Center for Arakan Studies

Arakan Conflicts Update

Case study analysis from November 13,2023 to January 13, 2025

Towns Newly Captured and Left to Be Captured

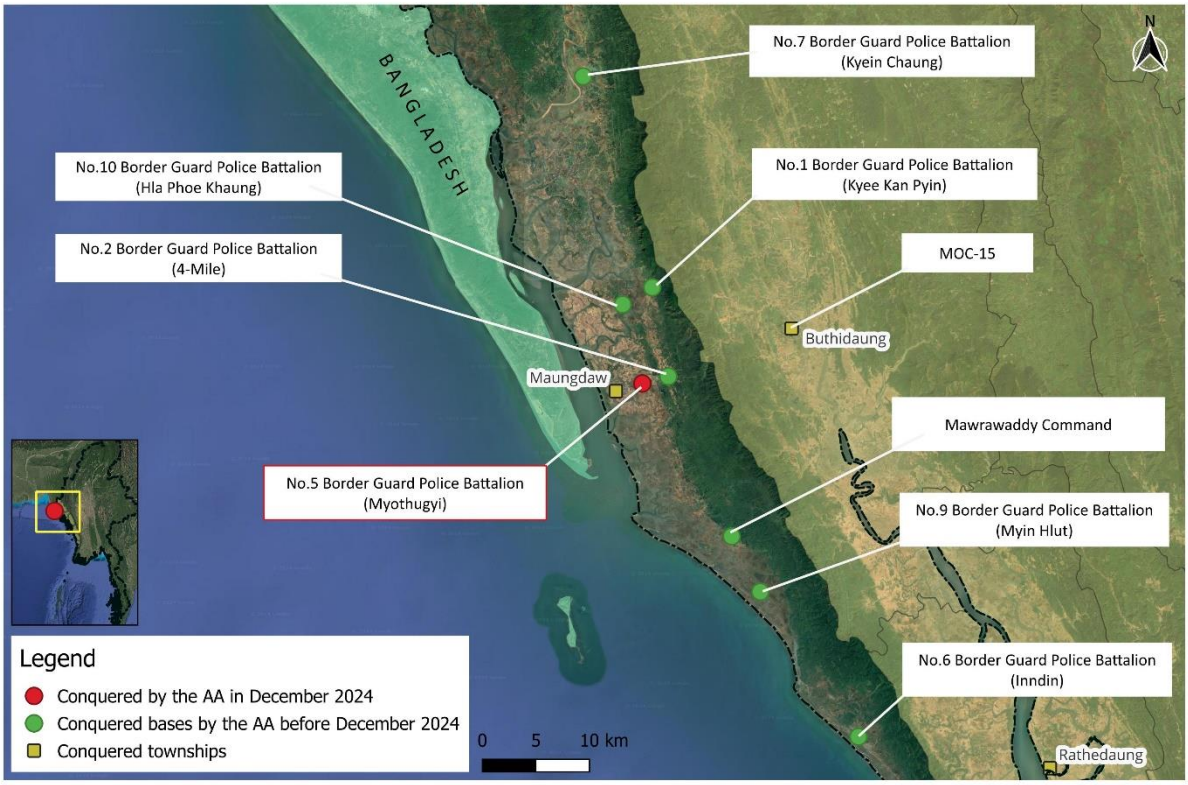
One of the unprecedented key characteristics of the armed conflicts in Arakan, beginning on November 13, 2023, is the capture of towns or township centers by the Arakan Army (AA) from the Myanmar junta. However, the intensity and duration of capturing each town vary depending on the fortified military positions, the nature of the conflict, and the external political environment.

On September 2024, the CAS has released a report named '**Twelve Towns in Ten Months'** highlighting 12 towns being captured by the AA in Arakan. These captured towns include Paletwa, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Minbya, Pauktaw, Rambree, Myebon, Ponnagyun, Rathedaung, Thandwe, Buthidaung and Maungdaw. However, Maungdaw was an exception as the last SAC military outpost named No-5, Border Guard Police station was not captured by the time of that report publication.

Currently, as of early February 2025, the AA has captured another four towns including Maungdaw. The new towns include Taungup, Ann, and Gwa. But there are also three towns such as Sittway, capital city of Rakhine state, Kyaukphyu, a key hotspot of Chinese investments and Muaung, an isolated island near Rambree island. In this report, the CAS has gathered information and highlighted key points regarding the process of the AA capturing the new four towns and issues happening in the left to be captured towns.

