

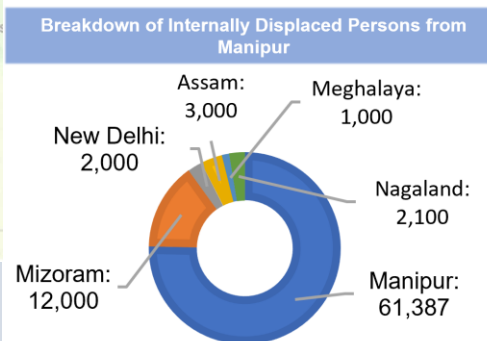
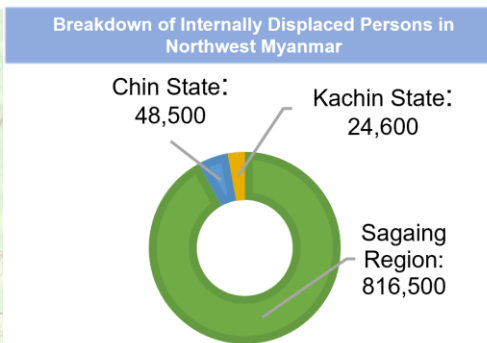
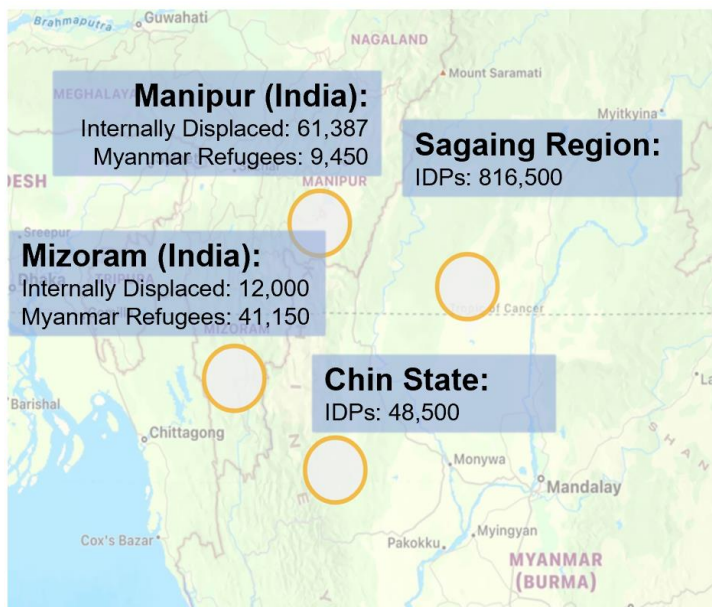


# Indo-Burma Region Situation Report

October, 2023 Update

Global Alliance of Indigenous Peoples, Gender Justice and Peace

*This monthly situation report tracks developing trends in the Indo-Burma region and is current with data through to November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The report is compiled by the Global Alliance of Indigenous Peoples, Gender Justice and Peace, in partnership with the Manipur Women Gun Survivor's Network and the Northeast Women's Initiative for Peace.*



## Key Figures in Manipur:



## NORTHEAST INDIA SITUATION Key Updates:

- **2 were killed in October**, adding to the **229 people** who have been killed in escalations of violent conflict in Manipur since May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Over **6,500 injured**, over **81,000 displaced**, and over **8,854 houses burned** since the beginning of the conflict.<sup>1</sup>
- **Increased censorship in Manipur** followed viral videos of brutal killings and abductions circulated on social media and messaging platforms. Legal scholars fear the implication of new censorship laws, and greatly impede the ability for civilians to discuss conflict in Manipur.<sup>3</sup>



### NORTHEAST INDIA SITUATION (continued):

- **366 arrested, 25,339 in preventative detention, and 9,332 FIRs** have been lodged in Manipur since the outbreak of violence in Manipur on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16</sup> Government data also reports 5,558 incidents of arson occurring since May 3<sup>rd</sup>, however, internal tracking reveals much higher numbers.
- **41,150**<sup>17, 18</sup> Myanmar asylum-seekers are currently estimated in Mizoram; however, estimates are likely an undercount. The Mizoram government continues to issue Identity cards to refugees; however, civil organizations still push the Indian government to afford stronger legal rights to asylum seekers.
- **5,232**<sup>17, 18</sup> Myanmar asylum-seekers have approached the UNHCR office in New Delhi since February, 2021. The true number of unreported refugees in New Delhi is still unknown.
- **9,450**<sup>17, 18</sup> Myanmar asylum-seekers are currently estimated in Manipur; however, estimates are likely undercounted. The majority of refugees in Manipur remain in hiding due to fear of retribution by the Manipur State government.

