

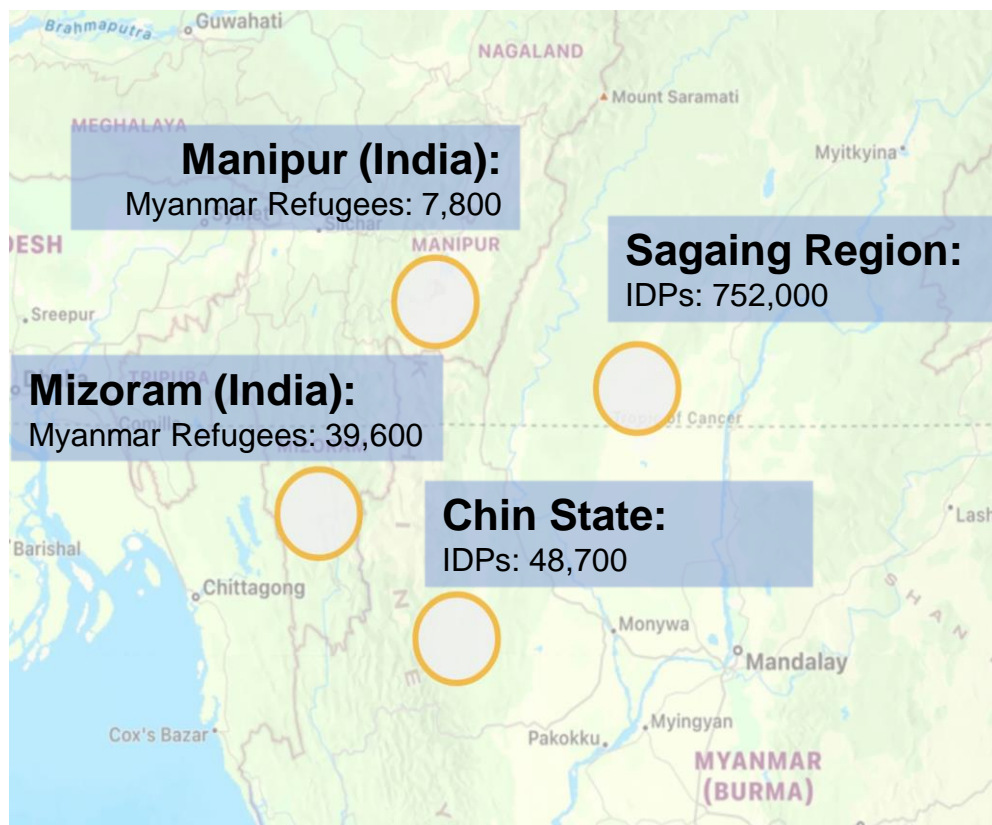


Indo-Burma Region Situation Report

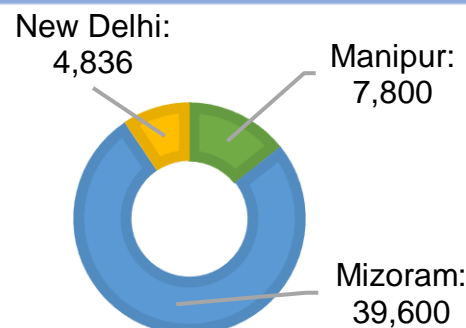
April, 2023 Update

Global Alliance of Indigenous Peoples, Gender Justice and Peace

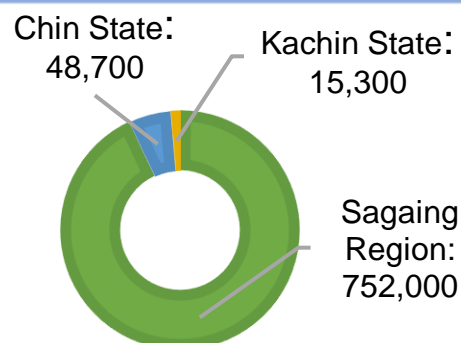
This monthly situation report tracks developing trends in the Indo-Burma region and is current with data through to April 25th, 2023. The report is compiled by the Global Alliance of Indigenous Peoples, Gender Justice and Peace, in partnership with the Manipur Women Gun Survivor's Network and the Northeast Women's Initiative for Peace.



