

Burma

Over 10,000 Civilians Flee Myanmar Junta Airstrikes in Sagaing

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Myanmar's military regime has committed yet another war crime by conducting airstrikes on Thursday on four villages in Tabayin Township, Sagaing Region that killed two civilians and forced over 10,000 people from a dozen villages to flee their homes.

On Thursday afternoon, regime forces arrived by helicopter to raid Namyar Village in the east of Tabayin Township, while two Russian-made Mi-35 helicopter gunships attacked the village for about 40 minutes, according to local news sources.

The junta gunships also attacked three nearby villages, despite not facing any opposition to the raid.

At the same time, another military detachment dropped by helicopters in the township in early July occupied neighboring Nayakan Village.

The airstrikes came hours after a pro-regime Telegram channel posted that many fighters from the ethnic armed organization the Kachin Independence Army had arrived in the villages, an official of Tabayin's Brothers, a local group assisting internally displaced people (IDP), told The Irrawaddy on Friday.

50-year-old villager U Khin Maung San and a female resident were killed during the airstrike on Namyar Village. Two other villagers were injured, according to local rights groups.

On Friday, around 100 residents in Namyar Village who had been detained by junta troops were released, said the Tabayin Assistance Association for IDPs.

After leaving Namyar, regime soldiers raided nearby Yin Khyay Village on Friday, opening fire as they did so. At the same time, the second military detachment raided and torched houses in nearby Kone Tel Village, after torching houses in Nayakan Village on Friday morning, according to the IDP assistance groups.

Currently, the IDPs are in urgent need of food and medicine, as residents frequently have to flee their homes due to numerous junta raids and airstrikes, said a member of the Tabayin Assistance Association for IDPs.

"The junta are attacking innocent civilians in the townships. Now we face a food shortage due to the increasing number of IDPs. Even the villages that are sheltering the IDPs are now facing a food crisis themselves," he added.

There have been at least five airstrikes on civilian targets in Tabayin Township, said the spokesperson for the Tabayin's Brothers group.

As of Thursday, regime forces have burned down over 560 houses during their raids on 26 villages in the township since the coup, said the spokesperson.

“During the revolutionary period, almost the whole population are suffering. However, our people must depend on each other as they have no other options,” the spokesperson added.

He also requested people to supply the IDPs in the township with food and medicine.

Since last September’s declaration of a people’s defensive war by the civilian National Unity Government (NUG), regime forces have relentlessly committed atrocities such as arbitrary arrests, indiscriminate killings of civilians, carrying out torture, massacres, burning people alive and using civilians as human shields, air and artillery strikes on residential areas and the looting and torching of homes, especially in Chin, Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Mon and Karen States and Magwe, Mandalay and Sagaing regions.

Last month, the NUG’s Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration said that junta forces committed almost 2,800 war crimes across the country from last December 1 to May 31 this year.

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