### MYANMAR SITUATION Key Updates:

- **55,832** Asylum-seekers have crossed the Indo-Burma border since the February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 coup. Numbers are expected to be an undercount.<sup>17, 18</sup>
- **2,016,400** Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are still seeking refuge within Myanmar's borders. This includes **816,500** IDPs in Sagaing Region and **48,500** IDPs in Chin State, two of the three states sharing a border with Northeast India.<sup>11</sup>
- **25,379** Myanmar Nationals have been arrested by the military regime (19,653 still detained), and **4,174** civilians have been killed by the military regime. These numbers include arrests of **701** children, and **477** children killed. Many children have died or been crippled by land mines set by the military regime.<sup>19</sup>
- **32 killed, including 13 children**<sup>20</sup> in an unguided airstrike on Laiza refugee camp on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.<sup>21</sup> The refugee camp was near the headquarters of the Kachin Independence Army.
- **Children increasingly targeted and held** by Myanmar's military as the regime tries to punish families of suspected resistance fighters. To resist the increasing threat, more and more children have joined resistance groups and taken up arms to protect themselves.<sup>22</sup>



### SITUATION OVERVIEW:

**In Northeast India**, violent conflict which erupted in Manipur on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, has to date taken the lives of an estimated **229 people**, while also injuring over 6,500, and displacing over **81,000 civilians**. Over **8,854 homes** have been lost to arson.<sup>1, 2</sup>

The central government has yet to structure and implement wide-spread humanitarian and legal support for over **55,832**<sup>17, 18</sup> Myanmar refugees and asylum-seekers who have entered Northeast India, which many view as a major contributing factor to recent unrest in Manipur.

**In Manipur**, violent conflict continued throughout October. A government crackdown on posts about the Manipur conflict on social media and messaging apps has made critical communications about the conflict an arrestable offense, raising concerns from legal scholars on human rights implications.<sup>3</sup> Internet and mobile data has also remained shut, further impeding civilian access to critical communications.<sup>23</sup>

Protests continued through October in response to the murder of two Meitei students, with arrests of suspects sparking a total shutdown and blockades of National Highway-37 in Churachandpur.<sup>24</sup> Many Kuki communities see the arrests as selective justice and now feel targeted both by Centre and the Manipur State Government.<sup>25</sup> Protests in Imphal were led and guided by Meitei militant groups,<sup>26</sup> and a sit in at Macha Leima School was organized by student activists to denounce repression of peaceful demonstrations and protests by students.<sup>27</sup>

On October 19<sup>th</sup>, a mob attacked a group on their way to collect a cow, accusing them of transporting goods for Kuki people, injuring 2 and killing one.<sup>28</sup> On October 31<sup>st</sup>, a Sub-Divisional Police Officer of Moreh was shot in his stomach by a sniper rifle while inspecting the construction of a helipad.<sup>29</sup> Although there was a significant decrease in conflict related deaths, bombs and gun fights still echoed throughout Manipur in October.<sup>1</sup>

Chief Minister N Biren Singh reiterated his calls for improved border security and a crackdown on “illegal” immigration of Myanmar refugees throughout October, claiming they are criminals seeding unrest<sup>30</sup> and citing 3 Myanmar Nationals who were arrested in Moreh after they were found pilfering charred furniture and electrical items from the ashes of burnt down homes.<sup>31</sup> As of October 10<sup>th</sup>, 6.812 km of border fence had been completed on the Indo-Burma border, with plans to finish construction by the end of 2023.<sup>32</sup>

The Manipur government distributed Rs 1,000 per person in relief camps across the state on October 24<sup>th</sup>, which now amounts to 61,387 displaced peoples.<sup>33</sup> The NHRC of India also sent notices to the Manipur State Government and Centre to suggest peace-building measures for rival communities be organized and prioritized.<sup>34</sup>



### SITUATION OVERVIEW (continued):

An unprecedented outbreak of Dengue fever has taken hold of Manipur, with 5 dead and 1,338 cases registered as of October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023.<sup>35</sup>

**In Myanmar**, heavy fighting remained constant across the nation's border states. October continued to see heavy airstrikes, especially in Kachin, Sagaing, and Shan North regions.<sup>17</sup>

