

Background

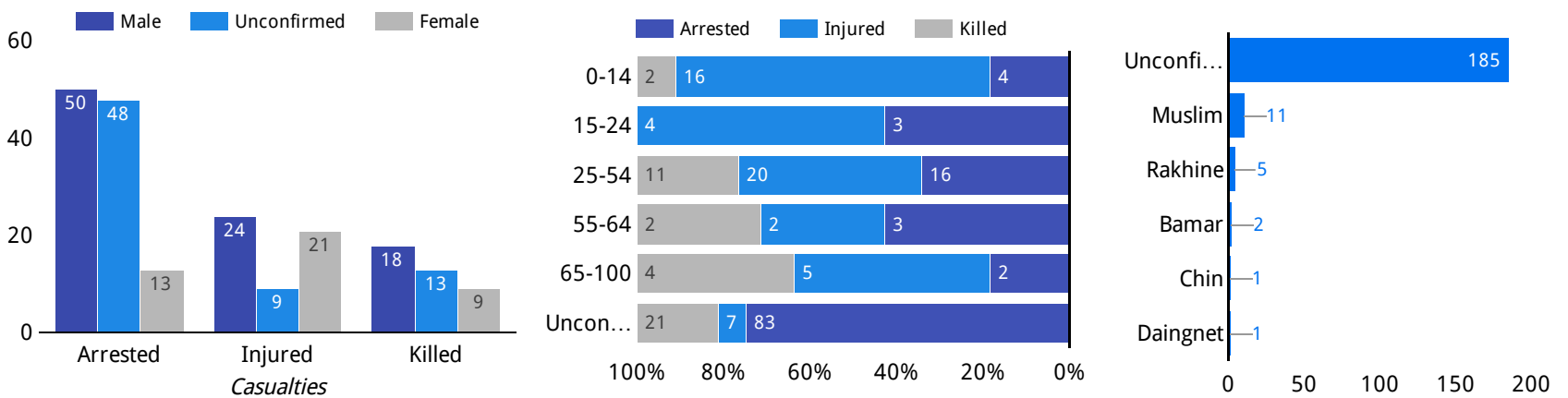
The de facto ceasefire in Arakan between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army (AA) broke down just before its one-year anniversary on November 13, 2023. The previous “humanitarian ceasefire” had been introduced on November 25, 2022. However, peace negotiations between the two parties were almost non-existent due to a lack of trust and reluctance to settle a political agreement. Despite the ceasefire in Arakan, AA troops in Kachin and the northern part of Shan State continued armed clashes with the Myanmar military during these truce period. This, in turn, led the junta authority to impose stricter measures against the administration and judiciary activities of the ULA, the political wing of the AA, in Arakan.

Moreover, the AA’s involvement in the Kachin Independence Army (KIA)’s anti-junta offensive operation against its headquarters in Liza in June 2023, and in the “1027 Operation” of the Three Brotherhood Alliance (3TBA) in northern Shan State starting on October 27, 2023, further escalated tensions and turbulent relations with the junta authority and military in Arakan. Consequently, on November 13, the AA initiated military attacks and seized control of two Border Guard Force posts (Doom-Baik and Chein-Kar-Le) in Rathedaung township. On the same day, it was reported that around 40 posts across Arakan were abandoned by the junta military, Border Guard Force (BGF), and police. The following day, the AA reportedly began offensive operations against two key junta military posts (Nu-Bu and Tro-I) alongside the Kaladan River, and one BGF post in the northern part of Maungdaw township. By November 15, this BGF post was reported to have been occupied by the AA.

