



MYANMAR WITNESS

A project by



CENTRE for
INFORMATION
RESILIENCE

NECESSARY AND PROPORTIONATE?

Potential 'Unprovoked' Airstrikes in January 2025

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31 March 2025

WARNING: This report contains graphic information and imagery. While efforts have been made to blur details, the report includes information which some readers may find distressing.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report investigates claims of Myanmar military airstrikes on villages and assesses whether they were isolated incidents or part of a broader pattern. While the State Administration Council (SAC) claims that airstrikes are necessary, targeted responses to immediate threats or terrorism, Myanmar Witness monitored five States and Regions in Myanmar - Mandalay, Kachin, Rakhine, Shan and Tanintharyi - in January 2025. The aim was to determine whether airstrikes generally occurred in response to clashes with resistance forces, supporting the SAC's claim that they were isolated events.

Reported airstrike incidents were widespread in the states and regions covered, with 46 pieces of data collected, including 32 distinct incidents of claimed airstrikes from January 2025. Three key hotspots have emerged as focal points of the investigation - Mandalay Region, Rakhine State, and Shan State. This investigation has found that airstrikes have destroyed or severely damaged villages and critical infrastructure in areas where civilians, including children, were either regularly present or are claimed to have been present. This directly contradicts SAC claims that airstrikes target only insurgents. Isolated incidents of airstrikes suggest a broader or more indiscriminate use of airpower than a strictly proportional or necessary military strategy.

This report is based on the collection of already established Myanmar Witness data, in comparison to collected data around clashes/other incidents in January 2025. It cross-references satellite imagery, social media content and independent reports in its use of case studies to assess whether the Myanmar military's claims of proportionality and necessity are accurate, while also highlighting the complexities inherent within claims of 'isolated' airstrikes.

2 INTRODUCTION

A prevailing narrative since the coup in 2021 is that the Myanmar military's actions are proportionate, necessary and due to the incitement of other actors. Myanmar Witness's earliest reports, such as those from [Hlaing Thayar](#), reflect SAC narratives as blaming 'protestors [...] inciting the people'. The SAC also claim that these reactions are proportional to the situation. For example, in coverage of [Operation Yan Naing Min](#) in 2024, the SAC justified its airstrike campaign to 'prevent the consolidation and establishment of EAOs and the People's Defence Forces (PDF)'. Additionally, state-linked media [Global New Light of Myanmar](#) has a 'Fact Check' section on their website, presenting the pro-military perspective on alleged military interventions in Myanmar, frequently framing airstrikes as proportionate to "[terrorist](#)" threats and militarily "necessary".

Myanmar Witness has monitored five states and regions with low levels of active conflict in January 2025 to assess these claims of airstrikes. More pertinently, the investigation examined if these incidents were preceded by clashes with defence forces, testing the military's narrative that airstrikes appear to be necessary.

However, documenting such incidents presents challenges in accurately capturing and analysing the trends with the established methodology. This underscores the necessity for case studies in this investigation, which provide a closer examination of isolated incidents and their broader implications. Moreover, these case studies highlight not only the complexity of airstrike patterns but also their human impact, particularly when the airstrikes appear indiscriminate or occur regularly in civilian areas.

The report is structured into two main sections: Analysis, which is a general overview of the investigation findings, while the Case Studies examine two incidents in detail, demonstrating the breadth of complex situations analysed and the consequences of airstrikes on infrastructure and civilian lives. The report concludes that claims around the Myanmar Air Force using airstrikes against villages where civilians may be present remain ongoing. Furthermore, the nature of some airstrikes - seemingly isolated from incidents immediately preceding them - challenges the Myanmar military's claims of necessary or proportional action against insurgents.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 MYANMAR WITNESS STANDARD METHODOLOGY

Myanmar Witness follows a methodology of digital preservation and rigorous, replicable analysis. Digital content is collected and archived in a secure database and hashed to confirm authenticity and prevent tampering.



Myanmar Witness uses a confidence judgment system to describe the extent of independent verification:

- **Very High:** Myanmar Witness is 85-95% sure that the event took place as described in the claims. Digital content is independently geolocated and mostly chronolocated, with strong corroborating evidence on details of the claim.
- **High:** Myanmar Witness is 70-80% sure that the event took place as described in claims. Digital content is geolocated. Other reliable sources

confirm the time and date, but it cannot be independently chronolocated. Other details of the claim have not been proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

- **Medium:** Myanmar Witness is 50-60% sure that the event took place. The event is somewhat verified, but significant gaps remain.
- **Low:** The geolocation and chronolocation process has shown the location or timing of the digital content to be inaccurate.
- **Unknown:** There is insufficient evidence for the investigator to make a judgment.