Breakdown of Myanmar Refugees in India



Breakdown of Internally Displaced Persons in Northwest Myanmar



MYANMAR SITUATION Key Updates:

- **52,400¹** Asylum-seekers have now crossed the Indo-Burma border since the February 1st, 2021 coup. Numbers are expected to be an undercount.
- **1,805,000¹** Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are still seeking refuge within Myanmar's borders. This includes **752,000¹** IDPs in Sagaing Region and **48,700¹** IDPs in Chin State, two of the three states sharing a border with Northeast India.
- **21,514²** Myanmar Nationals have been arrested by the military regime, and **3,430²** have been killed by the military regime. These numbers include arrests of **590** children, and the deaths of **363** children. Many children have died or been crippled by land mines set by the military regime.



MYANMAR SITUATION (continued):

- **Over 1,000 homes destroyed** by the Myanmar military during an offensive in Kachin State, also murdering **10 civilians**.³ Over **60,000** homes have been destroyed by the military.⁴ Shelter and basic commodities remain limited for people in Myanmar's border states due to road blocks and heightened conflict.⁵
- **Over 170 civilians were killed in a Sagaing airstrike**, including **38 children** and **24 women**, on April 11th, 2023. 53 civilians were injured.⁶ The airstrike occurred on the eve of Thingyan (Myanmar's Buddhist New Year festival) and targeted a Thingyan festival in Pazi Gyi village. Fighter jets dropped multiple bombs on the civilian crowd, while attack helicopters fired hundreds of rounds.⁷
- **15 k-12 teachers were arrested** by the Myanmar military regime in late March and early April. The teachers were part of the National Unity Government's Federal School of Aungmyaythazan, an online school offering k-12 education for families boycotting the military's education system. The military confirmed the arrests on April 5th.⁸

NORTHEAST INDIA SITUATION Key Updates:

- **At least 21 insurgents arrested** in India's Northeast in the last month adding to over **10,158** arrests of insurgents made in Northeast India since 2014. During that same period, **587** insurgents have been killed in counter-insurgency efforts, along with the death of **128** special forces personnel.^{9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23}
- **At least 30 Myanmar Refugees**^{24, 25} arrested in Manipur in the last month for "illegal" entry into the country, adding to a rising number of arrests of Myanmar asylum-seekers in Manipur, deemed unlawful by many experts. Courts in Manipur have consistently sided with Myanmar nationals, stating that they are not "illegal" migrants, and have non-refoulement rights as refugees.²⁶
- **39,600**¹ Myanmar asylum seekers are currently estimated in Mizoram, however, estimates are likely an undercount. The Mizoram government continues to issue Identity cards to refugees, however civil organizations still push the Indian government to afford stronger legal rights to asylum seekers.
- **7,800**¹ Myanmar asylum-seekers are currently estimated in Manipur, however, estimates are likely undercounted. The majority of refugees in Manipur remain in hiding due to fear of retribution by the Manipur State government.



NORTHEAST INDIA SITUATION Key Updates (Continued):

- **Mizoram locked gates at 2 border entry** points following the deaths of 3 Mizoram natives who crossed into Myanmar. The Matupi Hlungmang and Gawnglaung village gates have been closed, cutting off essential access to food, medical treatment, and shelter for refugees.²⁷
- **KCP accused political elites of encouraging illegal drug trade** in Manipur for decades in an address to the public and its supporters.²⁸

SITUATION OVERVIEW:

In Myanmar, heavy fighting remained constant across the nation's border states. April continued to see an increased number of airstrikes, raids and destruction of homes, arbitrary arrests and executions, as well as the deadliest attacks on civilians to date in the conflict.⁶ The Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPs) community grew significantly in April, especially in the Northwest Sagaing Region, Chin State, and Magway Region, as well as in Southeast regions of the state. Refugees and asylum-seekers in neighboring countries, and worsening food insecurities and fuel shortages continued to create roadblocks to survival for civilians.^{1, 5}

Northwest Myanmar continued to see constant airstrikes, landmine incidents, arbitrary arrests and executions, and arson attacks. Increased violence has continued to drive an influx of refugees across the Indo-Burma border. Magway and Sagaing Regions both continued to experience Internet shutdowns and blackouts, hampering humanitarian access and communications among civilians.⁴

Sagaing Region experienced the deadliest single attack on civilians to date. On April 11th, 2023, on the eve of Thingyan (Myanmar's Buddhist New Year water festival) in Pazi Gyi village, the Myanmar military executed a coordinated airstrike on a civilian Thingyan celebration, killing over 170 people, including at least 109 men, 24 women, and 38 children. At least 53 were wounded.⁶ The Myanmar air force dropped multiple aerial bombs, while attack helicopters fired rounds on the several hundred civilians gathered. The international community was outraged by the attack, with Germany, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations among the most outspoken. Amnesty International called for an immediate suspension of aviation fuel supply to Myanmar.⁷

