



**NEW
MYANMAR
FOUNDATION**

THEMATIC BRIEFS 2024

**Unlawful Killings of
Civilians by Myanmar
Military in Central Burma:
Analysis of Cases Happened
in Mandalay Region from
February 2022 to June 2024**

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About New Myanmar Foundation

New Myanmar Foundation (NMF) was established by a group of concerned citizens in January 2008 to "contribute to the development of Myanmar by strengthening the capacity of citizens and promoting democratic governance". Till the military coup, its focus program was election monitoring and related activities including training on voter rights, townhall meetings and lobbying for municipal elections. After the coup, due to crack down and arrest of members, the organization moved to the Thai Myanmar border and striving for restoration of democracy and human rights in the country. It has been concentrating on emergency response to the humanitarian crisis including supporting political prisoners, pro-democracy activists and internally displaced persons (IDP) in the country. At the border, it also concentrates on supporting Burmese refugees and migrants their basic and urgent needs such as refuge, basic food, emergency health care, Thai language training, vocational training and job facilitation.

New Myanmar Foundation (NMF) had initiated the Human Rights Program in February 2023. It aims for strengthening human rights networks and advocacy on the endeavors of human rights defenders in Myanmar and implementing human rights defense and promotion activities, including education and awareness raising, documentation, protection of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), networking and advocacy.

Executive Summary

In Myanmar, civilian populations have been historically subjected to abuses and violations of human rights by the Myanmar military including unlawful killings in conducting its campaigns of suppression and crackdown against political dissents and the civilians in general. This was exacerbated by the 2021 military coup that followed the development that the military leaders has intensified its campaigns of terror which take various form_ arial assault, naval attack and ground raid_ against both its dessents and peaceful villagers and community members. Among these different atrocities, unlawful killings largely contributed to civilian casualties of at least 5,350 individuals, including 1,022 women and 667 children since the coup.

According to the results of documentation conducted from February 2022 to June 2024, the Myanmar military is discovered to implement its campaigns of atrocity, especially unlawful killings widespreadly and systematically across different community in Mandalay region to instill fear among and exert control over the people, while the military also killed civilians on arbitrary ground or for no apparent reasons. In numerous cases of killings, security forces use excessive force during their killing campaigns in various townships in Mandalay. The frequent deployment of soldiers and heavy weaponry in these terror campaigns is a common feature in the cases analyzed in this report. Victims of these killings are often subjected to inhumane treatment, with their dignity intentionally degraded by perpetrators, such as improper disposal of their bodies or preventing families from reclaiming them. The incidents reviewed suggest that the military continues to enforce a shoot-on-sight strategy, indiscriminately firing at civilians fleeing military raids or those encountered by soldiers. The findings also indicate that civilians, regardless of gender, age, or social or political affiliation, are targeted by the military's unlawful killings.

Based on the key findings or analysis made in relation to practice of unlawful killings in Myanmar, especially in Mandalay region, the main recommendations made to the different actors include 1) the Myanmar military must stop its atrocities, including unlawful killings of civilians, 2) foreign powers and neighboring countries should collaborate with humanitarian organizations to provide shelter and protection for those fleeing military violence, and support screening and refugee programs. 3) the National Unity Government (NUG) must intensify efforts to seek justice for extrajudicial killings through international mechanisms. 4) international and local organizations should work together to protect survivors, witnesses, and documenters of unlawful killings, and collect testimonies for judicial use, and 5) Human rights groups should strengthen grassroots efforts to report unlawful killings by all actors in Myanmar.

1. Introduction

Across its decades of independence, Myanmar has continued to suffer from years of repressive military rules, extensive poverty and civil unrest among the military and different ethnic armed groups¹. As Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG), one of the human rights organizations pointed out in its report, the human rights violations in Southeast Burma and other areas did not start with the 2021 military coup, discussing their linkages to military policies dated back in the 1960s.² The country has also historically observed human rights violations committed by Myanmar military and other state or non-state actors, with tens of thousands of civilian population killed, injured, tortured and arrested. Over years, the military regime exercised its military power to violently repress any civil disobedience movement, conscripting any political and civil space for the different communities across the country. One of the notorious crackdowns is repression against the 1988 nationwide uprising that resulted in death tolls of over three thousand civilians.³

The human rights situation in Myanmar was further exacerbated by the military coup⁴ staged on 1 February 2021 that followed serious repression and crackdown against peaceful demonstrators nationwide. Since its coup attempt, the military regime has continued to intensify its campaigns of atrocities against dissents and civilian populations. The campaigns take different forms, ranging from ground attacks deploying disproportionate force to air assaults using indiscriminate power in different parts of the country. These atrocities result in commission of human rights violations, some of which include, but not limited to, unlawful killings, arbitrary detention and unfair trials, enforced disappearance, torture, prohibiting freedom of expression, association and assembly, and denial to humanitarian access.

According to the report published by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in June this year, since February 2021, at least 5,350 civilians, including 1,022 women and 667 children, had been killed at the hands of the military.⁵ The attacks by the military had been, and continued to be, indiscriminate. Many of these deaths resulted from unlawful killings during military air and ground attacks, often used as collective punishment against civilians. The military's air strikes, often indiscriminate or directly targeting civilians, have intensified, especially in central regions such as Sagaing.⁶ Two of the most atrocious air raids include

¹ Council on Foreign Relations, Myanmar's Troubled History: Coups, Military Rule, and Ethnic Conflict, 2022. <https://www.cfr.org/background/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>

² Karen Human Rights Group, Deadly Encounters: Killings of civilians by armed actors in Southeast Burma (October 2022 - April 2023), June 8, 2023. <https://khr.org/2023/06/23-2-bp1/deadly-encounters-killings-civilians-armed-actors-southeast-burma-october-2022>.