For the avoidance of doubt, this verification system only refers to Myanmar Witness's ability to independently geolocate or chronocate footage. Incidents marked as unverified may still be substantiated by multiple eyewitness reports. Myanmar Witness also collates and assesses unverified information, including claims on social media. This information is presented as claims, rather than verified facts.

This report contains figures showing how footage has been geolocated. In these images, coloured lines are used to represent the left and right arcs of vision. Coloured boxes show corresponding landmarks or distinguishing details in each piece of footage or data. Geolocation is conducted using an array of open source tools, such as Google Earth to match satellite imagery with visual features identified in the footage or images. Geolocations are peer-reviewed.

Chronolocation is conducted using metadata, contextual analysis, weather patterns, and shadow analysis. Through this, possible timeframes are deduced. For example, by orienting geolocated content and identifying the sun's position, time can be determined. Myanmar Witness follows rigorous ethical standards: obscuring identifying information about individuals involved; censoring private information and images where appropriate; blurring graphic imagery; removing links to private individual accounts; and archiving digital content securely.

3.2 JANUARY 2025 AIRSTRIKES METHODOLOGY

Myanmar Witness analysed data from its existing database in January 2025 and Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)'s Myanmar conflict database to create two datasets: a primary Myanmar Witness dataset, and an ACLED-collected conflict database, including claims of clashes, arrests and protests in Myanmar in January 2025. ACLED is a non-governmental organisation that collects, analyses and maps real-time data on political violence, protests and conflicts worldwide.

Myanmar Witness has analysed airstrikes in these five states and regions that are regularly monitored by Myanmar Witness but do not present as current epicentres of conflict. These areas have experienced airstrikes, which Myanmar Witness has

collected to examine the nature of potential provocation for incidents in these locations. January 2025 was chosen as a random sampling month to avoid any potential selection bias in the analysis.

Not all collected user-generated content (UGC) is completely verified, but it is included if both claims by uploaders and in some cases the nature of the damage suggest airstrikes. For example, four of the 20 potentially unprovoked incidents - termed throughout this report for clarity as isolated airstrikes - are categorised as 'claimed', without geolocation of the incident.

Myanmar Witness considers an airstrike isolated if no other incident is recorded to have happened within 10 km of the airstrike location in the previous seven days. Myanmar Witness has not included claims of airstrikes against civilians from the Myanmar military within the seven days and 10km radius, as they don't necessarily represent ongoing conflict, but could represent more unprovoked incidents in the same area and timeframe.

These parameters were chosen by Myanmar Witness to capture conservative but likely related incident data to the airstrike incident.

3.2.1 AUTOMATED ANALYSIS

Following the definition of an isolated airstrike from the previous subsection, Myanmar Witness conducted an automated analysis, judged an alleged airstrike to be isolated, and hence potentially unprovoked.

The automated analysis cross-checks 32 airstrike entries of the Myanmar Witness database with 670 entries of ACLED's database, which fall within the scope of this report. This step keeps only the isolated airstrikes, and hence potentially unprovoked, for further manual confirmation and analysis.

3.2.2 MANUAL ANALYSIS

Additional UGC and data sources were gathered for specific incidents included here as case studies. Incidents outside the research timeframe (1-31 January 2025), those deemed irrelevant (i.e., not including claims of airstrikes) or duplicates were excluded.

Myanmar Witness then conducted a manual review of the data collected, which had already been processed through automation separately, to ensure accuracy by uploading the geospatial data from Myanmar Witness' database and ACLED into Google Earth Pro and comparing each incident to the data around it within seven days and 10km.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 TOP LINE SIGNIFICANCE

Reported airstrike incidents were widespread in the regions covered, with 46 pieces of data collected from January 2025 (including approximately 32 distinct incidents of claimed airstrikes). Every State/Region analysed by Myanmar Witness reported at least one airstrike incident that could be verified. The dataset also indicates a higher number of isolated incidents compared to non-isolated incidents. This trend highlights a concerning level of destruction in seemingly isolated incidents across the regions assessed.

