

**Burma Democratic Futures Working Group (BDFWG)  
University of Virginia**

**June 2023 Report: Myanmar**

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## **Overview**

This June, many conflicts, developments, and political events occurred in Myanmar. A high-ranking Chinese military official visited Myanmar and met with the second-in-command, Vice-Senior General Soe Win. The Three Northern Alliances (Arakan Army, Ta'ang National Liberation Army, and Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army) and the Peace Group of the Military Council held a meeting in Mongla City. Some of the revolutionary forces active in the Sagaing Region formed the Sagaing Forum to talk about current issues. The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Myanmar Mrs. Nawlin Heza was terminated from her duties without further extension of her term in office. The American government placed sanctions on two Burmese banks affiliated with the Military Council, causing the Burmese kyat to inflate. The five ethnic revolutionary groups that signed the ceasefire agreement met with the Military Council's Peace group and discussed different issues. Thailand sponsored a discussion on Myanmar. The Karenni State Interim Administration Council was established for the reasons of forming state administration in the Karenni (Kayah) State. In the Karenni State, there have been military escalations, including reports of war, taking place in Mese Township. A broad range of conflicts and developments occurred during the month of June.

## **The Chief of Chinese Military Intelligence met with the Deputy Leader of the Military Council**

China's activities regarding Myanmar's affairs have become more frequent. In May, China's new foreign minister, Mr. Chinkan arrived in Nay Pyi Taw. This meeting was the first official visit that a Chinese state minister had with leaders of the Military Council since the military coup occurred. On the last day of May, the Acting Director General of the Intelligence Bureau of the Central Military Commission of China General Yang Yang and his team visited Nay Pyi Taw and met with the Deputy Leader of the Military Council. It was a public visit by a top Chinese military official since the military coup in 2021. The Military Council's Myanmar Television reported that the two armies had discussed the stability of the border region. According to the ISP Myanmar team, a group that studies China-Myanmar affairs, Chinese President Xi Jinping's Global Security Initiative (GSI) on the Chinese-Myanmar-Thai border region includes cooperation between the three countries to reduce cross-border crimes. After the coup, China was the second largest supplier of weapons to the Military Council behind Russia. The Military Council has received \$406 million from Russia over the past two years. According to a report written in Mid-June by Tom Andrews, the United Nations special representative for human rights in Myanmar, Myanmar imported \$267 million dollars worth of military equipment from China.

## **Peace Talks Facilitated by China Between the Military Council and the Northern Brotherhood Alliance Ended Without Success**

The Northern Brotherhood Alliance, Kokang Army (MNDAA), Rakhine Army (AA), and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), held the first post-coup peace talk with the Military Council. However, the talks ended half-way through without any results

The three northern alliances, Kokang (MNDAA), Rakhine Army (AA); The first post-coup peace talks between the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the military council ended half-way through without any results. Shan State It was planned to meet and discuss for three days from June 1st to 3rd in Myla city, but it ended on the second day because it was not possible to continue the discussion. Mr. Ko Pao, Special Envoy for Foreign Affairs of China's Yunnan Province, participated as China's representative during this meeting. Myanmar National Democratic Alliance (MNDAA) spokesperson U Yan Naing said that they had to participate in the talks due to China's push.

During the discussion, the representatives of the military council said, "The strengthening of the multi-party democratic political system, Building a union based on democracy and federalism. "Cooperation for peace and development" were discussed. The discussions of the military council representatives from the three northern groups There was no response and discussion. "Release those arrested after the coup; To cancel their groups, which have been declared illegal, and the storm-prone areas of Rakhine They discussed "allowing freedom of movement and assistance".

On June 2nd, after the conference, the three northern groups Some areas controlled by the Kokang group were attacked by the military council troops. In addition, aid to the storm-affected people in Rakhine State was blocked.

## **The NUG formed Battalion 5101 from the People's Defense Army**

The NUG Ministry of Defense said that the first battalion, named the 5101st Battalion, was formed from the People's Defense Army. The formation of the battalion was announced on June 1st. In the past, People's Defense Forces mostly attacked military forces through guerrilla activities, but now, through the establishment of a battalion, they can organize the formation and movement of troops. The ability of organizing battle formations could be a major improvement for revolutionary forces. The NUG and the revolutionary forces have announced that they will launch counter-offensives in the second half of 2023.