³ Council on Foreign Relations, Myanmar's Troubled History: Coups, Military Rule, and Ethnic Conflict, 2022. <https://www.cfr.org/background/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>

⁴ On February 1st, 2021, the Myanmar military overthrew the democratically elected government led by the National League for Democracy (NLD). The military seized all three branches of power and transferred them to Min Aung Hlaing, the Commander-in-Chief of Myanmar military (or so called Tatmadaw). The military considered null and void the landslide victory of the NLD in the November 2020 General Election, based on unproven voting fraud allegations. Elected President Win Myint and State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi were arrested, along with ministers, their deputies, members of Parliament and other prominent activists.

⁵ https://bangkok.ohchr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/A_HRC_56_23_AdvanceUneditedVersion.pdf, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/09/1154436>

⁶ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-east-asia-and-the-pacific/myanmar/report-myanmar/>

Pazigy air strike happened in April 2023 in Sagaing Region, killing at least 168 people including 35 children and in October 2023, aerial bombardment in Myuang Hlai Khet internally displaced persons' camps in Kachin State that resulted in at least 29 civilians casualties. Further incidents of air assaults in other parts of the country caused a lot of casualties.

Incidents of extrajudicial killings and other brutal acts including torture are largely associated with military raids and attacks conducted by various infantry or battalions in central regions and other areas. The military deploys ground attacks as a tool to terrorize civilians or to spread fear among them through the different forms of atrocious practices. Since the ground operations are discovered to associated with reports of unlawful killings, torture, looting and burning of civilians property, and taking villagers as hostages in both areas with resistance communities and areas where innocent civilians live, the military is systematically implementing its notorious four-cut strategy that targets civilians and sever alleged ties between armed resistance groups and local communities by cutting off their access to foods, funds, intelligence and recruits.

This report discusses analysis and insights on unlawful killings that occurred from 1st February 2022 to 30th June 2024 in Mandalay Region, presenting quantitative assessment of the incidents recorded and in-depth review of the incidents investigated.

2. Methodology

This short report is based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the killing incidents that the NMF's Human Rights Program monitored and documented from February 1st, 2022, to June 30th, 2024. This assessment is drawn from the Human Rights Violation (HRV) case (especially killing cases) investigation, ground reports submitted by the program's partners CSOs and other individuals or groups, and online monitoring carried out by the Human Rights program. In this report, the quantitative review is made based on killing cases reported by ground data collectors (GDCs) and collected by online data collectors (ODCs) between 1st February, 2023 and 30th June, 2024 in Mandalay Region.

The case analysis is largely built on the outputs from the interviews conducted in relation to six unlawful killing incidents⁷ occurred in the Mandalay Region while the key observations are drawn from the synergy of both reported and monitored cases and investigated or interviewed cases. The information and data analyzed or extracted from these interviews are presented either in case summary description or in testimonial quotes as they seem fit across the report. As the analysis is built on in-depth information of the investigated cases occurred in Mandalay Region, and quantitative review of the killing cases reported and monitored in Mandalay Region, the insights and patterns discussed in this report may fail to reflect the situations happened in other part of the country that this analysis does not focus on. Also, the number of killing cases mentioned in this report may represent an underestimation of the situations on the ground.

⁷ The individuals with the primary knowledge of these specific incidents are questioned or shared their accounts on the incidents they had encountered or witnessed or heard of.

3. Findings

In this report, ‘unlawful killing’ is generally defined as any deliberate action that results in death of a civilian, including but not limited to shooting with firearms, attacking with sharp objects, airstrikes, artillery attacks, civilian death due to landmines, and torturing to death during interrogation. It also includes death of civilians caused by non-physical or indirect methods, such as deprivation of medical care or food access; and terrorizing acts. (e.g causing heart attacks due to artillery attacks on civilian neighbourhoods).

From February 2023 to March 2024, a total of 169 cases of unlawful killing have been documented in Mandalay Region. Among those documented cases, people with different socio-economic status such as gender, age, religions including vulnerable group members were subjected to this killing act conducted by the Myanmar military.

Killing has been documented in various ways: not just limited to air assaults and areal bombardment that resulted in many civilian casualties. The security forces also deploy heavy weapons such as artillery shelling against civilian neighborhood in their campaign of terror on villagers and community members. In Mandalay region studied in this brief, killing occurs on the streets where both military and the police forces carry out arbitrary inspections of travelers, in villages where the military troops raid in the name of ‘clearance operations’, and even in the homes of the victims where the military and police may intrude arbitrarily without warrants at any time of the day.

3.1 Interviewed Case Description

Interviewed Case MDY_228

On March 12, 2023, at around 4:30 p.m., U Zeya, a male civilian, was brutally killed by military forces in a village located in Shin Hla A Lae village in Madaya township, Mandalay region. Earlier in the day, at approximately 4:00 p.m., a group of soldiers entered the village from the northern direction, raiding homes and indiscriminately attacking civilians. At that time, U Zeya’s wife had urged him to flee, but he remained seated on his porch. All of family member then run away from the house where U Zeya left alone in his home. As the soldiers arrived near his home, they questioned him, and in a violent escalation, they attacked him. U Zeya sustained several severe injuries, including multiple stab wounds to his legs and a deep cut to his throat. After attacking U Zeya, the soldiers continued their raid, leaving the village between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m., spreading fear and chaos among the remaining villagers.

