

Burma

Chin Rebels Open New Front with Myanmar Junta on Rakhine Border

Sunday 9 July 2023, by [The Irrawaddy](#) (Date first published: 7 July 2023).

The Chin National Army (CNA) attacked Myanmar junta troops in Paletwa Township in southern Chin State on Monday, according to sources.

It was the first military operation by the CNA in Paletwa, which borders Rakhine State, said a Paletwa resident.

A resident of Shin Letwa village tract said: "CNA troops attacked a junta hilltop outpost near Khone village on Monday. We heard junta troops suffered casualties and their weapons were seized."

On the border of Chin and Rakhine states, Paletwa saw fierce fighting between Myanmar's military and the ethnic Rakhine Arakan Army (AA) from late 2018 to 2020.

Both the AA and the Chinland Defense Force, which was formed after the 2021 coup, are active on the eastern bank of the Kaladan River.

CNA troops infiltrated the area in early 2023 before finally attacking junta troops this week.

The CNA was unavailable for comment.

A military analyst said: "CNA has said it represents the entire Chin State, so it will operate in places populated by Chin people. It will attack the military whenever the opportunity arises. The attack took place near the eastern bank of the Kaladan. The AA does not have much control there. It only controls the western bank."

The regime has imposed an internet blackout in Paletwa for years. The township also suffers from junta travel restrictions and bans on the delivery of food and other necessities, seriously disrupting people's lives.

The junta's Directorate of the Public Relations and Psychological Warfare sent a troupe to perform for military personnel and their families and residents from June 25-27. The troupe performed Chin and Rakhine songs.

Following the entertainment, junta troops deployed in hills on the Kaladan's western bank near Paletwa town were replaced with police and junta soldiers left by boat, said Paletwa residents.

"Ships carried away many junta soldiers. I don't know where they were moving," a resident told The Irrawaddy.

Military analysts said the regime is airlifting troops from Paletwa to Kayah State, where the regime is suffering heavy casualties.

The junta and AA have observed an unofficial ceasefire since November last year, ending heavy fighting. The AA has said the group will exercise restraint and avoid aggression as much of Rakhine was devastated by Cyclone Mocha in May.

THE IRRAWADDY

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