

## REGIONAL INVESTIGATION

# Civilian harm: an investigation into the impact of military operations in North-West Myanmar

REPORT BY MYANMAR WITNESS, 10 September 2022 (UPDATED 14 September 2022).

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## Executive Summary

Myanmar Witness has been investigating the civilian impacts of military operations in Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း), Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်) and the northern area of Magway (မကွေးတိုင်း) between September 2021 and May 2022. This report sets out evidence of the occurrence of man-made fires and the destruction of villages, as well as the violent deaths of multiple people. These findings corroborate eye-witness testimony of alleged human rights abuses by the Myanmar military. It also finds evidence to suggest that this use of force is driving cycles of violence between pro-military and pro-resistance communities in the region.

### Use of fire

Between September 2021 and May 2022, Myanmar Witness recorded 205 reports of homes and communities that were deliberately set alight in this region. The vast majority of these were attributed to the Myanmar military. By cross-referencing claims with satellite imagery and geothermal imaging data, Myanmar Witness has been able to verify or partially verify 172 of these reports. Time-mapping shows that the location and concentration of these fires correlated with troop build ups and the movement of military convoys in the north-west of Myanmar.

Myanmar Witness documented three interconnected trends related to the military's alleged use of fires against communities in Myanmar. First, military convoys passed through villages as part of military operations, with burnt buildings left behind. While footage is limited, Myanmar Witness has documented numerous claims, and on occasion been able to verify, the presence of military convoys in, or in close proximity to, communities where buildings have been burnt.

Second, evidence suggesting that the military entered and set fire to communities in retribution for the perceived anti-State Administration Council (SAC) stance of their inhabitants. This report presents two detailed case-studies showing the widespread and systematic destruction of homes in Thantlang and Taze townships – two areas known as centres of resistance to SAC rule. Further evidence of this trend is presented in Myanmar Witness' recent report, [Burning Myanmar](#).

Third, in recent months attacks by military and pro-military forces against communities appears to have led to retaliative violence in the Sagaing and Magway regions. This report contains partially-verified reports of attacks against communities perceived to be aligned to the SAC and pro-SAC militias. This dynamic will be explored further in Myanmar Witness' forthcoming report on pro-SAC militias.

### **Killings of multiple people**

Myanmar Witness has investigated three reports of the killing of multiple people in the north-west region in this time period. Eye-witness testimonies attributed these killings to the Myanmar military. Each of them followed reports of anti-regime protests and clashes between Myanmar security and local defence forces in the local area. In two cases the bodies were heavily burnt. This report presents detailed case-studies of:

- 18 dead in Myin Thar (မြင်သာ), Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ) Township, Magway (မကွေးတိုင်း) in September 2021 (partially verified). The dead reportedly included minors, the elderly and the physically disabled.
- 11 dead in Done Taw (ဒုံးတော), Salingyi (ဆားလင်းကြီး), Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) in December 2021 (fully verified). The dead reportedly included minors and an elderly women.
- Six dead in Thit Seint Gyi (သစ်ဆိမ့်ကြီး), Wetlet (ဝက်လက်) township, Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) in January 2022 (fully verified).

Myanmar Witness is still verifying footage related to further alleged killings in the north-west and other regions. These will be documented in a forthcoming report.

This pattern of deaths and setting fire to villages bears similar hallmarks to the 'clearance operations' conducted by the Myanmar military in Rakhine State, where the UN documented mass human rights violations. Myanmar Witness is continually monitoring the situation across Myanmar to ensure that reports of human rights violations are recorded and verified.

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## Introduction and Context

Myanmar Witness has monitored military activity and the human rights situation in the north-west regions of Myanmar, following the warning issued by [the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) on 8 October 2021 of substantial military deployments in these areas. Several [news outlets](#) and [pro-democracy sources](#) have stated that these military developments were part of a military operation called ‘Operation Anawrahta’ (အနော်ရထာ စစ်ဆင်ရေး), launched in Chin State (ချင်းပြည်နယ်) in early autumn 2021. According to pro-democracy sources this was allegedly followed by ‘Operation Alaungmintayar’ (အလောင်းမင်းတရား စစ်ဆင်ရေး) in Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) from late October 2021. However, there appears to be no official declarations by the Myanmar military which refers to these two specific operations or that calls them by these names.

According to the [Asia Times](#), a key objective of the offensive was to capture Camp Victoria in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) township. Camp Victoria is the headquarters of the Chin National Army (CNA), which – while small and militarily inactive in recent years – has retained a core of trained personnel. The camp was opened to the People’s Defence Forces (PDF) post-coup as a site to train against the Myanmar military.

Additionally, the military allegedly sought to gain control over two major supply routes for the Myanmar military in Chin State (ချင်းပြည်နယ်): the Kale-Falam-Hakha road, and the Kanpetlet-Mindat-Matupi road (Figure 1 and 2).

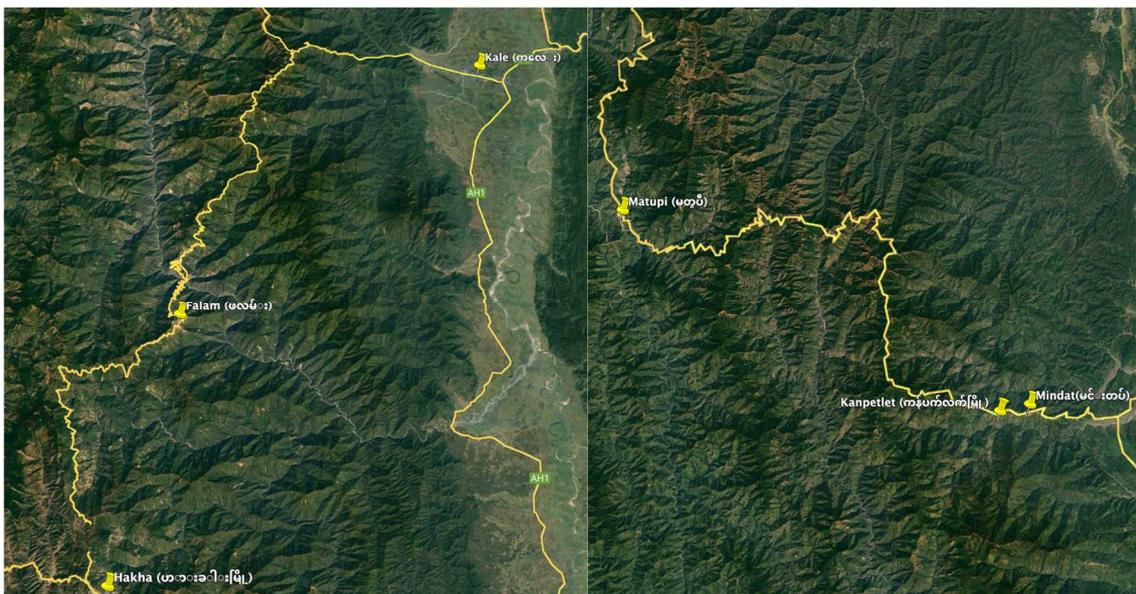


Figure 1: Two major supply routes in the Chin area, Kale-Falam-Hakha road, and the Kanpetlet-Mindat-Matupi road.



Figure 2: Two major supply routes in Chin in relation to one another throughout Chin.

This reports has also tracked the impact of another military offensive, which has been termed as Operation Alaungmintayar (အလောင်းမင်းတရားစစ်ဆင်ရေး) online by news sources and social media users. While this operation name has not been declared by the Myanmar military, there were increased attacks in the Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) region at the end of October 2021.

During this period, there were reports of repeated cuts to the internet and phone lines (Myanmar Now; Myanmar Now) which disrupted communications in the area and restricted the emergence of evidence of possible human right violations. Myanmar Witness has also identified the dissemination of propaganda, most often around the north-west regions, in the form of airdropped and hand-distributed pamphlets. The pamphlets contained disparaging messaging against the PDF coupled with pro-SAC sentiment in Myanmar. This is covered extensively in a recent Myanmar Witness report: Using Pamphlets for Propaganda, Misinformation, Intimidation and Division.

This report examines allegations of attacks against communities in the Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း), Magway (မကွေးတိုင်း) and Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်) regions in the context of the alleged military operations and suspected anti-military defence forces behaviour.

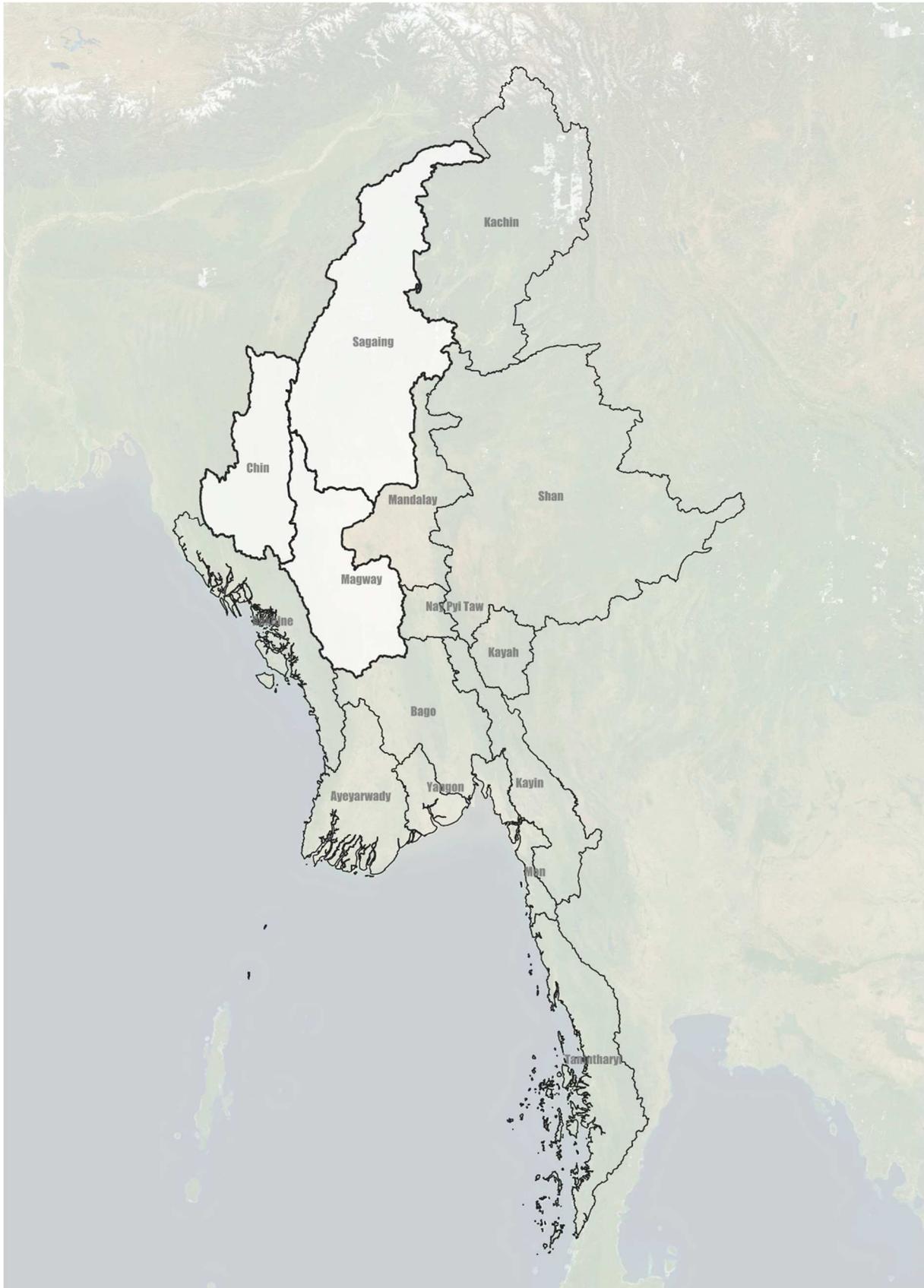


Figure 3: Geographic boundaries of Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း), Magway (မကွေးတိုင်း) and Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်).

Section One focuses on the use of fire and destruction of property. It provides an overview of fires reported in the region, followed by four in-depth case-studies of: i)

fires in communities linked to military movements; ii) destruction of communities by fire, allegedly in retaliation for resistance activity and iii) cycle of violence between pro and anti-SAC groups

Section Two examines reports of the killing of multiple people, reportedly by the military in retaliation against communities for PDF activity. It covers the following incidents:

- Myin Thar (မြင်သာ), Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ) Township, Magway (မကွေးတိုင်း) - September 2021 (partially verified)
- Done Taw (ဒုံးတော), Salingyi (ဆားလင်းကြီး), Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) - December 2021 (fully verified)
- Wetlet (ဝက်လက်) township, Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) - January 2022 (fully verified)

## Methodology

Myanmar Witness follows a methodology of digital preservation and rigorous, replicable analysis. Digital evidence is collected and archived in a secure database and preserved with hashing to confirm the authenticity and prevent tampering.