Interviewed Case MDY_285

On January 28, 2024, at 2:00 p.m., a male civilian named U Tin Kyaing, 53 years old, was arrested, shot, and killed by military forces in Sin Gone Village, Madaya Township, Mandalay Region. That afternoon, a military unit of approximately 100 soldiers arrived in the village from the south, traveling in one military truck and three FAW trucks. As they entered Sin Gone Village from Taw Pu Village, the troops began firing their guns, causing villagers to flee in panic. However, U Tin Kyaing, who was on the western side of the village, found himself trapped as another military unit raided from the west. Believing at first that the approaching

soldiers might be members of the People's Defense Force (PDF) or Local Defense Force (LDF)⁸, U Tin Kyaing quickly realized they were military personnel. Fearing for his life, he attempted to escape during their questioning. As he fled, he was shot twice in the thigh, causing him to fall to the ground. After he tripped, the soldiers brutally executed him by shooting him in the head. The gunfire shattered his upper skull, leaving his head and eyes severely mutilated. His death was immediate and violent, with his upper head destroyed by the impact of the gunshots. The military forces left Sin Gone Village between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m., leaving behind devastation and fear among the remaining villagers.

Interviewed Case MDY_286

On January 27, 2024, at around 1:00 AM, five young men of around 20 years olds were killed by soldiers and Pyu-Saw-Htee⁹ militia in Myingyan Township, Mandalay Region. The boys had visited a karaoke bar in the town when a military truck entered the venue. While the owner allowed the truck inside, he refused to let the boys enter as the doors were closing. One of the men, frustrated, commented, "Those guys are allowed in, but why not us?" A Pyu-Saw-Htee member overheard this and accused the group of provoking a fight. Without hesitation, the soldiers and militia beat the men, dragged them onto the truck, and broke their legs with rifle butts. Later, near Wah Htaung at the edge of Ma Kyee Tha Mya Village, the five men were tied up, and each was executed with a single gunshot to the head, leaving their brains exposed. The next day, police from Myingyan Township Station 1 summoned the parents of the victims and forced them to sign a statement claiming that no bullet casings or other evidence was found at the scene, nor any signs of injury on the bodies. Only after signing were the families allowed to retrieve their children's remains, especially the dead body.

Interviewed Case MDY_287

On January 28, 2024, at approximately 10:00 p.m., in Tu Yin Bon Village, located in Myingyan Township of Mandalay Region, a group of eight soldiers and Pyu-Saw-Htee members dressed in civilian and camouflage attire stormed a family's residence. They arrived on around five motorcycles, entering the property from the backyard. Unable to force open the rear door, they climbed over and entered the home. The family was sleeping under mosquito nets when they were awakened at gunpoint. The assailants demanded answers, forcing Ma Khin Swe Win and Ma Ei May Kyaw out of bed, claiming they needed to be questioned. Both women were arrested on the spot. In addition, Daw Nyunt May was also apprehended from her home and taken away. The next day, the bodies of all three women were found with multiple gunshot wounds. Their lifeless forms were discovered by locals near the southeastern edge of the village, along the Mandalay highway.

Interviewed Case MDY_320

⁸ People Defense Force and local defense forces: People Defense Force is the armed wing of the National Unity Government formed on May 5, 2021. Although armed resistance forces against the military are generically referred to as "PDF" most of the time, many armed forces were formed independently and operate outside the command of the NUG's PDF. The military uses the term 'PDF' for anyone that they accuse as a participant of the armed resistance. In this report, the term 'PDF' will specifically refer to the armed forces of the National Unity Government; the term 'local defense force' will be used to describe any anti-military armed group composed of civilians and not verified to be operating under the NUG's PDF.

⁹ Paramilitary militia composed of military supporters, mostly civilians and former soldiers, sponsored and armed by the military junta (SAC).

On February 17, 2022, at 4:00 p.m., military and Pyu-Saw-Htee militia units consisting of 40 to 50 individuals entered Nyaung-Tone Village and killed one male civilian, U Aung Nyunt, in Myingyan Township. Their target was U Aung Nyunt, a 50-year-old male civilian, who had been hiding at his daughter's house in a nearby village after learning that he was being sought by the military for his involvement in community development work. The military threatened his family in Nyaung-Tone, warning that their home would be burned down if U Aung Nyunt did not return. The following day of 17th February, U Aung Nyunt returned to Nyaung-Tone to protect his family. At 4:00 p.m., soldiers and militia members raided his house, dragging him outside and subjecting him to severe beatings and torture in front of his entire family. During the torture, the soldiers taunted him, saying, "you are being tortured just because of your involvement in volunteering work and community development." At 8:00 p.m., after hours of torture, U Aung Nyunt was killed. The soldiers also ransacked and destroyed his home, leaving his body behind but forbidding anyone to approach or examine it. Villagers were threatened with the same fate if they attempted to intervene or even look at the scene.

Interviewed Case MDY_337

On March 13, 2024, at approximately 6:00 a.m., a military unit of about 30 soldiers entered Pyokan Village in Myingyan Township from the direction of Seitkon Village. The military burned down a total of 165 houses in the village starting at 6:00 a.m. and subsequently at the outskirts of Pyokan, a resident named U Pyu Sein spotted the approaching soldiers while returning from visiting U Thaung Lone. Attempting to escape, he ran into Ko Pein's hut but was pursued and fatally shot by the soldiers. The troops then proceeded to U Thaung Lone's hut, where they forcibly removed him from his sleep and shot him dead. Following these incidents, the soldiers set fire to and destroyed numerous homes within the village. Among the villagers taking refuge in the local monastery, they detained Kyan Rit and Ko Maung Maw. They also apprehended Ko Cho Lat, who was hiding in his home. The detained villagers were taken towards Kan Swal Village. En route, near the Kyat Hlwar Taw Kan area, they were severely beaten and subsequently killed. In total, five male civilians engaged in farming activities were killed by the military forces in Pyokan Village. Additionally, 165 homes within the village were burned down and destroyed.

