

Myanmar Junta's Targeted Attacks in Sagaing Including Muslim Villages Constitute War Crimes Against Civilians and Religious Sites

Photos: On July 18, 2022, a mosque in Kyi Su village was burned down by a group of military soldiers..



London, 4 November 2024 - On October 30, Myanmar's military junta, in coordination with the Pyu Saw Htee militia, launched a coordinated and violent assault on two villages—Kyi Su and Kyauk Taing—in Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Region. Kyi Su is a Muslim village and this is the third time targeted by the Junta forces. Using drone strikes followed by ground troop attacks, junta forces deliberately targeted religious sites, civilian homes, and essential infrastructure,

leaving both villages decimated. The assault, which destroyed 700 homes, two mosques, two monasteries, and a school, constitutes war crimes under international law, highlighting a deliberate strategy to devastate civilian communities.

“These calculated attacks on religious minorities, villages, and religious sites are part of a sustained campaign by the Myanmar military to terrorize civilian populations,” said Kyaw Win, Executive Director of BHRN. “By systematically destroying symbols of faith and turning entire villages into ashes, the junta is erasing the security and dignity of communities. This relentless violence must be met with decisive international action to hold the perpetrators accountable and put an end to this reign of terror.”

Under the Geneva Conventions, the deliberate targeting of civilians and the destruction of cultural and religious sites are considered war crimes. BHRN received reports from local sources that more than 160 Junta and Pyu Saw Htee troops carried out this operation, methodically destroying Kyi Su village—obliterating 400 homes, two mosques, and a monastery. In Kyauk Taing, they razed 300 homes, a monastery, and a school. Following this latest assault, no houses remain standing in either village, leaving hundreds of families without shelter.

A source on the ground reported to BHRN, “They attacked two mosques in Kyi Su village three days before the raid, using drones to drop bombs that initially missed. Later, ground troops entered the villages and set the mosques and houses on fire. These villages had only recently been rebuilt after previous attacks, and now everything has been destroyed again.”

This assault marks the third attack on Kyi Su village, a majority Muslim population, which has repeatedly faced violence from the junta. Originally home to around 900 houses, Kyi Su was previously targeted in 2022, when junta forces destroyed over 600 homes and a mosque. The repeated, systematic destruction of these villages underscores a deliberate effort by the junta to destabilize and dismantle these communities. More than 5000 people in Kyi Su need emergency humanitarian assistance as winter is approaching.

This violence in Sagaing reflects the junta’s broader tactics: destroying civilian infrastructure and cultural landmarks to instill fear and destabilize local populations. BHRN has verified through satellite imagery, provided by Myanmar Witness, confirming fire damage across Kyi Su and Kyauk Taing on October 30.

BHRN calls on the international community to recognize these acts for what they are: war crimes against civilians. International law prohibits the destruction of religious and cultural sites and the deliberate targeting of civilians in conflict zones. This campaign of terror against civilian communities demands immediate and decisive international action. BHRN urges governments, multilateral organizations, and international courts to hold Myanmar’s military leaders accountable for these atrocities and to take all necessary measures to protect civilians under siege in Myanmar.

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About BHRN

Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN) is based in London and operates across Burma/Myanmar, working for human rights, minority rights and religious freedom in the country. BHRN has played a crucial role in advocating for human rights and religious freedom with politicians and world leaders.