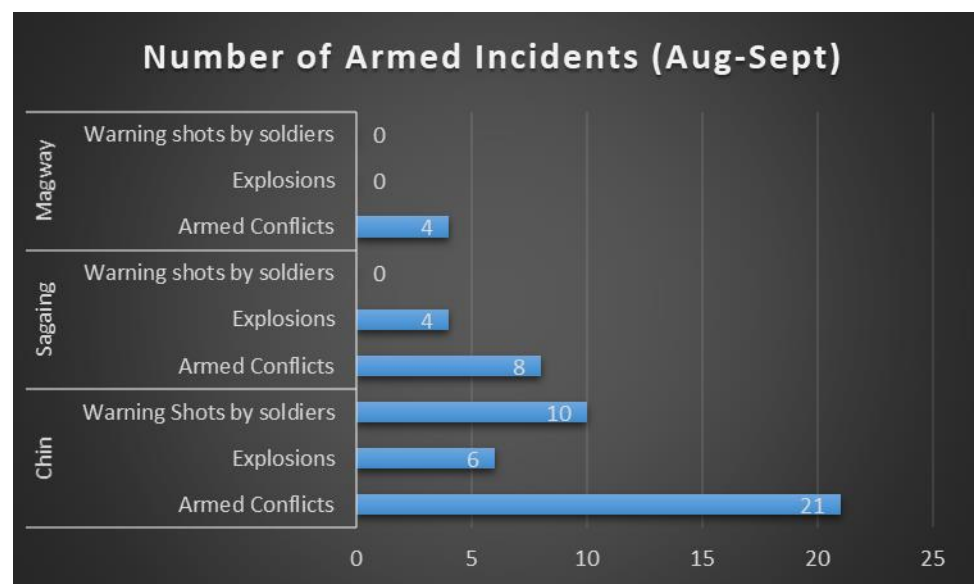


ATTACKS ON PROPERTIES & RELIGIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE



**19 houses were
burned to the
ground in a single
day in Thantlang
Town on September
18**

During the months of August and September across Chin State, Sagaing and Magwe Regions, there was an increase in the number of attacks by junta forces against civilian areas and neighborhoods as part of the junta's scorched earth policy. The indiscriminate and deliberate attacks on civilian targets have resulted in the destruction of homes, property and religious infrastructure. During the months of August and September, CHRO has documented at least 49 separate armed incidents in the three geographic regions. In at least 20 of the incidents, junta forces were responsible for firing small arms or heavy weapons without engaging an enemy. Junta soldiers often fired shots or mortar rounds indiscriminately into civilian neighborhoods as a means to scare or punish residents for sympathizing with self-defense local militia groups such as CDF or PDFs. The following figure shows the number of armed incidents in each of the three geographic regions.



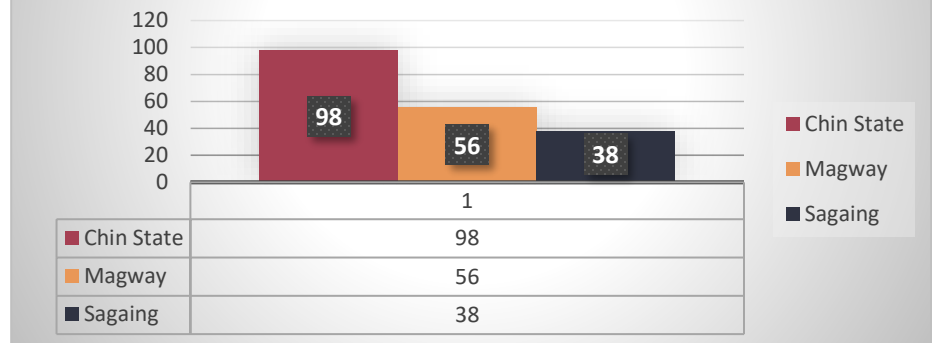
In August and September alone, a total of 192 houses or buildings were destroyed as a result of shelling by junta soldiers in Chin State, Sagaing and

Magwe Regions. Chin State saw the highest number of buildings damaged or destroyed at 98, followed by 56 in Magwe and 38 in Sagaing Regions.

