

Myanmar junta airstrikes kill dozens in attack on NUG ceremony

Sunday 16 April 2023, by [Maung Shwe Wah](#), [Moe Oo](#) (Date first published: 11 April 2023).

Many of the victims were members of the public who were offered food as part of the ceremony, which also coincided with the start of Myanmar's traditional New Year's celebrations



Photo: The site of the junta's airstrikes on Pa Zi Gyi, in Sagaing Region's Kanbalu Township, on April 11. The bodies of victims are obscured. (Supplied)

As many as 80 people, including children, are feared dead following an air raid carried out by Myanmar's military in Sagaing Region's Kanbalu Township early Tuesday morning.

The attack took place at around 7:45am during a ceremony held to mark the opening of a People's Administration Team office in Pa Zi Gyi, a village located about 45km southeast of the town of Kanbalu, according to local sources.

The office operates under the authority of Myanmar's publicly mandated National Unity Government (NUG), which the country's military junta has designated a terrorist organisation.

An officer of the Kanbalu District People Defence Force (PDF), which is also under the NUG, told Myanmar Now that the fighter jet and military helicopter involved in the attack directly targeted the gathering of around 150 people.

"The jet dropped two bombs right on the crowd. Then an Mi-35 helicopter came and opened fire on them, maiming and killing a large number of civilians," the PDF officer said.

Women, children and the elderly made up a large percentage of those killed and injured, he added. Many were there to receive food offered as part of the ceremony, which also coincided with the start of Thingyan, the traditional Myanmar New Year.

Another Kanbalu PDF officer who examined the scene soon after the attack said that the exact number of victims could not yet be determined, as many of the bodies had been torn apart.

He said that around 30 elderly villagers were in the building where the ceremony was being held, while most of the children were nearby.

"A bomb fell right on top of the building, blasting away its roof and walls. Just a few feet away, there are parts of dead children scattered all over the bushes," he added.

Photos of the incident published online by a local guerrilla group showed human body parts scattered amongst the wreckage of the NUG administrative building.

In one photo, a woman's body can be seen with the entire bottom half blown away. In another, internal organs are spilling out of the charred remains of a man whose arms have also been torn off at the shoulders. Others show burnt-out motorcycles and trees blackened by fire.

In a statement released on Tuesday afternoon, the NUG's Ministry of Defence condemned the junta's latest attack, which it said resulted in "the loss of scores of innocent civilians" and injured many more, "including children and pregnant women."

"This heinous act by the terrorist military is yet another example of their indiscriminate use of extreme force against innocent civilians, constituting a war crime," the statement said.

"We strongly condemn all terrorist acts committed against the people of Myanmar, including today's attack, and reiterate our commitment to ensuring justice for the victims," it added.

Myanmar's military has carried out numerous airstrikes since seizing power in a coup two years ago. Many have targeted villages, causing heavy civilian casualties and displacing hundreds of thousands around the country.

In October of last year, it carried out an air raid on the village of A Nang Pa in Kachin State's Hpakant Township, [killing dozens](#) at a gathering held to mark the anniversary of the founding of the Kachin Independence Organisation.

More recently, junta airstrikes [killed at least nine civilians](#) in Chin State's Falam Township on Monday, less than two weeks after a [similar attack](#) in the state's Thantlang Township left the same number dead at the end of March.

Maung Shwe Wah, Moe Oo

UPDATE: There were unconfirmed reports that four more bombs were dropped on Pa Zi Gyi at around 6pm on Tuesday as the bodies of the victims of the initial attack were being cremated. According to the source of this information, more than 70 bodies, including those of 17 children, were cremated before the second round of attacks began.

P.S.

- Myanmar Now. April 11, 2023:
<https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-junta-airstrikes-kill-dozens-in-attack-on-nug-ceremony/>