

Purpose	Submission on human rights situation in Southeast Burma since the 2021 coup, to the International Parliamentary Inquiry (IPI), ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR)
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<p>The Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) is a grassroots, Karen-led human rights organisation, established in 1992 and operating across rural Southeast Burma. With 30 years of experience, and twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize (2000 and 2001), KHRG is recognised internationally as a leading authority on human rights issues such as forced labour, landmines, internal displacement and conflict in Southeast Burma. To this end, our reporting follows a holistic view on human rights that requires an understanding of how different factors and abuses combine, rather than the incident-based legal perspective favoured internationally. Our focus is on human rights abuses that impact villagers’ lives, including both conflict- and development-related abuses.</p> <p>KHRG is an active member of the Karen Emergency Response Team, a collaboration between Karen-led organisations based along the Thai-Burma border that was formed in April 2021 to support and respond to the humanitarian needs of displaced villagers in Southeast Burma. Hence, our organisation provides and delivers emergency support to displaced populations.</p>	

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Overview

1. Since the 2021 military coup, the security and human rights situation in Burma/ Myanmar¹ has seriously degraded. Militarisation and offensives have increased throughout Southeast Burma, as has the perpetration of human rights violations by the junta, some of which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. In addition to the severe impacts of the armed conflict, the military junta is restricting and weaponizing humanitarian assistance, exacerbating the dire humanitarian crisis in Karen State.
2. This submission sheds light on the impact of the military coup upon local communities in Southeast Burma, including their livelihood, health and education situation. It also presents the challenges faced by displaced populations, as well as the difficulties to deliver cross-border aid. Finally, it offers reflections and recommendations on further action that might be taken by the international community. The temporal scope covered in this submission is February 2021 through June 2022, and the territorial scope is locally-defined Karen State in Southeast Burma, in particular areas of heaviest conflict and offensives: Doo Tha Htoo (Thaton), Taw Oo (Toungoo), Kler Lwee Htoo (Nyaunglebin), Mergui-Tavoy, Mu Traw (Hpapun) and Dooplaya districts² [[Annex, Figure I](#)] Some incidents are summarised in the Annex [[Figure II](#)] in order to support and exemplify the information presented in this submission.

I. Atrocities committed by the military junta

3. Since the 2021 coup, increased offensives against ethnic armed groups (EAGs) have taken place, as have direct attacks on civilians in Southeast Burma. Villagers in rural ethnic areas, particularly those living in areas under the control of ethnic armed organisations (EAOs), have faced large-scale displacement due to air strikes and ongoing armed conflict. They are also being subjected to a vast array of human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, torture, killing, extortion, looting, and forced labour (including being used as human shields). [[Annex, Figure II](#)].
4. Intensified military offensives began in rural Karen State in March 2021. The military junta conducted their first air strike in Mu Traw District, causing large-scale displacements.³ Since then, KHRG has documented multiple air strikes conducted by the junta across Karen State,

¹ In 1989, the then-ruling military regime changed the name of the country from Burma to Myanmar without consultation from the people. Despite controversy over this change of name, the use of Myanmar became common on an international level. KHRG prefers the use of Burma as it is more commonly used by villagers. The change of name to Myanmar is reflective of the military regime's longstanding abuse of power.

² These are the district designations as defined by the Karen National Union (KNU). KHRG's use of these district designations represents no political affiliation; rather, it is rooted in the fact that rural communities and local organisations commonly use these designations. Although Burmese names have been added in parentheses, they do not correspond to geographic demarcations used by the Burma/Myanmar government. (See Figure I)

³ KHRG, "[Military Atrocities and Civilian Resilience: Testimonies of injustice, insecurity and violence in Southeast Myanmar during the 2021 coup](#)", November 2021.

along with fighting, militarisation and indiscriminate shelling, in many cases targeting civilian areas. According to KHRG documentation, the State Administration Council (SAC) has conducted air strikes at least 55 times throughout Karen State. In Dooplaya District alone, air attacks have been conducted at least 23 times since the initial attack on Lay Kay Kaw in December 2021. Indiscriminate shelling is widespread throughout Karen State, with some areas experiencing shelling on a near daily basis. Mu Traw District has endured the highest level of indiscriminate shelling, with SAC troops continually shelling into nearby villages as they travel along the main road between Hpapun Town and Kamarmaung Town. According to KHRG's records, air attacks and indiscriminate shelling perpetrated by the SAC in Karen State have damaged over 360 houses and 21 service buildings, including clinics, schools, dormitories, and religious buildings. 129 villagers have been injured and another 64 have died as a result.⁴ Ground and air attacks cause both emotional trauma and physical insecurity for villagers, and impact their right to livelihood, health and education.

5. SAC retaliation in response to attacks by EAGs has taken the form of direct attacks against civilians, including the burning of villages, shelling into villages, and threats to torture or kill all villagers. [[Annex, Figure II](#), nos. 4, 5, 6]
6. Incidents of forced labour have increased dramatically since the coup. The incidents have involved forced portering and navigation, while SAC soldiers engage in troop rotation and the transport of rations, supplies and ammunition to their army camps. Since the SAC and junta-affiliated Border Guard Forces (BGF) are marching through roads in KNU-controlled areas, they demand portering and navigation of the local villagers, and also repeatedly use them as human shields to protect themselves from attack by EAGs. [[Annex, Figure II](#), nos. 8, 9, 10]

II. Impact on livelihoods, health and education

7. The intense militarisation and offensives, including increased security checkpoints and controls on movement and the transportation of goods, have had a devastating impact on the livelihood of rural villagers and displaced civilians. Villagers are facing food insecurity as they are unable to access their farmlands or travel to town to buy food and supplies, both due to security threats and restrictions on movement.
8. Extortion and confiscation of food, money and property is frequent at SAC roadside checkpoints, and as SAC troops pass through villages, placing further strain on livelihoods. Looting of villages by SAC troops is also widespread, particularly after villagers have been forced to flee. [[Annex, Figure II](#), nos. 5, 6]

⁴ The numbers provided here regarding property damage, injuries and deaths are only based on data that KHRG received and was able to confirm. In many cases, areas experiencing air strikes, heavy shelling and conflict are not immediately accessible to our field researchers. For instance, KHRG was unable to determine damages and casualties from the December 2021 offensives in Lay Kay Kaw, Dooplaya District. Thus the reported numbers here are far below any actual numbers.