As of November 16, AA troops had occupied the township police station in Pauktaw, arresting junta’s administration officers and members. Meanwhile, a large portion of Pauktaw town’s civilian population was forced to flee to nearby villages in the morning, with several hundred people becoming trapped downtown. Following the arrival of junta soldiers and police reinforcements, the AA troops withdrew. During this time, the remaining civilians in Pauktaw town were subjected to killings and arrests by the junta forces. The situation remained tense, and on November 21, the AA resumed its offensive operations against junta troops in Pauktaw, resulting in the release of about 100 civilians previously arrested by the junta. On the same day, it was also reported that the AA had occupied another BGF post, Kha-Htee-Hla, in the northern part of Buthidaung township. The military situation in Arakan remains continued to evolve. This report covers and analyzes data collected from November 13 to November 19, 2023.

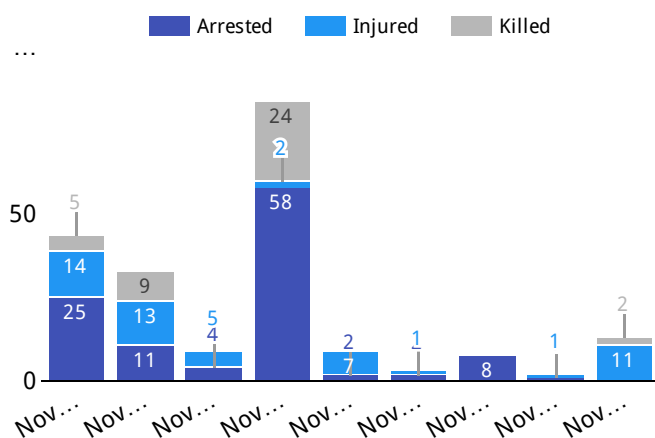
A. Civilian Casualties and Arrests

As of November 19, 2023, at least 111 civilians had been arrested, and another 42 were injured. The total number of civilian deaths was 38, according to the reports. Of these, 16 were male, 9 were female, and the gender of 13 could not be confirmed. Among the 42 injured, 16 were males and 18 were females, while the gender of the remaining 8 could not be verified. Among the affected population, at least 20 individuals under the age of 18 were killed, injured, or arrested. The affected civilians included members of various ethnic and religious backgrounds, such as Rakhine, Muslim [Rohingya], Bamar, Chin, and Daingnet.