### **The UN Special Representative for Myanmar is Ending His Term in Office**

The United Nations has announced that the term of office of Noeleen Heyzer, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Myanmar, will end on June 12. Mrs. Nolin Heiser came to Myanmar in 2022 in the month of August. He met with military leaders, including General Min Aung Hlaing, leader of the military coup d'état. During the meeting, he called for an end to the military attacks and more dialogue across groups to find a solution to the conflict. Last May, he visited China to discuss Myanmar issues with Chinese government leaders, including the Chinese Foreign Minister. Nolin Heza served as the Myanmar Special Representative for 20 months.

### **The Sagaing Forum was Held for the First Time by Revolutionary Forces**

The Sagaing Forum was held for the first time under the leadership of revolutionary forces based in Sagaing. A Regional Consultative Council will be established with the objectives of self-determination and self-governance. During the Sagaing Forum, they discussed the politics of local military administration, the Civil Disobedience Movement, strikes, and war evacuation as well as relief. It was announced that a regional consultative council will be established to coordinate and make decisions across revolutionary organizations in Sagaing. Additionally, the group announced that they wanted to put an end to all tyranny that the military dictatorship subjected the people to. The Sagaing Forum also emphasized the need for a federal democracy, and transitional measures at the regional level. They plan to institute policies that develop self-governance from the ground up and strengthen regional defense groups that are working in accordance with the federal democratic agreement. The first Sagaing Forum was attended by 173 revolutionary organizations and 32 observers from 28 townships in the Sagaing Region.

### **The United States Places Embargoes on Two SAC Owned Banks and the Ministry of Defense**

The US Department of Treasury announced on June 21 that the Ministry of Defense has been sanctioned along with the Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank (MFDB) and the Myanmar Investment and Commercial Bank (MICB). The Military Council's Ministry of Planning and Finance issued a statement telling the public not to worry about the sanctions, saying that foreign bank services will still be able to operate without delay. However, within only days of the sanctions, the price of the US dollar had risen to more than 3,000 Myanmar kyats. The United States has additionally imposed sanctions on around 80 individuals and 30 businesses in Myanmar.

### **More than 130 People Were Arrested For Participating in the Flower Strike in Honor of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Birthday**

Military Council troops arrested more than 130 people on June 19th, they were laying flowers in honor of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday. The civilians were arrested in Yangon, Irrawaddy, the Sagaing Region, and the Mandalay Region. On the morning of the 19th in Irrawaddy, around 80 people were arrested from the town of Mawlamyine Gyun. Later that day, around 8 o'clock in the evening, people were forced to sign a bond and released. Some of the people were arrested just for posting and sharing flower-related content on social media. In Kamayut, Yangon, 28 women and one man were arrested for participating in the flower strike, wearing flowers in protest against the Military Council. In Mandalay, soldiers stopped a family riding a motorcycle, brutally beating up a woman who came to pay her respects. They beat her in front of her children and her husband. Additionally, two family members of political prisoners and a former political prisoner who had just returned from a prison in Mandalay were arrested again and accused of staging a flower strike. One was eventually released, but the other two were detained by the police on the basis of section 505-a of the Penal Code.

### **The Exchange Rate of the Central Bank Increased to 2,900 Kyats Per Dollar**

The central bank announced on June 22 that after the United States sanctioned two banks affiliated with the Military Council, the exchange rate of the kyat per US dollar increased to around 2,920-2,922. The central bank sold dollars to six AD licensed banks, at the rate mentioned above. They sold 6.86 million dollars in total to the six AD licensed banks. Before the military coup in Myanmar, at the end of January 2021, one US dollar was only around 1,300 Myanmar kyats compared to the current price. The military government initially dictated that citizens should maintain an exchange rate of 2,100 kyats per dollar, however due to economic pressures they changed the rate to 2,900 kyats per dollar.

### **All Military Camps in Mese Township were Seized by Karenni Revolutionary Forces**

During the month of June, revolutionary forces were able to seize all six military council bases in Mese township and other townships along the Myanmar-Thai border in the Karenni State. On June 13, the Karenni-allied revolutionary forces simultaneously attacked Burmese military outposts and the Mese police Station near the Thai border. During the takeover, some regiments of the military simply surrendered, allowing revolutionary forces to quickly take over.