I. Town Name- Maungdaw

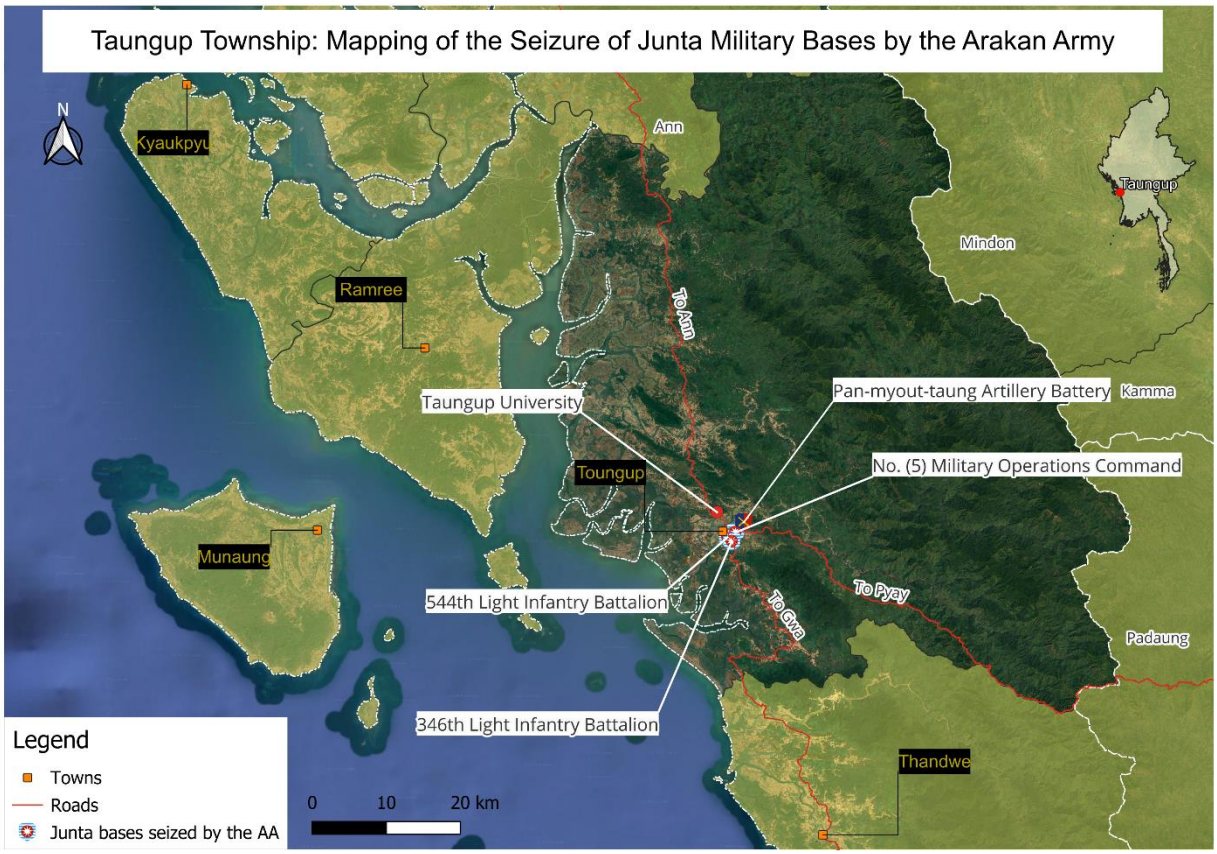
Location of No.5 Border Guard Police Battalion Conquered by the Arakan Army



The very first armed clashes between the Arakan Army and SAC in Maungdaw township took place when the AA captured the Done-Nyo BGP camps on November 17, just after three days of the current round of armed fighting. Then, on May 2, 2024, the AA captured No-1 Border Guard Police Battalion in Kyee Kan Pyin. On the same day, the AA also took control of the No-10 BGP in Hla Phoe Khaung.

After that, on June 13, the AA seized Mawrawaddy Tactical Operation Command. However, the last SAC military outpost of No-5 BGP in Myothugyi was only captured in December 8, 2024. Thus, it took the AA totally **one year and 21 days** to control the whole township.