## Verification of imagery

Myanmar Witness applies a four-tier classification system to describe the extent to which footage has been independently verified by Myanmar Witness. This is as follows:

- **Fully verified:** Footage independently geolocated and chronolocated by Myanmar Witness.
- **Verified:** Footage has been geolocated by Myanmar Witness. Other sources concur on the time and date of the footage, with no evidence following to suggest that the footage was taken earlier or later. However, it has not been possible for Myanmar Witness to independently chrono-locate the footage.
- **Unverified / Under investigation:** Myanmar Witness has not been able to independently geolocate or chronocate footage at the present time.
- **Inauthentic:** The geolocation and chronolocation process has shown the location or timing of the footage to be inaccurate.

For the avoidance of doubt, this verification system only refers to Myanmar Witness' ability to independently geolocate or chronocate footage. Incidents marked as unverified may still be substantiated by multiple eyewitness reports. Sources are cross-referenced in this report to indicate where this is the case.

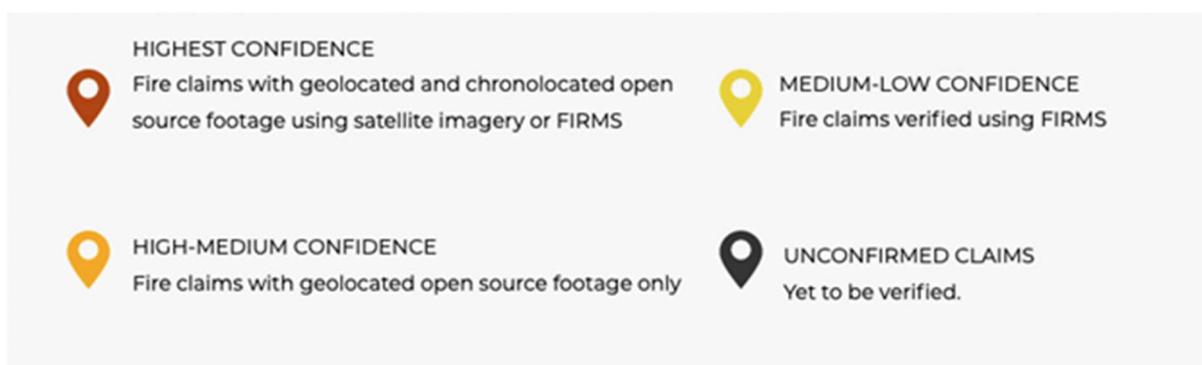
Geolocation is conducted using open source online tools such as Google Earth to match satellite imagery with visual features in the images. A high burden of proof is required to match imagery and all geolocations are cross-checked and peer-reviewed.

Chronolocation is typically conducted by analysing UGC timestamps to determine hard end limits for the possible time frame. This can then be followed with contextual analysis, for example comparing against known indicators such as events or clocks visible, weather, and shadows. Shadow angle is determined after geolocation and its orientation is used to determine the position of the sun and thus time.

## Verification of fires

Myanmar Witness uses additional resources to verify fires, namely NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) and Sentinel Hub. [NASA's FIRMS](#) uses VIIRS and MODIS sensors onboard satellites to obtain real-time heat signatures for fires on the earth's surface. While FIRMS has a high degree of accuracy, not all fires are picked up, due to limiting factors such as adverse weather events or fires occurring over too short a period to be detected by sensors. When Myanmar Witness cannot obtain confirmation of a fire on the claimed date through FIRMS, Sentinel Hub is used to track damage or change in the terrain between given dates. This utilises different filters and low-resolution satellite imagery to narrow down the time a fire could have taken place or the rough location of the fire in a given location. Sentinel Hub can also be used for other purposes of verification, including cross checking historic low resolution satellite imagery to disprove a suspected fire.

Verification of fire incidents is ranked as followed:



## Limitations

The information obtained by Myanmar Witness comes from an area of ongoing conflict. Availability of footage is limited by factors including fear of repercussions for uploading, unavailability of information from official sources and lack of access to the internet, which may also lead to selection bias in the footage available. Myanmar Witness strives to eliminate as much potential bias as possible by using both focussed and broad search terms in multiple languages, and by identifying media from multiple sources, such as social media and both pro and anti-SAC news media.

## Fires and Destruction of Property

### Overview of fires between September 2021 - May 2022

Between September 2021 and May 2022, Myanmar Witness recorded 205 reports of the deliberate burning of homes and communities in Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း), Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်) and Magway's (မကွေးတိုင်း) 'Yaw Region' of which it was possible to verify or partially verify 172.

As shown in Figures 4-6 below, Myanmar Witness documented a concentration of fires around the Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်) area for the first few months observed - from September to November 2021. [This correlates with what is alleged to be a military offensive in the area.](#)

[After November, there is a marked increase in fires around Sagaing \(စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း\), shifting the most intense conflict from Chin State \(ချင်းပြည်နယ်\) to Sagaing \(စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း\) and the northern area of Magway, known as the \(မကွေးတိုင်း\) 'Yaw region'. The region can be divided into: northern Yaw – centred around Gangaw district, and the river outlet on the Chindwin and Southern Yaw – Pauk is the 'gateway', and includes Saw, Kyaukhtu & Htilin.](#)

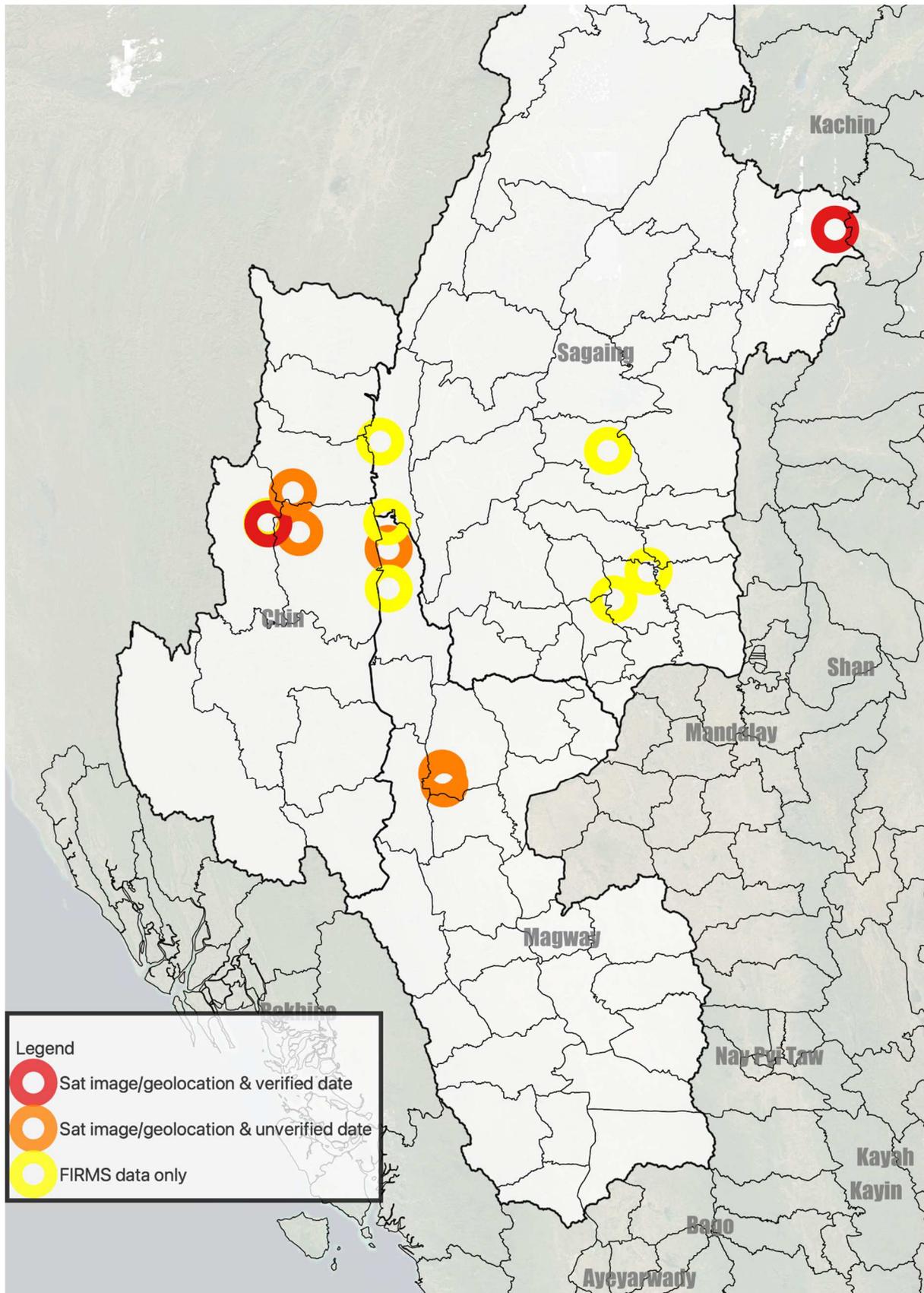


Figure 4: Verified or partially verified fires in the three regions observed during September, October and November 2021. This map was created by Myanmar Witness through QGIS.

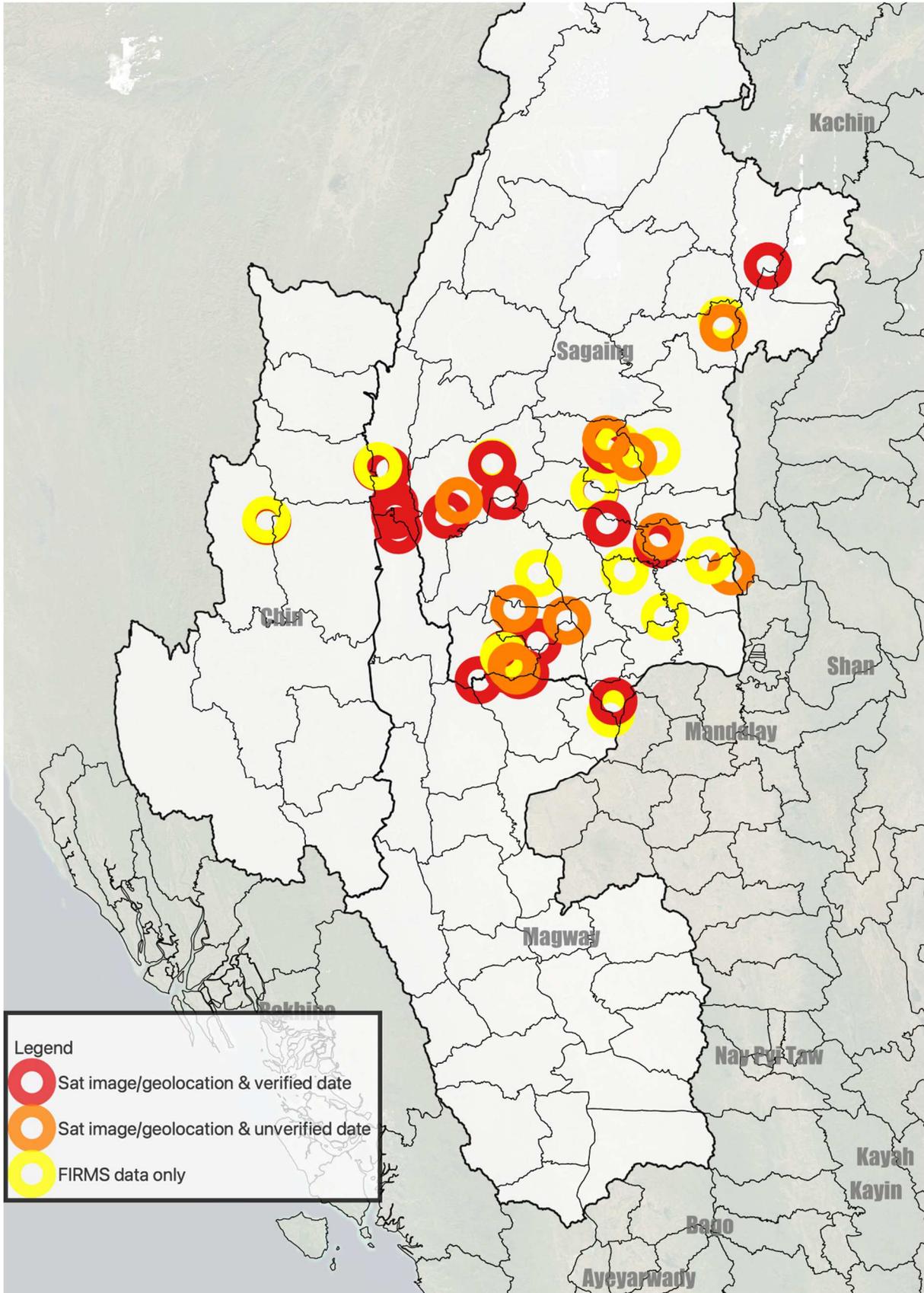


Figure 5: Verified or partially verified fires in the three regions observed during December 2021, January and February 2022. This map was created by Myanmar Witness through QGIS.

