

Burma Democratic Futures Working Group - BDFWG

University of Virginia

A Brief Summary of Events in November 2023

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Introduction

The events and news that happened in November can be considered to be fast-paced. The 1027 war, which started on October 27 with the Northern Brotherhood Alliance, spread rapidly over the course of November. The conflicts started from Northern Shan State near the Chinese border to Mandalay, Sagaing, Karenni (Kayah), Chin State and the Rakhine State. The Military Council has been spreading its forces thin along all these different military fronts, facing defeat from all sides. As a consequence of the 1027 campaign, the decline of the Military Council throughout the country strengthened hopes within the revolutionary forces. The public's hope for a revolution has been rekindled.

Within the Military Council, the defense and security council convened over the situation related to the 1027 operation. Since the beginning of the coup, the Military Council has only held defense and security council meetings to renew its state of emergency. Outside of these bi-annual meetings to renew its state of emergency, the Military Council has never historically held a meeting in response to threats from revolutionary forces. The fact that the military convened in response to the 1027 operation clearly shows that the Military government is feeling threatened.

While the Military Council was facing military defeats at home and on the wider front, joint military exercises were still being conducted between the Russian Navy and the Military Council Navy. In addition, the Military Council also invited the Chinese Navy to join in the joint exercises around 20 days later.

Military Council is Experiencing More Pressure as Revolutionary Forces Expand Operations

The 1027th military operation held by the Three Brotherhood Alliance (Myanmar Democratic Alliance Army, the Arakan Army, and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army) which started on October 27th, grew its center of operations over the period of a month. The center of operation spread to the cities along the border of China in the Northern Shan State such as to Pang Hseng(Kru Kok), Mankan, Konkyan, Chinshwehaw, Kunlong, Namhkam cities and were subsequently surrendered by the Military Council to revolutionary forces. The only two cities left along the Chinese border still under the control of the Military Council are Muse and Laukkai cities. Laukkai is currently under threat of being occupied by forces of the Northern Brotherhood Alliance. Fighting is still taking place in the townships along the Union Road in the Northern Shan State. Many parts of the Mandalay-Lashio-Muse Road, the trade route between China and Myanmar, have been controlled by the Northern Brotherhood Alliance. In Mogok Township of the Mandalay region and other townships bordering the Northern Shan State, the TNLA and PDFs are also attacking the Military Council army.

Other revolutionary forces have also recognized the importance of the 1027 operation and have been supporting the operation by putting more military pressure on the Military Council. In the Sagaing region, the People's Defense Forces (PDF) and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) captured the district town of Kawlin. There are plans to capture the town of Tigyaing. Revolutionary forces and PDFs in the area have also been planning to capture the town of Khampat near the Indian border in the Sagaing region. In addition, the military activities of the revolutionary forces intensified in various parts of Sagaing.

The revolutionary forces in Karenni (Kayah) state have also launched the 1107 operation, an operation started tangential to the 1027 operation. Fighting is persisting in Loikko town, as Karenni resistance forces continue to try to take control over the provincial capital. Additionally, revolutionary forces have taken full control of the Messe township of the Karenni State, which borders Thailand.

In Chin State, there are continuous battles. Over the Indian border, the Chin revolutionary forces have also taken control of the town of Rikhawdar, the city of Rezua and Lai Len Pi town in Chin State. Revolutionary forces have also started working towards taking Palatwa township from Military Council control. In particular, the Arakan Army (AA) has started operations in the Rakhine State and has already begun fighting in Paletwa township.

Fighting between the Arakan Army (AA) and the Military Council's army in the Rakhine State, where the order for humanitarian ceasefire was originally placed, continues. The cease-fire was broken with the 1027 operation, to the knowledge of both groups. Clashes have broken out in some places in the northern Rakhine State in Buthidaung and Pauktaw township.

After the start of the 1027 campaign, military activities have been spread more thinly. During the operation, the 2nd Battalion of the Military Council surrendered to the Three Brotherhood Alliance. Military Council troops in Karenni also surrendered to revolutionary forces. The soldiers of the Military Council have been less willing to attack, less capable of enduring fighting, and have been surrendering easily. It has been observed that soldiers of the Military Council have been losing their morale.

Military Council Calls for a Defense and Security Meeting in Response to Operation 1027

From February 1, 2021 the day of the military coup until today, the National Defense and Security Council meeting regularly convened once every six months to extend the state of emergency. This pattern continued until the 1027 operation, where an emergency meeting was held on November 8th. It can be observed that the Military Council felt so threatened by the operation that they were pushed to convene in an emergency meeting.

In that meeting, Myint Swe, the Vice President of the Military Council, said that the country can be disintegrated into many pieces. He also said that the people need to support the military to

keep the country from fragmenting. General Min Aung Hlaing of the Military Council said that in the 1027 operation, the Three Northern Brotherhood, the Kachin Independence Army, People's Defense Forces and other groups participated. The UWSA also revealed that it had allowed its territory, Namtit, to be used for the 1027 operation. In the meeting, the Military Council discussed what necessary measures should be taken to respond to the operation.