9. The military junta has been systematically searching and seizing medical supplies at checkpoints, which means medicine is not reaching rural areas.⁵ Clinics and hospitals also continue to be damaged and destroyed by junta air and ground attacks, leaving local villagers with even fewer healthcare options [[Annex, Figure II](#), no. 12]. The military junta has also seized COVID-19-related emergency support being transported by NGOs and local organisations. It weaponised the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to assert its authority over citizens and control their access to medical care.⁶ This has led to a significant increase in the spread of infections.⁷
10. Schools in Southeast Burma had been closed even prior to the coup because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the coup, the military junta has tried to reopen schools previously run by the civilian government, and has resorted to threats to force teachers and students to return to classrooms now under the junta's management, in some cases threatening those who do not register their children in junta-run schools with possible sedition charges [[Annex, Figure II](#), no. 13]. Many Karen Education Department (KECD) schools have managed to remain open, but face numerous challenges, including funding and staffing shortages due to increased enrollments (as many students refuse to attend schools run by the junta), and risks of air and ground attacks. Suspecting that children who attend KECD schools will join the KNLA, SAC troops have also forced students to leave those schools. Many communities have also created self-funded schools in order to address the education needs of their children.

III. Displacement and protection challenges

11. KHRG has estimated that more than 200,000 people have been displaced within Karen State since the February 2021 military coup. Displacement caused by armed conflict, air and ground attacks, as well as other threats to safety is constant in Karen State. The main protection agencies responsible for operating within Burma have little to no access to displacement sites due to the heavy insecurity and restrictions placed on them by the SAC.
12. Displaced villagers are fleeing to nearby jungles, hiding in caves and along waterways, or taking refuge in other villages where they may have relatives or friends. Most IDPs remain invisible from an aid perspective because of the difficulty of tracking and recording these households and individuals. Thus, most IDPs, particularly those farthest from the Thai border, are failing to receive humanitarian assistance. One IDP from Lay Kay Kaw noted: *"It's very cold now and some of the IDPs didn't get blankets. There were those IDPs who*

⁵ For instance, local villagers reported to KHRG that junta authorities prohibited to transport medicine to Htee Toh Loh village, Poh Pee Der village tract, Moo Township, Kler Lwee Htoo District, and hence villagers had to smuggle them secretly from Mone Town. [Unpublished data collected from Kler Lwee Htoo District].

⁶ KHRG, "[KHRG's Condemnation Letter Regarding the State Administration Council's Mishandling of the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)", August 2021.

⁷ KHRG, "[Dooplaya District Interview: Looting, fighting, forced labour and COVID-19 infections, September 2021](#)", January 2022.

fled to the forest too without people noticing them. They didn't get any support. They didn't have water to drink and they didn't have food to eat.”⁸

13. Thai authorities, whether or not under the orders of the Thai government, have been engaging in practices that constitute refoulement. Those fleeing conflict and violence, arbitrary arrest, torture and other threats to person, including the elderly and children, have regularly been pushed back after crossing into Thailand, primarily on the grounds of national security due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Thai government has stated its commitment to assist and take care of those fleeing unrest who have crossed their border, local Thai authorities have only allowed those fleeing to cross the river into Thailand at critical moments, for short periods, and have provided minimal emergency support. KHRG has documented many cases of forced return, including that of a group of high school students in December 2021. Many displaced civilians have also been told by Thai soldiers to cross back when the sound of gunfire and shelling stops.⁹
14. Some displaced villagers and civilians fleeing persecution, violence and threats of arrest have managed to secretly enter Thailand, but face constant fear of arrest, harassment and deportation by Thai authorities. Screening mechanisms and interim protection services seem to be minimal, and those that do exist lack the necessary transparency to be truly accessible to the population in need. While Thailand is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the prohibition of refoulement is also explicitly provided for in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED). Thailand has ratified the CAT and is signatory to the ICPPED, yet screening and protection services for those who may qualify under these criteria have not been established. Furthermore, the prohibition of refoulement provided for in the CAT is absolute, meaning that exception to the non-refoulement principle on the basis of national security is not applicable.
15. While the Thai government has also stated its readiness to help facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Burma, the channels to do so remain informal, and depend entirely on the willingness of local Thai authorities. The Thai government has also refused the involvement of key international agencies in attending to the needs of displaced populations along the border.
16. Because of the difficulty of crossing into Thailand, displacement sites on the Burma side of the Moei River are being created through the efforts of border-based CSO/CBOs, mostly Karen-led organisations, along with ethnic service providers and local faith-based organisations. Dry food goods and other material supplies (like tarpaulins, mats, blankets and clothing) and sanitary items (including feminine hygiene products) are being provided on a regular basis, sometimes daily, but still depend on what local Thai authorities will allow at the various crossing locations.