3.2 Analyzing the Military's Motives for Unlawful Killings

Unlawful killings by the military forces, particularly targeting civilians, are often driven by several overlapping motives. Evidence from reports and interviews highlights two main reasons behind such actions.

- **Fear and control:** are key motivators of the killings incident assessed. Military forces use these killings to instill terror in the population, demonstrating their power to eliminate anyone suspected of opposition, even without evidence or due process. This tactic suppresses dissent and the civilian populations as whole by creating a climate of fear, where they are forced into compliance.
- **Arbitrary violence:** plays a significant role. In many cases, killings are carried out without clear reasons, reflecting a culture of impunity. Soldiers may kill brutally, driven by personal aggression or simply because of arbitrary suspicions, further illustrating the lack of accountability within the military.

3.2.1 Fear and Control

All cases of unlawful killings serve as a brutal demonstration of the military's strategy to instill fear and maintain control. By executing individuals suspected of opposition—often without evidence or due process—the military showcases its power in the most public and terrifying ways. In many instances, these killings are carried out in front of victims' families and their communities, amplifying the terror and ensuring that the fear spreads. This tactic is a deliberate attempt to suppress dissent, creating a climate where civilians are forced into compliance, knowing that any sign of opposition could lead to the same fate. The following cases highlight how fear and control are central to the military's use of public killings to silence anti-military sentiment.

Interviewed Case MDY_320: U Aung Nyunt, a 50-year-old civilian, was brutally beaten and tortured by 40-50 military personnel and Pyu-Saw-Htee militia in front of his family and community. After learning he was wanted for his involvement in community development, U Aung Nyunt hid at his daughter's house, but the military threatened to burn his family's home if he didn't return. On February 17th, he returned to protect them but was tortured, with the attackers mocking his volunteer work. This act was intended to instill fear, punish him publicly, and deter others from engaging in community efforts, leaving the community traumatized and controlled by fear.

"Right in front of his family, they mocked U Aung Nyunt, saying he was being beaten for leading and assisting in community and social development. As they beat him, we could hear both the sounds of the blows landing and his cries of pain."

The soldiers made it clear that his involvement in helping the community was the reason for the attack, turning his leadership into a justification for violence meant to terrify everyone watching and listening."

Witness-Interviewed Case MDY_320

Box-1 Case MDY_320: Beating and Torture of a Community Leader until Death by Military and Pyu-Saw-Htee Militia in Myingyan Township

On February 17, 2022, at 4:00 p.m., a unit of 40 to 50 military personnel and Pyu-Saw-Htee militia stormed Nyaun-Toal village in Myingyan Township and brutally killed U Aung Nyunt, a male community leader, at his home in front of his family and with the present of community nearby. The soldiers targeted him for his active involvement in volunteering and community development, using taunts to make it clear that his death was a punishment for his efforts to improve the community. Beaten and tortured until death, U Aung Nyunt's murder was meant to send a terrifying message, instilling fear and control by turning his execution into an example for the rest of the villagers.

Interviewed Case MDY_228: U Zeya, a male activist, was brutally killed at his home by military forces in the evening. The soldiers, marching in formation, stabbed him in the legs and inflicted a deep cut to his throat. This execution, witnessed by the surrounding

community, was a calculated act of terror meant to punish U Zeya for his political involvement. The brutal nature of the attack served to instill fear, sending a chilling message that anyone who followed in his footsteps would meet the same fate, thereby controlling the community through intimidation.

“While sitting in his chair, U Zaw was still alive when the soldiers arrived. However, it was clear they intended to kill him. The scene was horrific, with shedding blood and cries of pain making it unbearable for onlookers.

Those in the village felt powerless as they witnessed the violence unfold. Some tried to seek help, calling out for assistance, but as more soldiers entered the village, fear took over, and people began to flee. They were terrified and realized that any attempt to intervene could endanger their own lives. In the end, the brutality continued unchecked, and U Zaw lost his life right before our eyes.”

Interviewed Case MDY_228

Box-2 Case MDY_228: Inhuman Killing of a Male Activist by Military Forces in Shin Hla A Lae Village, Madaya Township

On March 12, 2022, at around 4:30 p.m., military forces stormed the home of U Zeya, a male activist, in Shin Hla A Lae village, Madaya Township, Mandalay region. Upon their arrival, soldiers questioned him aggressively before launching a brutal group attack. They stabbed him in the legs and inflicted deep cuts to his throat, actions clearly intended to instill fear among the nearby villagers. This horrific act of violence was not just a targeted killing, but a calculated display of power aimed at spreading terror and reinforcing control over the community. U Zeya’s murder served as a stark warning to anyone who might oppose the military’s authority, demonstrating their willingness to resort to extreme brutality to silence dissent.

3.2.1 Arbitrary violence and terror

In many cases, the military has engaged in the torture and killing of civilians without any clear reason. These violent acts are characterized by their randomness, often carried out without warning or provocation. Civilians, sometimes just trying to escape, become victims of extreme terror. Many are shot multiple times or killed in cruel and inhumane ways, showcasing the military's unchecked brutality. These actions are not directed at specific individuals or based on any suspicion, but rather seem intended to spread fear and impose control over the population. The following cases demonstrate the military’s brutal use of arbitrary violence to terrorize civilians.