In Chin State, destructions or damage to residential houses and religious buildings took place in five townships, including in Thantlang, where 19 houses were burned to the ground in a single day on September 18. Other townships included Hakha, Mindat, Kanpetlet and Falam.



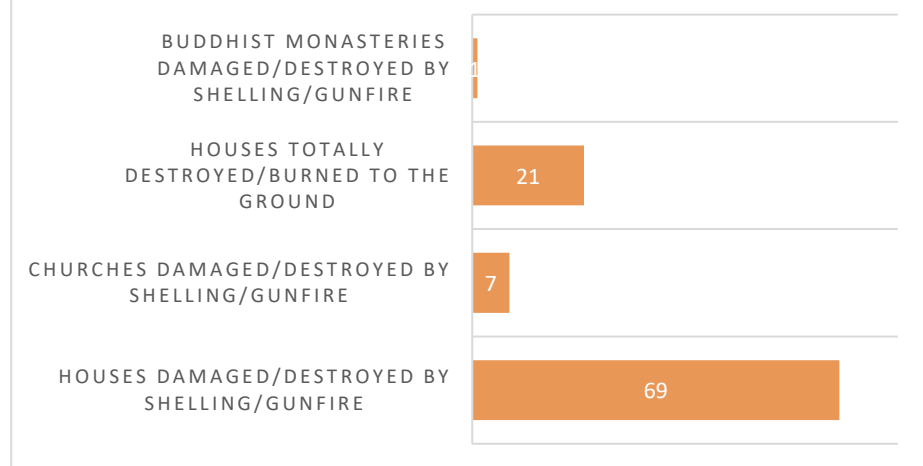
Number of civilian & religious infrastructure damaged or destroyed (Aug-Sept)



Seven church buildings were damaged or destroyed across five of the nine townships in Chin State. A Buddhist monastery was also damaged by artillery fire

A total of 98 structures were damaged or destroyed in these townships of which seven were church buildings. A Buddhist monastery was also damaged during the airstrikes on Lungler Village on September 10 where the junta military outpost was being overrun by fighters from the Chinland Defense Force and Chin National Army.

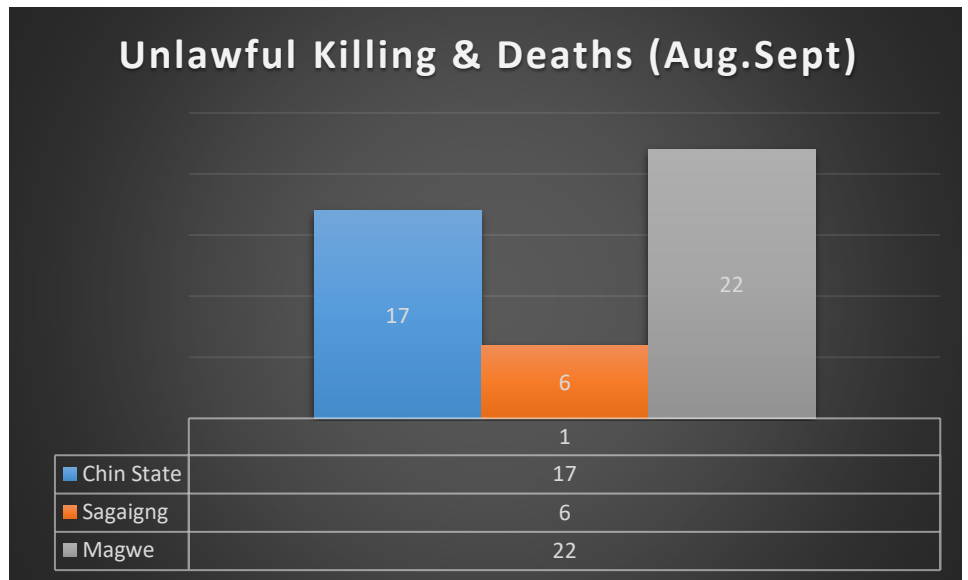
NUMBER OF HOUSES/RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS DAMAGED OR DESTROYED