**Northwest Myanmar** continued to see constant airstrikes, arbitrary arrests and brutal tortures, as well as arson attacks.<sup>17</sup>

**Sagaing Region** continued to experience heavy airstrikes and attacks targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. On September 27, 3 mortars struck a school in Joe-Taung Ywama Village, injuring children between 7 and 14 years old, adding to at least 119 schools destroyed by the Myanmar military.<sup>36</sup>

On October 14<sup>th</sup>, 6 people were abducted, tortured, and killed in Yinmabin Township, including 3 16-year-olds. Knives had been used to cut flesh off of their back, and rubber tubing was used to torture the victims.<sup>37</sup>

There are now over **816,500**<sup>17</sup> IDPs in Sagaing Region.

**Kachin State** an unguided aerial delivered bomb killed 32 refugees, including 13 children, in the Laiza Refugee Camp on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, adding to a disturbing number of airstrikes on civilian populations throughout the conflict.<sup>20</sup>

**Central, Northeast and Southeast Myanmar** regions faced escalations in October, with increased fighting in Northern Shan displacing nearly 50,000 people.<sup>17</sup>

**Northern Shan** an offensive led by the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, and the Arakan Army against the Myanmar junta has displaced over 50,000 people, with at least 600 fleeing to China.<sup>38</sup> At least 2 children, 12- and 9-years-old were killed in a rocket attack.<sup>39</sup> After days of fighting, the Myanmar military lost control of strategic border towns, including Chinshwehaw, where nearly 500 million USD worth of border trade with China passed through from April to September, 2023.<sup>40</sup>

**Bago Region** in Nattalin Township, the Myanmar military captured and held 100 people and 20 elephants from Nyan Le village hostage in October. The military has initiated attacks forcing civilians and elephants on the front lines, making it nearly impossible for resistance forces to attack.<sup>41</sup>



## SITUATION OVERVIEW (continued):

On October 11<sup>th</sup>, shell attacks in Nyaunglebin District killed a 14-year-old and injured 8 other civilians, displacing hundreds.<sup>42</sup>

**Across Myanmar**, the Military regime has continued to force recruitment for militias through local administrators, requiring recruitment quotas of 3 men per village.<sup>43</sup> A UN probe also found the military guilty of using forced labor for porters, guides, human shields, cultivation, construction, maintenance of military camps, transportation, accommodation, and domestic work throughout the conflict.<sup>44</sup>

There were 6 attacks on healthcare infrastructure and persons receiving treatment from September 30<sup>th</sup> to October 3<sup>rd</sup>, including a prisoner dying of a heart attack after being denied medical treatment, CDM-affiliated health workers abducted by the junta, and LNGO volunteer ambulance driver and ambulance abducted by the junta.<sup>45</sup>

The National Unity Government (NUG)'s first Rohingya minister, Aung Kyaw Moe, represents a new age of unified governance, should the NUG shadow government successfully regain political control of Myanmar. Aung Kyaw Moe is the first Rohingya minister since a 1962 law excluding them from holding office.<sup>46</sup>

In an unprecedented move, the Junta has also revoked the passports of anti-coup activists in Singapore, a move typically reserved for high-profile opposition leaders. Approximately 300,000 Myanmar Nationals live in Singapore.<sup>47</sup>

## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE:

### **Manipur Response:**

Humanitarian aid in Manipur remains difficult, especially in Kuki areas where education access and critical medical supplies and medical professionals remain largely inaccessible.<sup>1</sup>

The Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network (MWGSN) and the Northeast India Women's Initiative for Peace (NEIWIP) continue to work with leaders throughout Manipur to build Gardens for Peace in relief camps to provide opportunities for therapeutic work, and also address food insecurity in relief camps.

MWGSN and NEIWIP are also working with Manipuri artists to create artwork promoting peace and unity in the region.

The International Tribunal for Peace in Manipur, established in August, has also continued work in situation tracking, research, and statement gathering throughout October.





## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE (continued):

The Rs 1,000 distributed by the Manipur to over 61,000 survivors in displacement camps in October does little to alleviate the economic hardships and loss faced by many survivors, who feel forgotten by the Indian government, with inadequate aid packages, inadequate meals (often only 2 meals a day), no access to education, and inadequate access to healthcare.

