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Written statement* submitted by European Centre for Law and Justice, The / Centre Européen pour le droit, les Justice et les droits de l'homme, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 August 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Requesting that the United Nations Take Meaningful Action to Stop the Senseless Violence Being Perpetrated against Innocent Christians and Other Civilians in Myanmar

1. Introduction

The European Centre for Law and Justice, The / Centre Européen pour le droit, les Justice et les droits de l'homme, (ECLJ) has submitted at least ten reports to this Council detailing the violence being perpetrated against innocent Christians and other civilians by the Myanmar army. However, nothing has been done to stop the senseless violence. Christians have been disproportionately attacked, as the Myanmar army has destroyed villages and churches and has killed numerous Christians.⁽¹⁾ Because of this, Myanmar is ranked as the 17th most dangerous country for Christians to live in.

2. Background

The Myanmar army has relentlessly and indiscriminately attacked innocent Christians and other civilians in Myanmar.⁽³⁾ Since the coup in February 2021, more than 3 million people have been displaced and thousands have been killed. Every day, people in Myanmar live in fear of being attacked by the Myanmar army. Innocent people have been gunned down the instant they stepped within range of the Myanmar army.

In just the first four months of 2024, airstrikes by the Myanmar army have resulted in the deaths of more than 359 civilians, including sixty-one children.⁽⁷⁾ Between January and April, airstrikes averaged about six per day.⁽⁸⁾ In addition to the civilian deaths, fifty religious buildings, thirty-eight schools, and eleven health centers have been destroyed.⁽⁹⁾ Below, we highlighted just a few of the attacks that the Myanmar army carried out.

3. Violations

The conflict in Myanmar continues to put innocent civilians at risk. Over the last three months, Free Burma Rangers, our on-the-ground source, has reported that there have been 759 airdropped munitions in Doo Pla Ya District. These munitions have consisted of 500 lb. and 300 lb. bombs, as well as 60 mm and 81 mm mortars. Often, these aerial bombardments have targeted civilian infrastructure, killing many and driving others to flee for safety. In fact, over 300 homes in Doo Pla Ya District alone were destroyed as a result of these aerial bombings.

In June 2024, the Myanmar army raided a village in Rakhine State and killed at least fifty people.⁽¹⁴⁾ The attack took place over two-and-a-half days.⁽¹⁵⁾ During the attack, soldiers blindfolded civilians, beat them up, poured petrol on them, and forced them to drink urine.⁽¹⁶⁾ Those killed ranged in age from as young as fifteen to as old as seventy.⁽¹⁷⁾

On May 16, 2024, the Myanmar army fired a mortar, killing the mother of a family in Zee Phyu Kone village, Krutu township.⁽¹⁸⁾

On May 13, 2024, the Myanmar army used 120 mm artillery to bombard surrounding villages.⁽¹⁹⁾ Additionally, two fighter jets dropped 500 lb. bombs in the surrounding area.⁽²⁰⁾ Thankfully, there were no reported casualties or injuries.⁽²¹⁾

On May 11, 2024, the Myanmar army attacked a Christian community in Chin State.⁽²²⁾ Around 9 p.m. on May 11, the Myanmar army conducted an airstrike, destroying two churches and five houses.⁽²³⁾ More than 1,000 civilians in the predominately Christian region fled into the forests to seek safety.⁽²⁴⁾

In May 2024, the Myanmar army massacred more than thirty civilians in central Myanmar.⁽²⁵⁾ One witness shared that soldiers forced at least thirty men to sit on the ground while they were interrogated.⁽²⁶⁾ The men were then beaten, and when they said they had no knowledge about the presence of resistance fighters, they were killed.⁽²⁷⁾

The soldiers then burned down between 170 to 200 homes in the village and destroyed their water pumps.(28)

On April 23, 2024, a Myanmar army helicopter fired into Kaw Kite Village, Krutu Township.(29) Villagers fled for their safety and multiple homes were destroyed in the attack.(30)

On April 12, 2024, the Myanmar army raided and pillaged approximately 400 homes and five churches in a village in Kalay Township in Sagaing Region.(31) One villager shared his account of the attack: “Houses that could not be burned down were also destroyed by industrial equipment. A school was also destroyed by their heavy weapons and drone bombs. They broke into the houses. After that they took off with a getaway vehicle.”(32) All of the houses destroyed in the attack belonged to Christians.(33)

On April 8, 2024, the Myanmar Army destroyed a church in Sagaing Region using a drone.(34)

On Easter Sunday in 2024, the Myanmar army bombed a monastery in Karen State that was providing aid and refuge to hundreds of civilians who were displaced from their homes. Eight civilians were killed and at least fifteen were injured in the attack.

During the first three weeks of March 2024, more than seventy civilians were killed in western Myanmar.(37) In addition to those killed, more than 100 were injured as a result of the indiscriminate bombing.(38) The aerial bombardment also destroyed numerous homes and schools.(39)

4. Request

Clearly, nothing has been done to stop the senseless violence being perpetrated against Christians and innocent civilians in Myanmar. Every day, the Myanmar army continues to indiscriminately bomb and raid villages. These attacks have resulted in a massive loss of human life and have created a humanitarian crisis. We respectfully urge this Council to take immediate action to protect innocent Christians and other civilians in Myanmar. Every day that meaningful action is not taken will only result in further loss of life.

1. Myanmar, OPEN DOORS, <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/myanmar/> (last visited Aug. 9, 2024).

3. OPEN DOORS, *supra* note 1.

7. Yasin Gungor, Myanmar Junta Airstrikes Kill 359 Civilians in 4 Months, ANADOLU AGENCY (May 24, 2024), <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/myanmar-junta-airstrikes-kill-359-civilians-in-4-months/3229452>.

8. *Id.*

9. *Id.*

14. Jonathan Head & Burmese Service, Myanmar Soldiers Cut Off Tattoos and Gave Detainees Urine to Drink, Witnesses Tell BBC, BBC NEWS (June 6, 2024), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckmm6jep6l7o>.

15. *Id.*

16. *Id.*

17. *Id.*

18. FREE BURMA RANGERS, *supra* note 10.

19. *Id.*

20. *Id.*

21. *Id.*

22. Myanmar Military Bomb Two Churches and a Hospital in Christian-Majority Chin State, BARNABAS AID (May 20, 2024), <https://www.barnabasaid.org/us/news/myanmar-military-bomb-two-churches-and-a-hospital-in-christian-majority/>.

23. *Id.*

24. *Id.*

25. Grant Peck, Reports of Army Killing of Villagers in Myanmar Supported by Photos and Harrowing Tale of a Survivor, AP NEWS (May 13, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/myanmar-massacre-of-civilians-by-army-c4b65ef8a61b327d77950e237a5b80b1>.
26. Id.
27. Id.
28. Id.
29. FREE BURMA RANGERS, *supra* note 10.
30. Id.
31. Junta Forces Continue to Destroy Churches in Myanmar, INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN (May 23, 2024), <https://www.persecution.org/2024/05/23/junta-forces-continue-to-destroy-churches-in-myanmar/>.
32. Myanmar: Five Churches Destroyed, OPEN DOORS YOUTH (May 13, 2024), <https://youth.opendoorsuk.org/new/myanmar-five-churches-destroyed/>.
33. See *id.*
34. INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN, *supra* note 31.
37. Airstrikes and Shelling Have Killed 70 Civilians in Myanmar's Rakhine State, RADIO FREE ASIA (Mar. 22, 2024), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/rakhine-civilians-bombs-03222024151502.html>.
38. Id.
39. Id.