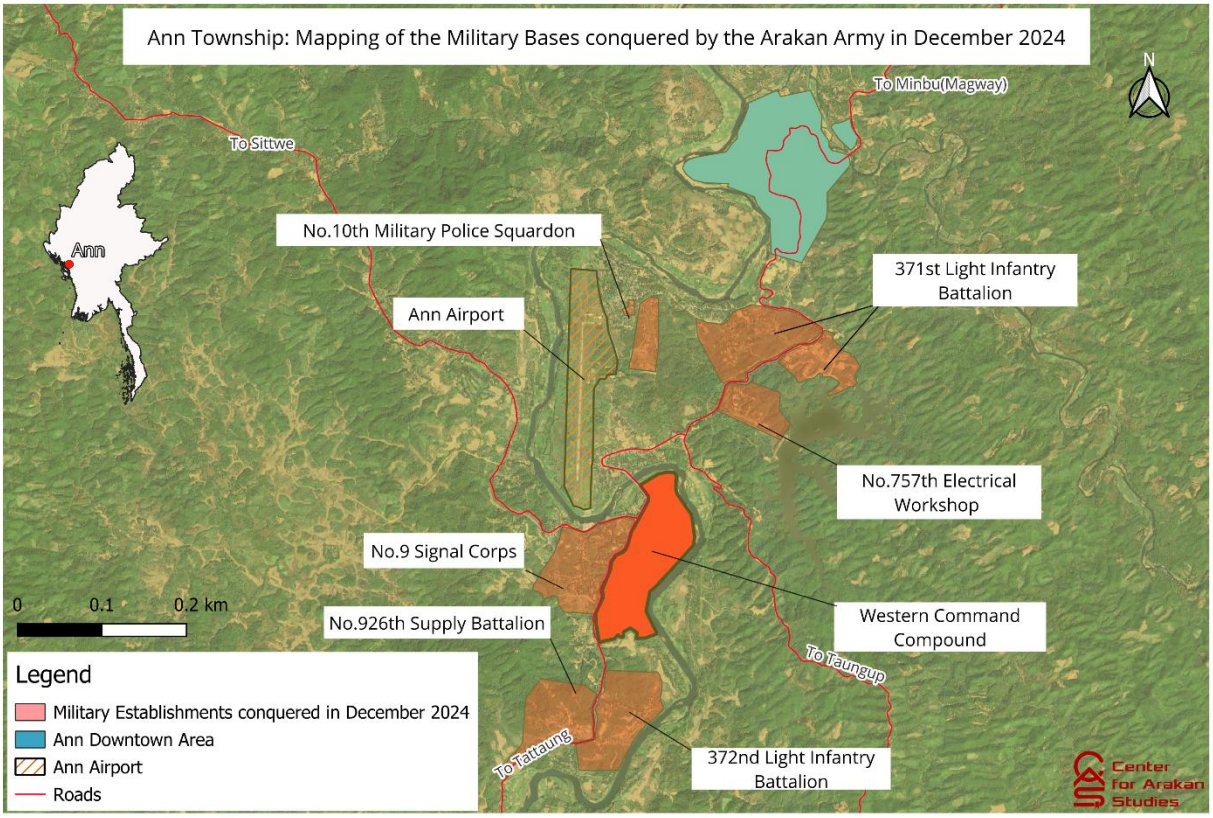
II. Town Name- Taungup



The first armed clashes in the township occurred when the Arakan Army (AA) attacked the Tan Hlwe Ywar Ma police station on November 13, 2023. Then, fighting was less intensive and the AA captured Artillery Battalion on Mt. Pan Myauk located near the town on November 3, 2024. Besides, reports said that AA captured No-544 and No-346 LIBs together with No-5, Military Operation Command on December 14, 2024.

Then, the AA forces ultimately took control of the entire town on that day, after the Myanmar junta troops surrendered, with some fleeing the town. It took the AA **one year and 30 days** to capture the town.