⁸ KHRG, “[Denied and Deprived: Local communities confronting the humanitarian crisis and protection challenges in Southeast Burma](#)”, June 2022.

⁹ Ibid.

17. The SAC's heavy restrictions on the movement of goods also includes humanitarian aid. KHRG received reports of junta soldiers even shooting at boats in the Salween River that were transporting supplies to IDPs. The SAC's Chairman of the Task Force on Humanitarian Assistance, Ko Ko Hlaing, despite claims that no one and no place will be left behind, refuses to allow aid to pass through international land borders, stating that outside assistance can only be distributed through assigned air and sea channels controlled by the SAC. By keeping humanitarian assistance under its control, the SAC further excludes ethnic areas from aid, and limits the ability of border-based organizations to engage in protection services.
18. Without oversight through independent monitoring mechanisms, the SAC and Myanmar Task Force will continue to deprive ethnic peoples of humanitarian support and their fundamental human rights.

IV. Triggers of the coup and failures of the international community

19. For decades, ethnic civil society, community-based and human rights organisations, like KHRG, have documented the atrocities committed by the Burma military, providing credible evidence of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, destruction of property, torture and inhumane treatment, forced relocation, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, forced labour, recruitment of children into armed forces, and indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks on civilians, including targeting of places of worship, hospitals, schools, and using civilians as human shields. And yet the international community has yet to hold the Burma military accountable through the various mechanisms at its disposal, or bring justice to the people who have endured these atrocities.
20. Since 1992, successive UN Special Rapporteurs on Myanmar have also reported consistent and systematic patterns of violence and abuse against minority communities throughout Burma. In some cases, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur have suggested that these violations amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes, thus warranting investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Ethnic minorities have waited for decades for the recommendations of international bodies to be implemented effectively so that the Burma military's gross human rights violations and atrocity crimes finally come to an end.
21. Since the February 2021 coup, the Burma military has intensified its perpetration of atrocities against civilians and against ethnic minorities. The failure of the international community to adequately respond to the atrocities committed against ethnic minorities since the 1990s has led to this point. The continued inaction of the international community, particularly the UN and ASEAN, since the coup risks undermining the people's trust in the international community and the principles that bodies like the UN claim to defend.

22. The likelihood of resolving the crisis without working with the NUG and other actors committed to the restoration of democracy seems slim. Accepting the NUG as the de facto government of Burma may be the clearest means of breaking the current political impasse and facilitating concrete actions on the part of international actors. The NUG must however be held not only to its pledges to cooperate with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to ensure Myanmar's compliance with international legal obligations regarding the Rohingya, and accept the scrutiny of the ICC, but also prepare a clear roadmap for its plans to "address decades of structural violence against all the people of Myanmar regardless of race and religion".

V. ASEAN's repeated failures

23. ASEAN's failure to achieve progress in addressing the human rights and humanitarian crisis in Burma since the February 2021 military coup is nothing new. For decades, the Burma military has committed mass atrocities and human rights abuses while other ASEAN members have watched on. In fact, Burma's acceptance into ASEAN in 1997 only served to bolster the military's confidence in its own invincibility. KHRG noted at that time that the SLORC (State Law & Order Restoration Council) military junta increased its repression in every quarter and was no longer even attempting to hide its brutal nature.¹⁰

24. As the Burma military junta currently increases its reign of terror, ASEAN continues to allow the junta to take an active role in ASEAN meetings, leadership and decision-making, and to treat junta leaders as trustworthy partners to end the violence and resolve the humanitarian crisis. The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) stated that it is working in close consultation with the Myanmar Task Force and Ministry of Health in the implementation of the humanitarian assistance framework provided for in the Five-Point Consensus. Yet, civil society and other stakeholders have repeatedly pointed out that the Myanmar Task Force has been taking action to cut off humanitarian assistance from the most vulnerable in EAO-controlled areas, and that the SAC cannot be trusted with the provision of humanitarian aid.

VI. Other mechanisms and actions

25. KHRG, like many other stakeholders, recommends imposing sanctions as a means of cutting off money flows, fuel and weapons to the junta. While these cuts may hinder some types operations by the junta, many of the abuses against civilians, such as forced labour, forced recruitment, torture, arbitrary arrests, threats of retaliation, looting, confiscation and extortion, and the deprivation of access to resources, will likely worsen.

26. The past has shown that the more the military regime faces dwindling funds and resources, the more it will engage in other means of accessing food, supplies, troops, weapons, fuel and hard currency. These actions have always had devastating impacts on villagers. Under

¹⁰ KHRG, "[Commentary](#)", July 1997.

previous regimes, villagers consistently experienced various forms of extortion by junta soldiers, including being forced to pay the monthly salary of local troops [Annex, Figure II, no. 15]. Forced recruitment of soldiers, including children, and forced labour, also of children, were extremely common as a means of maintaining troop numbers and undertaking a vast array of military-related activities from sentry duty to construction projects.¹¹ In 2006, military officials in Hpa-an District also forced villagers to plant castor bushes on village-owned land as part of a larger national project to harvest the beans for refinement into fuel for vehicles [Annex, Figure II, no. 16]. Not only did this deprive villagers of being able to plant their own crops, castor beans are highly toxic and were often accidentally ingested by children and animals.

27. Thus it is important to consider ways of ensuring greater protection and support for villagers as money and other resource flows to the junta get cut, since these cuts will not, in and of themselves, end the abuses against civilians. In fact, those abuses will likely increase, at least in the short term.