B. Causes of the Casualties

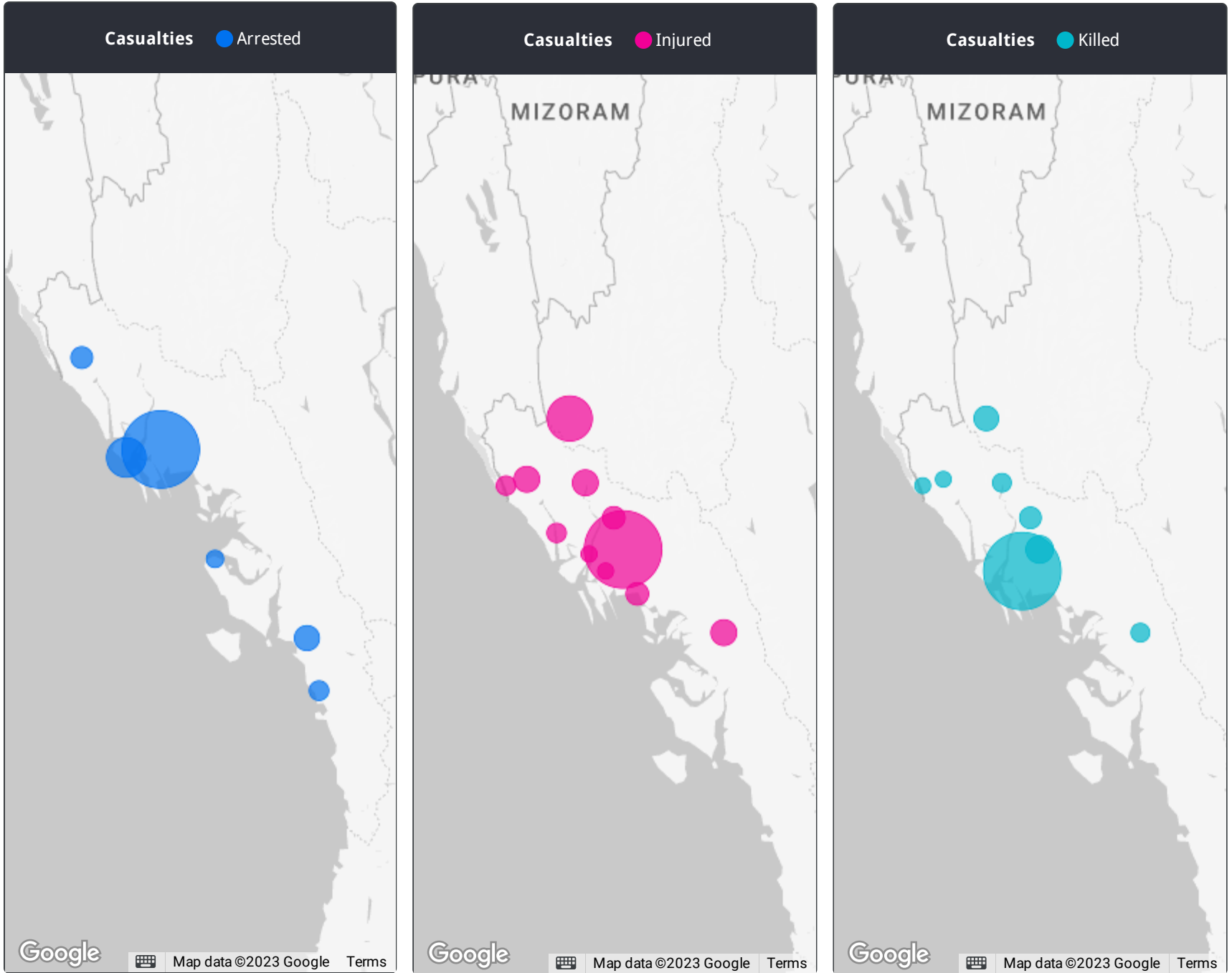
The key factors affecting the civilian population included artillery attacks, gunshots, airstrikes, mine explosions, and health problems. According to the data, gunshots by junta soldiers were the leading cause of civilian deaths, accounting for 25 fatalities by gunshot by SAC forces, followed by artillery attacks and airstrike with 11 deaths. Additionally, artillery attacks were responsible for the highest number of civilian injuries, affecting 35 individuals, with gunshots causing 4 injuries.



Causes (Category)	Injured	Killed
Heavy Artillery	37	9
Gunshot by SAC soldier	5	25
Airstrike	10	-
Airstrike & Heavy Artillery	1	4
Mining	1	1
Health Problem during fleeing	-	1

C. Locations of the Casualties and Arrests

According to the figures, the highest number of civilian deaths occurred in Pauktaw township (22), followed by Paletwa (4). The greatest number of injuries was reported in Min-Bya township (19), with Kyauktaw and Buthidaung each recording four injured individuals. Additionally, the most arrests of civilians were in Pauktaw (58) and Sittwe (24), followed by Taunggoke (11).



Overall, many observers claim that the current resumption of armed clashes in Arakan are likely to escalate in the coming weeks and months. They note that urban and peri-urban areas are increasingly becoming major parts of the conflict landscape. This marks a significant shift from previous armed conflicts. As a result, a larger civilian population is expected to be impacted and displaced.

About the Report

This report is part of the Center for Arakan Studies' (CAS) weekly conflict monitoring report, primarily focusing on conflict scenarios and civilian casualties in Arakan. Its purpose is to document the impact of armed conflicts on civilians, including deaths, injuries, and arrests. The report details the number of civilian deaths, arrests, and injuries, along with their locations and causes. Data for this report are mainly sourced from local media agencies and phone communications regarding on-the-ground situations. It covers the period from November 13 to 19, 2023.