III. Town Name- Ann

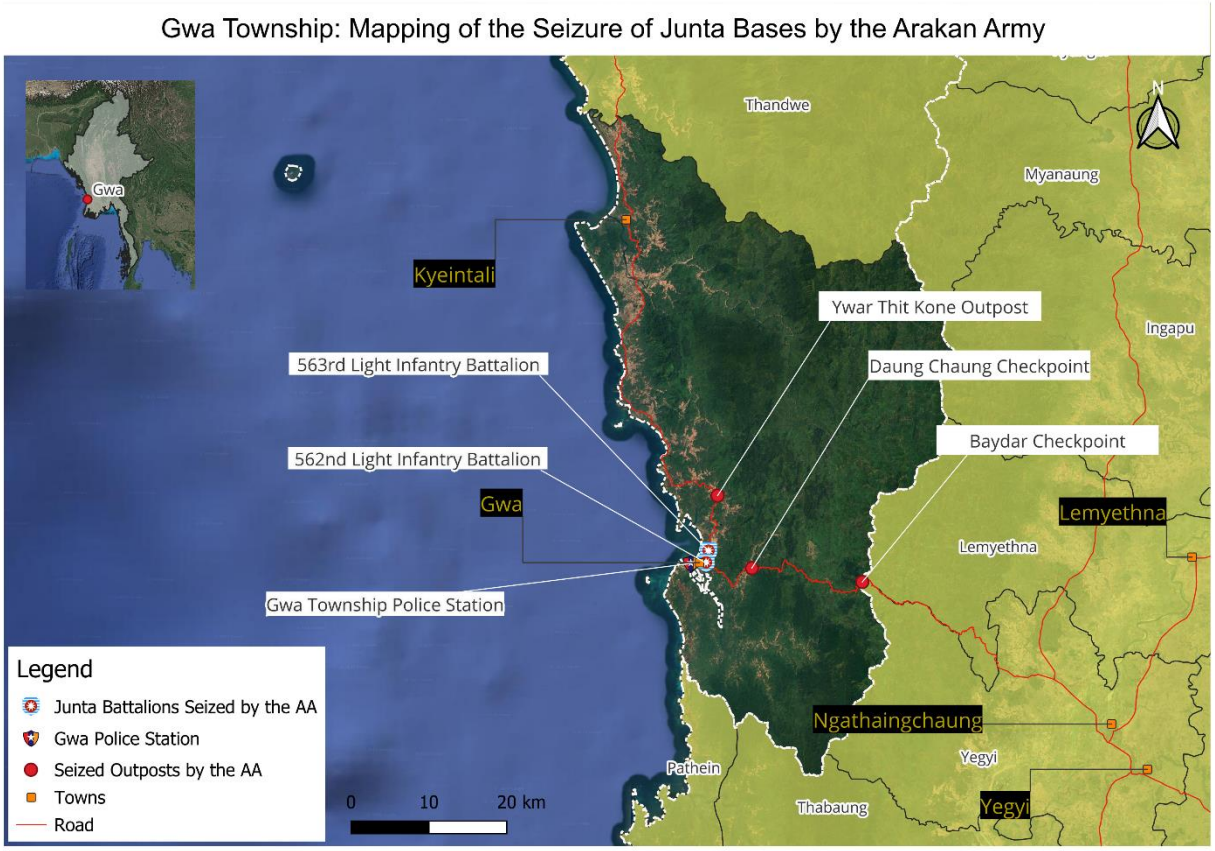


Note: No.8th Signal Battalion, No.919th Battefield Engineer Battalion, No.946th Engineer Squardon cannot be illustrated on the map as location is unknown.

The Arakan Army (AA) firstly launched attacks on two military camps near No-542 LIB on December 14, 2023. Then, with the intensification of conflicts on late 2024, the AA seized No-757 Electrical Workshop Battalion on November 13, 2024. It was then followed by the AA's capture of No- 926 Logistics and Transport Battalion, No-9 Communication Security Battalion, and No-10 Military Police Battalion on December 6, 2024.

The AA then finally seized Western Regional Military Command on December 20, 2024. Thus, it took approximately **nearly one year (357 days)** for the AA to capture the town of Ann.