VII. Improving humanitarian response

28. According to the 2022 Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)¹², assistance is primarily reaching urban areas, rather than rural areas and areas of heavy conflict and insecurity like many parts of Southeast Burma. Although localisation and the inclusion of local actors have been listed as top priorities for the Myanmar HRP and the OCHA-managed Myanmar Humanitarian Fund, local actors continue to be side-lined and excluded from decision-making processes. The HRP states that the number of organisations participating in the development of the plan increased over the past year, however of the total 160 partners, only 14 CSOs, CBOs and border-based organisations were included. Likewise, although the stated aim of the plan is “to help ensure that local responders are better supported to deliver assistance in a nimble, safe and context-adapted manner”, a focus seems to be placed on “technical support and capacity building for ‘non-traditional’ or new humanitarian actors, CBOs or CSOs”.¹³ Yet, for decades, these actors have been providing support and services to local communities, including during periods of conflict and military oppression and under the most challenging circumstances, often because of the lack of international support. What they currently need is not capacity building, but funds, inclusion in decision-making, the removal of barriers, and assistance with the mitigation of risk.

29. Many of the local actors currently operating on the ground to provide humanitarian/emergency support are operating outside of their normal service activities. Although many donors that already work with these organisations have been able to redirect funds to them in order to respond to the need for humanitarian/emergency support, those funds remain limited. Most funds still seem to be locked in the hands of those who cannot

¹¹ KHRG, “[Foundation of Fear: 25 years of villagers' voices from southeast Myanmar](#)”, October 2017.

¹² UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), “[Humanitarian Response Plan - Myanmar](#)”, January 2022.

¹³ *Idem*, p. 36.

access the populations in need, or are failing to trickle down to the real actors on the ground. Some donors who are looking to redirect funds may not know who to direct funds to in the current context. Donors may also be hesitant or unable to redirect funds if the stated activities are not part of the local organisations' mandate/mission, or if the organisations are unregistered, which is often the case. Furthermore, the requirements and bureaucratic red tape imposed on CSO/CBOs by some donors create additional strains on these small organisations that are already operating at (and often beyond) full capacity since the coup. Thus there is a need for greater flexibility in fund distribution and greater consideration of the situation of these local actors.

30. Organisations operating on the ground also face security challenges, whether documenting abuses and violations or trying to provide protection services and emergency support. They risk threat and retaliation by the junta itself as it seeks to suppress their activities. Since many are unregistered organisations and are often working out of neighbouring countries like Thailand, which heavily criminalises unregistered entities, they also face a host of security risks within these other countries, both from the government and local authorities. Such risks need to be mitigated to allow these local actors to continue their work.

31. Because of a lack of wider and more formal obligations to ensure cross border aid, local actors in Thailand face numerous challenges to transport food and materials across the border into Burma. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In that respect, although these means of delivering support are currently the most effective, they are in no way guaranteed.

Recommendations

To all international actors

32. Pressure Burma/Myanmar's neighbours to respect international human rights and humanitarian obligations, including non-refoulement and other protection measures, and to adopt and ratify other international conventions and treaties to show their commitment to these standards and norms. This pressure could be most effective coming from allied governments, or citizens themselves.

33. Push forward with accountability proceedings since the pursuit of justice is one of the most visible forms of accountability and will send clear messages that human rights violations and impunity for these acts will no longer be tolerated. This includes:

- Supporting current investigations and proceedings by intervening in the genocide case at the ICJ, and pushing for an ICC referral and acceptance of the NUG's declaration delegating jurisdiction of the court to investigate and prosecute mass atrocity crimes that occurred in Burma since 2002.
 - Seeking out all additional opportunities (through hybrid courts, ad hoc tribunals, universal jurisdiction and other existing mechanisms) to hold the Burma military accountable for its vast array of crimes committed against Karen peoples, as well as other ethnic and religious minorities.
34. Acknowledge that the military junta is the root cause of the current human rights and humanitarian crisis; but also acknowledge the longstanding and ongoing failures and complicity of the international community in fueling the military's power, impunity, and ability to continue engaging in human rights violations, many of which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.
 35. Refrain from giving any legitimacy to the military junta and from recognising them in any international forum.
 36. Consult and include local actors in decision-making regarding humanitarian response and the resolution of the crisis, accountability and justice, as well as the future direction of the country.
 37. Develop and support International Accountability Platforms, and increase support for human rights organisations operating on the ground to ensure that the widest representation of voices and experiences of oppressed peoples in Burma are considered.
 38. Recognise that, in rural areas, villagers will likely bear the brunt of funding and resource cuts to the junta, and that adequate protection and support mechanisms need to be established to prevent even greater violence and human rights violations being perpetrated against them.
 39. Diversify international funding distribution so that more funding is made directly available to non-state actors, particularly ethnic service providers and civil society organisations, regardless of their registration status.

To ASEAN member states and leaders

40. Abandon the current Five-Point Consensus, and develop a new plan that addresses the critiques already outlined by numerous organisations and stakeholders, including the unrealistic focus on dialogue with the junta, and the assigning of responsibility for humanitarian response to the ill-equipped AHA Centre.
41. Suspend Burma from ASEAN membership until a democratically-elected civilian government is restored, and cooperate with civil society in Burma to ensure the effective delivery of aid within the country as well as Burma representation at the regional level.