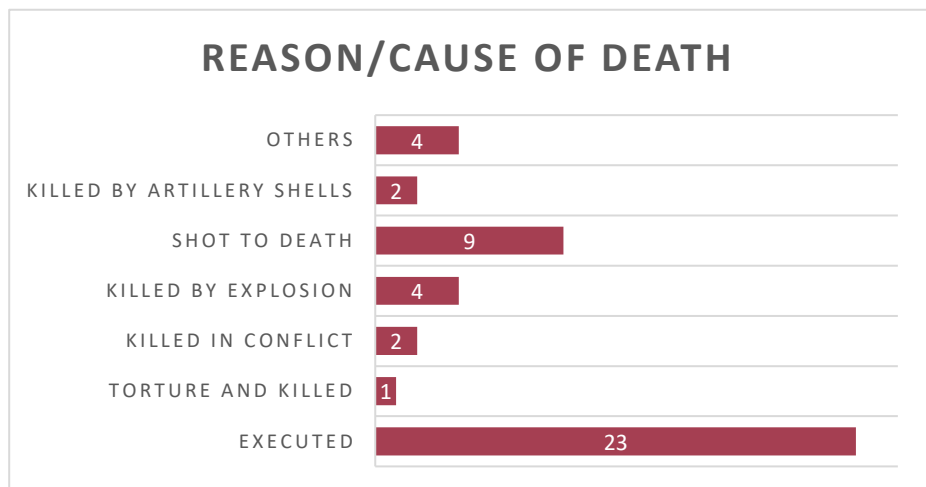
UNLAWFUL KILLINGS & DEATHS

During the months of August and September, a total of 45 people were killed in Chin State, Sagaing and Magwe Regions. In Magwe Region, 22 deaths associated with the conflicts were documented. Chin State saw the second highest deaths at 17 followed by Sagaing Region at 6.

19 people were arrested and summarily killed by junta soldiers in cold blood in Gangaw Township, Magwe Region on September 9, 2021



The majority of deaths were a result of execution style killings that took place on September 9, which took place in Tharlin and Mintha Villages of Gangaw Townships in Magwe Region. Junta soldiers stormed the two villages, arrested 23 local community members and executed them on the accusation that they sympathized and harbored PDF fighters in their villages. A further nine people were shot and killed as part of a shoot-on-sight policy in which civilians going about their daily business were shot and killed by soldiers





Ral Tu (78)

Three civilians, including Pastor Cung Biak Hum (31) of Centenary Baptist Church in Thantlang were shot and killed by junta soldiers on September 19 and 29 respectively



Hram Cung (59)

On September 18, Pastor Cung Biak Hum (31) of Centenary Baptist Church in Thantlang was shot and killed while riding his motorbike as he approached buildings which had been set ablaze as a result of shelling by Junta forces from Light Infantry Battalion 222 and Light Infantry Division (LID 66). His intention was to help put out the burning buildings. After he was killed, soldiers cut off his finger to steal his wedding ring



On September 29, two elders of Thantlang Town, Ral Tu (78) and Hram Cung (59) were shot and killed by soldiers from the same army units on the edge of town opened fire on their care as they attempted to retrieve their belongings. A third person received an injury to the head while the driver and another passenger survived the incident unharmed. The soldiers stole one million Kyats and a mobile phone from one of the victims, Ral Tu.

The commanding officers in charge at the time of both incidents in Thantlang, including the shelling of artillery that caused 19 homes to burn are reported to be Column Commander Major Nay Myo Oo and Col. Thaung Hlaing of LIB 222 and LID 66.