Three key hotspots have emerged as focal points of the investigation: Mandalay Region, Rakhine State, and Shan State. Rakhine stood out due to the severity of the incidents recorded, suggesting a pattern of escalating violence, perhaps aligned with conflict in the region. On the other hand, Mandalay has shown the highest frequency of isolated incidents, which might warrant closer examination in the future.

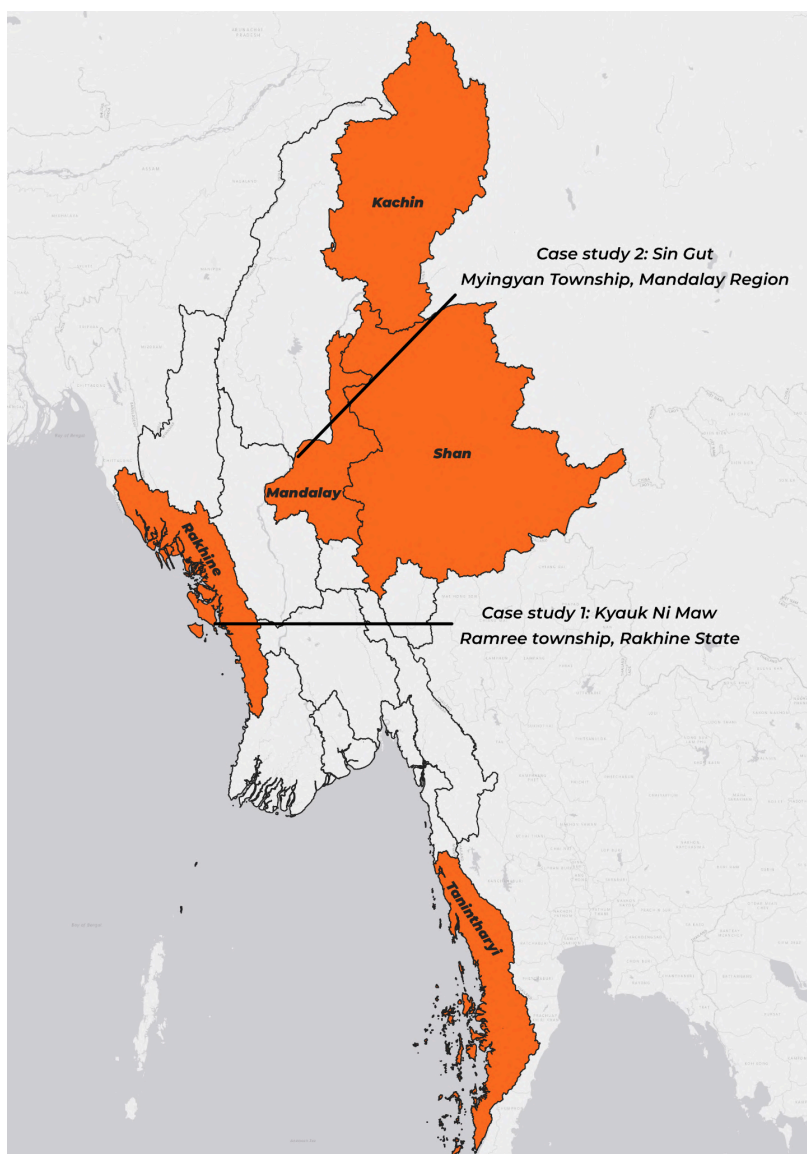


Figure 1: Map showing the location of the case studies analysed by Myanmar Witness.

4.2 LOCATION AND DATE

In January 2025, Myanmar Witness found that airstrikes occurred in all of the States/Regions analysed - Rakhine, Shan, Tanintharyi, Kachin and Mandalay. Of these, an 'isolated' occurrence of airstrikes was reported in all of the States/Regions analysed. For some of these incidents, the level of damage to the location specified was further verified to a 'medium' or 'high' degree through geolocation, chronolocation and analysis by Myanmar Witness. This demonstrates that although the dataset in January was not particularly large, the 20 isolated air incidents reported at the time of writing were nonetheless frequent enough to appear in all States/Regions where Myanmar Witness conducted analysis. This highlights that these incidents are widespread.