In another offensive earlier in April, ground troops of the Myanmar military conducted raids, heavy artillery shelling, and coordinated airstrikes on Kalay Township, displacing over 27,000 people. Most residents of Chan Thar Gyi, Mauk Lin, Sa Meik Kwin, Nan Chaung, Pyin Taw U, Gyoe Gyar Kwin, Min Hla, Let Pan Chaung, and Myauk Chaw Taw villages were forced to flee.²⁹



SITUATION OVERVIEW (continued):

There are over **752,000**¹ IDPs in Sagaing, a number driven by increased military air strikes and raids, imposed martial law, food shortages, destruction of property, among other violence in the region.⁵ Data for Myanmar has also published that, of the over 60,000 homes burned by the Junta across Myanmar, over **43,000**^{4, 30} homes have been in Sagaing Region.

Chin State IDPs number north of **48,700**¹ people. The Chin State experienced a continual daily bombardment of airstrikes, resulting in at least 21 civilian deaths just in the last month.³¹ One of the attacks, on March 30th, 2023, targeted Khuafo, a village of around 60 households near the Indo-Burma border. 10 civilians were reported dead, including a 3-year-old and a 9-year-old, and 20 injured. There were no resistance fighters in the village, adding to deliberate arbitrary attacks on civilians across Myanmar.³²

Also in the Chin State, the bodies of 3 Mizoram nationals were found dead and charred, leading to mass protests in Mizoram.³³ In response to the killing, Mizoram has locked 2 border gates in Matupi Hlungmang and Gawnglaung vilages, cutting off access to food, medical treatment, and critical refuge.³⁴ The Chin Defense Forces report continued incursions into the Chin State by Indian Border Security forces, who have fired guns into the air and arrested anti-Junta Chin forces.³⁵

Southern Chin and Rakhine Regions still maintain a ceasefire between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF). There are reports of forced recruitment of civilians, and there has been an increased Rohingya exodus via dangerous land and sea routes.⁵

Northeast and Southeast Myanmar has seen increased shelling and airstrikes, arbitrary arrests and forced labor, reduced access to food and basic needs, and continued attacks near town centers and IDPs sites.⁵

Mandalay saw upticks in IDPs in April, as well as disturbing arrests. The Myanmar military arrested at least 15 primary and secondary teachers working remotely for the NUG online school, the Federal School of Aungmyaythazan. The school was established for children and families boycotting the military's education system. Mothers have also been arrested for sending their children to NUG-run online schools.³⁶

In southern **Karen State**, about 5,000 refugees crossed into Thailand's Tak province, where shelters have been set up by local residents. Thailand's air force pledged protection to refugees and citizens, stating that it was "ready to send patrol flights if Thai airspace is violated."³⁷

Across Myanmar, the Military regime has deemed 63 political parties eligible for an upcoming election, however, virtually all parties have ties with the military, and many are led by ex-generals. 34 parties sought guarantees from the military Chief, Min Aung Hlaing, that there would be interventions if voting appeared unfair.³⁸ Democracy advocates have continued to claim that the



SITUATION OVERVIEW (continued):

election is undemocratic and that people will neither participate in nor accept the results of the election.³⁹ The military has also dissolved the National League for Democracy (NLD) along with 40 other parties, who did not register in protest of the election, and have made statements against accepting results.⁴⁰ The U.S., the U.K., Japan, and Australia have all condemned undemocratic moves by the Myanmar Military, warning that the military's election will only escalate instability.⁴¹

Also in reports are growing concerns about the Myanmar Junta's relationships with China and North Korea. North Korea News reported that Myanmar's Royal Shune Lei Company Ltd. brokered a deal with Korea Mining Development Trading Corporation for arms purchases.⁴² Tensions also grew between India and China over development of a spy base in Coco Islands.⁴³

In a new report by the NUG Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children's Affairs, and the National Unity Consultative Council Joint Coordination Committee on Gender Policy, at least 122 reports of sexual assault by the Junta have been reported. 60% of resistance forces in Myanmar are made up of women, and the majority of protests are led by women. Women are also critical in fighting and moving supplies to the front lines.⁴⁴

In Northeast India, the government has yet to structure and implement wide-spread humanitarian and legal support for over **52,400**¹ Myanmar refugees and asylum-seekers. Additional Border Security forces continued to be deployed along the Indo-Burma border with regular foot patrols to protect against army incursions and stop refugees and asylum-seekers from entering India.⁴⁵