Interviewed Case MDY_286: Five young men were shot and killed by military units and Pyu-Saw-Htee militia. The incident began when the men, attempting to visit a karaoke establishment, were denied entry by the owner. Their frustration escalated the situation, prompting the soldiers and militia inside the karaoke to respond with brutal force. Without hesitation, the men were beaten, dragged into a truck, and executed with gunshots to the head, leaving their brains exposed. This brutal act, carried out without warning or justifiable

cause, serves as a terrifying example of the military and militia's unrestrained violence and terror over the civilians.

“One of the young men, after drinking, started saying things, which likely led to the situation escalating. “Why the other group was allowed in but not us”, he questioned. At that moment, a Pyu-Saw-Htee member nearby overheard and angrily confronted them, asking, “What are you trying to do? Are you challenging us?” After that, they began to beat and arrest the men, dragging them into a truck. Later, it was reported that all five were shot in the head with rifles, their skulls shattered. They were brutally killed, with their heads left exposed after the execution.”

Interviewed Case MDY_286

Box-3 Case MDY_286: Execution of Five Young Men by Military and Pyu-Saw-Htee Militia in Myingyan Township, Mandalay

On January 27th, 2024, at around 1:00 a.m., five young men, all around 20 years old, attempted to enter a karaoke bar in Myingyan town. At the same time, units of the military and Pyu-Saw-Htee militia were stationed at the location. When the karaoke owner denied entry to the young men, their frustration led to complaints, which were overheard by the military and militia members. In response, the soldiers and militia brutally beat the men, dragged them into a truck, tied their hands behind their backs, and executed them by shooting them in the head near a school in Ma Kyee Tha Mya village. This horrific act of violence was purely arbitrary, a clear misuse of power by the military and their militia, resulting in the senseless and brutal killing of innocent civilians.

Interviewed Case MDY_337: Five male civilians were brutally shot and killed by military forces during a march through PyoKan village in Myingyan Township. As soldiers burned down homes, one villager fleeing for his life was shot and killed on the outskirts of the village. Another was forcibly removed from his sleep and executed. Two more villagers hiding in the monastery and one hiding in his home were arrested and killed without any warning. This case highlights the military’s arbitrary violence and terror, targeting innocent civilians who were simply trying to escape, and executing them without cause or justification.

“As the military approached from the west side of the village, they dragged Ko Thaung Lone, who had been sleeping in his hut, out of his home and shot him just outside the hut. At the same time, Ko Pyu Sein, who was returning from Ko Thaung Htun's house, was spotted by the soldiers. He attempted to flee and took shelter in Ko Pain's hut, but the military followed and shot him inside the hut.”

Box-4 Case MDY_337: Five male civilian were shot and killed at the outskirts of the village by the unit of Military in Pyokan village

On March 13, 2024, at around 6:00 a.m., a military unit of 30 soldiers entered Pyokan Village, Myingyan Township. One resident, while returning home, spotted the soldiers and tried to flee into a nearby hut but was pursued and shot dead. The troops then entered another hut, forcibly removed a man from his sleep, and executed him. Additionally, three villagers hiding in the monastery and their homes were arrested, beaten, and later killed near Kyat Hlwar Taw Kan as they were taken toward Kan Swal Village. In total, five male civilians were arbitrarily executed by the military, highlighting the violence and terror inflicted on the community.

Interviewed Case MDY_287: Eight soldiers and Pyu-Saw-Htee members, dressed in a mix of civilian clothes and disguise, forcibly entered the home of two women in the middle of the night. The women were violently removed from their sleep at gunpoint. A third woman from neighbor was also abducted from the area. The following day, all three women were found dead, their bodies bearing multiple gunshot wounds, discovered by locals near the site of the arbitrary arrest. This case underscores the severe and unchecked violence inflicted by both military forces and their militias and other armed groups, terrorizing innocent civilians with unlawful killings and brutal oppression.

3.3 Analyzing the Military's Methods Deployed in Unlawful Killings

The military's unlawful killings in Myanmar showcase extreme brutality aimed at controlling and terrorizing the civilian population. Based on reports and interviews, the following key methods are identified:

- **Disproportionate power:** Armed units attack unarmed civilians with overwhelming and disproportionate violence. Communities are raided, riots are incited, and powerful weapons are used against innocent people to instill fear and suppress opposition.
- **Dehumanization:** Victims' bodies are often left at the scene, preventing families from reclaiming them and obscuring the military's role by blaming other groups such as other armed groups and the People's Defense Forces (PDF). This tactic strips victims of dignity and compounds the terror.
- **Shoot-on-sight strategy:** Civilians fleeing military raids are arbitrarily shot without warning. These killings further the climate of fear and highlight the military's unchecked brutality.

3.3.1 Use of Disproportionate power

In many cases, the military uses disproportionate force to terrorize defenseless civilians, employing powerful weapons, storming villages in trucks, and conducting raids in large groups. These operations often lead to chaos, with random gunfire and violence aimed at

spreading fear and confusion. The motives behind these brutal acts appear to be instilling terror, oppressing the local population, and justifying arbitrary actions without any real cause. The following cases illustrate the military's ruthless use of force to control and terrorize innocent civilians.

Interviewed Case MDY_320: a group of 40 to 50 military personnel and Pyu-Saw-Htee militia stormed Nyaung-Toal village, spreading fear and chaos throughout the area. The armed group unleashed violence, brutally beating defenseless one male civilian, U Aung Nyunt, and killed in the attack. The soldiers and militia members tortured the victims to death, leaving the community paralyzed with terror. To further assert their control, they forbade nearby residents from approaching the scene. This case highlights the military's excessive use of overwhelming force on powerless civilians, illustrating the extreme violence and unchecked power they wield to oppress and terrorize innocent communities.