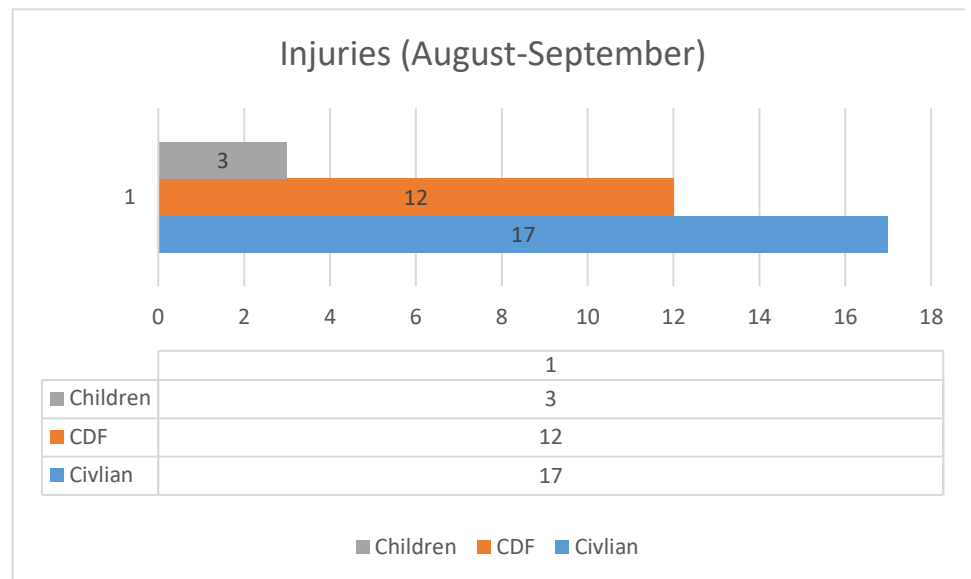


Soldiers cut off Pastor Cung Biak Hum's finger and stole his wedding ring

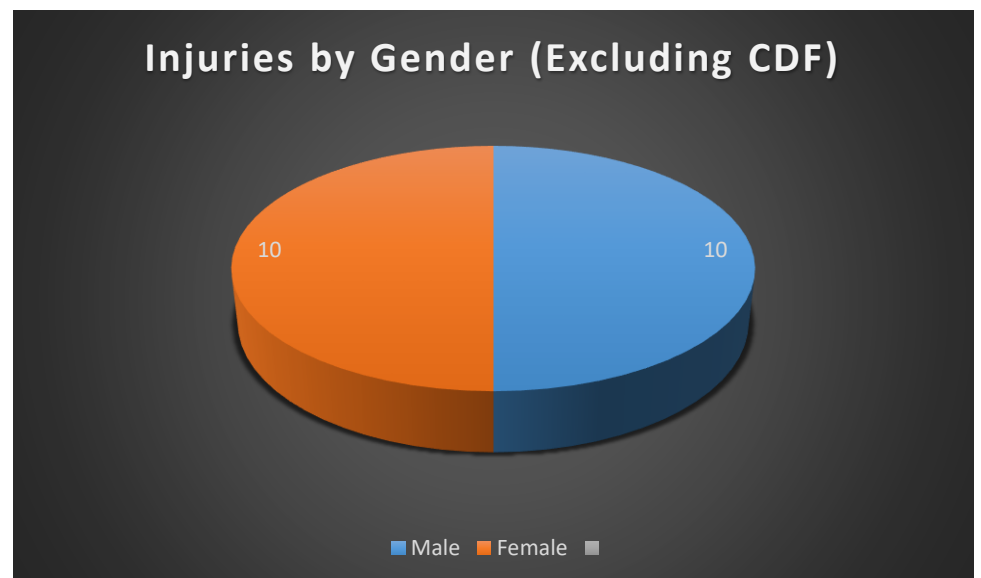


INJURY TO CIVILIAN POPULATION

A total of 32 people were injured by bullets and shell explosions initiated by junta soldiers in Chin State. With the exception of one injury in Kalay, Sagaing, CHRO doesn't have documentation of injuries from Magwe for August and September. At least 20 civilians, including 3 children and 10 female were injured during the period.