The batallion commander and soldiers of the 430th army unit guarding the Burmese-Thai border in Mese Township in Karenni/Kayah State surrendered to revolutionary forces. Battalions

guarding the Nanma village outpost north of Mese township also similarly surrendered to revolutionary forces. This incident is the largest surrender of military council soldiers to revolutionary forces since the start of the military coup in 2021. The conflict lasted from June 13th to June 24th.

### **Kalalata Members Fight Back Against the Military Government**

In 2009, some ethnic armed groups called for a ceasefire within the framework of the 2008 Constitution. Back in 2008, the ethnic armed groups accepted the plan presented by the Military government to transform their groups into border guards. Among the groups that accepted the plan is the Karenni People's Liberation Front from the Kayah (Karenni) State, or known as Kalalata. Kalalata members formed Battalion Number 1004, based in Pantin City in Mese Township, and Battalion Number 1005, based in Ywadhit Village in Balachai Township. However, on June 13th, both of the border guard battalions rebelled against the military army, and joined forces with local resistance groups, participating in battles to capture the military camp in Mese Township.

Kalalata is an ethnic armed resistance group that broke away from the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) in 1978. In 1994, it ended a ceasefire agreement with the military. In 2002, some of its troops were transformed into a border guard unit under the military. Each battalion was composed of 326 members, and active in the Kayah (Karenni) State. The headquarters of the battalions is located in Hose Nyothit City, in Mese Township, on the east bank of the Salwin River.

### **The Military Council Took Action Against Workers who Advocated for a Wage Increase**

Ten garment workers were arrested for two weeks after requesting for a wage increase by the Military Council under Section 505-A of Inciting sedition. Seven labor leaders and three labor rights activists were arrested by the military from garment factories in Hlaing Thayar and Shwe Pyi Thar townships, Yangon region between June 14th and 17th. The seven labor leaders were fired from the factory after demanding an increase in daily wage from 4,800 to 5,6000 kyats (1.5 US dollars to 1.9 US dollars) as well as full labor rights.

According to a World Bank report released on June 27, between 2017 and 2022, there were 9 million adult workers who could enter the workforce, but only over two million new jobs. The number of uneducated youth, people who have not been able to attend trade school or have proper professional training, and other people with unemployment status has reached over six million.

## **The NUG Interior Minister Stated that Pre-counteroffensive Military Plans have been set into Motion**

The National Unity Government established a one year plan starting in September of 2022 that set 2023 as the decisive year for revolutionary measures. The plan was set in motion, and revolutionary forces are preparing to launch counter-offensives; as revealed by the Minister of Home Affairs U Lwin Kolat. During these past few months, there has been an increase in battles between revolutionary forces and the military council army. Specifically, there has been intense fighting in the Karenni State, and the revolutionary forces were able to take complete control over Mese Township. With the increase in conflict, more civilians will have been affected as well.

## **The Military Council Held Talks with the Five Ethnic Groups that Signed onto the NCA**

The Military Council's peace negotiation team and the five ethnic armed groups that have signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) met for three days between June 26 and June 29. The five ethnic armed groups that attended the meeting were the following groups: the Arakanese Liberation Party (ALP), the Democratic Karen Army (DKBA), the Karen Peace Council (KNU/KNLA-PC), the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU); and the PAO National Liberation League (PNLO). According to reports following the conclusion of the meeting, the wishes of the five ethnic armed groups were discussed and five points of agreement were reached. However, it was not disclosed what exactly the groups had agreed on.

On the second day, they discussed the common agreement reached by NCA signatories, the principle of federalism, humanitarian assistance, and discussions to be planned with the following groups: UWSA, NDAA, and SSPP. The Military Groups deliberately excluded revolutionary groups engaged with fighting, instead only talking with smaller groups that are not directly involved in fighting on the revolutionary front.

## **Pact Global Microfinance Fund was Forced to Close after Operating for 25 Years**

The Pact Global Microfinance Fund, which has been operating for around twenty-five years, is due to have its business license expire at the end of June. The Military Government is forcing PGMF to re-register as a business, forcing the company to comply with restrictions, share profits, and eventually hand over the entire business. Faced with these demands, the business will likely stop operations and be suspended.