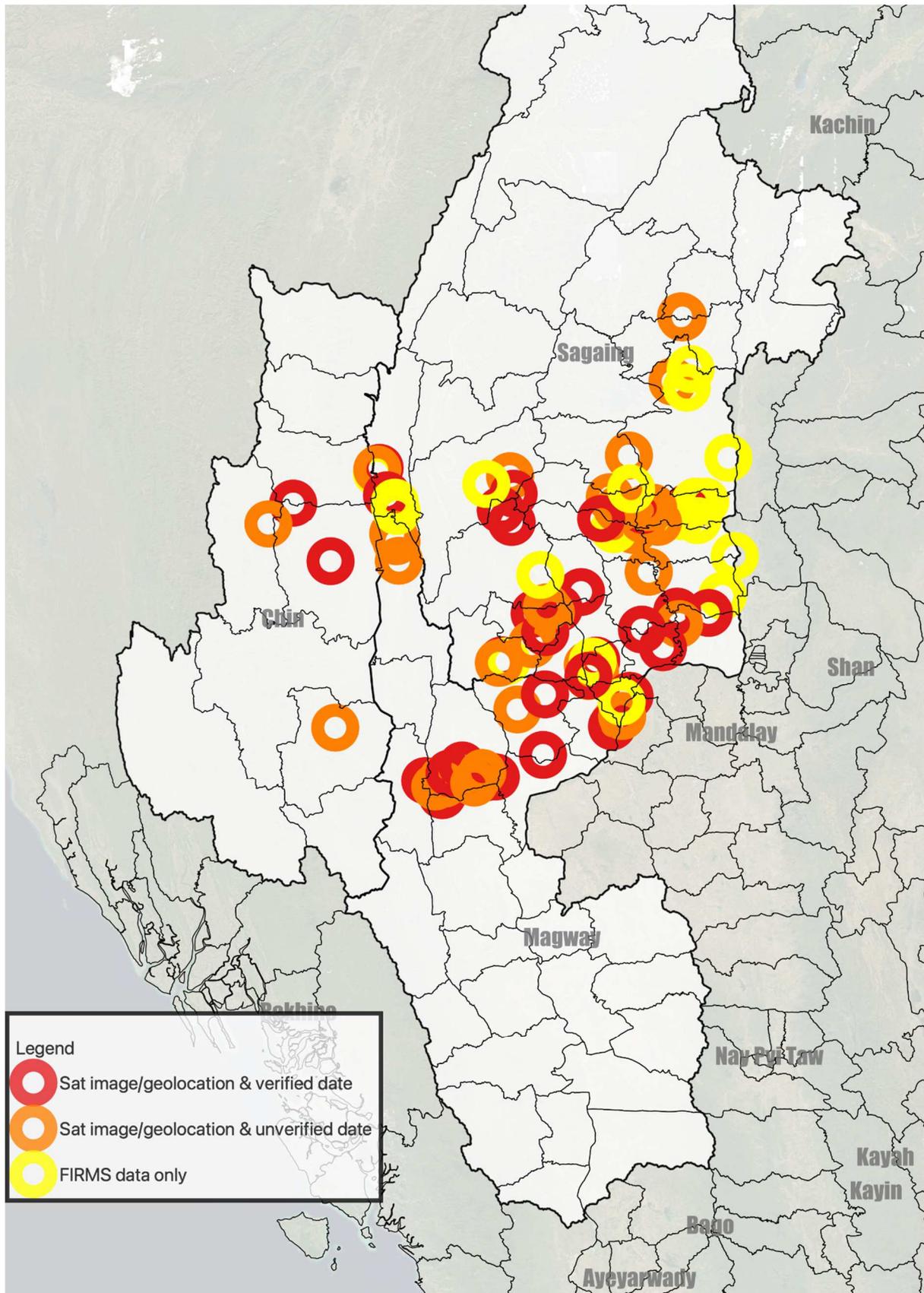


Figure 6: Verified or partially verified fires in the three regions observed throughout March, April and May 2022. This map was created by Myanmar Witness through QGIS.

In a statement to [Radio Free Asia](#) in February 2022, military spokesperson Zaw Min Tun acknowledges fires in these regions but insists PDF forces were responsible for the burning down of homes. According to eye-witness testimony and media reporting, the vast majority of fires were perpetrated by the military.

Myanmar Witness documented three main and inter-connected trends related to the military's alleged use of fires against communities. First, reports that military convoys passed through villages as part of military operations, sometimes using them for accommodation, leaving burnt buildings in their wake. Second, evidence suggesting the military deliberately entered communities known for their association with the pro-democracy movement or where PDF's had been active, setting fires to homes in retribution for the perceived anti-SAC stance of their inhabitants. Third, in recent months, this appears to have sparked retaliatory violence most notably in the Sagaing and Magway regions, with reports of retaliatory attacks against communities perceived to be aligned to the SAC and pro-SAC militias. This will be explored in more detail in Myanmar Witness' forthcoming report on pro-SAC militia activity.

## Destruction of homes linked to military convoys

While footage is limited, Myanmar Witness has documented numerous claims, and on occasion been able to verify, the presence of military convoys in, or in close proximity to, communities that were attacked. For example, on 2 March 2022, in Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်), Myanmar Witness verified military convoys being pictured moving through Dokthek village, while structures in the village were in flames (Figure 7). Cross referencing the alleged date with [FIRMS](#) demonstrates a fire in this village on 2 March 2022. The most in-depth cases Myanmar Witness has investigated in regards to this pattern is again in Chin around October 2021.



Figure 7: Verified image of a large Military convoy moving through Dokthek (ဒေါက်ကီ) village in Falam Township (ဖလမ်းမြို့နယ်), Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်) at 22.804994, 93.565967, while structures are on fire.

### Magway-Sagaing-Chin convoys, October 2021 (partially verified)

In October 2021, Myanmar Witness traced the route of military convoys moving from Magway (မကွေးတိုင်း) and Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) up into Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်) State and reports of fires and destructions of homes left in their wake. This movement is consistent with Operation Anawrahta (အနော်ရထာ စစ်ဆင်ရေး). This case study is based on a combination of cross-referenced local media reports, claims made on social media relating to military activity and verifiable material where available. Figure 8 provides a map of these events, with a detailed timeline available in Annex 1.

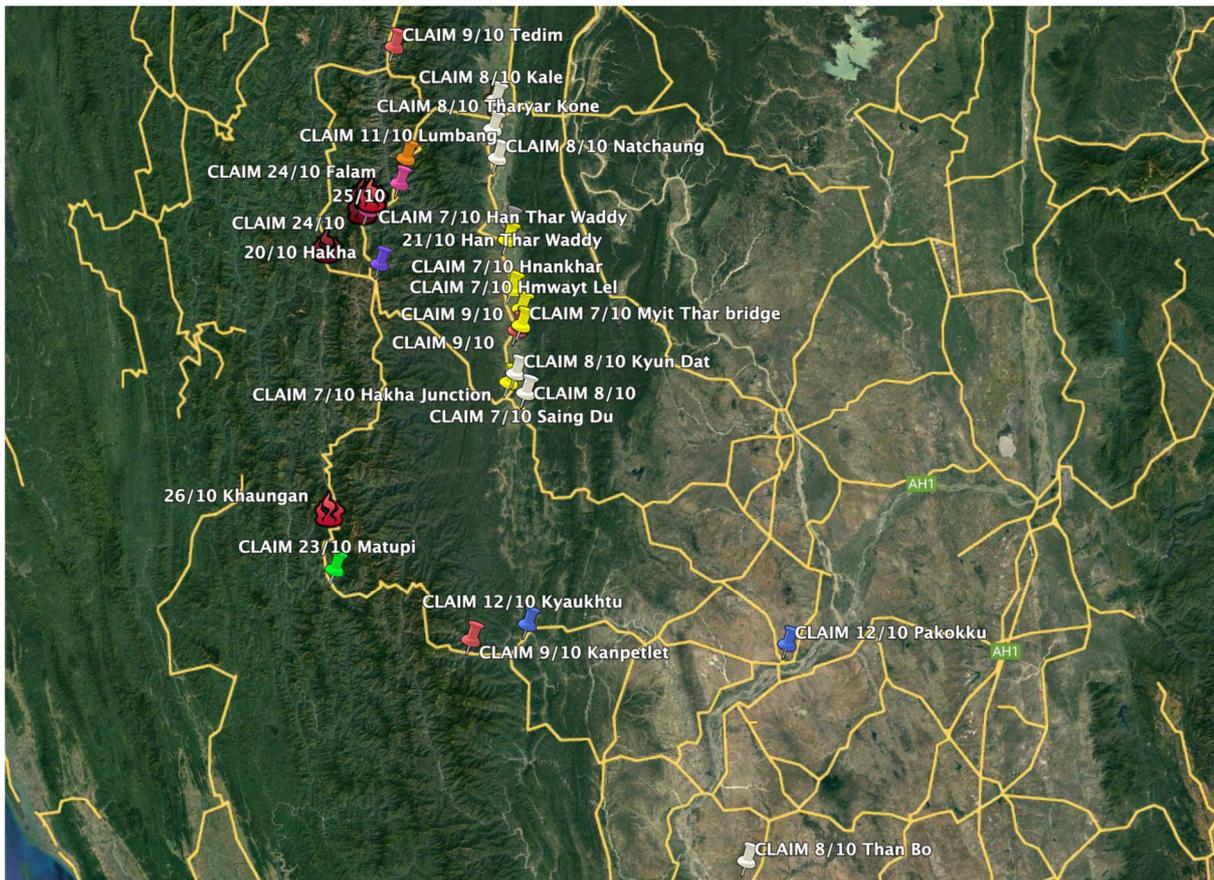


Figure 8: Mapping of the claims collected via social media alongside geolocated claims of destruction and fires throughout October 2021. The yellow lines represent roads, while the claims are highlighted with 'CLAIM' and the claims with geolocatable images attached have been inserted without 'CLAIM'. The colours of the pins represent the different days while the fire icon represents destruction in that area.

Between 7-10 October 2021, there were many social media reports placing the military along the Gangaw-Kale road. There were claims that villagers - arrested in Sai Du (စိုင်းဒူး) village - were used as human shields, as well as claims that homes were destroyed by fire. Myanmar Witness was not able to substantiate these claims due to a lack of available footage.

From 8-14 October, there were multiple reports of military movements heading up to Falam and Hakha from Tedim and Kale (ကလေး), with one verified case of a fire related to this convoy.

On 11 October 2021, the [Chin Human Rights Organisation](#) reported that at least 55 truckloads of soldiers arrived at Lumbang village (လုံဘန်း) [23.001250, 93.700542] on the road between Tedim and Falam. Myanmar Witness geolocated images of vehicles allegedly related to this convoy movement (Figure 9). On 12 October 2021, 50 trucks reportedly left Lumbang in the morning with 21 military vehicles and one armoured vehicle arriving in Falam (ဖလမ်း) from Kale (ကလေး) at 1450.



Figure 9: Vehicle spotted at 23.001250, 93.700542 before arriving in Lumbang village (လုံဘန်း).

On 14 October 2021, the [Chinland Post](#) reported that villages on the Falam (ဖလမ်း) to Hakha road, namely Taal (တာရ်) and Thlanrawn (တလန်ရောန်), were on fire with 12 houses burning in Taal (တာရ်) village and three houses in Thlanrawn village (တလန်ရောန်) [22.85872078, 93.59303284]. Footage from [Chin Human Rights Org](#) features Thlanrawn (တလန်ရောန်) [22.864881, 93.596241] on fire, while a stationary convoy can be seen by the village (Figure 10). This does not attribute the convoy as being the cause of the fires. However, this convoy size is consistent with the claims seen above and mapped as moving around the area. It was possible to deduce from the shadows in the footage that this fire occurred at around 1107 local time. [Zotung Tube Times](#) uploaded footage reportedly showing Thlanrawn village (တလန်ရောန်) on fire on 14 October. Phone lines were reportedly cut in areas of Chin at the time (ချင်းပြည်နယ်).



Figure 10: A large convoy can be seen in this footage, while a fire burns.

Between 15-26 October 2021, there were further reports of military movements in the Falam-Hakha area. Myanmar Witness has partially verified reports on the ransacking and attacks on civilian infrastructure and homes in Ramthlo village, Thlanrawn village and Taal in this timeframe.

On 16 October 2021 [The Ladies News](#) reported that the military were trapped between Thlanrawn village (တလန်ရှောန်) and Taal village (တာရ်) in Falam (ဖလမ်း) Township. On 19 October 2021, around 100 houses were allegedly ransacked in nearby Ramthlo (ရမ်ထလို) according to [The Chin Journal](#) (Figure 11). The date cannot be verified but the images related to these reports had not previously been uploaded and were geolocatable to Ramthlo (ရမ်ထလို), on the Falam-Hakha Road [22.826003, 93.561918].



Figure 11: Ramthlo (ရမ်ထလို), Falam (ဖလမ်း) was allegedly ransacked by the military when passing through.

On 20 October 2021, it's alleged that the military attacked and burned down a home in Taal (တာရ်), Falam (ဖလမ်း) [22.865650, 93.564553]. Images uploaded in relation to this incident can be geolocated to the village, showing the destruction of a single structure (Figure 12). However, this cannot be confirmed to have occurred on the day due to a lack of low-resolution satellite imagery to confirm ground change or FIRMS data in this area on the date in question.