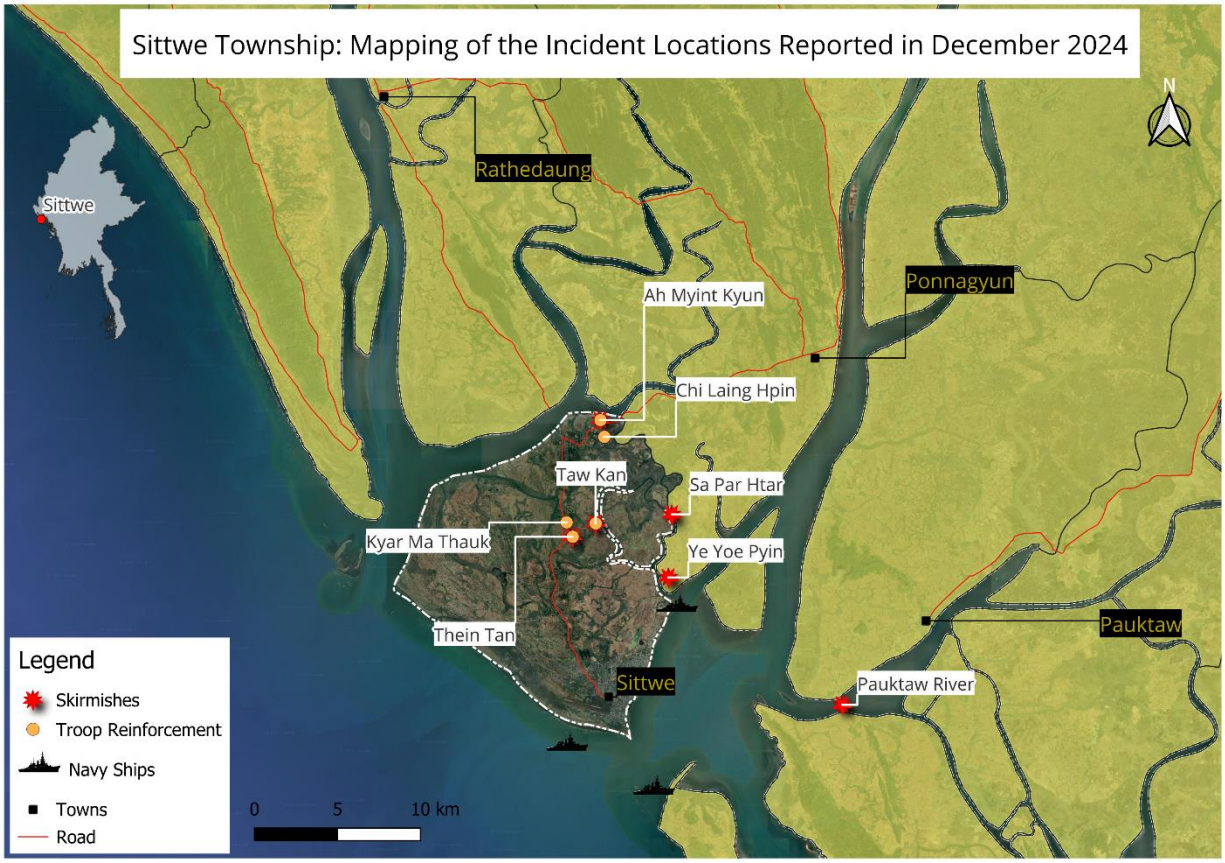
IV. Town Name- Gwa



The first battle conducted by the Arakan Army (AA) in the township was an attack on the Kaing Khon and Kan Kaw Taung military camps on October 6, 2024.One month later, the AA captured another camp named Ywar Thit Kone outpost. It was then followed by the AA's control of Daung Chaung Checkpoint and Bay Dar Checkpoint on December 18, 2024. Besides, the AA captured both No-562 and No-563 LIBs on December 29, 2024.

However, it was the junta reenforced its troops from the Division (66), (11) and South-Western Command in Pathein. Thus, AA only controlled the whole township on January 2, 2025. Thus, it took the AA **one month and 26 days** to gain control of the entire township.