At least one person died of injuries he sustained from an explosion of unexploded ordnance from a mortar round, which landed inside a home on August 27. Civilian injuries were documented seven of the nine townships in Chin state during the period.





FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

In Chin State, more than 90 percent of the population is Christians. While the population at whole remains at risk of severe human rights violations, there are specific cases of violations that have direct link to religious affiliation and contraventions of Article 18 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Geneva Convention Articles 27, 38 and 58. They are as follows:

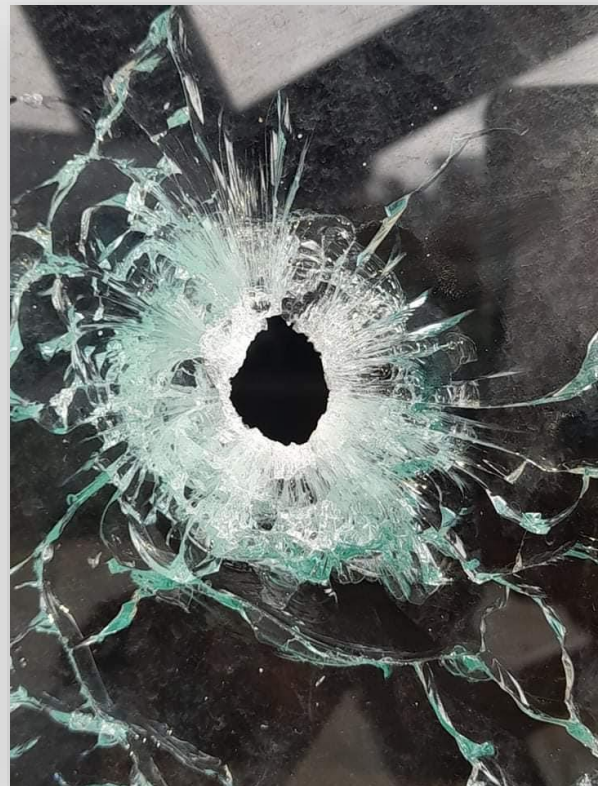
Killings

On 18 September, Pastor Cung Biak Hum was shot and killed as Burmese troops opened fire indiscriminately as he rode his motorbike in Thantlang Town, Chin State. Pastor Cung Biak Hum was on his way to help to extinguish fires that were set ablaze as a result of SAC forces bombing civilian homes. After he was killed, soldiers cut his finger off to steal his wedding ring.

Arbitrary Detention/Torture

On 16 September, Rev. Thian Lian Sang was arrested in Mandalay and remains detained. CHRO is still trying to ascertain the details of his arrest.

On 23 September, Pastor Ngai Kung was arrested at Ngaleng Village, Matupi Township along with four others. The four other civilians arrested have since been released while Pastor Ngai Kung remains detained incommunicado at Light Infantry Battalion 140, located close to Matupi Town. CHRO is concerned for the physical well-being of both these individuals as torture is commonly used in situations of arbitrary detention, particularly since the military coup took place.

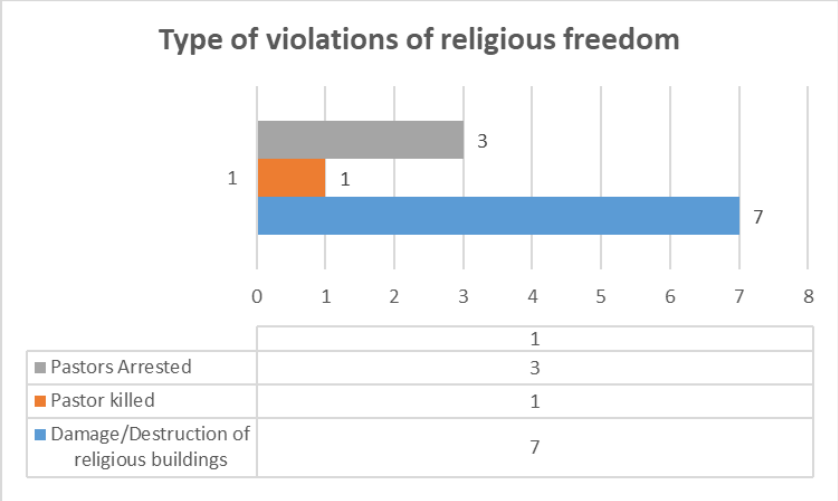


Nazereth Baptist Church in Hakha shot at by junta soldiers on September 16

Indiscriminate Targeting, looting and occupation of Religious Infrastructure.