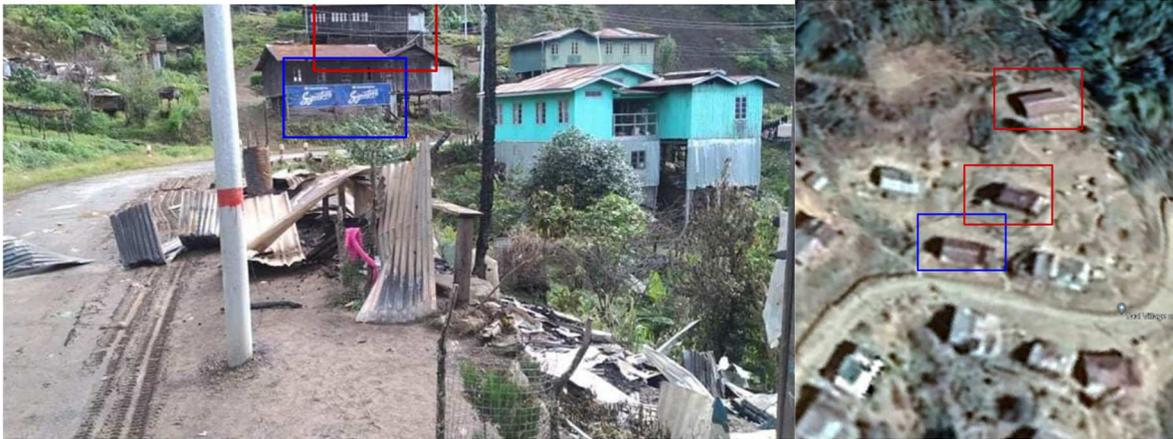


Figure 12: A structure is destroyed in Taal (တာရီ), Falam (ဖလမ်း), Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်).

On 20 October 2021, there were multiple claims of a convoy arriving at Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) in Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်). Myanmar Witness verified footage uploaded by [The Hakha Times](#) showing a convoy on the way to Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) (Figure 13) [22.692419, 93.582061]. According to shadow indications this footage was taken at around 1530, however the date cannot be confirmed.



Figure 13: Footage of the convoy arriving to Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) in comparison to Google Earth satellite images.

Other images show a convoy in Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) [22.685373, 93.585917] and what appears to be soldiers on the ground in Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) [22.689343, 93.585854] (Figure 14) as well as comments on fighting alleged to have happened between Dokthek (ဒေါ်ထက်) [22.804600, 93.566200] and Chuncung (ချွန်ကျုံး) [22.685373, 93.585917] the night before.



Figure 14: Convoy and soldiers pictured respectively in Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့).

Myanmar Witness geolocated images posted on 22 October 2021, of individuals in a truck passing through Thlanrawn village (တလန်ရှောန်), alongside destroyed structures (Figure 15) [22.865844, 93.596842]. According to social media users, the military had destroyed homes in the village and people were fleeing the area.



Figure 15: Individuals in a truck appears to be leaving Thlanrawn village (တလန်ရှောန်).

On 23 October 2021, it was reported by [Hakha Times Daily](#) that more than 50 vehicles carrying military personnel returned to Falam (ဖလမ်း) from Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့). Myanmar Witness geolocated an image of around at least 14 vehicles in Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) (Figure 16) [22.686789, 93.586529] posted at this time, but was not able to verify the date.



Figure 16: Convoy of military vehicles and individuals on the ground in Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့). The image has been cropped by Myanmar Witness.

In a post by [The Chin Journal](#) it's claimed that the convoy that left Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) spent the night of the 24 October 2021 at Ramthlo (ရမ်ထလို့) on the Falam-Hakha road. [Chindwin News Agency](#) reported skirmishes along the road resulting in the deaths of SAC soldiers. According to local villagers interviewed by [Zalen News](#), the military killed a pig, burnt down a house and shot at homes in the village with heavy weaponry. Myanmar Witness was able to verify that the ammunition reportedly photographed in Ramthlo were 24-MG2 grenades (Figure 17). The location of a damaged house attached to these claims is geolocatable to Ramthlo (ရမ်ထလို့) [22.826219, 93.561639] (Figure 18, full footage available on request).



Figure 17: An image related to claims that the military had used 24-MG2 grenades in Ramthlo (ရမ်ထလို့).



Figure 18: Frame from an unrelated video of Ramthlo (ရမ်ထလို) used in the geolocation of a damaged building to this village 22.826219, 93.561639.

On 25 October 2021 footage of burning homes was geolocated by Myanmar Witness to Thlanrawn (တလန်ရှောန်) [22.865844, 93.596842]. Other images, uploaded by [The Chin Journal](#), of destroyed buildings were geolocated to Taal (တာၤ) (Figure 19) [22.865753, 93.563661]. Reports claim that the destruction happened around 0700, when 11 houses were burned by the SAC after they had spent the night. The convoy reportedly had around 50 SAC trucks and 200 SAC soldiers. It is also reported by [Khit Thit Media](#) that messages were written on buildings, threatening to burn the whole village in Taal (တာၤ). Myanmar Witness could not verify the date of either image due to a lack of corresponding data from FIRMS and Sentinel.



Figure 19: Geolocation of destroyed homes in Taal (တာၤ), Falam (ဖလမ်း) in Chin State (ချင်းပြည်နယ်).



Figure 20: Comparison of mountainous range in image of destroyed homes in Taal (တာၤ) used for geolocation.

According to the [International Chin Humanitarian Info Network](#), on 26 October 2021 Thu Phay village on the Kale-Falam road in Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်), was raided after the army spent the night there. At 2125, 50 military vehicles reportedly arrived in Kale (ကလေး) from Falam (ဖလမ်း).

On the morning of 27 October, social media users reported that 80 military vehicles were heading to Matupi (မတူပီ), Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်). [FIRMS](#) records night-time fires, at around 0215 local time on 26 October 2021, next to Khuangan (ခွါငန်း), Matupi (မတူပီ) [21.796039, 93.439738]. The village is on the way to Matupi Town (မတူပီမြို့) (Figure 21).

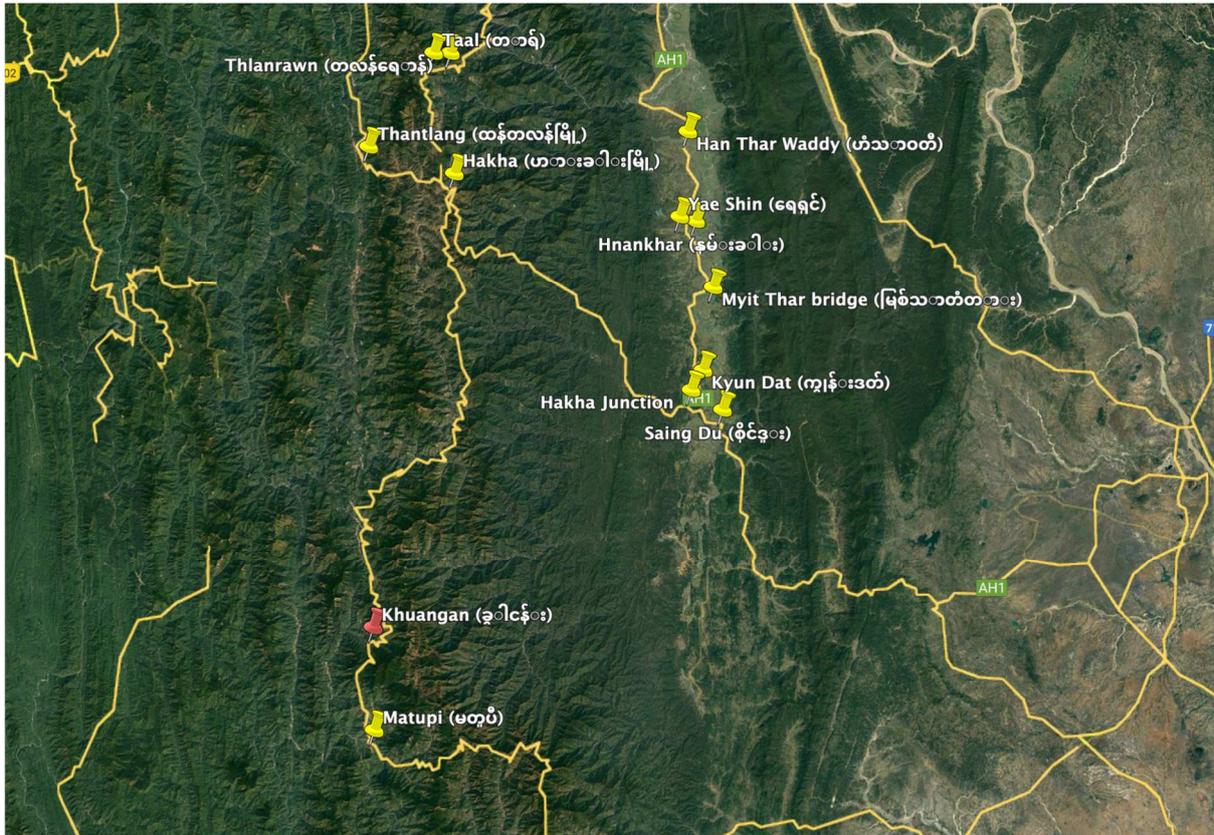


Figure 21: The location of Khuangan (ခွါငန်း) in relation to Matupi Town (မတူပီမြို့) and other areas of reported military activity.

On 29 October 2021, fires began being [reported](#) in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့), up the road from Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) and along a western road as compared to previous fires in Taal (တာရ်) and Thlanrawn (တလန်ရှောန်) (Figure 22). Through open-source information Myanmar Witness had verified that more than 150 buildings in Thantlang were destroyed by arson on 29 October 2021 (Figure 23-25). A detailed report on the extensive fires in Thantlang can be found in the *Myanmar Witness Spot Report: Thantlang, Chin State October 2021* (available on request).

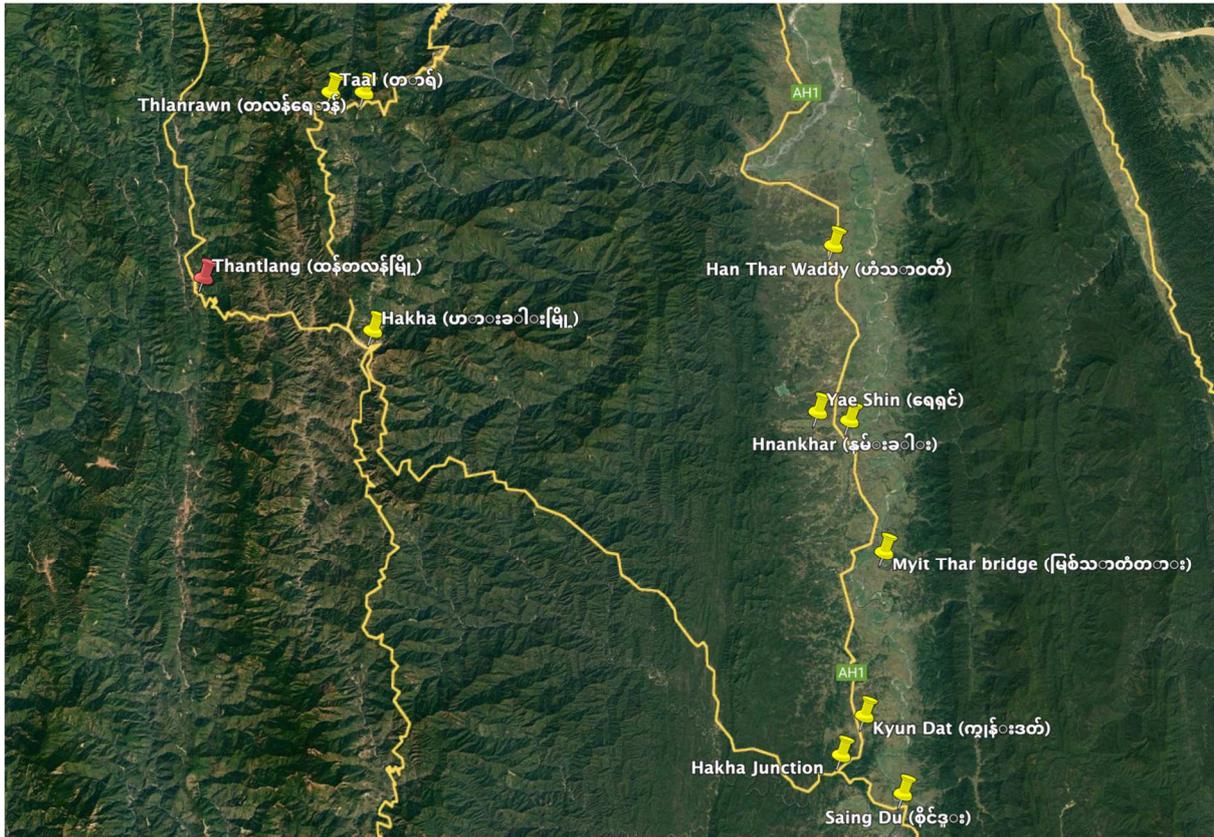


Figure 22: Mapping to demonstrate Thantlang's position in regards to other areas military movements were reported on in October 2021.