Isolated Incidents Of Alleged Air Attacks In January 2025 Geographically

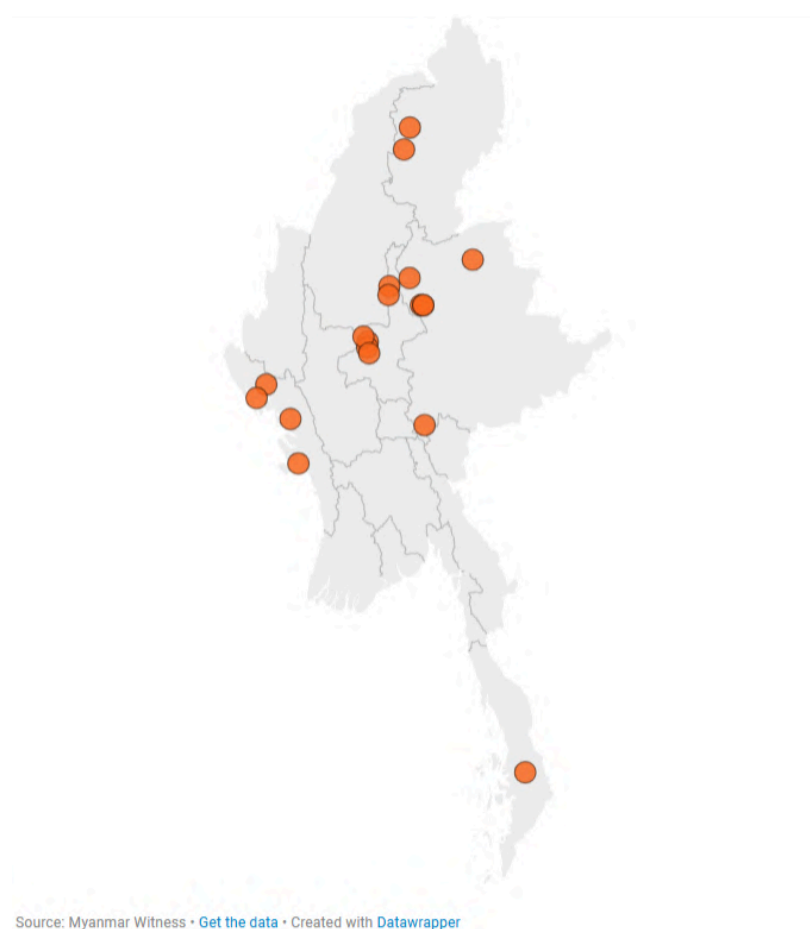


Figure 2: Map showing geographic split in isolated incidents collected from the Myanmar Witness database for January 2025 (Source: datawrapper)

Of the States/Regions analysed, Mandalay was found by Myanmar Witness to have the highest number of potentially isolated incidents, notably with most occurring in the final part of the month. However, no clear pattern could be ascertained as to why that might be at the time of writing. This was followed by two areas of ongoing conflict in Myanmar: Rakhine and Shan.