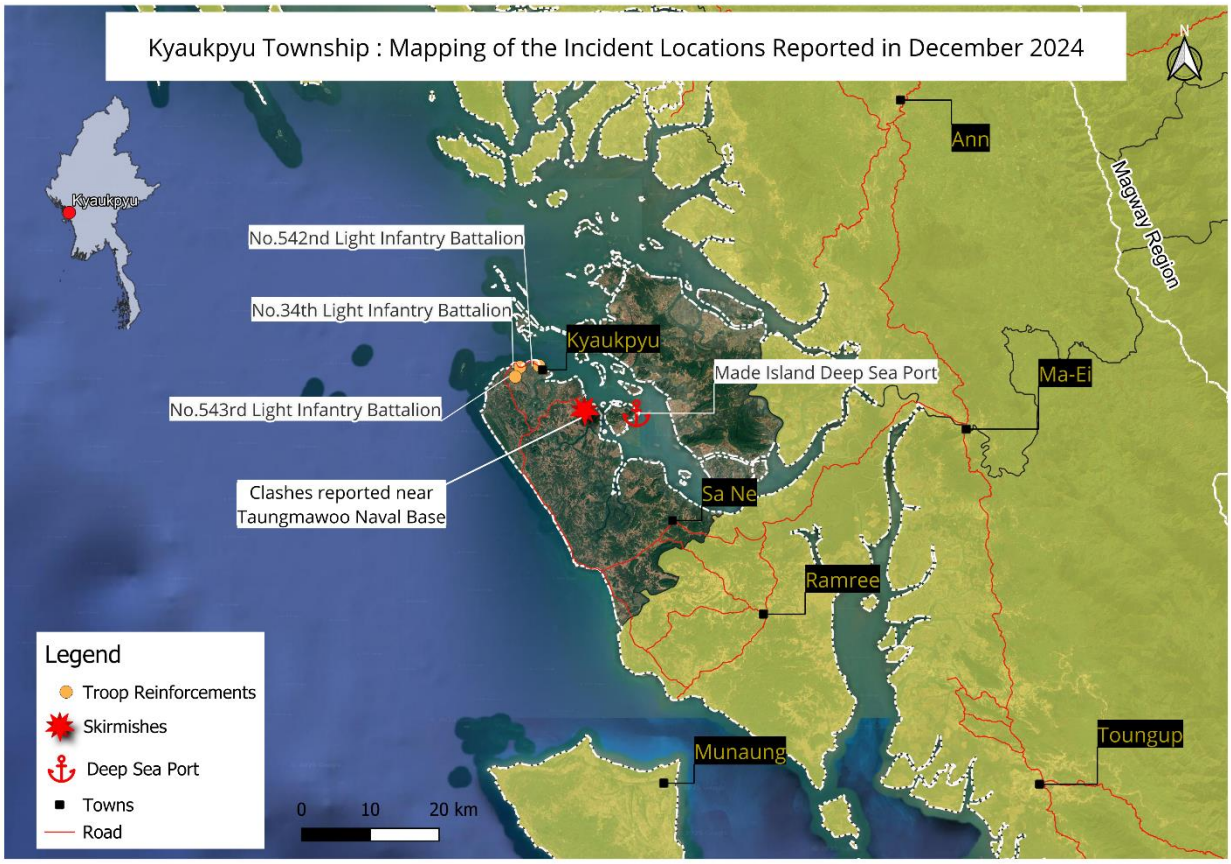
V. Town Name- Sittway



On December 14, 2023, the Arakan Army (AA) attacked Aung Daing Chaung Wa Military Camp in Sittway township. It was responded by the SAC' arson attack on Taw Kan village near the town. Then, one year later, on December 23, 2024, the AA and SAC shelled artilleries to each other near the villages like Thein Tan, Taw Kan, Ah Myint Kyun, Sa Par Htar and Ye Yoe Pyin.

As the latest development, it was reported that the SAC increased its navy power near the town to halt AA's offensives. No significant armed clashes were seen in the town.