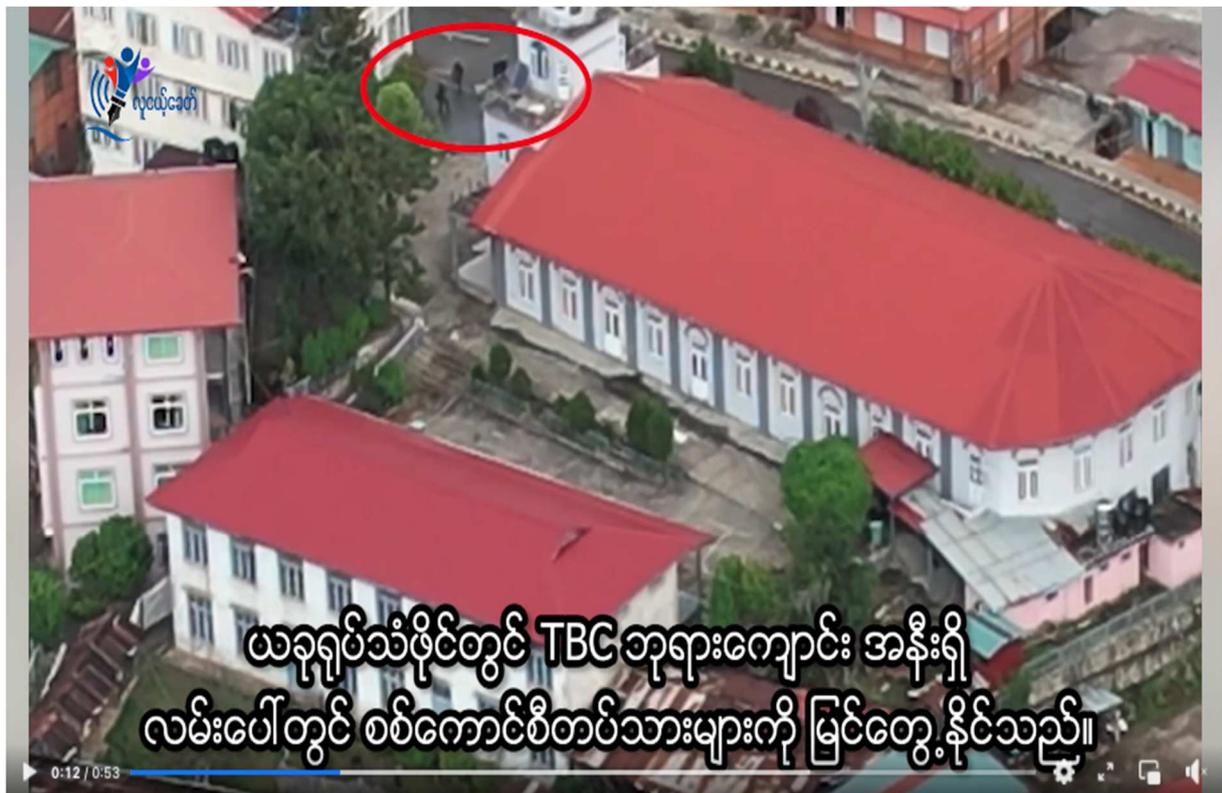


Figure 23: Drone footage on 29 October 2021 in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) appears to capture individuals, allegedly the military, setting fires [22.697950, 93.428231].

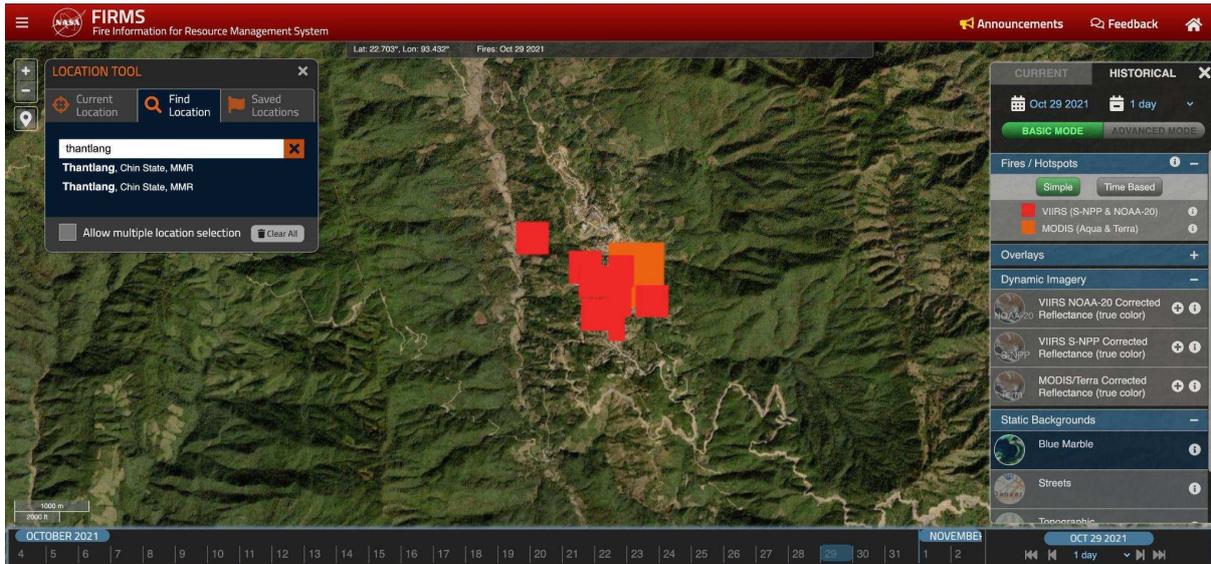


Figure 24: Heat signature data from FIRMS indicates the multiple heat signatures were picked up on 29 October 2021, confirming the time and location of those readings.



Figure 25: Aftermath of these fires that can be seen in multiple locations on 1 November 2021 [[22.705908, 93.428334 and 22.701503, 93.427879 respectively].

## Destruction of Communities by Fire

Myanmar Witness has documented numerous reports of arson attacks against civilian homes and infrastructure by the military across communities in north-west Myanmar, allegedly in retaliation for pro-democracy protests and PDF activity. In this section, Myanmar Witness examines two in-depth case-studies illustrating this trend. Further reporting on arson attacks on communities across Myanmar can be found in our report [Burning Myanmar](#).

In recent months, Myanmar Witness has also documented a much smaller number of reports of attacks against villages alleged to be aligned to the SAC or pro-SAC Pyu Saw Htee militias, in what appears to be retaliation for military or pro-SAC militia violence in the area. This is illustrated in a case study on Pale Township and will be explored in more depth in Myanmar Witness' forthcoming report on pro-SAC militias.

## Thantlang Township, Chin - November 2021 onwards (partially verified)

### Summary

Myanmar Witness has identified repeated fires in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့), Chin State (ချင်းပြည်နယ်). Large-scale fighting around Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့), which begun in August 2021, intensified around September, with reports that the city was mostly abandoned from that time. Details of fires in Thantlang township in the period September to October 2021 are covered in Myanmar Witness' *Spot Report Thantlang, Chin State October 2021 (available on request)*. This section focuses on further destruction in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) from November 2021.

Myanmar Witness has assessed available footage of Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) since September 2021 which appears to suggest that, as of June 2022, approximately 1,015 structures in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) have been destroyed - the buildings have been reduced to ashes or heavily burned.

Reporting from non-SAC sources consistently attribute these attacks to the Myanmar military. While there is no identified user generated footage of the Myanmar military in the areas during this reporting period, Myanmar Witness previously identified a military base at the top of a hill in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) which was reportedly in use by the military during this time (located at 22.687342, 93.432531). Myanmar Witness cannot determine if there was activity at the base in the reporting period due to a lack of high-resolution satellite imagery to confirm human activity at the site (Figure 26).



Figure 26: Myanmar military base outside of Thantlang. The solid red-line shows the trench parameter; the dotted red line shows where there had been possible further military occupation; The blue circle shows where fires were present and the green cross shows where a Myanmar military soldier was located in a previous report, Myanmar Witness Spot Report: Thantlang, Chin State October 2021, watching fires in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့).

### Timeline

Between 24-29 November 2021, Myanmar Witness detected 24 separate fire hotspots in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့), along with multiple pieces of footage showing fires and fire damage to the town (Figures 27-32). [The Irrawaddy](#) reported accounts from locals and resistance forces in the area who claimed that the Myanmar military were responsible for the fires. According to one local Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်) resistance fighter interviewed, troops were stationed on a hill in the middle of the town (consistent with the military base identified in Figure 26). The fighter stated that the military conducted these arson attacks in order to keep the ground around them clear of resistance fighters, as well as in retaliation for the death of fellow soldiers.



Figure 27: 24 separate fire hotspots detected by [FIRMS](#) from 24-29 November 2021 in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့).  
Satellite imagery from Google Earth, edited by Myanmar Witness to include icons.



Figure 28: Verified Image of Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) burning on 24 November 2021, with the location from Google Earth.



Figure 29: 25 November 2021 fire in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) at around 22.690192, 93.432146).



Figure 30: Images uploaded to social media on 25 November 2021 demonstrate damage that had occurred to Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) as a result of fires between 24-25 November. These homes do not appear damaged in earlier footage of October attacks. Satellite imagery from Google Earth.



Figure 31: Video uploaded on 28 November 2021 with active fires at around 22.691378, 93.433846, 1345 approx local time. FIRMS also recorded active fires in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) on this day.



Figure 32: Video uploaded on 28 November 2021, with active fires. Located at around 22.691926, 93.430552, 1345 approx [local time](#). FIRMS also recorded active fires in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) on this day.



Figure 33: Sentinel Hub imagery showing change in the southern area of Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) between 24 November and 4 December 2021.

Myanmar Witness recorded five further instances of fire in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) on 4 December, 8 December, 18 December, 3 January and 6 January, detected through FIRMS and social media claims.

On 2 February 2022, [the Chinland Post](#) posted images showing extensive fires in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့), reportedly set on 1 February 2022 (Figure 34). Myanmar

Witness geolocated these images to Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့). Between 28 January 2022 and 2 February 2022, [Sentinel EO](#) shows damage in this particular location (Figure 35).



Figure 34: Destruction in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) at 22.698573, 93.430491, posted on 2 February 2022.



Figure 35: Damage around 22.698573, 93.430491 in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) between 28 January and 2 February 2022. Low resolution satellite imagery from Sentinel Hub.

Between 25-27 February 2022, more fires were reported in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) by the [Thantlang Placement Affairs Committee](#), totalling around 101 structures. These claims match with [FIRMS](#) data from those days and footage was geolocated by Myanmar Witness to confirm that extensive destruction had taken place.

There were further reports – uploaded by [Thantlang Placement Affairs Committee](#) – of fires occurring on 24 and 26 May 2022. Myanmar Witness analysed associated imagery and identified around 336 structures which were destroyed or damaged in the north of Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) that had not previously been recorded.

Below is a mapping of these different incidents. The yellow icons denote destruction from September and October 2021. The red icons denote November and December 2021. The purple icons denote January and February 2022. The pink icons denote May 2022. The brown icon denotes destruction which occurred within an unknown time frame. Nonetheless, this destruction occurred since Google Earth updated its satellite imagery on 12 November 2021. Footage from before September does not confirm if the exact structure was still erected.