He also said at the meeting that due to the fighting along the border with China, special restrictions have been put in place that might affect China-Myanmar relations. It was revealed that officials of both China and Myanmar are working to resolve the issue of heavy artillery falling and exploding in Chinese territory along the border.

Arrest Warrant Issued for Ex-Kokang Leader and His Family Members

On November 15th, the Military Council issued arrest warrants for the Union Strength and Development Party (USDP) Member Parliamentarians and their family members from Laukkai township, Kokang region. They are wanted by the Chinese government for committing online scams called "Zha Pian".

The individuals wanted by the Chinese government and Military Council are: former parliamentarian for State parliament 2010-2015, Ming Xue Chang age sixty-nine; his son Kokang militia leader U Ming Guoping age forty-two; his daughter Ming Julan age forty-two years old; and his grandchild Ming Zhenzhen age twenty-seven. The four of them were involved in online scams occurring in the Kokang region. The Military Council accused them of committing and encouraging online scam, coercion, illegal detention, kidnapping, black mail, gang violence.

The Military Council arrested Ming Guoping and Ming Zhenzhen in Laukkai city on November 16th. The Military Council also announced that Ming Xue Chang had shot himself during his arrest. According to a military announcement, Ming Guoping and Ming Zhenzhen were handed over to the police of the Yunnan Province in China through the Yanglong Kai border gate along the Myanmar-China border.

The Chinese government has implicated local authorities in online scams based in the Kokang region. China has lost nearly 40 billion yuan due to online fraud. Since 2022, there has been pressure on the Military Council to fight these illegal activities. However, the Military Council has been unable to handle the situation effectively, allowing for the illegal activity to worsen. One of the objectives of the 1027 operation was to combat online fraud. There are also unproven speculations that China might have been involved in Operation 1027.

Russian and Chinese Navy Arrived in Myanmar to Hold Joint Military Exercises

The first Myanmar-Russia joint military exercise involving the Pacific Fleet and the Myanmar Navy was held in the Andaman Sea from November 7 to 9. The two countries' ships and aircrafts participated in the military exercises that modeled air and water threat prevention and maritime security measures.

Less than a month after the maritime security drills with the Russian Navy, the Chinese Navy also arrived at Yangon's Thilawa Port on November 27th to conduct military exercises with the Myanmar and Russian Navy forces.

Regarding the arrival of Chinese troops, Major General Zaw Min Tun, spokesman for the Military Council, stated: "As I said yesterday, Myanmar and China are strategic partners, or Pauk-Phaw countries (relative relationship). The two countries respect the five principles of peaceful coexistence, and both governments and armies have solid and strong engagement".

The visit of Chinese warships to Myanmar came as a surprise, as relationships between the Military Council and the Chinese government had become strained due to the fighting on the Sino-Myanmar border in the Northern Shan State.

Military Conflicts

During November, more military conflicts broke out in various parts of Myanmar. Especially in the Northern Shan State after Operation 1027 began and other revolutionary operations. In the Karenni (Kayah) State, Operation 1107 emerged following Operation 1027 and now is being conducted simultaneously. Fighting in Sagaing, Chin, Rakhine, Mandalay, Kachin, and Karenni (Kayah) State has intensified. During this month, many cities and towns (Kawlin District and Khampat Town in Sagaing; Rekhawdar, Rezoa, and Lailinpi towns in Chin State; Nankham, Pansai or Kyukot, Mongkoe, Chinshwehaw, and Konlon towns) fell under control of the revolutionary forces.

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Map of Myanmar Conflict (Nov 2023 Total)