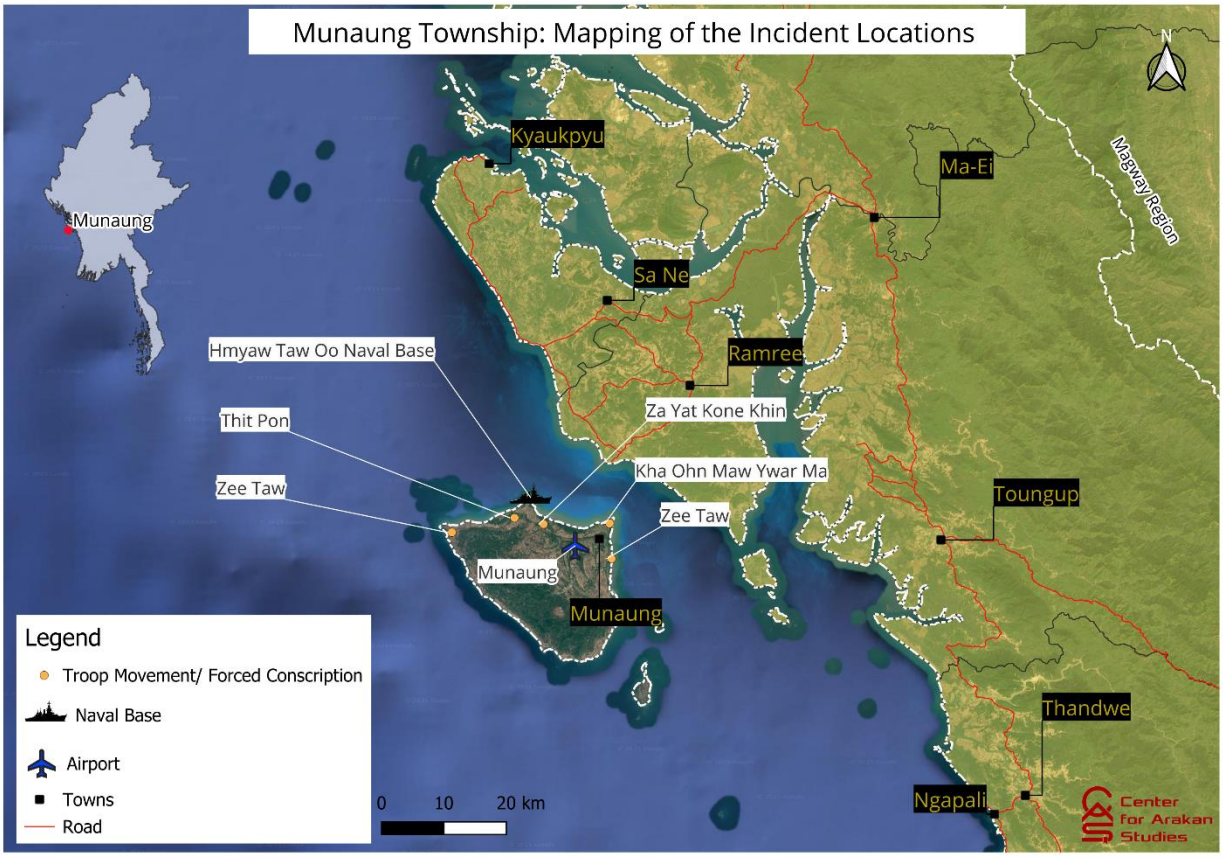
VI. Town Name- Kyaukphyu



The Arakan Army (AA) first attacked and seized Sa Ne Myoma Police Station on November 13, 2023. Then, on January 8, 2024, armed clashes also broke out near Danyawaddy Naval Base and Thit Pote Taung Village.

As of December 13, 2024, the SAC reenforced Np-542 and 543 LIBs including 34th Infantry Battalion near the town. Ten days later, the armed clashes also broke out near Taung Maw Oo Naval Base. As the latest update on January 2, 2025, it was reported that fighting broke out near No-32 police battalion near the town.