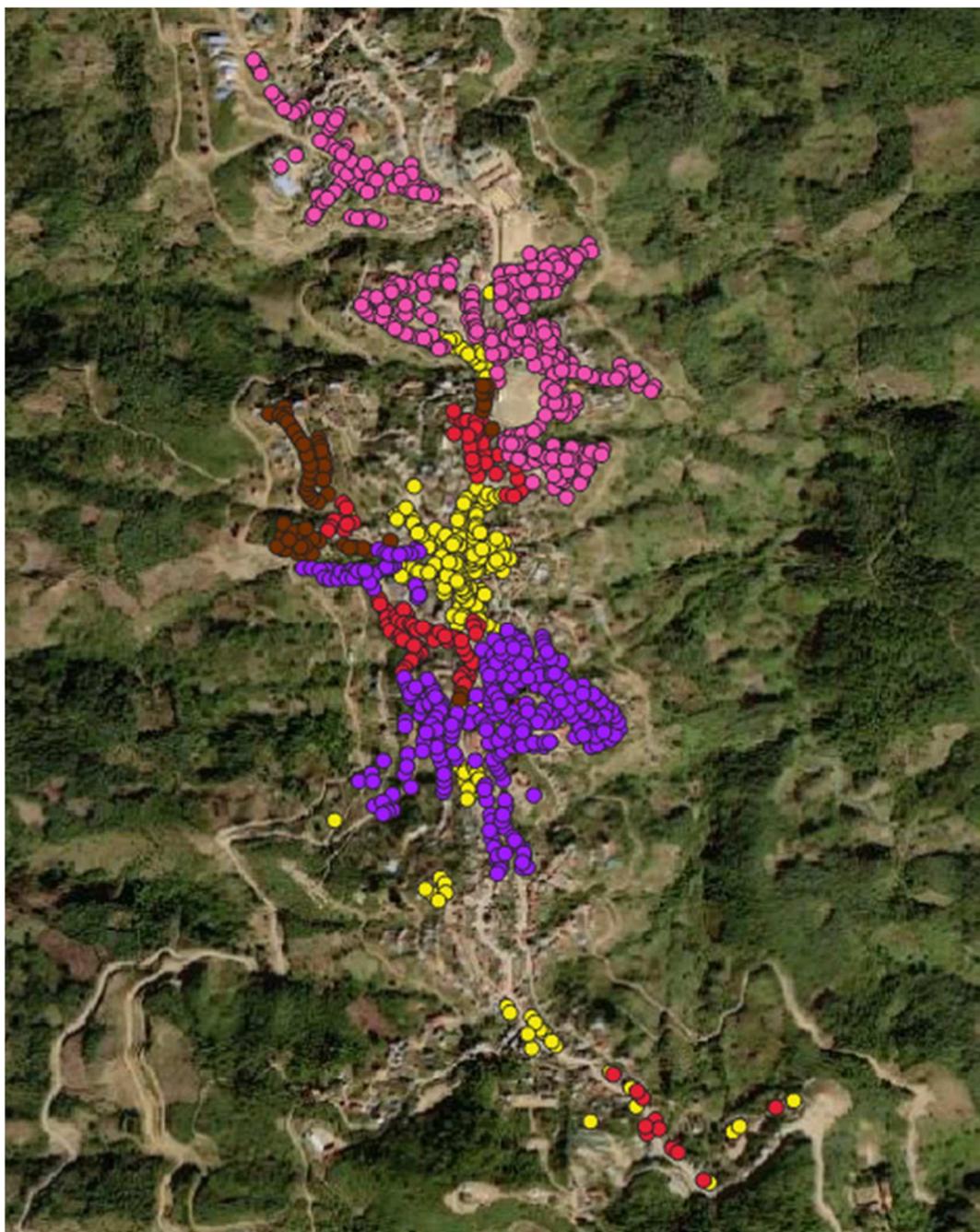


Figure 36: QGIS Map of the total individual visibly destroyed or heavily damaged structures in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) utilising footage from September 2021 - 26 May 2022. There are around 1,015 individual icons in this map.

Thantlang’s residents have [reportedly](#) been fleeing the area since September 2021, when attacks began. While reports do not suggest widespread physical danger or injury to individuals as a result of these fires, residents have lost their homes and possessions. Whole communities have been affected every few months. This makes the prospects and likelihood of return more challenging.

## Taze Township, Sagaing - October onwards (partially verified)

### Summary

There have been reports of attacks and fires in villages in the Taze Township (တန့်ဆည်), and elsewhere in Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) throughout the reporting period. However, one village, Kar Paung Kya (ကာပေါင်းကျ), has seen reports of attacks and footage uploaded of damaged structures multiple times, spanning months.

Kar Paung Kya (ကာပေါင်းကျ) has reportedly been targeted by the military due to a history of pro-democracy and PDF activity in the village and surrounding areas. In April 2021, [Myanmar Now](#) reported a violent military crackdown in Taze Township (တန့်ဆည်), where thousands of people from the surrounding areas had reportedly taken part in pro-democracy protests. The village was reportedly stormed by the military in [May 2021](#) and again in [August 2021](#). Locals speculated that was retaliation for the murder of two men from Kar Paung Kya (ကာပေါင်းကျ) who were accused of being military informants.

### Timeline

On 26 October 2021 social media posts claimed Kar Paung Kya (ကာပေါင်းကျ) was on fire. [FIRMS](#) data shows heat signatures in the village on that day. Sentinel footage taken on 31 October 2021 shows some structures here were destroyed.

On 12 December 2021, Guerilla Warfare K.P.K - a local defence group - uploaded drone footage that Myanmar Witness geolocated to Kar Paung Kya (ကာပေါင်းကျ) [23.091879, 95.273063] (Figures 37 and 38). The post mentions that the villages had been attacked during the past two months. About 53 structures appear damaged in this footage. The post claims the military caused the fires but this cannot be confirmed.



Figure 37: Geolocation of damage through drone footage of Kar Paung Kya (ကာပေါင်းကျ) at 23.091879, 95.273063. Satellite imagery from Google Earth.



Figure 38: Geolocation of damage in Kar Paung Kya (ကပေါင်းကျ) at 23.094167, 95.272686. Satellite imagery from Google Earth.

On 2 January 2022 more drone footage appeared of a fire in Kar Paung Kya (ကပေါင်းကျ) - with [FIRMS](#) data on this date corroborating that there was a fire in the village [23.089386, 95.277186]. In the footage, the damaged structures amount to around 19 (Figure 39).



Figure 39: Kar Paung Kya (ကပေါင်းကျ) village with active fires on 2 January 2022. The sunlight appears to suggest this drone footage was taken in the evening. Satellite imagery from Google Earth, with fire icon indicators to identify the number of structures damaged.

On 11 February 2022, drone footage of Kar Paung Kya (ကပေါင်းကျ) uploaded by the same page, KPK PDF, shows areas of the village on fire again (Figure 40). In this footage, there appears to be around 33 structures destroyed by fire [23.090926, 95.273268]. This brings the total number of structures Myanmar Witness has identified in these pieces of footage to around 105 structures (Figure 41). It cannot be confirmed if the military were responsible for these attacks.



Figure 40: Kar Paung Kya (ကပေါင်းကျ) with active fires on 11 February 2022. Satellite imagery from Google Earth, with fire icon indicators to identify the number of structures damaged.

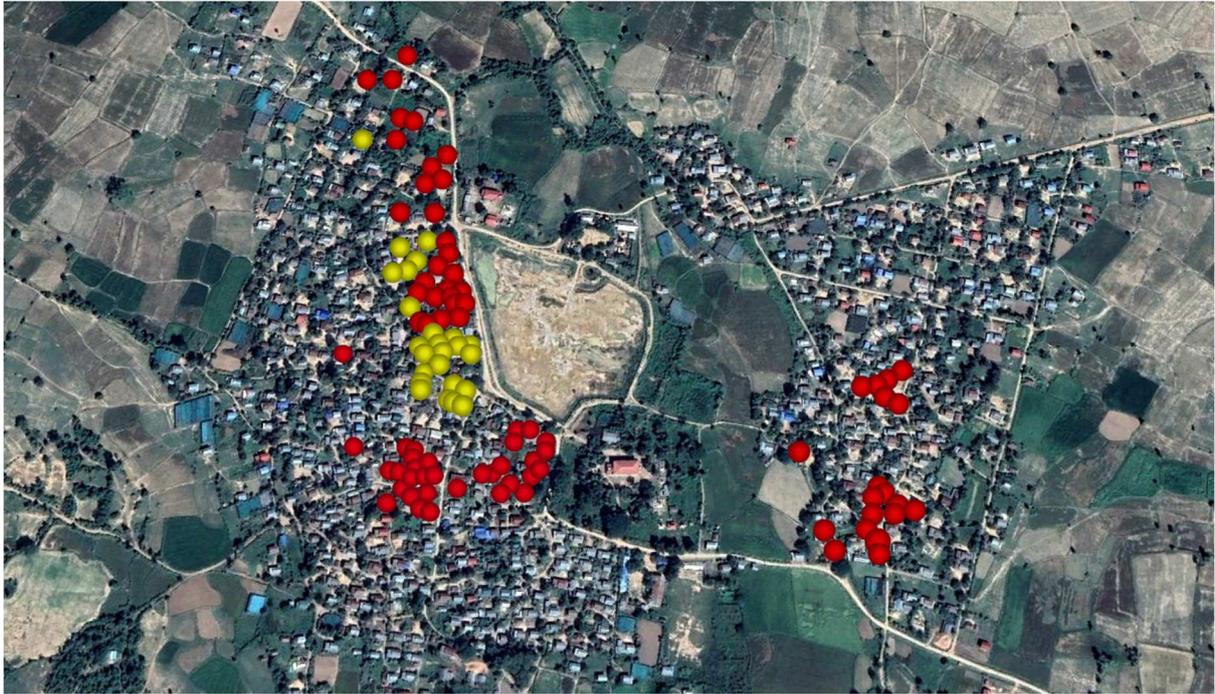


Figure 41: Structure damage in Kar Paung Kya (ကာပေါင်းကျ) village, Taze since December. The red symbols indicate burned structures and the yellow indicates damaged structures. Satellite imagery from Google Earth.

A few days after this, on 14 February 2022, Kar Paung Kya PDFs claimed to have attacked the military with a mine [23.101056, 95.329888]. The associated media shows a large group of individuals using rafts to cross a river, while smoke rises from the bridge nearby (Figure 42). This footage could indicate that the bridge has been attacked. In the associated text the setting of fires in Kar Paung Kya (ကာပေါင်းကျ) is mentioned. This footage demonstrates that the PDF were active in the area.



Figure 42: Geolocation of the bridge that Kar Paung Kya PDF claim they set a mine attack, leading to individuals having to cross the river by raft. Satellite imagery from Google Earth.

Pro-military media, such as the Myanmar Morning Post, claimed that PDFs were responsible for attacks in this village and around Taze (တန့်ဆည်) generally. One such report [interviewed](#) members of these villages who claimed that violent PDFs were active in the area and that the PDF members were burning their own homes. One of the interviewees was a local monk, Wa Tha Wa, who is [reportedly](#) associated with nationalist monk group, Ma Ba Tha. Images identified and geolocated by Myanmar Witness link Wa Tha Wa, as well as other monks, with the military and plain clothed individuals (claimed to be Pyu Saw Htee - a pro-SAC militia group) seen in footage.

He is captured carrying a weapon and attending a rally in Taze (တန့်ဆည်) at Yadanar Kan Myint Tae Monastery (Figure 43) [23.084258, 95.413475].



Figure 43: Comparison of images taken from Wa Tha Wa's Facebook

## Pale Township, Sagaing - January, 2022 (verified)

### Summary

During this investigation into the north-west regions in Myanmar, Myanmar Witness has recognised a pattern in reporting from local news and social media sources, which outlines the growing presence of a group known as Pyu Saw Htee. Pyu Saw Htee is a general term for local paramilitary armed groups that have a pro-SAC stance. There are some unifying features, such as their political stance - supporters or members of the Union Solidarity and Development - as well as being religious Bamar Buddhists. They are accused of collaborating with the Myanmar military in repressing anti-coup movements and supporters of the National Unity Government (NUG) and National League for Democracy (NLD).

While the majority of cases of attacks against communities documented by Myanmar Witness are attributed to the military, attacks also appear to be occurring in 'pyu' villages (ပျူရွာ) which is a phrase used on social media to refer to villages where Pyu Saw Htee are said to reside.

### Timeline

On 30 January 2022, in the village of In Ma Htee (အင်မထီး), Pale Township (ပုလဲမြို့နယ်) [21.886400, 94.737136] a local defence group claimed that they attacked a pyu village, but that a subsequent fire was set by the Pyu Saw Htee and the army. The [People's Spring](#) Facebook page reported that local PDFs had attacked a Pyu Saw Htee and military training session in the village. For example, "*In Pearl Township, the People's Defense Force has repeatedly warned people not to attend the Pyu Saw Htee training courses led by the Terrorist Military Council, and warned that the participants **and their families** will be punished as a terrorist group.*" The previous text has been highlighted by Myanmar Witness to emphasise the language used in the post, which could be

conceived as threatening. [FIRMS](#) data recorded heat signatures in this village on the date alleged.



Figure 44: Satellite imagery from 20 January to 4 February 2022 in In Ma Htee (အင်မထီး), Pale Township (ပုလဲမြို့နယ်). Destruction of part of the village is visible, which could suggest an attack by PDFs as claimed on this village. Image from Sentinel Hub.

During February, another village reported to have Pyu Saw Htee members living and training there - Zee Phyu Kone (ဒီးဖြူကုန်း) - in Pale Township (ပုလဲမြို့နယ်) [21.962330, 94.715640] appears to have been attacked several times. PDF social media pages claim that, on 25 January, 16 February and 6 March 2022, they launched attacks against Pyu Saw Htee members living and training in the village. The [Irrawaddy](#) published footage of an ongoing fire during the PDF attack, alleged to have been from a raid on this village between 14 and 15 February 2022. Using FIRMS, it is possible to see fires taking place in this village on 14 February - likely those referenced in the Irrawaddy - 18 February and 21 February. Between these dates, [Sentinel](#) records what looks like the destruction of much of the village (Figure 45).



Figure 45: Satellite imagery from 14 February and 19 February. Most of Zee Hpyu Kone seems to have been destroyed between the two dates. Satellite imagery from: Sentinel Hub.

Posts from a local PDF Facebook page, concerning an attack to Zee Hpyu Kone (ဇီးဖြူကုန်း) on 6 March, says “*more than half of the village was set on fire after a shoot out with the dogs [military]*”. It is unclear if it was the Pyu Saw Htee who set fire to the village or if it was the PDF members having set the village on fire themselves during the attack.