"There must have been about 50 Pyu-Saw-Htee members along with military soldiers, around 50 or 60 of them. Yes, they came in full force. As soon as we got word that they were coming, they arrived and immediately started beating U Aung Nyunt. They threatened shouting that anyone who were watching from the nearby houses will be beaten if they came out to see. There was shouting, and eventually, we couldn't hear any sounds anymore. We only heard crying from U Aung Nyunt's house later, the kind of crying that happens when someone has died. Only after that did we dare to come out and see."

Interviewed Case MDY_320

Box-6 Case MDY_320: An armed group of 40 to 50 military personnel and Pyu-Saw-Htee militia stormed Nyaung-Toal village and killed one defenseless male civilian.

On February 17, 2022, at 4:00 p.m., a group of 40 to 50 fully armed soldiers and Pyu-Saw-Htee militia entered Nyaung-Toal village, raiding the home of a male civilian and killing U Aung Nyunt. The defenseless man was brutally beaten by the armed group, ultimately succumbing to the torture. From the moment they entered the village, the group created chaos, threatening the nearby community while demonstrating their indiscriminate use of overwhelming force during the torture.

Interviewed Case MDY_285: a group of 100 soldiers stormed into Sine Gone village in Madaya Township, Mandalay region, terrorizing villagers hitting with power mortars. The armed force arrived from the south in a military truck and three FAW trucks, firing their weapons indiscriminately and causing villagers to flee in panic. Simultaneously, another military unit launched an attack from the west, shooting a male civilian multiple times in the head, leaving his body horrifically exposed. This incident reveals the military's reckless use of overwhelming force, as they stormed the village with full military capability, creating chaos and terrorizing innocent civilians.

"There must be over 100 of them, with three FAW trucks and one fully loaded truck. The military presence is significant—definitely over a hundred. They fired their weapons as they entered. The heavy artillery came from the south of our village, hitting us from the Taw Pu

village with 81 mm mortars. They entered our village through one route while blocking another route from the western part of our village."

Interviewed Case MDY_285

Box-7 Case MDY_285: Over 100 military personnel stormed into Sin Gone village, using heavy weapons while driving in one military truck and three FAW trucks.

On January 28th 2024 at 2:00 p.m., approximately 100 soldiers arrived in Sin Gone village from the south, traveling in one military truck and three FAW trucks. As they entered the village from Taw Pu Village, the troops began firing their weapons indiscriminately, launching mortars from the southern side and sending villagers fleeing in panic. Simultaneously, another military unit raided from the western side of the village, effectively blocking any escape routes. During this attack, one male civilian was trapped and shot multiple times in the head, dying on the spot.

Interviewed Case MDY_286: A group of military personnel and Pyu-Saw-Htee militia killed five defenseless young men by shooting them in the head.

Interviewed Case MDY_337: A unit of approximately 30 soldiers entered Pyokan village, setting houses on fire and killing five powerless male civilians by shooting them with guns.

Interviewed Case MDY_287: Eight soldiers and Pyu-Saw-Htee members dressed in civilian clothing and camouflage arrived on five motorcycles and raided the home of two women, as well as a neighbor's house of one woman. They arrested three women and executed them with multiple gunshots.

These above-mentioned cases highlight the military's indiscriminate use of overwhelming force against ordinary civilians, including women, showcasing the extreme violence and oppression inflicted on defenseless populations, which resulted in not only civilian casualties but also different impacts on villagers' lives.

3.3.2. Dehumanization

In some cases, the military exhibited cruel and inhumane treatment of victims by discarding their bodies in public areas, leaving them at the scene of the crime, or dumping them on the roadside. In some instances, they prevented families from recovering the bodies of their loved ones and even shifted the blame to other armed groups, such as the People's Defense Forces (PDF), to obscure their involvement. These actions highlight the military's dehumanizing behavior, stripping victims of their dignity and further traumatizing their families as per followed.

Interviewed Case MDY_286: Five young men were brutally shot in the head and killed by a group of military personnel and Pyu-Saw-Htee militia in Myingyan Township. The following day, police from Myingyan Township Station 1 summoned the victims' parents and coerced them into signing a statement falsely claiming that no bullet casings or evidence of injury were found at the scene. The families were only allowed to retrieve the bodies of their

children after signing this falsified statement. This case highlights the military's dehumanizing behavior—not only through the brutal execution of the young men but also by stripping the victims and their families of dignity. The attempt to falsify the truth and disrespect the dead demonstrates the extent of the military's inhumane treatment of civilians. The following testimony clearly depicts how the soldiers treated the dead bodies inhumanely.

"When all the clothes were removed, they put the children into large black body bags. One by one, they were placed into the bags and piled up. When I said I wanted to see my child's body at the hospital, they told me it wasn't allowed because it wasn't appropriate. They said that when the bodies reached Taung Tha, we would be able to see everything, nothing would be hidden, and we could see our children.

The first child they brought out was wrapped in the black body bag. I asked, 'Are the children still tied up, with their hands bound even now?' And the person from the Taung Tha funeral service confirmed, 'Yes, they are still bound, but don't worry. Once we reach Taung Tha, we will untie everything, and you will be able to see your child's whole body.' That's what they told us. When I asked, they said the clothes weren't there. So, I asked, 'Why did you take the children's clothes off?' They replied that they had taken all the children's clothes because they were being kept as evidence for the investigation, and they said they couldn't return them. They mentioned that once. They also made copies of the IDs of the people collecting the bodies, had us sign some documents, and at the hospital, they didn't explain anything. We just signed where they asked us to. As for the document, we didn't even know what it was. At the hospital, they didn't explain anything; they just asked us to sign, and after that, they handed the body over to us. They didn't mention anything about money or explain anything about their investigation."