VII. Town Name- Munaung

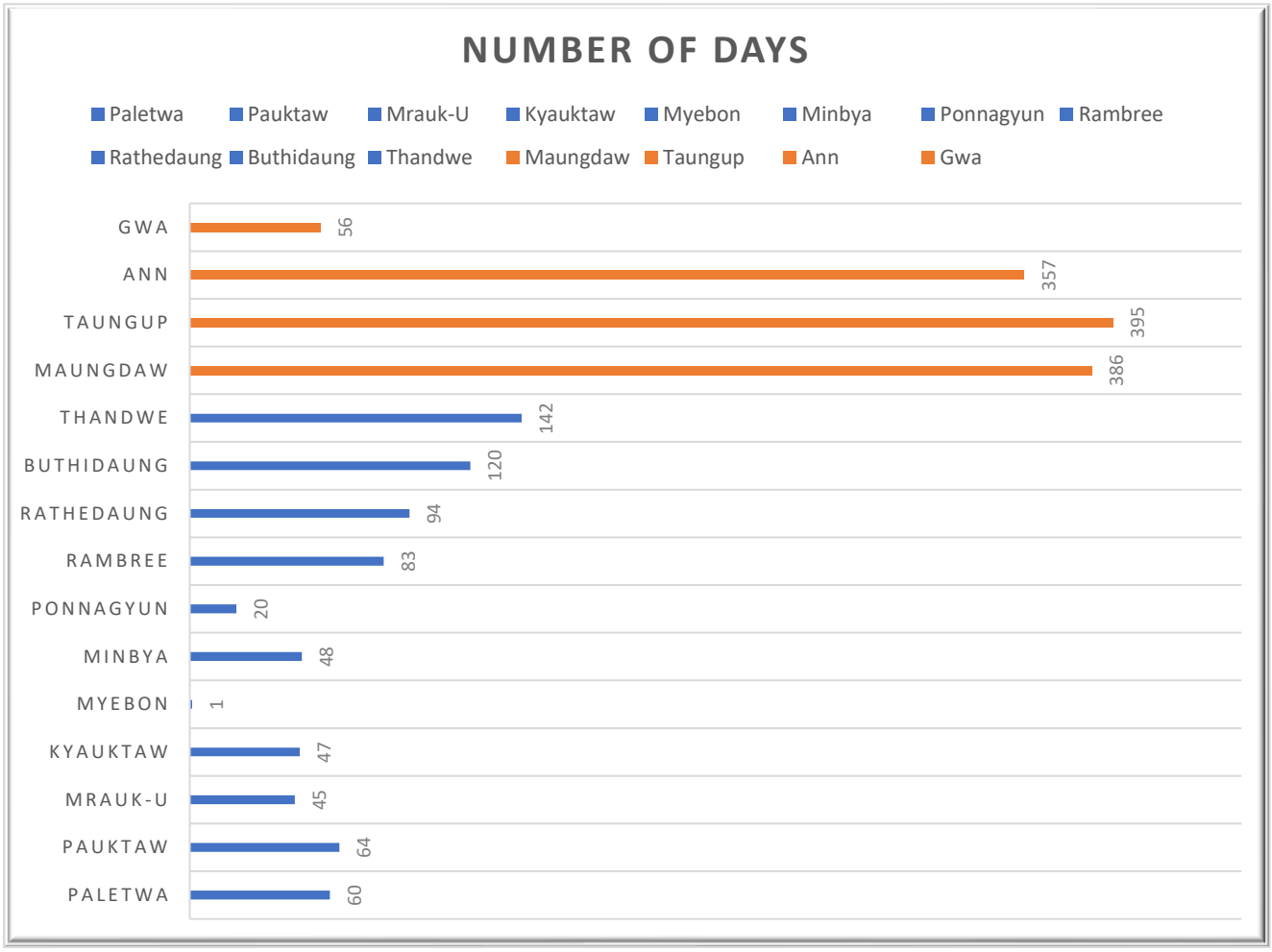


As Munaung is an isolated island, no military activities or armed clashes broke out in this township. But reports mentioned political activities and suffering of the local residents.

On February 25, 2024, it was said that the SAC extended the existing airport into 5500 feet to use for the military activities. Then, on April 8, 2024, the SAC soldiers entered Thit Pon village and warned not to cooperate with the AA. Besides, they also asked for forced conscription.

Then, on September 2, 2024, in the villages on the outskirts of Munaung Township (Zayar Kone Khin, Anout Zee Taw, Kha Ohn Maw Villages) and near the sea, the SAC conducted military activities like patrolling the areas. Then, as the updates on November 12, 2024, the SAC tightened the security measures around the town of Munaung and town entrances.

Analysis



First of all, the number of days does not determine the intensity of the armed clashes. Based on this metric, it appears that the townships of Taungup, Maungdaw, Ann, and Thandwe, took the longest to be captured by the Arakan Army (AA). However, this is not necessarily true, particularly for townships like Taungup, Maungdaw and Ann. In these two areas, despite the AA forces targeting military posts in November, the initial clashes did not lead to intense fighting.

Intensive fighting mainly happened in the townships like Ann, Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Thandwe and Paletwa where the SAC already has large military bases and heavily reenforced. Urban warfare similarly occurred in Pauktaw and Rambree, where no battalions were present.