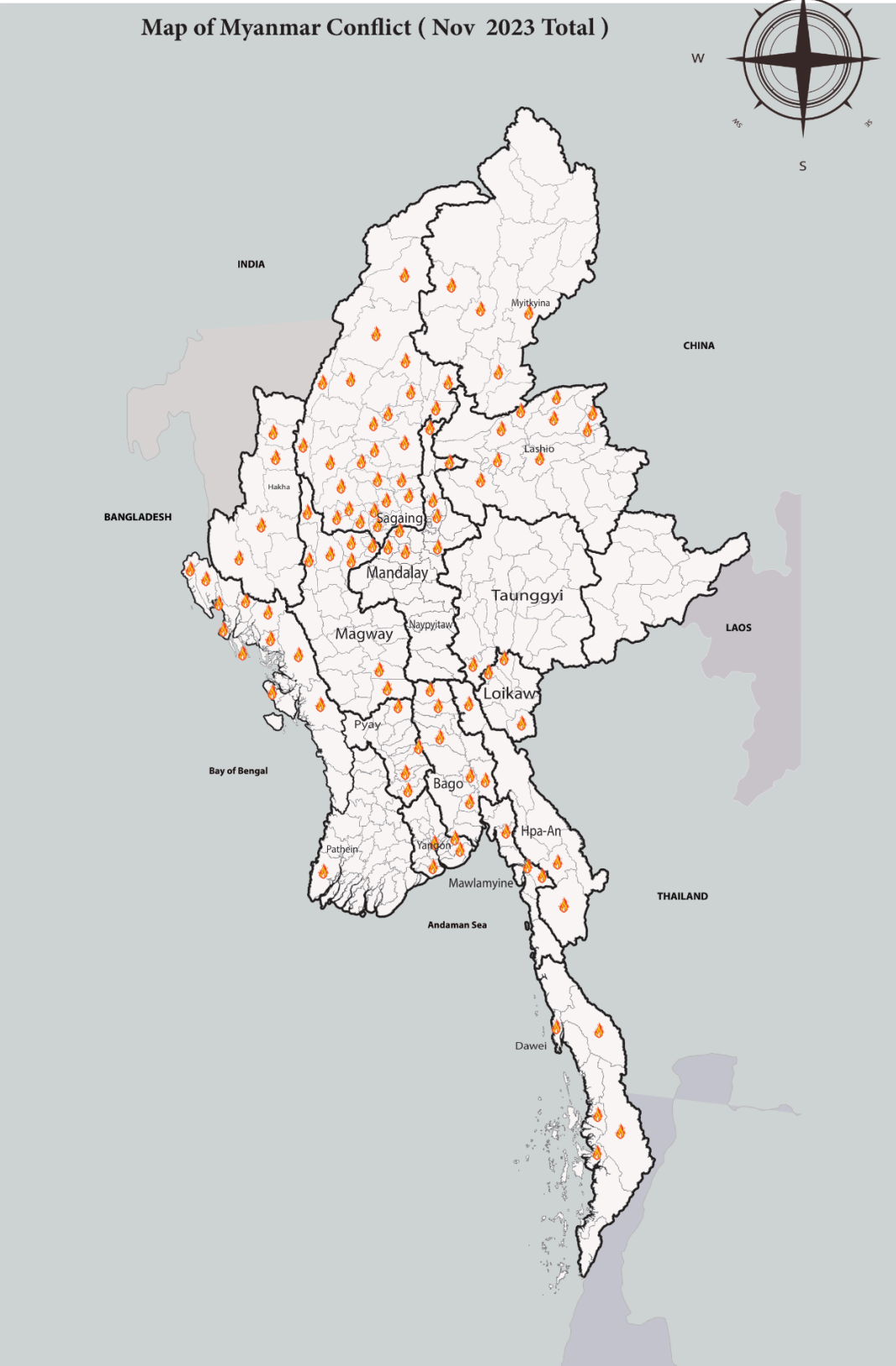


Table 1: Data of Myanmar Conflicts in November 2023			
States	Clashes between SAC and PDF/EAOs	SAC's soldiers killed	PDF killed
BAGO	18	91	4
CHIN	9	13	
KACHIN	8	1	
KAYAH (Karenni)	7	20	
KAYIN	6	18	2
MAGWAY	10	63	29
MANDALAY	16	113	
MON	5	27	
RAKHINE	13	43	6
SAGAING	80	372	28
SHAN (North)	35	8	
SHAN (South)	3		
TANINTHARYI	11	48	3
YANGON	4	2	
TOTAL	225	819	72

Human Rights Violations

When the Military Council was fighting all over the country, faced with the pressure to surrender arms, they would respond by oppressing and persecuting civilians. Arrests, killings, and human rights violations have been on the rise. There have been increased aerial bombing attacks on civilian villages. On November 21, over the course of a day, 25 civilians, including a monk, were killed in Sittwe. Sixty civilians in Yesagyo township, Magway region were arrested by military troops. Four civilians were killed by a military air attack on Lialaipi town, Chin State. The Military Council arrested and killed four civilians in Salingyi township, Sagaing region.

States	Children Killed	Civilians Killed	Civilians Arrested	Villages Set on Fire	Houses Burned Down
AYEYARWADDY			20		
BAGO	1	13	12		42
CHIN		17			
KACHIN		3			
KAYAH (Karenni)		23			
KAYIN	1	1			
MAGWAY		17	90		40
MANDALAY	2	43	35	2	30
MON	2	43	35	2	30
SAGAING	3	40	84	2	183
SHAN (North)	6	33	18		2
SHAN (South)		7			
TANINTHARYI	1	5	1		
TOTAL	19	222	342	4	340

Acronyms

AA - Arakan Army

KIA - Kachin Independence Army

PDF - People's Defense Force

TNLA - Ta'ang National Liberation Army

USDP - Union Strength and Development Party

UWSA - United Wa State Army

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