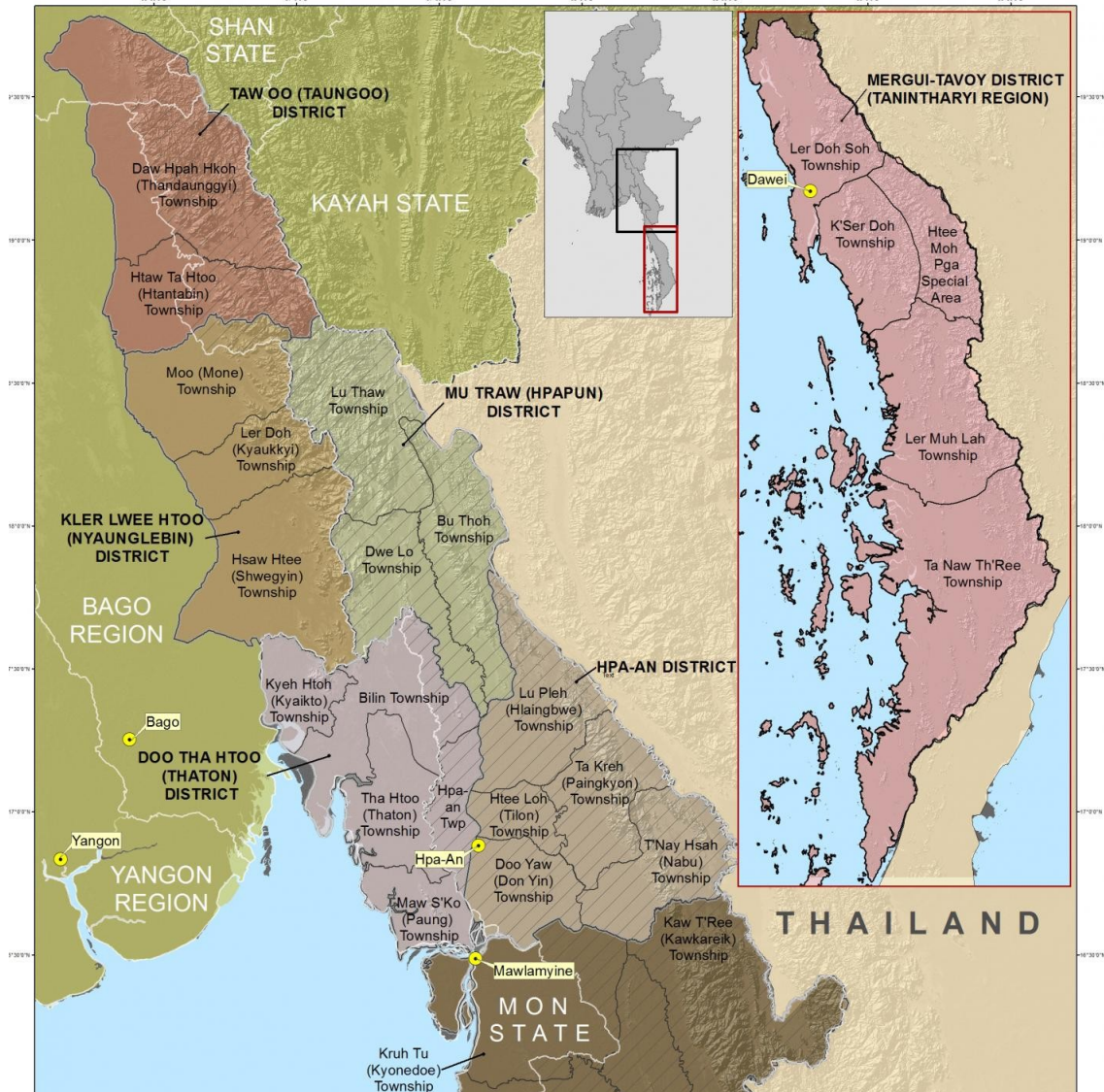
To neighbouring countries

42. Support and facilitate emergency and protection efforts, including those undertaken by border-based organizations and other local actors.
43. Ensure that local authorities do not deny entry to people crossing the border seeking refuge; and encourage them to work with cross-border organisations to develop support and protection services for those seeking refuge, as well as formal agreements that allow for the unfettered provision of aid.

Annex

Figure I. KHRG operational area in Southeast Burma

GNU-defined Karen State and Myanmar government-defined State and Region boundaries



and abuses

(non-exhaustive)

	Crime	District	Summary	Link
1	Murder	Doo Tha Htoo District	<p>On December 21st 2021 at about 8:00 am, fighting took place when SAC and BGF troops encountered KNLA troops at a rubber plantation in L--- village, Noh Beh Baw village tract, Bilin Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. At the time of the fighting, two villagers, Naw A--- and her husband, Saw B---, were working on their plantation. Both of them fled in fear, but only Saw B--- was able to escape. As Saw B--- explained, <i>“When we were in the rubber plantation, we heard gunfire so I told her [my wife]: ‘Dah [a Karen term of affection]!!! Run along the fence!’ [...] I was running behind her and did not see her anymore so I thought she had run further [from the incident place]. I called her once, but she did not hear me. At that time, I heard a lot of gun sounds behind me so I could not look for her.”</i> Due to the security risk, Naw A---’s husband and two other villagers could not go to the incident place until 5:00 pm that evening, which is when they found Naw A---’s corpse on the ground. The local villagers believe that the SAC and BGF troops caught Naw A---, questioned her (probably about the KNLA), tortured her and then killed her on the plantation. According to a local villager, <i>“I think they [the SAC and BGF] tortured her before they killed her because her whole nose bone was broken. The bullet went out the back of her neck so we [villagers] think they [the SAC and BGF] forcibly put the muzzle [of the gun] into her mouth and shot her dead.”</i> The SAC troops are from Ka Taing Ti Town under the SAC Light Infantry Division (LID) #22, Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #104 and the BGF soldiers are led by General Bo Maung Soe.</p>	Link
2	Murder	Mergui-Tavoy District	<p>On March 16th 2021 at 7:45 pm, Htoh Htoh, a soldier in the SAC militia [<i>pyithusit</i> (People’s Militia)] based in Taw Ngeh village, T’Naw Th’Ree (Tanintharyi) Township, Mergui-Tavoy District, shot dead a student named Maung C---, aged 17 years old, Grade 8, living in M--- village. He was shot in the chest with an MA-1 assault rifle, and died immediately. The reason provided by the militia for shooting Maung C--- was because he went out at night after curfew, however, the curfew had been set at 9:00 pm.</p>	Link