Between 30 August and 1 September, Burmese soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion 274 camped in a Church compound for two days and desecrated Church materials in Chat village, Mindat Township. SAC soldiers forced the Catholic father, John Aung to leave the Church and while stationed there, destroyed religious property and drank alcohol in the compound. According to Father John Aung, the military opened the tabernacle and threw consecrated hosts on the floor. Other locked cabinets were broken into and searched.

Also between 1 August and 1 September, soldiers from the same battalion occupied the Baptist Church in Chat, Mindat. According to Shane Aung Maung, a local Christian, the soldiers ripped bibles and threw them on the floor, destroyed the Church’s sound system and speakers, broke pews and the electric generator used to power the Church. Mr. Maung also said that cattle kept within the church compound were slaughtered and cooked inside the Church.



On 8 September Calvary Baptist Church in Hakha was damaged due to heavy weaponry landing in the compound. Church windows were smashed and the Church itself was hit.

On 9 September, the Thantlang Baptist Church was bombed in Thantlang Town, Chin State. This followed the bombing of the Johnson Memorial Baptist Church (JMBC) Church once on 25 August and once on 14 September. Heavy weaponry landed on the roof causing damage, and bullets from single shots broke multiple windows.

On 7 August Kanpetlet Baptist Church, Kanpetlet town was bombed. The military shot heavy weaponry indiscriminately into the town, hitting Kanpetlet Baptist Church. According to residents, there had been no fighting in the town around the date of the bombing and they, therefore, had no idea why the town was bombed.



Soldiers used Taal Baptist Church in Falam Township as temporary camp and destroyed church properties, including Bibles



A picture taken from inside Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Mindat, which was shot at and shelled on by SAC soldiers on September 22