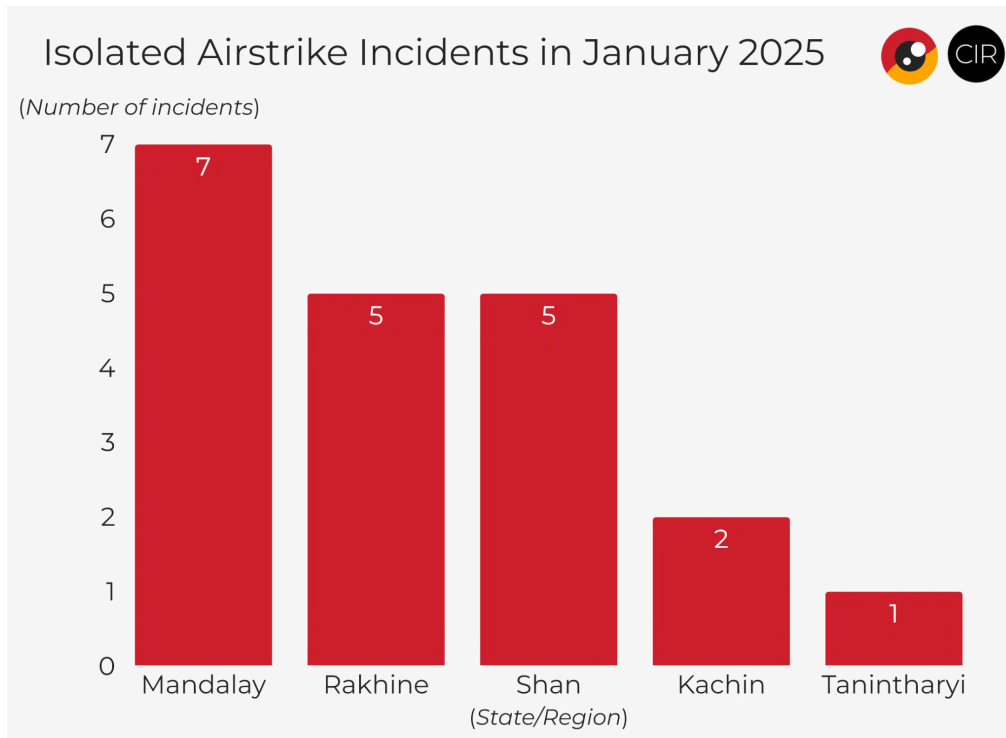


Figure 3: A bar chart created by Myanmar Witness, demonstrating at least one isolated incident of airstrikes reported in each of the States/Regions chosen for analysis.

In terms of date ranges, Myanmar Witness has not found a notable pattern in the clustering of events in isolated incidents. While incidents later in the month slightly trended towards Mandalay and Shan, this has been analysed as not significant to the process. This small data trend could be a result of collection bias, thus, it has not been deemed significant.

Table 1: The Dates And Locations Of Alleged Isolated Incidents As Analysed By Myanmar Witness

Date	State/Region	Township	Village/Town
2025-01-01	Shan	Hseni	Hseni town
2025-01-02	Mandalay	Thabeikkyin	Chaung Gyi
2025-01-03	Rakhine	Myebon	Kan Htaunt Gyi town
2025-01-05	Rakhine	Ponnagyun	In Zone Pyin
2025-01-08	Rakhine	Ramree	Kyauk Ni Maw
2025-01-08	Mandalay	Mogoke	Mogoke
2025-01-11	Kachin	Tanai	
2025-01-12	Shan	Pekon	La Ei
2025-01-13	Tanintharyi	Tanintharyi	Than Taik
2025-01-13	Kachin	Hpakant	Ma Sut Yang
2025-01-14	Shan	Nawngkhio	Kone Son
2025-01-18	Rakhine	Mrauk-U	Ram Chaung

2025-01-18	Mandalay	Myingyan	Ywar Thit
2025-01-21	Shan	Nawngkhio	Nawngkhio
2025-01-22	Shan	Nawngkhio	Nawngkhio
2025-01-23	Mandalay	Natogyi	Let Wea and Myin Ni
2025-01-24	Rakhine	Ramree	Htaunt Chein
2025-01-26	Mandalay	Myingyan	Sin Gut
2025-01-30	Mandalay	Taungtha	Zat Yat Gyi
2025-01-31	Mandalay	Singu	Singu town

Table 1: A table showing the date and location of airstrikes events recorded by Myanmar Witness in the five States/Regions in Myanmar that showed no ACLED incidents within seven days or 10km of the event (Source: Myanmar Witness database, available on request).

4.3 NON-ISOLATED INCIDENTS

Of the 32 incidents, 12 were classified as non-isolated, meaning they were potentially linked to previous events such as arrests, clashes in the area or claims of attacks. This was based on an analysis of incidents that were within seven days and 10 km of each other. The highest number of four related incidents was in Shan State, with the fewest being in Mandalay.