3	Murder	Doo Tha Htoo District	<p>In August 2021, the SAC occupied a KNLA army camp at N--- village, N--- village tract, Paw (Paung or Maw S'Ko) Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. A week later, they imposed a curfew on villagers in N--- village. Due to the curfew, villagers were facing difficulties getting sufficient food, especially fish. Therefore, some villagers snuck out of their houses during curfew to fish. On the evening of September 4th, one of the families in N--- village left their house to go to the stream near their house to fish. Saw D--- was going to fish, and was accompanied by his wife, Naw E---, who was five months pregnant, and their 4-year-old daughter because they did not feel secure staying at home without him due to the presence of SAC troops that were based close to and patrolling in their village. After fishing, the family encountered an SAC patrol on their way back to their house. The SAC soldiers questioned them, asking, "<i>Why do you open [turn on] the torch light?</i>" The soldiers then shot at them at about 10:46 pm. Naw E--- was shot approximately 12 times: one shot to her belly, two shots to her head and eight or nine shots to her thighs, until her thighs were destroyed by the bullets. The soldiers shot twice at Saw D---'s head; both shots struck his head near his right ear, and at least one bullet lodged in his head. He was carrying his 4-year-old daughter in his arms at the time. Though other villagers heard the gunshots, it was too risky to help the family immediately due to the curfew and the nightly SAC patrols. A local villager, Naw F---, said, "<i>No one dared to go there. Everyone stayed silently in their houses. No one dared to go outside of their houses.</i>" Villagers could not help the family until 4:00 am on the morning of September 5th. The couple's 4-year-old daughter was found with her parents' bodies when other villagers came to help them the next morning.</p> <p>The soldiers bribed the victim's mother by offering her 500,000 kyats [USD 270.05] to prevent her from disclosing the killings to the public. The husband was sent to the hospital, and suffered brain damage due to the attack.</p>	Link
4	Targeting civilians	Mergui-Tavoy District	<p>G---, from Taung Pyout area, Tha Yet Chaung Township, Mergui-Tavoy District, who works in Dawei District, Tanintharyi Region, spoke of her area as being a heavy target by the SAC. She herself was very active in the anti-coup protest movements and tried to persuade many government staff to join the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) shortly after the coup. A warrant for her arrest was issued by the SAC by the end of February 2021. She fled to KNU-controlled area in Hpapun District to avoid arrest. When the soldiers came looking for her in March 2021, they destroyed her mother's house. SAC soldiers from LIB #404 and LIB #405 continued to come to the area in search of National League for Democracy (NLD) members and protest leaders, burning</p>	

			<p>down the houses of these people. On April 2nd 2022, they burned houses in O--- village and P--- village. According to G---, Taung Pyout area has been a location where CDM and other protestors come and seek refuge, so <i>“that is why SAC want to target our area and oppress the people in our area.”</i> On April 3rd 2022, they burned houses in her village (Q--- village, Thel Chaung Gyi village tract in Taung Pyauk area). When the soldiers came looking for her [in April 2022], they burned down her grandfather’s house, including her sister’s shop which is in her grandfather’s house. In total, they burned down 15 houses. In addition, they burned ten motorbikes and two cars. According to G---, this was the third time SAC troops came to burn houses. They also came on September 30th 2021 and November 4th 2021.</p>	
5	Targeting civilians	Doo Tha Htoo District	<p>Beginning June 1st 2022, SAC troops from Artillery Unit #9, LID #22 and #208 conducted heavy artillery fire into Waw Ray village tract, Tha Htoo (Thaton) Township for six days straight after an SAC company commander and military medic were captured by the KNLA. As a result, more than 3,000 villagers in the area were forced to displace. As part of these retaliatory offensives, an SAC officer from Artillery Unit #9 also threatened to burn everything between Hton Bo Gyi and Hton Bo Lay villages in Waw Ray village tract. On June 25th, the SAC set fire to Hton Bo Lay village. At least 66 houses were completely burned to the ground, as were over 30 thatch huts used for traditional practices and the storage of livestock. Most of the 180 houses in the village, along with the village rice granary, latrines, and other structures were damaged by the fire. Prior to burning down the village, SAC troops looted villagers’ homes and took their livestock. The monastery and school were also looted and heavily damaged by mortar shelling. SAC LID #44, Artillery Unit #9, LIB #9 in Wa Pa [Winpa] army camp, LIB #3 based in Bilin army camp, Military Operation Command MOC #8 and LID #66 were involved in this attack. The Battalion Commander of LIB #9 is Bomoo Thiha Zaw; the Battalion Deputy Commander of LIB #3 is unknown.</p>	
6	Retaliation against civilians	Doo Tha Htoo District	<p>On April 15th 2022 between approximately 3:30 pm and 4:00 pm, eight soldiers (including the battalion deputy commander) from Artillery Unit #314 under LID #44 entered into R--- village, Shwe Yaung Pya village tract, Tha Htoo Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. The SAC soldiers indiscriminately fired guns to threaten R--- villagers before entering the village. There are about 150 households in the village (cannot specify the number of villagers). When villagers heard the sound of gunfire, all the men in the village fled, fearing arrest by the SAC. Women and children (about 70 villagers total) hid in makeshift bunkers. However, the SAC troops threatened the women and children, forcing them to come out and gather on the village road. When villagers were gathering, a young male was asked by SAC troops to open a grenade with his mouth,</p>	