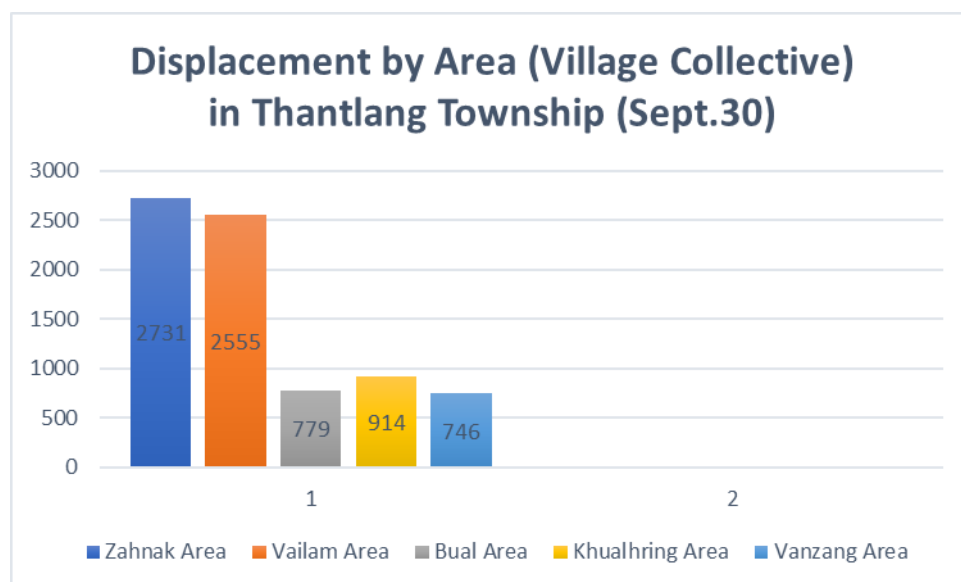
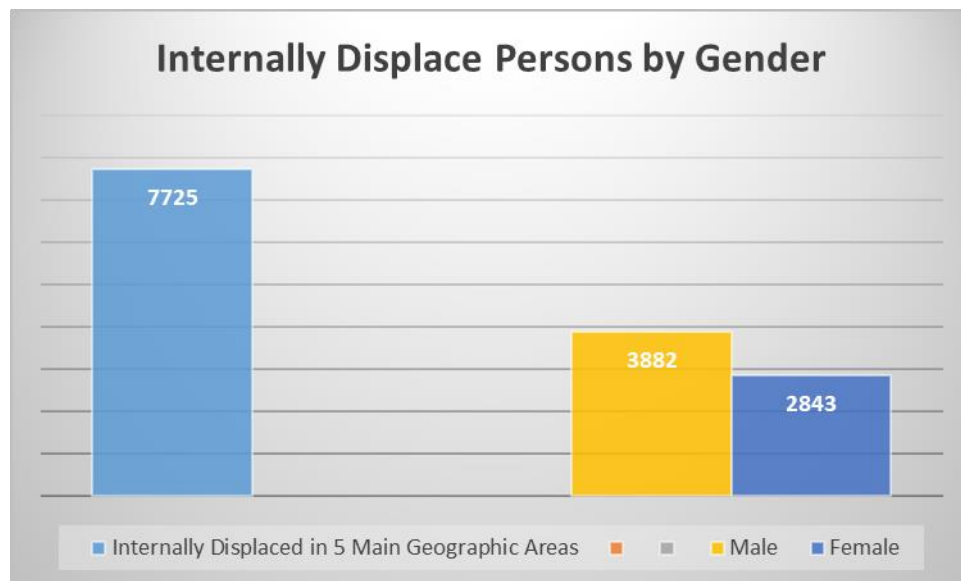
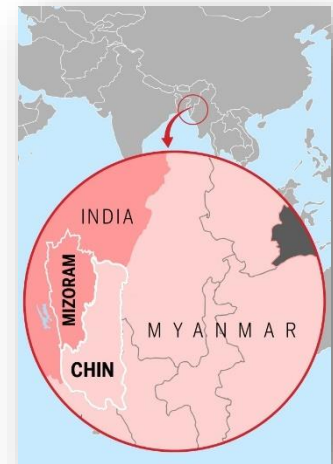


Artillery shells fired by SAC troops landed on Kanpetlet Baptist Church on August 7. Residents reported there was no CDF members present in town at the time of the incident and accused the soldiers of targeting the church for destruction

FORCED DISPLACEMENT: SITUATION OF IPDS & REFUGEES

The deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation has displaced thousands of people since February. Gross violations of human rights in Chin State have led to approximately 30,000-35,000 people crossing into Mizoram State, India, as refugees since the coup. Approximately 20,000 people remain internally displaced in Mindat Township, and up to 10,000 people are newly displaced in Thantlang Township since 6 Sept.

The latest mass displacement took place in Thantlang Township in the last two months following the escalation of fighting between the CDF and junta forces. By the end of September, more than 10,000 people in the township has been displaced of which approximately 8,000 people scattered in 43 villages across the Township while a few thousands have crossed into Mizoram State.



Approximately 8000 people are now internally displaced, scattered in at least 43 villages across the five main geographic areas along the border, including Vanzang, Zahnak, Khualhring, Bual in Thantlang Township

The situation of internally displaced persons in Thantlang Township is alarming. With the Township being cut off from the rest of other townships, especially from Hakha, and the town itself having been almost completely deserted since its destruction on September 18, the IPDs are quickly running out of food supplies. Host villages are being outnumbered by new arrivals by the hundreds and what little left of villagers' food stock are quickly being depleted. Concerns are also being raised for high number of COVID-19 infections in some villages as large number of people are cramped in school buildings. One village reports as many as 60 cases of infections mostly among residents who fled from Thantlang where infection rate was already high prior to its evacuation.