Interviewed Case MDY_286

Interviewed Case MDY_287: A group of eight security forces and Pyu-Saw-Htee members, dressed in a mix of civilian clothes and camouflage, stormed the houses of three women, removing them from their sleep at gunpoint. The women were taken away, and their lifeless bodies were discovered the next day by locals near the southeastern edge of the village, dumped along the Mandalay highway. Each victim had been shot multiple times. This case highlights the military's dehumanizing treatment of civilians, exemplified not only by the arbitrary killings but also by the disrespectful disposal of their bodies. The inhumane dumping of the victims after execution reflects a complete disregard for human life and dignity, further demonstrating the brutality and terror inflicted on innocent civilians.

"Early the next morning, while searching, the bodies were found along the side of the Mandalay Highway near the village's southeastern edge, with multiple gunshot wounds. Hearing that female bodies had been found nearby, and knowing that our loved ones were missing, we went to check, and unfortunately, they were indeed our people."

Interviewed Case MDY_287

Interviewed Case MDY_228: A male activist, U Zeya, from Shin Hla A Lae village, was subjected to a savage attack by military forces. His body sustained multiple stab wounds in the legs, and a deep, fatal cut across his throat. Left barely alive, he remained in his home,

abandoned by the soldiers who had carried out the brutal assault. The case underscores the military's dehumanizing treatment of defenseless civilians, exemplified not only by the extreme violence inflicted upon U Zeya, but also by their heartless decision to leave him in such a cruel and vulnerable state. This act further highlights the deliberate and inhumane cruelty, showcasing a total disregard for human dignity and life.

"Sitting on his chair, U Zeya wasn't dead yet when I arrived, but he was close to dying. His leg and stomach was full of stab wounds, and his throat had been cut. It was a terrible sight, and I couldn't bear to look. I ran out to get help from the village. But when more soldiers came, everyone ran away in fear. After we escaped, we didn't go back. Auntie and the others went back into the village later, and by then, U Zeya had already died."

Interviewed Case MDY_228

3.3.3. Shoot-on-Sight Strategy

In some cases, the military has implemented a shoot-on-sight strategy, targeting civilians fleeing violence without any provocation or warning. This arbitrary and ruthless act spares no one, regardless of their circumstances, and has been carried out without justification. Civilians, often running for their lives, have been gunned down indiscriminately, instilling fear and uncertainty throughout the population. The shoot-on-sight strategy has made daily life perilous for the people of Myanmar, as any attempt to escape conflict zones or from the military raids can result in immediate execution. In other words, every encounter with the soldiers could be a deadly one. The following cases highlight the military's committing on shoot-on-sight strategy, blatantly ignoring and violating the individuals' fundamental human rights such as rights to live.

Interviewed Case MDY_285: Approximately 100 military personnel, accompanied by one military truck and three FAW trucks, stormed Sin Gone village from the south and west. A male villager, trapped on the western side of the village, attempted to flee in fear for his life. While trying to escape, he was shot twice in the thigh and then multiple times in the head, shattering his upper skull and leaving his head and eyes severely mutilated. This case highlights the military's brutal enforcement of a shoot-on-sight strategy, targeting civilians without any justifiable reason other than their attempt to escape.

"When he got caught, the soldiers thought at first that he was from the PDF. But later, they realized he was just a civilian. U Tin Kyaing, get fear and know that they were about to kill him, he tried to escape. As he ran, he was shot twice in the thigh, and after he fell, they kept shooting at him, aiming at his head. His entire skull above the eyes was gone, and both of his eyes were left exposed."

Box-11 Case MDY_285: A male civilian was shot and killed by the military while attempting to flee during questioning.

On January 28th, 2024, at approximately 2:00 p.m., around 100 soldiers marched into Sin Gone village, located in Madaya Township, Mandalay Region. A male civilian, U Tin Kyaing, was captured on the western side of the village for questioning as the military suspected he was a member of the PDF. After realizing he was just an ordinary civilian, U Tin Kyaing, fearing for his life, attempted to flee. As he ran, he was shot in the leg and then repeatedly in the head, causing his upper skull to be completely destroyed.

Interviewed Case MDY_337: A unit of 30 soldiers stormed Pyokan village in Myingyan Township, burning down houses and indiscriminately killing civilians. While returning from U Thaung Lone's place, U Pyu Sein spotted the soldiers approaching the village outskirts and attempted to flee. He ran into Ko Pein's hut for shelter, but both were pursued and fatally shot by the soldiers. U Thaung Lone, who was asleep in his hut at the time, was forcibly removed from his sleep and shot dead as well. This case highlights the military's ruthless enforcement of a shoot-on-sight strategy, targeting innocent civilians without any justification or reason.

"Ko Thaung Lone, who was watching over his hut on the outskirts of the village, was dragged out of his hut while he was sleeping. The soldiers pulled him out and shot him dead outside the hut. After that, U Pyu Sein, who had returned from U Thaung Lone's place, was spotted by the soldiers. When they saw him, he tried to run and took refuge in Ko Pein's hut. But the soldiers pursued him and shot U Pyu Sein inside the hut as well. His body was so badly mutilated that it was unrecognizable."

Interviewed Case MDY_337

Box-12 Case MDY_337: Three male civilians were shot and killed at the outskirts of Pyokan village by military units

On March 13, 2024, at approximately 6:00 a.m., a military unit of around 30 soldiers stormed Pyokan village, located in Myingyan Township. As the soldiers entered the village, they began burning houses. U Pyu Sein, a villager who noticed the approaching soldiers, fled in fear and attempted to hide in a nearby hut belonging to Ko Pein. Both men were chased by the soldiers and shot without warning. Meanwhile, another villager, U Thaung Lone, who was sleeping in his own hut, was forcibly removed and executed without any reason. All three men were killed at the outskirts of the village.