Broader access to humanitarian and government aid for IDPs across Manipur needs national and international attention as conflict in Manipur continues into its 7<sup>th</sup> month.

### Myanmar Response:

In **Southeast States and Regions**, 26,000 in Bago Region received food assistance in October, and 2,850 displaced families in Bago, Kayah, Kayin, and Mon received Critical Relief Items (CRIs).<sup>17</sup> In Southeast States and Kachin, 547,500 people received food and cash assistance in October.<sup>17</sup>

In **Kachin and Shan (North)** Critical Relief Items (CRIs) were distributed to more than 280 survivors, including firewood and tarpaulins.<sup>17</sup>

In **Northwest Regions**, 1,312 students were enrolled in Non-Formal Education programs, while 5,684 students joined Open Learning programs in Sagaing Region. 9,700 IDPs in Sagaing Region's Kale Township received water purification tablets and hygiene kits in October.<sup>17</sup> 154,200 displaced in Chin and Magway received cash assistance.<sup>17</sup>

In **Rakhine and Chin (South)**, 76 students, including 54 with disabilities, joined Open Learning programs, while 320,000 people in Rakhine affected by Cyclone Mocha received cash assistance. 30 longhouses were also constructed in Rakhine, providing shelter to 1,300 IDPs, while 450 Rakhine families, and 880 Rohingya families received CRIs.<sup>17</sup>

## REGIONAL BACKGROUND:

Northeast India is home to one of the world's longest running armed conflicts, where a former British colonial martial law signed into law by the Union of India on September 11th, 1958, known as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), remains in effect to this day. The imposition of this law over the last 6 decades has led to the death of over 20,000 Indigenous peoples in the Northeast India state of Manipur alone.

### Manipur Violence

In Manipur, tensions had been rising throughout April over the push by the Meitei Indigenous community to receive Scheduled Tribe status. Meitei people, who make up 53% of the population of Manipur, had applied for Scheduled Tribe in 2013. Other Indigenous groups in Manipur, including Kuki and Naga groups, fear the recognition of Meiteis as Scheduled Tribes would take away opportunities for education, jobs, political seats, and also affect land rights.



### REGIONAL BACKGROUND (continued):

Without clear communication from the Manipur government about the actual implications of approved Meitei ST status, protests became violent. Houses and communities on both sides were targeted. Tensions began to simmer on April 27<sup>th</sup> when protestors in Churachandpur torched a new gym that Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was scheduled to speak, leading to an internet shut down.

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the All Tribal Student Union of Manipur led a march of over 60,000 in protest of the ST status application of the Meiteis, and an armed mob of protestors attacked Meitei communities in Torbung, Churachandpur during the attack. Women groups organized human chains to stop armed mobs from entering Meitei communities. Kuki leaders, including MLAs, claim the violence was initiated by the Meiteis and submitted a petition for a separate state, citing fear of future attacks. Groups on the ground have described the desperate need for peace negotiations and leaders from both communities to invest in a mutual understanding of each other and the situation, while also cautioning that there are political interests at play which have yet to be uncovered.

#### Myanmar Civil War

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, across the Indo-Burma border in Myanmar, the military overthrew a democratically elected government in a coup d'état which has since left Myanmar (Burma) in a state of violent conflict and turmoil. Fleeing conflict zones where fighting and arbitrary military murders remain a daily constant, many Burmese refugees arrive in Northeast India carrying the traumas of death, sexual violence, and displacement – the traumas of war. With 1.2 million refugees and asylum-seekers, and another 1.5 million Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs), Myanmar has the 6<sup>th</sup> largest global population of refugees in the world. The UNHCR reports that over 50,000 displaced peoples, including at least 18 lawmakers of Myanmar's National League for Democracy, have crossed the Indo-Burma border in the last 2 years. The vast majority of displaced peoples have crossed the Indo-Burma border without documentation. Many Burmese refugees do not have access to Identity Cards or the means to fulfil their most basic needs.

A growing humanitarian crisis has evolved over the past two years, and exacerbates the already dire circumstances people in Northeast India face under martial law. Many survivors lack basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and medical attention. Burmese refugees who have not received official Identity Cards are at risk of detention or being returned Myanmar.

For additional details, please contact the office of Global Alliance of Indigenous Peoples, Gender Justice and Peace:

Email: [gaipgap@gmail.com](mailto:gaipgap@gmail.com)  
[www.globalallianceofindigenouspeoples.org](http://www.globalallianceofindigenouspeoples.org)

