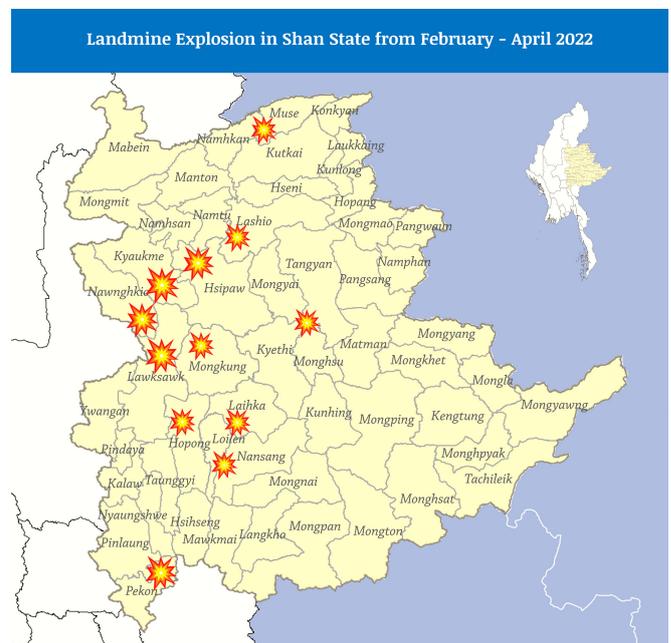


The Overall Situation in the Shan State

Fighting between various armed organizations has continued in many townships in the Northern and Southern Shan State during the past three months, and circumstances made the anxiety levels of residents increase. Using landmines, heavy shelling, and airstrikes killed and injured many civilians. The most afflicted area of conflict has centered on the northeastern part of the Shan State.

Landmines laid by the various armed groups in the Northern and Southern Shan State have resulted in at least 14 deaths, many injured, including children. The following incidents can provide examples of what is occurring in the Shan State:

On 3 February 2022, three IDPs [Internally Displaced Persons] in Hsipaw Township were injured after stepping on a landmine in a conflict zone contested by the RCSS and Northern Alliance, on 7 February 2022, two civilians were killed, and another one was injured after stepping on a landmine while working on a tea farm in Kyaukme Township, on 17 February 2022 three IDPs, including a 5-years old child, were killed while 5 others were injured after a landmine exploded as they were returning to their home from the IDP Camp located in Mong Yaw.



During the past three months, the Military Council has been making arbitrary arrests and reported to have tortured and killed innocent civilians. This includes the following incidents:

On 1 February 2022, members of the Military Council in Mong Mit Township shot two young people riding on a motorbike. One of them died immediately, while the other was seriously injured,

On 2 February 2022, an IDP in Kyaukme Township died from wounds sustained after being tortured by the Military Council,

On 14 February 2022, Members of the Military Council in Ywar Ngan, shot a man and arrested three other young men for no apparent reason, on 23 February 2022, a 70-years old man died, while a 14-years old girl and another man were injured by the heavy artillery shells fired by the Military Council in Mong Pai/Moe Byae.

In addition to the incidents mentioned, young activists and local residents who volunteered to support IDPs have been arrested and sentenced to serve time in prison. Between February to April, at least 10 people were arrested and detained. They were involved in demonstrations and collecting donations for the IDPs. In March 2022, the junta arrested six young activists, including three women and under 18 years of age, who traveled to donate food and other supplies to assist IDPs in Hsi Hseng.

A young resident in Taunggyi who had been helping the IDPs was arrested and sentenced to prison by the Taunggyi district court. This individual was charged with engaging in "terrorist activities", which carries ten years prison term.[1] The military junta has recently begun to track down and arrest people providing support to the IDPs in Taunggyi and other large urban areas. They are accused of helping PDF forces and are being apprehended by tracing their mobile banking or Kpay usage records.

The Situation of Displaced Women

As of 28 February 2022, there were approximately 873,000 people internally displaced within the country. Around 502,600 people were displaced due to insecurity and increased vulnerability to their communities since the military coup within affected areas.[2] As of 4 April 2022, approximately 907,500 men, women, and children were internally displaced inside Burma. Out of this group, 234,600 are IDPs located in the Southeast, and 227,300 are IDPs in the Northwest of the country.[3] Since the beginning of 2022, concerning the Shan State, the UNHCR has established a temporary base in Taunggyi to coordinate the distribution of emergency aid to IDPs arriving from the Karenni (Kayah) State.[4] As of 1 March 2022, there were 56,300 IDPs in the Southern Shan State and 6,600 IDPs in Northern Shan State.[5] The majority of these IDPs are women and girls.

As of February 2022, there are 19 pregnant women in the six IDP camps in Taunggyi Township, Southern Shan State. As of March 2022, 11 additional women were pregnant in four IDP camps in the Taunggyi district. Within two months, there were 30 pregnant women in the IDP camps in the Taunggyi area.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly since the military coup occurred, local women and IDP women were encountering more difficulty accessing health services that included maternal health care and basic needs such as those related to water, nutrition, and a safe place to live.

Violence Against Women and the Overall Gender-based Violence Situation

During February to April 2022, SWAN data collectors gathered information about 30 GBV cases. Nine out of these 30 cases involved sexual violence, while the remainder attributed to physical violence and domestic violence. The level of domestic violence increased primarily due to the usage of drugs and gambling. Most of the female family members, such as mothers, wives, sisters, and some elderly were survivors of these domestic violence assaults.

Sexual assault and violence incidents perpetrated by members of armed organizations in Hsipaw and Kyaukme Townships in Northern Shan State. A member of an armed group from Northern alliance tried to rape the wife, and the husband intervened and pleaded with the soldier not to do so. After that, the couple was detained until nighttime and warned not to speak about this incident. Too frightened to remain in their village, the couple decided to flee to the Thai-Shan border.

Another incident concerned a member of the SSPP assaulting a married woman. When the woman informed her husband, he went to complaint and argue with the perpetrator. After that, the perpetrator became angry and murdered the husband leaving the woman on her own to take care of the couple's eight months old child. When this woman asked for her husband's body the authority told her that it had already been buried.

Sources

[1] <https://burmese.shannews.org/archives/27823>

[2] <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-asia-pacific-complex-emergency-revised-emergency-appeal-n-mdrmm016>

[3] <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-emergency-update-6-april-2022>

[4] <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2022/2/6206288c4/unhcr-steps-aid-displaced-myanmar-conflict-intensifies.html>

[5] <https://www.mizzima.com/article/conflicts-displace-civilians-myanmars-shan-state>

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Conclusions and Recommendations

The current situation in the Shan State continues to place civilians at risk of being severely injured, killed, or involved in other aspects of the armed conflicts occurring there. The fighting between EAOs is causing more and more individuals and families to flee their homes, increasing the already large number of IDPs, and has worsened the already deplorable living conditions found in the newly established IDP camps. EAOs' members and members of the Military Council continue to commit human rights violations by arbitrarily arresting, torturing, and even killing innocent civilians.

Vulnerability for women has increased due to the present lawless situation in Shan State. They are less able to work safely outside their homes and must reserve more time for domestic tasks. They also are victims of an increasing gender-based violence, which they cannot report to the justice authority, as they do not have access to legal services, and in many cases, the perpetrators are members of the local ethnic authority organization and/or members of the military regime.

In this context, SWAN strongly urges all stakeholders, such as EAOs' members, and humanitarian organizations to ensure that civilians are secure and safe and to provide appropriate humanitarian assistance to IDPs in Burma.

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