			<p>but he refused. The SAC soldiers raided the villagers' houses and stole money, phone SIM cards and eight phones. When they came into the village, they accused the villagers of cooperating with the KNLA and threatened to fire into the village and burn down the houses in the village. The soldiers returned some phones to the villagers after three days, and then asked them to retrieve the rest of the phones at the army camp. Afraid of being arrested, they did not go.</p>	
7	Arbitrary arrest		<p>During the anti-coup protests that took place in the months following the coup, civilians reported being unlawfully arrested and detained by SAC security forces. Students who were active in the protests reported that young people were being targeted for arrest, and that their families had received no information about where they were or how they were doing.</p> <p>20-year-old university student, H--- stated: <i>“Last month [...], they [police and soldiers] arrested a lot of people. We don’t know what happened to them. We do not know where they are now. We do not know whether they are alive or not. We don’t know whether there is law in prison. We cannot hire lawyers. We cannot get information from their families. We cannot post the news about the people who disappeared. We heard that they are in prison but we do not have any evidence that they are in prison. We feel like their rights are being violated. We heard that there are students and children in prison.”</i></p>	Link

8	Forced labour	Doo Tha Htoo District	<p>On the morning of September 20th 2021, BGF soldiers ordered villagers from S---, T--- and U--- villages to carry rations as well as some ammunition for them as they marched to Yoh Klah army camp. Close to 300 villagers in total (approximately 180 from S--- village and 100 from T--- village), including men, women, children, the elderly and sick people, had to carry rations and ammunition for them. The majority of the villagers required to serve as porters were women, and another 12 were underage (nine girls and three boys). They started travelling from S--- village at 10:30 am and arrived at Yoh Klah army camp at 12:30 pm (thus a two-hour walk each way) under extremely hot conditions. They also did not receive any food or drink along the way. Some villagers had to carry rations such as rice and canned fish while others had to carry ammunition such as mortars. The SAC and BGF soldiers walked between the villagers along the way to Yoh Klah army camp. There were no attacks by the KNLA on this portion of the journey so villagers were able to return home safely. According to local leaders, the SAC troops that operate in Bilin Township are BGF Company #3 under Battalion #1013, led by Company 2nd-in-Command Lieutenant Ka Don, and SAC Battalion #406 under Military Operations Command (MOC) #8.</p>	Link
9	Use of human shields/deprivation of medical care	Kler Lwee Htoo District	<p>On the night of January 30th 2022, SAC troops (from LIB #201, LIB #203, LIB #205, and LID #44 under Western Battalion #207 based in Thein Z'Yat Town) entered V--- village in Kler Lwee Htoo District, took the villagers of that village and detained them at their camp. On the morning of January 31st, only male villagers were selected, and taken to accompany the SAC troops. Among them were I---, 19 years old, from W--- village, Kya Chaung village tract, Shway Kyin Township, Kler Lwee Htoo District, but staying with his aunt in V--- village, and his friend, K---, from V--- village. They left V--- village at around 11:00 am. Villagers who were taken were forced to walk in pairs with each SAC soldier throughout the journey. When they were approximately two miles away from the village, fighting broke out between the SAC and KNLA Brigade 1 and People's Defence Force (PDF) joint forces who were in Kyeh Htoh Township. K--- saw that his friend I--- got shot in the abdomen. After I--- was shot, K--- asked permission from the SAC military officer to go back and get a car from the village to take I--- to the hospital. However, the military officer would not allow him to go, telling him that a car will come. Villagers were only allowed to go back and get the car at around 1:00 pm after I--- had already died.</p>	
10	Forced labour	Doo Tha Htoo District	<p>In May 2022, soldiers from BGF Company #2 forcibly detained over 150 villagers to use as human shields and porters on their way to Lay Kay and Ta Paw army camps in Bilin Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. Although some were released along the way, around</p>	

			100 villagers were detained for around 15 days before being released on May 22 nd 2022.	
11	Forced displacement	Mu Traw District	<p>Displacement has been particularly heavy throughout many parts of Mu Traw District due to armed conflict and direct attacks and threats against civilians. Ma Htaw village tract has been a site of heavy conflict and human rights violations, even before the coup. SAC Strategic Operation Command (SOC) #8, LIB #407, led by Lieutenant General Zaw Min Htike, has repeatedly terrorised local villagers through threats against villagers and direct attacks on civilian areas, including burning down villagers' homes.</p> <p>On July 12th 2021, soldiers from SAC LIB #407 burned villagers' houses in X--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township. The villagers whose houses were burned did not dare to return to their village and found it difficult to build new houses elsewhere because of the rainy season. Therefore, some of them are living in the forest and some of them are living in poor conditions in the buildings at several monasteries in Myaing Gyi Ngu special area.</p> <p>On July 16th 2021, KNLA Battalion #102, Company #1 collaborated with Company #2 security guards from Meh Nyoo and Ma Htaw village tracts to ambush the SAC troops that had trespassed into KNU-controlled areas between X--- and Y--- villages. During the fighting, at about 12:30 pm, the SAC soldiers from LIB #407 burned the houses of four villagers living in X--- village. The SAC soldiers were attacked by the KNLA as they continually patrol these areas situated very close to the villages. Villagers believe that they do so in order to spy on the villagers. The SAC burned down the four houses in retaliation for the attack. There are around 50 houses in the village. Some of the villagers living in X--- fled to other nearby villages and others fled to Hpapun Town.</p> <p>On August 15th 2021, a skirmish between KNLA Battalion #102 and SAC LIB #407 broke out in Y--- village, Ma Htaw village tract after SAC troops trespassed into KNU-controlled territories. The SAC troops based at Y--- village threatened villagers, warning them that they will kill all of the villagers if more fighting happens between them and the KNLA. The next day, the villagers fled their village fearing the threat made by the SAC troops.</p>	Link