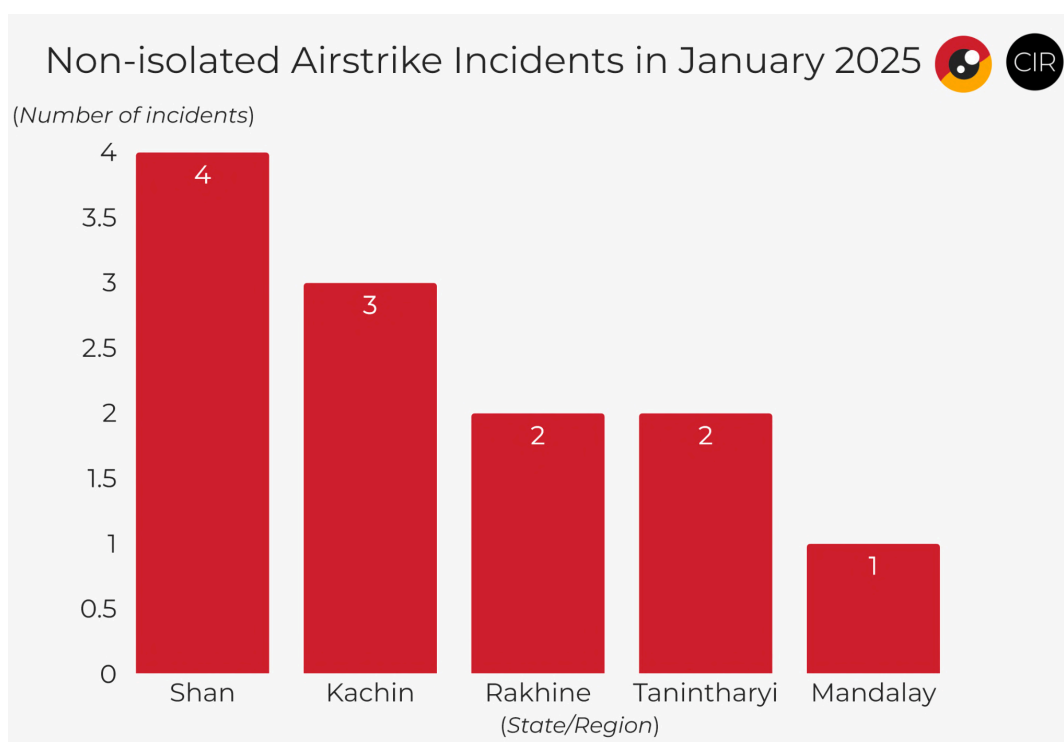


Figure 4: A bar chart created by Myanmar Witness, demonstrating at least one non-isolated incident of airstrikes reported in each of the States/Regions chosen for analysis.

5 CASE STUDIES

Following the broader pattern analysis, Myanmar Witness selected case studies to demonstrate some of the themes present within the dataset. Though the dataset is not large enough to have specific through lines, the following cases' importance lies in their broader implications for conflict patterns and implications for civilian safety in Myanmar.

The first case study underscores the severity and indiscriminate nature of airstrikes in Myanmar post-coup, demonstrating how areas with ongoing conflict still contain civilians, especially vulnerable children, and the effects of such airstrikes can be devastating. The classification of this incident as an 'isolated' incident further highlights the unpredictability of airstrikes, reinforcing the lack of clear provocation or retaliation pattern. The second case highlights the complexities of categorising conflict incidents based on combatant status. Even sources sympathetic to PDFs acknowledge casualties among their members, as well as emphasising damage to schools and civilian infrastructure. This raises concerns about the impact of conflict on educational spaces both during conflict and post-conflict.

Both cases allege the presence of civilians, including children, in these areas, which highlights the ongoing risks faced by individuals in Myanmar amid indiscriminate violence and air attacks specifically. The lack of clear provocation or retaliation challenges narratives that airstrikes are purely defensive or in retaliation for acts against the Myanmar military.

5.1 CASE STUDY 1: RAMREE TOWNSHIP, RAKHINE STATE

5.1.1 BACKGROUND

[Fighting](#) in Ramree township reportedly started on 18 December 2023. The [Arakan Army](#) (AA) announced that they had taken full control of Ramree township on 11 March 2024. This could explain why the Myanmar military, engaged in active conflict with the AA since a large [offensive led](#) by the Myanmar military in July 2022, allegedly targeted the area in a [retaliatory](#) attack against AA forces. Despite the conflict in Ramree township, there does not appear to be an incident in the comparative analysis within the seven-day, 10km timeframe to suggest this was a retaliatory air attack being carried out by the MAF in Ramree town.

On 8 January 2025, at around 13:20 local time, [pro-military sources](#) as well as local anti-military news media [Arakan Princess Media](#) and the Arakan Army Telegram channel [AA Info Desk](#), reported that Kyauk Ni Maw (ကျောက်နီမော်) [18.90410995, 93.95806885] village in Ramree township, Rakhine State was attacked, and heavily

fire-damaged, by the MAF. This was reportedly the result of an air attack with a fighter jet, though the exact model is not further specified in reporting.

[Progressive Voice Myanmar](#) reports that Kyauk Ni Maw is a predominantly Kaman Muslim village. Initial reporting of the incident by [Arakan Princess Media](#) alleged that the airstrikes - and subsequent fire damage - resulted in the deaths of around 40 individuals and injury of another 20, including children and elderly people (most of whom were Muslim as reported by [Progressive Voice Myanmar](#)). This figure is restated by the [Arakan Princess Media](#) channel in a post two days later on Telegram. However, the [AA Info Desk](#) confirmed the death of 26 individuals and reported both major and minor injuries to others. They also stated the victim count could rise, as the search for missing people was still ongoing at the time of publication. Thus, Myanmar Witness will use the figure of around 26 to 40 individuals reportedly dead as a result of the incident.