Pact is the largest microfinance company in Myanmar, serving over 2.3 million people. The total amount of money that has been loaned to almost 900,000 people is over 156 million US dollars. All of that money will be lost if Pact loses its business license. The shutting down of PGMF's operations has resulted in even fewer job opportunities. It is a big loss for Burmese people who are already facing alarmingly high commodity prices and an economic recession. PGMF was an enterprise with approximately 4,000 employees. The future of these now unemployed workers is also uncertain. According to a World Bank report released on June 27, Myanmar has nine million adult workers who can enter the workforce between 2017 and 2022, but there are only around two million new jobs that are available for the workforce.

### **Military Conflicts**

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Since the coup occurred, revolutionary forces have grown stronger and more capable of occupying territory in the Karenni (Kayah State). Revolutionary forces attacked and captured all Military Council camps in Mese Township. Military troops surrendered, and revolutionary forces were easily able to take back the territory. The 430th Light Infantry Battalion of the Military Council Army, including the battalion commander, surrendered without counter attacking revolutionary forces. The battalion's loyalty to the Military Council is under question because they surrendered so easily.

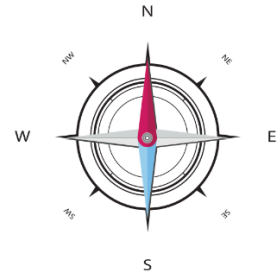
During the month of June, there were more than 200 military conflicts across the country. In all of these battles, there were 899 soldier deaths on the side of the military. On the side of revolutionary forces, 87 soldiers were killed. The place with the most frequent clashes between revolutionary and military forces was the Sagaing Region.

**Figure 1: Map of Military Conflicts**

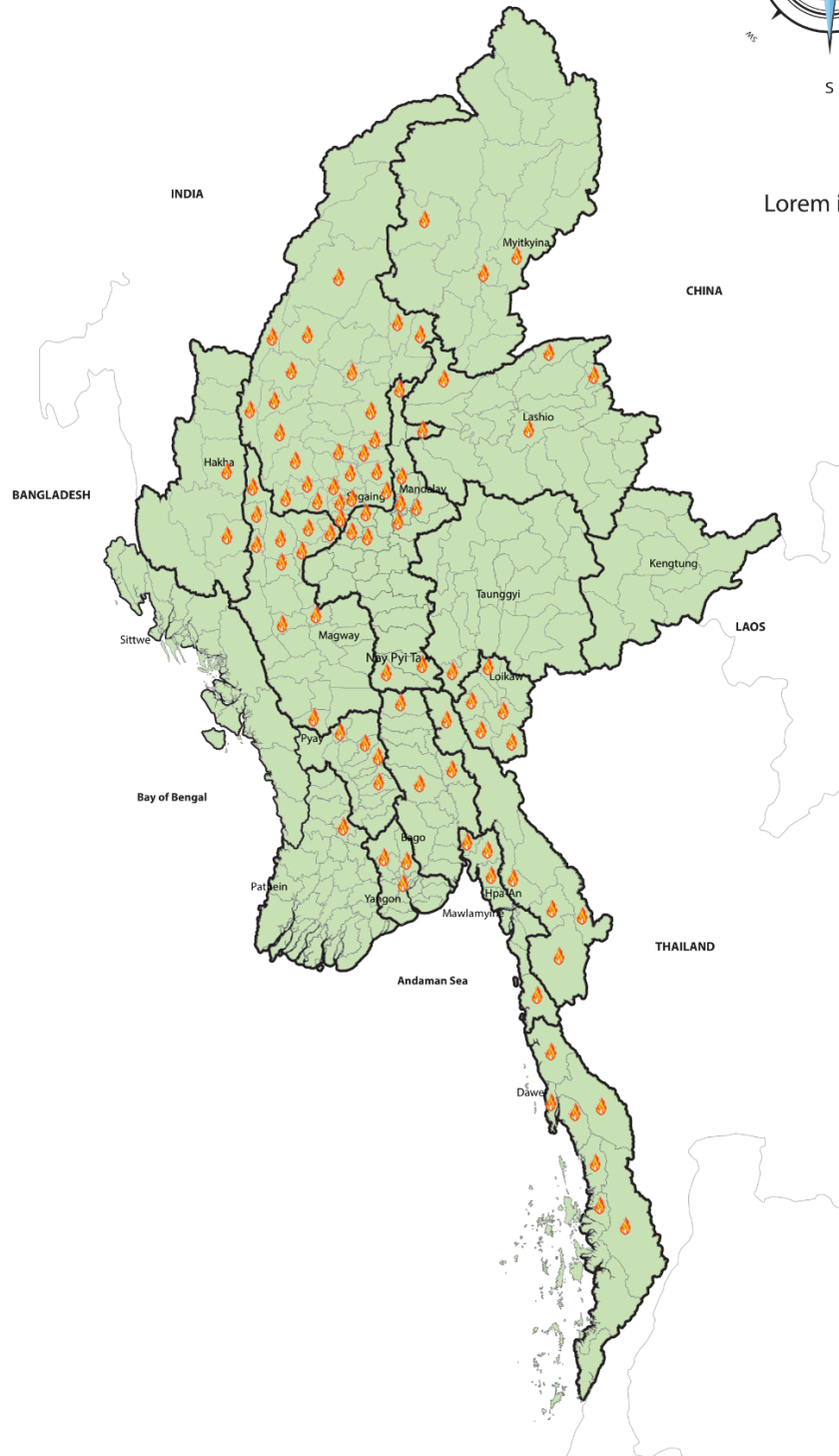
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**Map of Myanmar Conflict ( June 2023 Total )**