Hnaw Yoe (နှောရိုး) village in Pale Township (ပုလဲမြို့နယ်) [21.944410, 94.699508] was alleged to have been attacked on 10 March 2022. [FIRMS](#) shows a fire in this area and [Sentinel](#) records possible damage to structures. This village is geographically close to Zee Hpyu Kone (ဇီးဖြူကုန်း) and the original post claims that Pyu Saw Htee were the perpetrators of this attack. This could demonstrate that Pyu Saw Htee groups are attacking PDF villages in retaliation for attacks on themselves.

## The Killing of Multiple People

Following on from Myanmar Witness' joint [investigation with](#) the BBC into killings in Kani Township, Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) in May 2021, Myanmar Witness has identified and analysed a number of incidents involving the discovery of significant numbers of corpses, allegedly the victims of mass killings by the Myanmar military. Each of these followed reports of anti-regime protests and clashes between the military and defence forces in the local area. The report sets out our verification of three separate incidents alleged to be mass killings committed by the Myanmar military in the north-west region.

- 18 dead in Myin Thar (မြင်သာ), Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ) Township, Magway (မကွေးတိုင်း) - September 2021 (partially verified)
- 11 dead in Done Taw (ဒုံးတော), Salingyi (ဆားလင်းကြီး), Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) - December 2021 (fully verified)
- Six dead in Thit Seint Gyi (သစ်ဆိမ့်ကြီး), Wetlet (ဝက်လက်) township, Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) - January 2022 (fully verified)

Myanmar Witness has monitored the situation and is initiating an additional report which will cover killings of multiple people across Myanmar more broadly. **Please note this section of the report contains graphic content – reader discretion is advised.**

### Gangaw Township, Magway - September, 2021 (partially verified)

#### Background

**[Warning: Graphic]** According to local residents, military forces stormed Myin Thar (မြင်သာ) village, Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ) Township, Magway (မကွေးတိုင်း) at around 1000 local time on 9 September 2021. Fighting between the military and residents allegedly began at 1100 local time. [The Irrawaddy](#) reports that the military began setting fire to homes in Thar Lin (သာလင်း), on the opposite side of the riverbank to Myin Thar (မြင်သာ), before approaching the village. An anonymous witness from Myin Thar (မြင်သာ) reported that some individuals, upon hearing that the military were heading towards Myin Thar (မြင်သာ), fled to the jungle while others fled to the sanctuary of the monastery.

It is claimed by [The Irrawaddy](#) that 18 people in total were killed on 9 September 2021, including 10 children, one elderly person, and someone who was reportedly paralysed. The first 17 bodies were said to have been discovered after the clash, with another found two days later, on 12 September, near Kone Ywar (ကုန်းရှာ) village. Local

residents interviewed in some of the footage archived by Myanmar Witness claim that none of these people belonged to an official PDF movement but were protecting the village - they stood at the Myinttha bridge to observe those entering the area of the village and to protect the village from thieves or outsiders.

Regime spokesman Major General Zaw Min Tun [confirmed](#) that fighting took place when troops entered Myin Thar (မြိုင်သာ) in response to a tip that local PDFs were active there - something witnesses from the village refute. Zaw Min Tun also claims that military forces were attacked by around 50 men near the village and blamed the use of rifles by these members for the hostility in Myin Thar (မြိုင်သာ) that resulted in their deaths. An anonymous witness in a Youtube interview collected by Myanmar Witness reports that some of the individuals standing guard on the bridge whom were killed in Myin Thar (မြိုင်သာ) were armed with homemade weapons (footage available on request). Images of the deceased individuals on social media (available on request) indicate that they were possibly armed at the time they were killed, but it cannot be determined whether they threatened or otherwise raised these arms against the military.

## Verification

Myanmar Witness has verified images uploaded by DVB English on 10 September showing two corpses at the edge of Myinttha Bridge (22.590550, 94.123050) including one which is of small stature and could be a child (Figure 46, bottom right image). This image is consistent with claims from locals that these individuals were killed at their 'posts' by the bridge. Homemade weapons are visible in this image. Myanmar Witness was not able to verify further images of approximately 11 corpses reportedly also killed on 9 September (graphic footage – available on request).

In footage uploaded 10 September 2021, approximately 12 corpses are piled up on a pyre (Figure 46), including corpses wearing the same clothes as those seen in the unverified images. Myanmar Witness geolocated these images to Myin Thar (မြိုင်သာ) [22.590369, 94.122914], with the bridge seen in the background (Figure 46, top right image).



Figure 46: Image of the Myinttha Bridge connecting Thar Lin (သာလင်း) and Myin Thar (မြင်သာ) village; compared to two images of dead individuals close to this bridge.

According to [local residents](#) around 18 houses were burned down by Myanmar military forces prior to their departure at 0600 on 10 September 2021. Myanmar Witness has verified footage dated 10 September 2021 showing fires burning in Myin Thar (မြင်သာ) [22.587906, 94.117000] (Figure 47).



Figure 47: Geolocation of fires in Myin Thar (မြင်သာ).

Additional footage that claims to be in Myin Thar (မြင်သာ) shows burned buildings (available on request). Myanmar Witness was not able to verify this footage. Myanmar Witness was able to verify footage of fires at nearby Hnan Khar (နှမ်းခါး) village, Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ) which were set alight on the 10 September 2021 (available on request) [22.551783, 94.084517].

Further footage also purports to show residents of Myin Thar (မြင်သာ) fleeing from the area after the military attack; this footage is unverified.

## Salingyi Township, Sagaing - December, 2021 (fully verified)

### Background

**[Warning: Graphic]** On 7 December 2021, Myanmar military troops reportedly raided the village of Done Taw (ဒုံးတော), Salingyi (ဆားလင်းကြီး) Township in Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) Region [22.138278, 95.055861]. This was, according to a report by [Myanmar Now](#), following a mine ambush on military vehicles on the Monywa-Pathein highway near North Yamar bridge, located at 22.149591, 95.057023, about 300 metres from the village. Salingyi (ဆားလင်းကြီး) is an area which was reportedly targeted by convoy-centred Operation Alaungmintayar in November 2021. Salingyi (ဆားလင်းကြီး) residents have [reportedly](#) engaged in anti-regime protests - an example of which being just days before this incident.

Locals interviewed by Myanmar Now state that military soldiers entered the village from near the Pathein-Monywa road at 0800. Done Taw (ဒုံးတော) has only one entrance and exit route, through the Shwe Myin Tin farm on the bank of the Chindwin River. According to villagers and a local PDF leader (reported by [Myanmar Now](#) and [The Irrawaddy](#)), 11 villagers were reportedly captured, set on fire, and burned to death. A video uploaded to social media by various media outlets shows the aftermath of the attack, including the burnt remains of bodies (graphic footage – available on request). The video's voiceover states: *"They were shot and stabbed while forced to kneel, with their hands tied"*.

### Verification

Myanmar Witness can verify that the location where these bodies were found was just outside of Done Taw (ဒုံးတော) village, in farmland located at 22.142916, 95.062057 (Figure 48). However, it cannot be verified that this was the area where the people were killed, whether they had their hands tied, or whether they were dead before or after the fire started.



Figure 48: Geolocation of the original Done Taw video, from a background landscape.

It's also reported by the [Irrawaddy](#), as well as elsewhere online, that a Done Taw (ဒုံးတော) resident, Daw Win Yi, who was over 50, was also killed by the Myanmar military in farmland outside the village. While images of a deceased elderly woman have been collected, Myanmar Witness could not verify where these particular photos were taken.

According to the official NUG twitter account, the NUG were supplied with a victim's list, followed by their ages (Figure 49). This included four victims under the age of 18 : Arkar Soe (14), Hsan Min Oo (17), Than Myint Aung (17), Kyaw Thet (17). Most of the victims were unrecognisable as a result of the impact of the fire, except for 17-year-old Than Myint Aung, who was identifiable from his ear piercing, according to [Myanmar Now](#).

**List of civilians burned to death alive  
by Myanmar Military Forces**



Location – DonTaw village, Salingyi Township, Sagaing, Myanmar  
Date - December 07, 2021

No.	Name	Age (Yrs)
1	Ko Arkar Soe	14
2	Ko San Min Oo	17
3	Ko Than Myint Aung	17
4	Unconfirmed Name	17
5	Ko Kyaw Thet	17
6	Ko Chit Nan Oo	19
7	Ko Win Kaw	20
8	Ko Htet Ko	22
9	Ko Zin Min Htun	22
10	Ko Tint Naing	30
11	U Soe	40

Figure 49: Names of dead individuals from the Done Taw incident as reported to the NUG by a local PDF group.

## Wetlet township, Sagaing - January 2022 (fully verified)

### Background

**[Warning: Graphic]** Burmese media ([Mizzima](#), [Irrawaddy](#) and [RFA](#)) reported that soldiers alleged to be from the Myanmar military's Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း) division entered Thit Sein Gyi (သစ်ဆိမ့်ကြီး) village in Wetlet (ဝက်လက်) Township at about 0200 on 29 January 2022 and arrested six villagers. It is claimed that the residents were used as human shields and subsequently killed. Local residents reported there was a clash between the Wetlet (ဝက်လက်) PDF and military forces on 30 January 2022. The bodies were discovered after the military reportedly left the area on the morning of 4 February 2022. [RFA](#) interviewed local residents who claimed the victims were all male, and they were “handcuffed and burned”. Through interviews with local residents, [The Irrawaddy](#) identified the victims as Myint Aung (58), The Tun Aung (28), Ko Ko Lin Maung (28), Thura Tun (20), Zaw Min Tun (43) and Min Min Tun (35).

### Verification

Myanmar Witness was able to geolocate footage showing a number of burnt bodies to a site just outside of Thit Seint Gyi (သစ်ဆိမ့်ကြီး) village (graphic footage – available on request) [22.423056, 95.949964]. In the footage, the peak of a pagoda can be seen in the background. Myanmar Witness cross referenced this pagoda with old footage uploaded by [Mizzima TV](#), to match the peak of the pagoda to another pagoda in the area (Figure 50). The pagoda seen in the above images can be located to the outskirts of Thit Seint Gyi (သစ်ဆိမ့်ကြီး), at coordinates: 22.421225, 95.951197. Features seen in those images match what is seen on satellite imagery at that location (Figure 51).



Figure 50: Pagoda in background of footage of the burned ground.

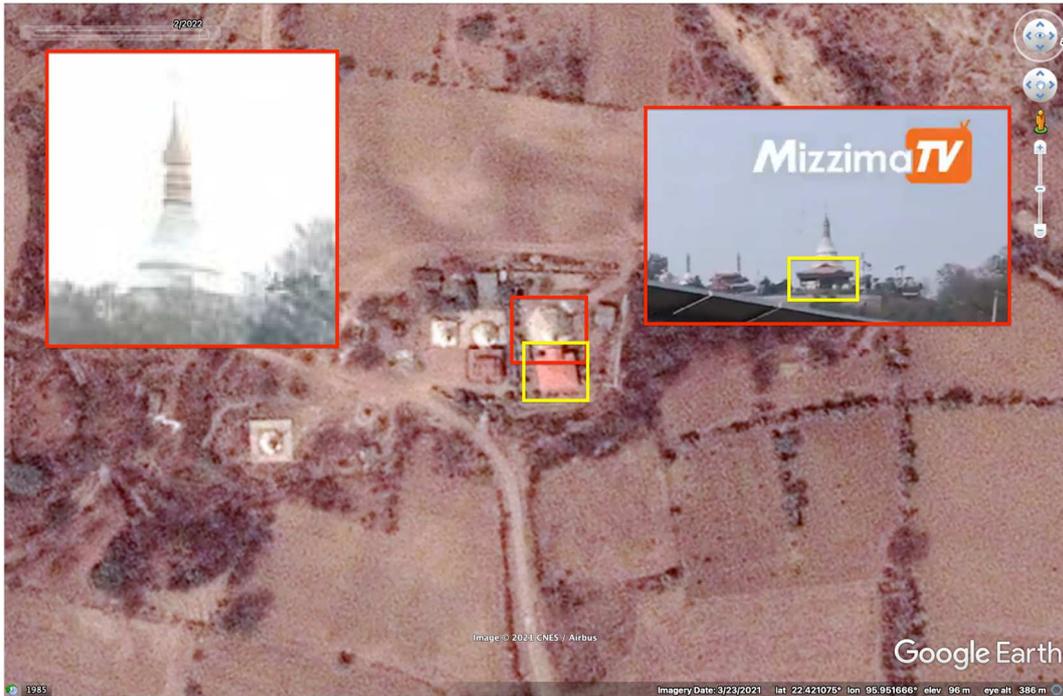


Figure 51: Geolocation of pagoda using satellite imagery from Google Earth.

Sentinel-2 satellite imagery of the site confirms that burn marks were acquired in the alleged location, during the period of military occupation reported. Sentinel-2 imagery shows no burn scars on 30 January 2022, but does show burn scars on 4 February 2022, indicating the burning happened at some point in between those two dates (Figure 52).