Fire damage was also reported to have destroyed around 500 civilian homes, in initial reports, which was later revised to 398 by the [AA Info Desk](#) on 10 January 2025, along with the release of some 26 victims' names. The two online news sources also published images of the allegedly deceased and injured individuals from the Kyauk Ni Maw village (source redacted due to privacy reasons). The UGC appears to show both deceased and injured individuals, including men, women and children. Some of the bodies show severe burns, reportedly caused by fires resulting from the airstrike. However, these images do not confirm that an airstrike was the direct cause of death. Myanmar Witness will analyse this further in the case study.

This case was chosen as it highlights the brutality of an airstrike, which can cause widespread destruction, and also the indiscriminate nature of reported air attacks in Myanmar since the coup. Although the area has been in active conflict since December 2023, children, who can be more confidently assumed to be civilians, were still present in the area and at risk from indiscriminate general air attacks. This case is also classified by Myanmar Witness' methodology as an 'isolated' case despite its ongoing conflict, as there does not appear to be, from comparative analysis with ACLED data and sources searching, a retaliatory nature or provocation behind this incident.

5.1.2 MYANMAR WITNESS ANALYSIS

Myanmar Witness geolocated and verified several pieces of UGC associated with this incident and believes it is likely that an airstrike incident by the MAF occurred, damaging infrastructure in Kyauk Ni Maw village. This assessment is based on footage posted by local media and private uploaders. This included:

- UGC of fire damage structures geolocated to Kyauk Ni Maw village.
- Active fire data chronolocated to 8 January 2025, through the Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) and Sentinel-2 imagery.
- A location where dead bodies were gathered, geolocated at 18.903138, 93.953988, in Kyauk Ni Maw village.

Kyauk Ni Maw village has been assessed as having sustained major damage through imagery geolocated by Myanmar Witness. This level of damage could have been caused by the alleged airstrike on the village, but no UGC analysed points to aircraft involvement. Additionally, Myanmar Witness did not identify any information on flight tracking channels that could be consistent with flight times related to this incident to verify that the aircraft was the reason for the damage.

5.1.3 LOCATION

Myanmar Witness verified UGC uploaded by [Arakan Princess Media](#) of burning and damaged structures, identified and geolocated to Kyauk Ni Maw village. An image shows the extent of the fire damage across the village at around 18.902611, 93.957278 (figure 5). Additionally, on social media, individuals (source removed due to privacy concerns) shared footage of fires destroying houses and boats. This footage was geolocated to Kyauk Ni Maw at around 18.902618, 93.957786 (figure 6).



Figure 5: Myanmar Witness geolocated ongoing fires in Kyauk Ni Maw village at around 18.902611, 93.957278 (Source: [Arakan Princess Media](#) and Google Earth Pro).



Figure 6: UGC geolocated to Kyauk Ni Maw village at 18.902618, 93.957786, showing fires throughout the village affecting civilian infrastructure and boats in the area (Source: removed for privacy).

5.1.4 DATE AND TIME

Several online sources, including those cited above, reported that the incident happened on 8 January 2025. Myanmar Witness used FIRMS and low-resolution satellite imagery to verify if satellites had picked up heat detection while buildings were on fire in Kyauk Ni Maw village. [FIRMS](#) confirmed multiple heat signature detections - the earliest at 00:51 local time - in Kyauk Ni Maw village on 9 January 2025, in similar areas to those geolocated by Myanmar Witness (figure 7, left).

[Sentinel-2](#) demonstrates likely damage to the urban structures there between 4 January 2025 and 9 January 2025. Using a false colour (urban) filter on 9 January 2025, [Sentinel-2](#) also detected fire in the village visible in the same cluster as FIRMS

on 9 January 2025 (figure 7, right). According to [EOS Data Analytics](#), a false colour filter enhances certain features, such as fires, which would appear orange, while urban areas appear lighter than vegetation. This chronolocation further verifies that the fires likely occurred in the village, between 8-9 January 2025, similar to the timeframe reported.