12	Destruction of medical facilities	Doo Tha Htoo District	<p>On November 16th 2021, BGF Company #3 led by Kyaw Leh Theit from BGF Battalion #999 entered Z--- village, Pwa Gaw village tract, Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo District, and destroyed the medical clinic buildings and looted all healthcare materials, including ultrasound tools and medicine. They also threatened local villagers not to enter the clinic compounds anymore. Local villagers assume the BGF planted a landmine in the clinic and did not feel safe to go to the clinic. The clinic stopped operating after the incident but was able to reopen a month later.</p>	Link
13	Destruction of schools	Mu Traw District	<p>On the night of March 27th to 28th 2021, SAC jets bombed the Day Bu Noh area, Pay Kay village tract, Lu Thaw Township. The first air strike was carried out by two jets. It started at around 7:45 pm and ended at around 9:00 pm on March 27th 2021. On March 28th, at around 12:45 am, two others jets came and bombed the area again. The air strikes resulted in 11 civilian casualties, including 3 children; as well as in the destruction of several buildings in Pay Kay village tract, including the KECD No. 1 Day Bu Noh High school in Day Bu Noh village, as well as 12 villagers' houses in the area.</p> <p>A teacher from Day Bu Noh area reported to KHRG in April 2022 how the situation is still disturbing for students: <i>"They can attend school in the daytime, but if they hear the sound of SAC aircrafts flying over, they run to a safe place. Sometimes, all students flee hearing an aircraft while I am in the class, and I am not able to teach. [...] It is more difficult for them at night, as they sleep in the forest. They cannot do their readings in fear of SAC air strikes. Some students turn on a small light by covering themselves with a blanket. Some put the light inside the bamboo. Others turn on the light in the temporary bunker. Sometimes, SAC troops conduct reconnaissance at night. This is why students are scared to study. Even during the day, they remain afraid to go to school. This situation really affects their studies. Motivation has also decreased."</i></p>	Link
14	Threats against civilians	Mergui-Tavoy District	<p>Where parents send their children for schooling has become an issue in some of the villages in the Lay Nya Bok Pyin area, T'Naw Th'Ree Township, Mergui-Tavoy District. On June 15th 2021, three officers from Military Security Affairs (MSA) came to Aa---village and asked the children who attend KECD schools to come back to the village [the students are in school in other areas]. The MSA officers said they heard that the children who go to Karen schools are going to become KNLA soldiers and so the MSA officers came to surveil the villagers. The MSA officers came to the village two or three times, after receiving surveillance reports from <i>da lan</i> [informants] in the village.</p> <p>Some parents from Ab--- village who haven't registered their children at the SAC-run school have been threatened by the SAC village head, who said they would be charged</p>	Link

			for opposing the country since they had not registered their children. Some of the village leaders were appointed by the SAC after the military coup and they do as they are ordered by the SAC.																			
15	Forced production	Hpa-an District	Since early 2006, local military officials from State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) LIBs #547, 548 and 549 have forced villagers to plant castor oil plants (Cheh Su Pay in Burmese) on village-owned land lying along roadways, with the intention of harvesting the resulting castor beans, which the SPDC has claimed can be refined for use as fuel for vehicle engines. This is part of a nationwide programme instigated by the top SPDC leadership to reduce Burma's reliance on foreign fuel supplies; throughout 2006 villagers everywhere in the country have been forced to buy and plant castor bushes, tend them and harvest the beans for the military.	Link																		
16	Extortion	Hpa-an District	<p>Each village tract in Doo Yaw Township is forced to pay the salary of 40 State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) militiamen. Each salary is 1,500 kyats per month, making a total of 60,000 kyats per month demanded from each village tract. In addition, every village must pay for the following every month:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>1)</td> <td>2 permanent porters @ 3000 kyats per month:</td> <td>6,000 kyats</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2)</td> <td>1 emergency porter @ 3000 kyats per month:</td> <td>3,000 kyats</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3)</td> <td>1 messenger @ 40 kyats per day:</td> <td>1,000 kyats</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4)</td> <td>10-15 viss of meat weekly @ 100 kyats /viss:</td> <td>1,000-1,500 kyats</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5)</td> <td>500 shingles of leaf roof annually (minimum):</td> <td>500 kyats /yr</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6)</td> <td>Bamboo for building army barracks:</td> <td>Variable</td> </tr> </table> <p>If the villagers do not have this money, they must go to do the slave labour themselves. In addition to providing all materials to build and maintain the army camp, they are also forced to go and build the barracks without pay.</p> <p>At the official rate, US\$1 = 6 kyats. At the black market rate, US\$1 = 100 kyats (at the time of printing in 1992).</p>	1)	2 permanent porters @ 3000 kyats per month:	6,000 kyats	2)	1 emergency porter @ 3000 kyats per month:	3,000 kyats	3)	1 messenger @ 40 kyats per day:	1,000 kyats	4)	10-15 viss of meat weekly @ 100 kyats /viss:	1,000-1,500 kyats	5)	500 shingles of leaf roof annually (minimum):	500 kyats /yr	6)	Bamboo for building army barracks:	Variable	Link
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