Figure 52: Satellite imagery of the location from 30 January 2022 and 4 February 2022 from Sentinel Hub.

The second burn scar, to the west of the field, was at a small collection of sheds on the side of the road. Images taken from the location of those sheds demonstrate that these buildings were destroyed by fire damage. Further images identified by Myanmar Witness show what appears to be bones in burnt areas alleged to be near the village. While the whole image is too graphic to show, the image does display specific features in the background that allow for geolocation, such as the pagoda that is visible in the background of the below image (Figure 53).



Figure 53: Image uploaded to social media on 4 February 2022 (cropping by Myanmar Witness).

This pagoda is seen here on [Google Maps images](#), and can be geolocated to 22.418694, 95.953889, about 500m away from where the burnt areas have been identified (Figure 54).



Figure 54: Geolocation of an image uploaded to social media on 4 February, 2022.

## Conclusion

This report demonstrates the grave civilian impacts of military operations in north-west Myanmar. It presents evidence of the destruction of communities and violent deaths of multiple people, as well as the escalatory impact of excessive military violence on conflict dynamics within Myanmar.

Many trends documented in this report have been seen across the country more broadly. Myanmar Witness' published reports [Burning Myanmar](#), [Moso Village Christmas Eve Killings](#), and [Using Pamphlets for Propaganda, Misinformation, Intimidate and Division](#), as well as forthcoming reports on killings of multiple people and pro-SAC militias, provide further information on these trends. Myanmar Witness continues to document and investigate evidence of possible human rights abuses in Myanmar. These findings will be made available on our [website](#), as and when they are completed.

## List of Abbreviations

Chin National Army	CNA
Chin National Front	CNF
Ethinc Armed Organizations	EAOs
Fire Information and Resource Management System	FIRMS
Light Infantry Division	LID
National League for Democracy	NLD
National Unity Government	NUG
People's Defence Force	PDF
Security Administration Council	SAC

## Annex 1

A detailed timeline of the claims constructed from social media that point to convoy-centred operations and fires along these villages. All claims are alleged on social media unless stated otherwise in this timeline

### 7 October 2021

- 0620-0753: Military vehicles move along the Gangaw-Kale road, passing by movements Saing Du (စိုင်းဒူး) [22.19994926, 94.13722992]. This included 2 vehicles, carrying an estimated 50 soldiers, followed by 39 vehicles, including two armoured vehicles, following. It's also alleged that 13 vehicles were stationed in front of the 50 Light Infantry Division (LID) base in Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ).
- 0915: soldiers began marching on foot from Thone Det Kwayt (သုံးထပ်ကွေ့), three miles from Saing Du (စိုင်းဒူး). They are claimed to have been using 50 villagers as human shields, who were arrested in Saing Du (စိုင်းဒူး) village.
- 1200: 15 vehicles moved from Hakha junction [22.237168, 94.074733] towards Kyun Dat (ကျွန်းဒတ်) village [22.27425003, 94.09871674]. It's alleged that 27 vehicles were already in Kyun Dat (ကျွန်းဒတ်) village and the 15 would be arriving to Kyun Dat (ကျွန်းဒတ်) soon.
- 1420: 29 vehicles left for Yae Shin (ရေရှင်) [22.5629901886, 94.0539627075] from Myit Thar bridge (မြစ်သာတံတား) [22.42933083, 94.12019348]. These vehicles were stationed in front of Shwe Lan (ရွှေလမ်း) restaurant and Shwe Kan Thar (ရွှေကံသာ) next to Myit Thar bridge (မြစ်သာတံတား).
- 1437: 16 police officers on 8 motorbikes with equipment left the north Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ) from Kan Police Station (ကန်ရဲစခန်း) [22.4127902985, 94.1056365967].
- 1510: At Kyun Khone Thar junction [22.428333, 94.092137] 32 out of a supposed 42 vehicles passed by Myin Thar bridge at 1510. The other 10 stayed in Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ).
- 1720: 32 vehicles and 14 private cars left Hmwayt Lel (မ္မလယ်) [22.48461914, 94.12019348] heading to Kale (ကလေး) passing Hnan Khar (နှမ်းခါး) [22.5552196503, 94.0875015259].
- 1840: A convoy of 46 vehicles from Hmwayt Lel (မ္မလယ်) village stopped to camp at Han Thar Waddy (ဟံသာဝတီ) [22.7244091034, 94.0709762573] at 1615; they left at 1840.

### 8 October 2021

- Reports of military movement in Kale (ကလေး), headed towards the Chin Hills. This is consistent with other Facebook reporting of a military convoy which left Kale (ကလေး) on the 8 October and arrived in Tedim Township (တီးတိန်မြို့နယ်) on 9 October 2021.
- 0714: Claimed that four convoys worth of troops from Hmwayt Lel (မ္မလယ်) village, Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ) Township [22.48461914, 94.12019348] left the village, heading south. Two tanks included in the convoys.
- 0800: 46 vehicles are then claimed to have been in Than Bo (သံပိုရွာ) village in Magway [20.60832024, 94.91771698] at around 0800 local time with 13 motorbikes coming first, acting as a scout patrol. At around 0835, the convoy was allegedly in Hmwayt Lel village (ထယ်လှော်) [22.48461914, 94.12019348], Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ), Magway.
- 0810: Four military vehicles were reportedly firing shots as well as what is claimed to be artillery usage in Kyun Dat (ကျွန်းဒတ်) [22.27425003 94.09871674], Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ).
- 0930: Four military vehicles entered Kyun Dat (ကျွန်းဒတ်) [22.27425003 94.09871674], Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ), with another four vehicles entering and raiding the jungle nearby.
- 0959: 52 vehicles, among which were private cars, were claimed to have passed by Kyan Thar (ကြံသာ), Kale (ကလေး) in Sagaing [22.7733, 94.0819] at 0810. They are claimed to have arrived to Natchaung (နတ်ချောင်း), Kale (ကလေး), Sagaing [22.99934959, 94.03572083] at 0959.
- 1302: Eight military vehicles are claimed to have passed Saing Du (စိုင်ဒူး), Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ) [22.19994926, 94.13722992].
- 1230: A convoy of 52 vehicles are claimed to have arrived in Kale (ကလေး) nearby Thayar Kone (သာယာကုန်း) [23.09872055 94.01888275]. It's alleged that houses were destroyed.
- 1900: Reports indicate that a convoy of 10+ military vehicles arrived in Tedim Township (တီးတိန်မြို့နယ်) having left from Kale (ကလေး) on the 8 October 2021. Social media reports that military forces stormed houses in Heinzin village on the Kale-Tedim road in Chin State. The timing would align with the reports above and below of a military convoy moving from Kale-Tedim, although it is impossible to verify this without footage available.

9 October 2021

- 1030: 10 trucks, most empty, from the convoy which arrived in Tedim Township (တီးတိန်မြို့နယ်) on 9 October 2021 left Tedim Township (တီးတိန်မြို့နယ်) at 1030.

- 1039: 25 police officers from Kan Police Station left Myin Thar Bridge (မြစ်သာတံတား) [22.426770, 94.094424] in the direction to the northern part of Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ) with full uniform and equipment.
- 1150: It's reported that two military vehicles and 2 police trucks from LID 50 were preparing to head out in the direction to the northern part of Gangaw (ဂန့်ဂေါ).
- Reports on social media indicate a military blockade of Kanpetlet, southeastern Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်) causing a food scarcity. Further reports from 14 October 2021 also attribute a hunger situation in the region due to an SAC blockade.

#### 10 October 2021

- 1500: The vehicles arrived back at Kale (ကလေး). Only one truck appeared to be carrying troops. Local sources told Khit Thit Media that "In the university about nine miles west of Kale (ကလေး), military councils are installed, weapons are set up" on 10 October 2021.

#### 11 October 2021

- It's reported that at least 55 truckloads of soldiers had arrived at Lumbang village (လုံဘန်း) [23.001250, 93.700542] in Falam (ဖလမ်း) and were camping at a highschool inside the village; detailed battle plans were allegedly smuggled by defectors that showed the military was planning to launch massive ground assault against the Chin National Front (CNF) in the coming days. Myanmar Witness geolocated images of vehicles allegedly related to this convoy movement (Figure 7).

#### 12 October 2021

- A military convoy of 80 trucks is reported to have left from Pakokku Township (ပခုက္ကူ မြို့နယ်) in Magway (မကွေးတိုင်း) in the morning, and stayed overnight on the 12 October in Kyaukhtu (ကျောက်ထု), Saw Township (ဆောမြို့နယ်), Magway (မကွေးတိုင်း)
- near the Chin border, on the way to Matupi (မတူပီ), Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်). The attached image of the convoy is time stamped but not geolocated.
- 1450: Fifty trucks are reported to have left Lumbang village, Falam (ဖလမ်း) in the morning with twenty-one military vehicles and one armoured vehicle arriving in Falam (ဖလမ်း) from Kale (ကလေး).

#### 13 October 2021

- Reports of the deaths of two named Tuphie villagers, who were reportedly shot near Htinyuu station in Falam (ဖလမ်း). Both posts (posted on 13 October),

agree on the details but not the date, with one claiming it happened on the 11 October 2021.

- 14 October 2021
- Villages in Falam (ဖလမ်း), namely Taal (တာရ်) and Thlanrawn (တလန်ရှောန်), were alleged to be on fire with 12 houses burning in Taal (တာရ်) village and 3 houses in Thlanrawn village (တလန်ရှောန်) [22.85872078, 93.59303284]. Footage from Chin Human Rights Org was geolocated by Myanmar Witness to Thlanrawn (တလန်ရှောန်) in Figure 8. Other posts on social media also show Thlanrawn village (တလန်ရှောန်) on fire. Reported cuts in areas of Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်).

16 October 2021

- The military were reportedly trapped between Thlanrawn village (တလန်ရှောန်) and Taal village (တာရ်) in Falam (ဖလမ်း) Township.

19 October 2021

- 100 houses were allegedly ransacked in Ramthlo (ရမ်ထလို), in Falam-Hakha Road [22.826003, 93.561918]. Images of destruction were geolocated by Myanmar Witness (Figure 9).
- Fighting is alleged to have happened between Dokthek (ဒေါ့ထက်) [22.8046, 93.5662] and Chuncung (ချွန်ကျုံး) [22.685373, 93.585917]

20 October 2021

- It's alleged that the military attacked and burned down a home in Taal (တာရ်), Falam (ဖလမ်း), Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) [22.865650, 93.564553]. Myanmar Witness geolocated images of destruction to Taal (Figure 10).
- 1530: Claims of a convoy arriving at Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) in Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်). Footage of a convoy was geolocated to Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) (Figure 11) by Myanmar Witness. According to shadow indications this footage was taken at around 1530, if they did indeed arrive on 20 October 2021.
- Other images show a convoy in Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) and what appears to be soldiers on the ground in Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) (Figure 12)

21 October 2021

- Reported that the military warned villagers about landmines planted on the Kalemio-Falam road near Manipur River Bridge in Falam (ဖလမ်း). Also alleged that, three fully armed soldiers from Kale (ကလေး) arrived at Hanthawaddy village in the morning, carrying small arms and light weapons.

- Myanmar Witness geolocated images posted on 22 October 2021, of individuals in a truck passing through Thlanrawn village (တလန်ရှောန်), alongside destroyed structures (Figure 13)

#### 23 October 2022

- Reported that 50 vehicles carrying military personnel returned to Falam (ဖလမ်း) from staying in Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့). Myanmar Witness geolocated an image of around at least 14 vehicles in Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) (Figure 14)
- Clashes continue as it is reported that a 3 vehicle convoy was attacked while on the Kale-Gangaw road and five SAC soldiers were allegedly killed in Matupi.

#### 24 October 2021

- The convoy that left Hakha (ဟားခါးမြို့) spent the night at Ramthlo (ရမ်ထလို), with some skirmishes along the road that appears to have resulted in the deaths of some SAC soldiers according to Chindwin News Agency. Myanmar Witness geolocated and image of a damaged house to Ramthlo (ရမ်ထလို) attached to claims that the military had used 24-MG2 grenades (Figure 16).

#### 25 October 2021

- 0700: Footage was geolocated by Myanmar Witness to Thlanrawn (တလန်ရှောန်) and other images were geolocated of destroyed buildings in Taal (တာရ်) (Figure 17). Reports claim that the destruction happened at dawn around 0700, when 11 houses were burned by the SAC.

#### 26 October 2021

- 0215: FIRMS records fire next to Khuangan (ခွါငန်း), Radui, Matupi [21.796039, 93.439738]. Social media reports also indicate that, on 26 October 2021, Thu Phay village was raided on Kale-Falam Road in Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်), after the army spent the night there.
- 2040: Posts claim that the sound of gunshots could be heard in Hakha.
- 2125: 50 military vehicles arrived in Kale (ကလေး) from Falam (ဖလမ်း).

#### 28 October 2021

- 80 military vehicles were reportedly heading to Matupi, Chin (ချင်းပြည်နယ်).

#### 29 October 2021

- Fires began to be reported in Thantlang (ထန်တလန်မြို့) - many of which have been verified by Myanmar Witness.