3.4 Analyzing the Victims' Profile of Military's Unlawful Killings

Military forces involved in extrajudicial killings do not discriminate among civilians based on gender, age, disability status, or ethnic and religious backgrounds. However, specific groups,

such as community leaders, activists, and human rights defenders, are disproportionately targeted, according to findings from both online and on-ground interviews.

- **Targeting activists and community leaders:** The military focuses significant effort on suppressing community leaders, rights defenders, and activists. By eliminating these individuals, they aim to dismantle organized resistance, silence voices that promote justice, and weaken the social structures that support human rights advocacy.

This pattern reveals a deliberate strategy to undermine communities' social and political fabric by removing key figures who could rally opposition or mobilize support for justice and accountability as in the following cases.

Interviewed Case MDY_320: U Aung Nyunt, a male civilian, was tortured and killed by a combined force of military personnel and the Pyu-Saw-Htee militia, estimated to be between 40 to 50 individuals. The assailants raided his home, subjected him to severe beatings, and ultimately killed him. Witnesses report that U Aung Nyo was targeted specifically because of his involvement in volunteer work and community development, as evidenced by the taunts hurled at him during the torture. His murder underscores the military's deliberate persecution of those contributing to societal improvement, aiming to instill fear and suppress civilian engagement in community efforts.

Interviewed Case MDY_287: Three female civilians—Ma Khin Swe Win, Ma Ei May Kyaw, and Daw Nyunt May—were forcibly taken from their home during the night while they were sleeping. The unit, composed of eight soldiers, stormed into the house, claiming that the women needed to be questioned. Despite their initial claims, the women were executed by multiple gunshots. This case highlights the military's blatant disregard for gender, as women were targeted and killed without any judicial process, further emphasizing the regime's willingness to oppress community leader only upon suspicion.

Interviewed Case MDY_285: In this case, approximately 100 heavily armed soldiers raided the village of Sin Gone. A male civilian, U Tin Kyaing, was apprehended and questioned under the suspicion of being a member of the People's Defense Force (PDF). During the questioning, U Tin Kyaing, driven by fear, attempted to escape. The soldiers responded by shooting him to death. This case illustrates how the military quickly resorts to lethal force even in situations where individuals show no violent resistance but are merely suspected of opposition involvement.

Interviewed Case MDY_228: U Zeya, another male civilian, was singled out and brutally killed in his own home. The military raided his house, interrogated him, and then proceeded to murder him in an especially cruel manner, inflicting multiple stab wounds to his leg and a deep cut to his throat. The gruesome nature of his death reflects a particularly brutal tactic used by the military to send a message of fear and control, especially against community leaders and opponents.

From these cases, it becomes evident that the military spares no mercy on civilians, regardless of gender or age. However, a closer analysis reveals a particular focus on community leaders, activists, and individuals suspected of supporting resistance movements. The targeting of U Aung Nyo, involved in community development, and the harsh treatment

of women like Ma Khin Swe Win, point toward a systematic effort to silence those engaged in social and political causes.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

Though practice of unlawful killings against civilian population is not alien to many communities across Myanmar, there has observed widespread, increased occurrence of killings in various part of the country including Mandalay, where different atrocities campaigns conducted by both airforce and ground infantry of the Myanmar military leads to civilians casualties. The military forces and its affiliated groups continues to heavily deploy killing as a tactic to suppress it dissent, terrorize unarmed villagers, while conveying the message that everyone is subjected to unlawful killing everywhere. This results in serious violation of fundamental human rights, especially the rights to live.

The incidents happened in Mandalay that this brief assessed highlights that the military forces are increasingly using killing as a tool to instill fear among and exert control over the people, with some cases seemed to be associated with arbitrary grounds. In several cases of killings, the security forces deploy disproportionate power in their commission of killings campaigns in different townships in Mandalay. The excessive use of soldiers and heavy weapons during campaign of terror is commonly found in cases analyzed in this report. The victims of the killing incidents are subjected to inhumanely treatment by their perpetrators who intentionally degrade dignity of those being murdered unlawfully by discarding them improperly or preventing families from retrieving dead bodies. The incidents reviewed suggest that the military continue to implement a shoot-on-sight strategy: which is constant shooting of civilians fleeing from military raids or villagers who encounters the soldiers. The findings also highlight that civilians, regardless of their gender, age, and social or political affiliation are subjected to the military's unlawful killings.

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations are made to the international stakeholders including UN bodies and ASEAN, NGOs, and regional and foreign governments including Thailand, and India and the military regime and the National Unity Government:

1. The Myanmar military must halt its atrocity campaigns against its own civilians including unlawful killings of civilians.
2. Foreign powers and neighboring countries should work with local and international humanitarian organizations to promptly establish coordinated mechanisms to provide shelter and protection for people fleeing from unlawful killings by the military. Coordinated international actions should include the initiation of screening processes for refugees and asylees in neighboring countries and increased international support for governments of countries harboring Myanmar's refugees and asylees.
3. The National Unity Government (NUG) should strengthen its efforts to seek justice and accountability for the extrajudicial killings committed by the Myanmar military at all possible international accountability mechanisms.

4. International governments and non-governmental organizations should work with local community organizations to implement programs for survivors of unlawful killings, witnesses, and human rights documenters for providing protection for them and for documenting their testimonies to use in judiciary mechanisms.
5. Local and international human rights organizations should strengthen the capacity of local grassroots organizations and establish nonpartisan channels to safely report acts of unlawful killings - not only those committed by the military, but also those committed by all other actors with territorial authority.