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**Table 1: Data on Military Conflicts**

<b>Table 1: Data of Myanmar Conflicts in June 2023</b>			
<b>States</b>	<b>Clashes between SAC and PDF/EAOs</b>	<b>SAC's soldiers killed</b>	<b>PDF killed</b>
<b>BAGO</b>	9	55	7
<b>CHIN</b>	5	25	1
<b>KACHIN</b>	3	3	
<b>KAYAH (Karenni)</b>	15	10	5
<b>KAYIN</b>	6	25	1
<b>MAGWAY</b>	22	80	4
<b>MANDALAY</b>	13	78	
<b>MON</b>	12	84	2
<b>SAGAING</b>	75	409	58
<b>SHAN (North)</b>	7	20	
<b>SHAN (South)</b>	17	67	8
<b>TANINTHARYI</b>	17	43	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>87</b>

### **Human Rights Violations**

Since the coup in February 2021, the Military Council's human rights violations have only continued to increase. On a daily basis there are arrests of unarmed civilians, burning of villages inhabited by civilians, killing of innocent civilians, and aerial bombardment of villages and townships. It is clear that the Military Council has been committing crimes against humanity, and not being held accountable for their war crimes. The most prominent crime in June was committed on the 27th of June in the Sagaing Region. The military army launched an aerial bombardment on Nyong Gone Village in Pulay Township. Nine civilians, including a priest, were killed. 13 residential houses were also destroyed by the fire following the bombardment.

Among the Military Council's human rights violations in June, the Sagaing Region received the most severe attacks. Among the civilians killed, 39 children were killed by the attacks. Additionally, 216 people were arrested by military troops. As many as 1,484 houses in the Sagaing Region were burned down by military troops.

**Table 1: Data on Human Rights Violations**

<b>Table 2: Data of Human Rights Violations by SAC in June 2023</b>					
<b>States</b>	<b>Children Killed</b>	<b>Civilians Killed</b>	<b>Civilians Arrested</b>	<b>Villages Set on Fire</b>	<b>Houses Burned Down</b>
AYEYARWADY			6		
BAGO	4	11	22		8
CHIN		3			
KACHIN	1	10	8		
KAYAH (Karenni)		8	8		1
KAYIN	2	9			
MAGWAY	2	6	4	1	67
MANDALAY		3	19		113
MON		5			
SAGAING	39	27	216	73	1484
SHAN (North)		3			
SHAN (South)	1	6			2
TANINTHARYI	1	6	89	1	11
YANGON			15		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>1686</b>

## **List of Acronyms**

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AA - Arakan Army  
ALP - Arakanese Liberation Party  
CDM - Civil Disobedience Movement  
DKBA - Democratic Karen Army  
GSI - Global Security Initiative  
ISP - Institute for Strategy and Policy  
KNPP - Karenni National Progressive Party  
KNU/KNLA-PC - Karen Peace Council  
LDU - Lahu Democratic Union  
MFDB - Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank  
MICB - Myanmar Investment and Commercial Bank  
MNDAA - Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army  
NCA - Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement  
NDAA - National Democratic Alliance Army  
NUG - National Unity Government  
PDF - People's Defense Army  
PGMF - Pact Global Microfinance Fund  
PNLO - PAO National Liberation League  
SSPP - Shan State Progress Party  
TNLA - Ta'ang National Liberation Army  
UWSA - United Wa State Army

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