On the other side of the border, in Mizoram, where there are now an estimated 30,000 to 35,000 refugees, sympathetic local communities are struggling to accommodate new refugee arrivals as they face overcapacity in housing and shelter. Many communities along the border are building makeshift huts and shelters as new arrivals need to be quarantined for a period of time before they can be relocated to other surrounding villages. Nevertheless, both the public and Mizoram State government has been more than sympathetic to refugees and have been providing assistance to refugees with basic needs upon arrival. For example, Dr. R Lalthangliana, Mizoram State Health Minister has publicly declared, "The refugees coming into our State from Burma have our full sympathy. We will do everything in our power to make sure that they are well provided for with food without need." The Mizoram government has also officially allowed refugee children access to basic education and has enrolled them into public school system. However, the Indian central Home Ministry has not officially withdrawn its orders instructing state governments with internal borders with Burma/Myanmar not to accept refugees into their States.



Chin refugees in makeshift tents in Vombuk Village, Lawntlai District, Mizoram State



CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Gross and systematic violations of fundamental human rights documented by CHRO and other groups have clear patterns in which perpetrators' actions are demonstratively deliberate and intended to cause harm to civilians. The destruction of lives, livelihoods, and property is directly linked to the military scorched earth counter-insurgency policy. The notorious four-cuts doctrine, which has been employed in active war zones in ethnic areas for decades, is now being applied in the junta's military campaigns in urban areas in the fight against local militia groups such as CDF and PDFs in western Myanmar/Burma. Furthermore, based on the trends and developments of the situation in the region over the past two months, there is a high likelihood of an escalation of armed conflicts and increased militarization of the area, which will have disastrous human rights and humanitarian situation across northwestern Burma/Myanmar over the coming months. The reign of terror which has been imposed by the SAC military junta has impacted the population in Chin State and northwest Myanmar in ways that they might never be able to recover from. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights testified before the Human Rights Council, the international community must act, and act fast to avert a 'catastrophe' before it is too late.

In light of the developments of the past two months, following the escalation of fighting in Chin State, CHRO recommends the following to the international community:

To UN agencies, Donors, and International Humanitarian Organizations:

- Disengage from working with the junta in the provision of humanitarian assistance, preventing them from weaponizing humanitarian aid in their campaign of terror against the civilian population;
- Provide monetary assistance to trusted local church groups and committees, which have been set up to respond to the displacement situation. Making cash readily available for these groups is important given the logistical difficulties in sending aid to Chin State at this time. Local groups can purchase food items, medicines, and other materials locally and distribute them to places that need them most. CHRO is ready to assist in identifying and recommending groups operating on the ground;
- Consider cross-border modalities of aid distribution, as well as making funds available to Chin and Mizo civil society groups operating from the Mizoram side of the border, to reach people stranded in villages along the border;
- Consider providing relief and basic assistance to refugees inside Mizoram State to ease the burden of local communities in Mizoram who are overwhelmed by the current influx of refugees.

To the International community:

- Urge the Indian Government to allow UNHCR access to Mizoram State, as well as to allow international aid organizations to channel assistance to refugees in Mizoram State and allow cross-border modalities of aid distribution;
- Urge the Indian Government to ease pressure on state government to re-foul Chin refugees given current circumstances and allow unrestricted access to border crossing areas;
- Deny any SAC representation at the upcoming ASEAN Summit due to the overwhelming rejection by the SAC to implement the ASEAN-designed 5-point plan;

- Support a UN Security Council resolution on a global arms embargo, to refer the situation of Myanmar to the International Criminal Court and for an urgent Un-led humanitarian intervention to address the COVID-19 pandemic;
- To apply all diplomatic, political and economic pressure on the SAC military junta to immediately cease the targeting of the civilian population in Chin State and northwestern Burma/Myanmar;
- To hold all military commanders of SAC individually accountable for violations being committed by troops engaged in the scorched earth military campaign in Chin State and northwestern Burma/Myanmar.





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