

Myanmar Military Airstrikes Targeting Civilians

On February 1, 2021 the Myanmar military (also known as the Tatmataw) launched a coup against the civilian government, declaring the results of the November 2020 general election invalid. The military takeover occurred just hours before the newly elected parliament was scheduled to convene, destroying hopes of democratic progress in the country. The military takeover ignited nationwide protests, with hundreds of thousands taking to the streets. What started as peaceful demonstrations in the first weeks quickly escalated into lethal clashes, as the military initiated a brutal crackdown, arresting elected leaders, civilian officials, protest leaders, and journalists, and firing live ammunition at unarmed protesters (Parliament of Australia). Since the coup the military has killed a minimum of 3,500 civilians, detained at least 22,000 political prisoners, and forcibly displaced over 1.5 million people. Violence continues to escalate as the military has conducted airstrikes and land attacks, commits murder, torture, and sexual violence, and pillages and burns villages ostensibly aligned with opposition groups (United Nations Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, 2023).

Following the coup, Myanmar's military has predominantly relied on Russian-supplied military equipment to carry out human rights atrocities from the air. The Russian Federation and its state-owned entities have shipped at least \$406 million USD of arms, raw materials, and associated supplies to the Myanmar military and known Myanmar arms dealers since 2021. This includes Yak-130 fighter jets, parts for Mig-29 jets, and parts for Mi-35 attack helicopters, all of which have been used most extensively since the coup in attacks targeting civilians. One such example of this occurred on April 11, when a Russian-supplied Yak-130 fighter jet, armed with two domestically manufactured 250 kg bombs, took flight from Tada-U Airforce base and released its bombs on a ceremony attended by approximately 300 people in the Sagaing Region, killing 157 people (United Nations Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, 2023). The location of this event and the air base from which the jet originated are shown on the right. Following these attacks, Russia has continued to express its intent to support the Myanmar Military and provide additional Yak-130 jets and parts for other aircraft (Myanmar Witness, 2022).

The coup, and Myanmar's ongoing military campaign have drawn international condemnation and sanctions. Despite sanctions imposed by the United Nations, the United States, and other nations, the military has continued to evade them with the support of their allies, including China and Russia. This support allows for a flow of military equipment, parts, and fuel into the country, facilitating the continued human rights abuses against civilians.

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 Projection: Asia North Albers Equal Area Conic
 Data: ACLED, ArcGIS, Natural Earth, and Myanmar Witness

"Myanmar Junta Airstrike Apparent Laws-of-War Violation" - Human Rights Watch

On the evening of October 23, 2022, the Myanmar military carried out an airstrike on a music concert in Hpakant, Kachin State, organized by the opposition Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) to commemorate the ethnic organization's 62nd anniversary. Local media reported that at least 60 people were killed and 100 injured, and that the Myanmar military blocked access to medical care for those harmed. The concert was held at a base also used for military training by the KIO's armed wing, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

"Myanmar: 'Murderous' airstrike killed 28 civilians including children investigation reveals" - Amnesty International UK

At approximately 11:30pm on October 9, 2022, the Myanmar military launched an attack that hit the Mung Lai Hkyet displacement camp, close to the town of Laiza in Kachin State, near Myanmar's border with China. Witnesses told Amnesty that a large bomb exploded near the camp, followed by sustained mortar fire from nearby Myanmar military positions. The camp is home to an estimated 150 displaced families and is near other civilian homes in Mung Lai Hkyet village. The camp is around three miles from central Laiza, the headquarters of the Kachin Independence Organization/Army, an armed ethnic group that has fought the Myanmar military for decades (Amnesty International UK, 2023).

"Airstrikes in Rebel-Held Region of Myanmar kills at Least 100" - New York Times

On April 11, 2023 at least 157 people were killed, including 25 children according to two local groups that have verified the toll over several months. It was the single deadliest attack by the Myanmar military since it seized control from a civilian government in 2021, and a stunning demonstration, analysts said, of how far the junta is willing to go to crush the resistance movement that has pushed it out of large swaths of the country (The Washington Post 2023).

Tada-U Air Base

Shown are two Yak-130 aircraft, Tada-U is a principal air base for attacks on the Sagaing Region.



Magway Air Base

Shown is a Mig-29 aircraft, Magway is a principal air base used for attacks on Chin State as well as Magway Region itself.



Hmwabi Air Base

Shown is a Mig-29 aircraft, Hmwabi is a principal air base used for attacks on Kayin state.

Location of Airstrikes Targeting Civilians by Year of Conflict

- Into the third year of conflict (2/1/2023-11/20/23)
- Second year of conflict (2/1/2022-1/31/2023)
- First year of conflict (2/1/2021-1/31/2022)
- ✈ Airbase