A pact between the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and three of its factions (NSCN/NK, NSCN/R, and NSCN/K-Khango) was signed on Thursday, April 6th to extend ceasefire by another year.⁴⁶ Amit Shah continues to reinstate the importance of developing the Northeast Region, and he made special mention of developing better boarder infrastructure, including roads, fencing, floodlights, and border outposts.⁴⁷ The KCP issued a statement calling for accountability of political elites who have encouraged the trade and trafficking of illicit drugs through India's Northeast and into Indigenous communities.⁴⁸

In Manipur, there are an estimated **7,800**¹ Myanmar refugees, most of whom are in hiding due to a crackdown on what Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh is calling "illegal migrants".⁴⁹ The Manipur government began setting up temporary detention centers in Chandel to hold refugees and asylum-seekers, until a decision is made about their fate, deporting or otherwise.⁵⁰ 23 Myanmar Refugees were arrested in Manipur's Churachandpur district.⁵¹ They were working in the local weaving industry.⁵² 7 Myanmar Refugees, including 2 juveniles, from Myanmar's Sagaing region were also arrested in Manipur's Imphal airport.⁵³

In Mizoram, there are an estimated **39,600**¹ Myanmar refugees. The Mizoram State Government has undertaken informal measures to ensure the safety and security of Myanmar Nationals in the region. The government has led a campaign to issue Identity cards to all refugees.⁵⁴ Although the



SITUATION OVERVIEW (continued):

Identity Cards don't hold any legal ramifications, they have helped refugees and asylum-seekers assimilate more freely into society, and have also given humanitarian aid organizations a structure within which to assess needs and administer aid.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE:

In Northwest Myanmar regions, humanitarian aid remains largely inaccessible to those in need due to heightened conflict. A 3-day workshop on protection and security was held in Sagaing Region by the UNHCR, and Food Security Cluster delivered food, cash assistance, or rice assistance to over 500,000 in Chin State, Kachin State, Kayah State, Rakhine State, and Shan and Southern Shan States.^{1, 5}

In Rakhine State, the ceasefire has improved humanitarian access. Temporary learning spaces for education, life skills, and Gender-Based Violence training were established across the region, however, the distribution of non-formal education kits in Ann and Mrauk-U Townships were challenged at Junta checkpoints.⁵ UNHCR distributed CRIs to 12,500 IDPs (2,100 families), and 864 people (404 families) in Rakhine North. CRIs included kitchen sets, blankets, jerry cans, buckets, portable solar lamps, sleeping mats, and mosquito nets.¹

Kachin and Shan (North) States have received CRIs for 7,800 IDPs (1,500 families) as well as iron sheets provided to 270 IDPs to renovate shelters.¹

Southeast States have received CRIs for 8,000 IDPs (3,800 families), as well as 190,000 PPEs.¹ Learning and teaching material were distributed throughout Kayin and Kayah. Capacity building trainings and psychosocial support for teachers were also provided in the region.⁵

REGIONAL BACKGROUND:

Northeast India is home to one of the world's longest running armed conflicts, where a former British colonial martial law signed into law by the Union of India on September 11th, 1958, known as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), remains in effect to this day. The imposition of this law over the last 6 decades has led to the death of over 20,000 Indigenous peoples in the Northeast India state of Manipur alone.

On February 1st, 2021, across the Indo-Burma border in Myanmar, the military overthrew a democratically elected government in a coup d'état which has since left Myanmar (Burma) in a state of violent conflict and turmoil. Fleeing conflict zones where fighting and arbitrary military



REGIONAL BACKGROUND (Continued):

murders remain a daily constant, many Burmese refugees arrive in Northeast India carrying the traumas of death, sexual violence, and displacement – the traumas of war. With 1.2 million refugees and asylum-seekers, and another 1.5 million Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs), Myanmar has the 6th largest global population of refugees in the world. The UNHCR reports that 50,000 displaced peoples, including at least 14 lawmakers of Myanmar's National League for Democracy, have crossed the Indo-Burma border in the last 2 years. The vast majority of displaced peoples have crossed the Indo-Burma border without documentation. Many Burmese refugees do not have access to Identity Cards or the means to fulfil their most basic needs.

A growing humanitarian crisis has evolved over the past two years, and exacerbates the already dire circumstances people in Northeast India face under martial law. Many survivors lack basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and medical attention. Burmese refugees who have not received official Identity Cards are at risk of detention or being returned Myanmar.

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**Manipur Women
Gun Survivors Network**