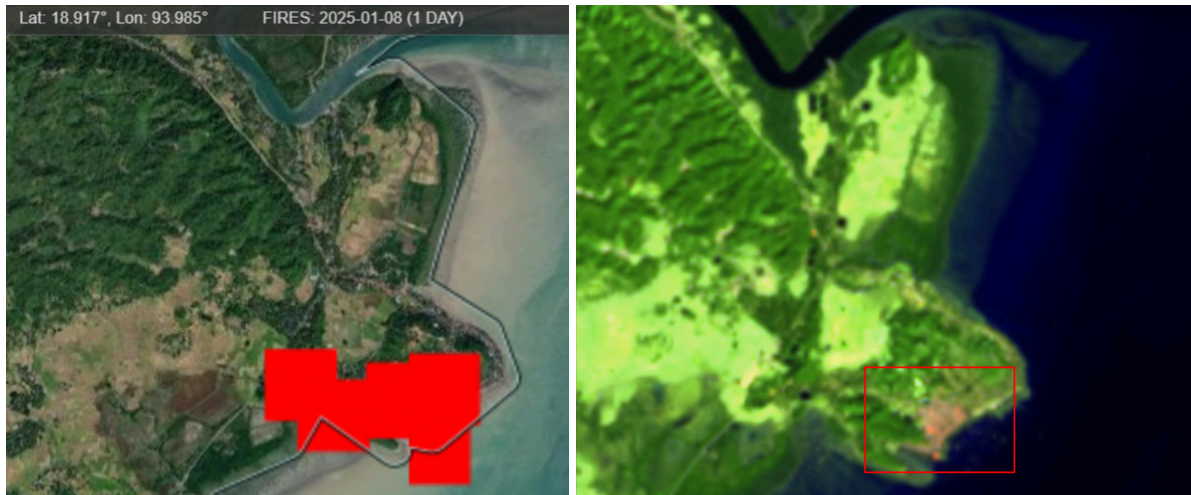


Figure 7: [Left] FIRMS heat activity that was registered in Kyauk Ni Maw village, Ramree Township on 8 January 2025 compared to [right] Sentinel-2 imagery showing fires in Kyauk Ni Maw on 9 January 2025 (Sources: [FIRMS](#) and [Sentinel-2](#)).

The geolocation and chronolocation of this incident mark damage to Kyauk Ni Maw village as highly likely to have occurred between 8-9 January 2025. The analysis of the airstrike allegedly involved in this case, as well as the victims reported, is less certain. Despite Myanmar Witness not being able to fully confirm this incident as an airstrike, the human impact of the loss of civilian infrastructure in this village is undeniable in images of the aftermath of the incident in Kyauk Ni Maw uploaded to Facebook by the [Rammar Myay War Relief Group](#) (figure 8).



Figure 8: Images of the aftermath of the incident in Kyauk Ni Maw show vast fire damage to the village structures. Not geolocated to exact coordinates, but matching images of mountains, hills and telephone polls suggest the images were very likely taken in Kyauk Ni Maw in the general area of 18.903090, 93.957749. (Source: [Rammar Myay War Relief Group](#)).

5.1.5 VICTIMS

[Initial reports](#) claimed there were 40 killed and 20 injured as a result of the incident. The [AA Info Desk post](#) listed the victims with their names and reported the number as 26 deaths and 27 injuries.

Myanmar Witness analysed images of the bodies provided and geolocated an image of deceased individuals, covered by blankets (figure 9). These bodies appear to have been gathered together in Kyauk Ni Maw village in what is labelled on Google Earth Pro as an Islamic place of worship in the village at around [18.903138, 93.953988] (figure 9). Some of the clothing worn in the images appears to be traditional Islamic formal wear, for example, with one of the corpses (labelled number 13 in figure 10) covered with a burial shroud that appears to have Arabic text on it. Myanmar Witness conservatively counted approximately 21 bodies based on the available footage - close to the 26 dead reported by the AA Info Desk (figure 10). The actual number may be higher.

Myanmar Witness identified and analysed images of victims, including at least seven individuals who appear to be children. While some images show smaller corpses, they are not geolocated, making independent verification difficult. The overall count includes the bodies in white bags seen in other images, as well as severely burned bodies. These factors suggest that reports identifying the victims in Kyauk Ni Maw as being predominantly [Kaman Muslim](#) could be accurate. However, Myanmar Witness cannot independently verify these claims, especially

about child casualties, due to a lack of information on the victims available in the geolocated footage.

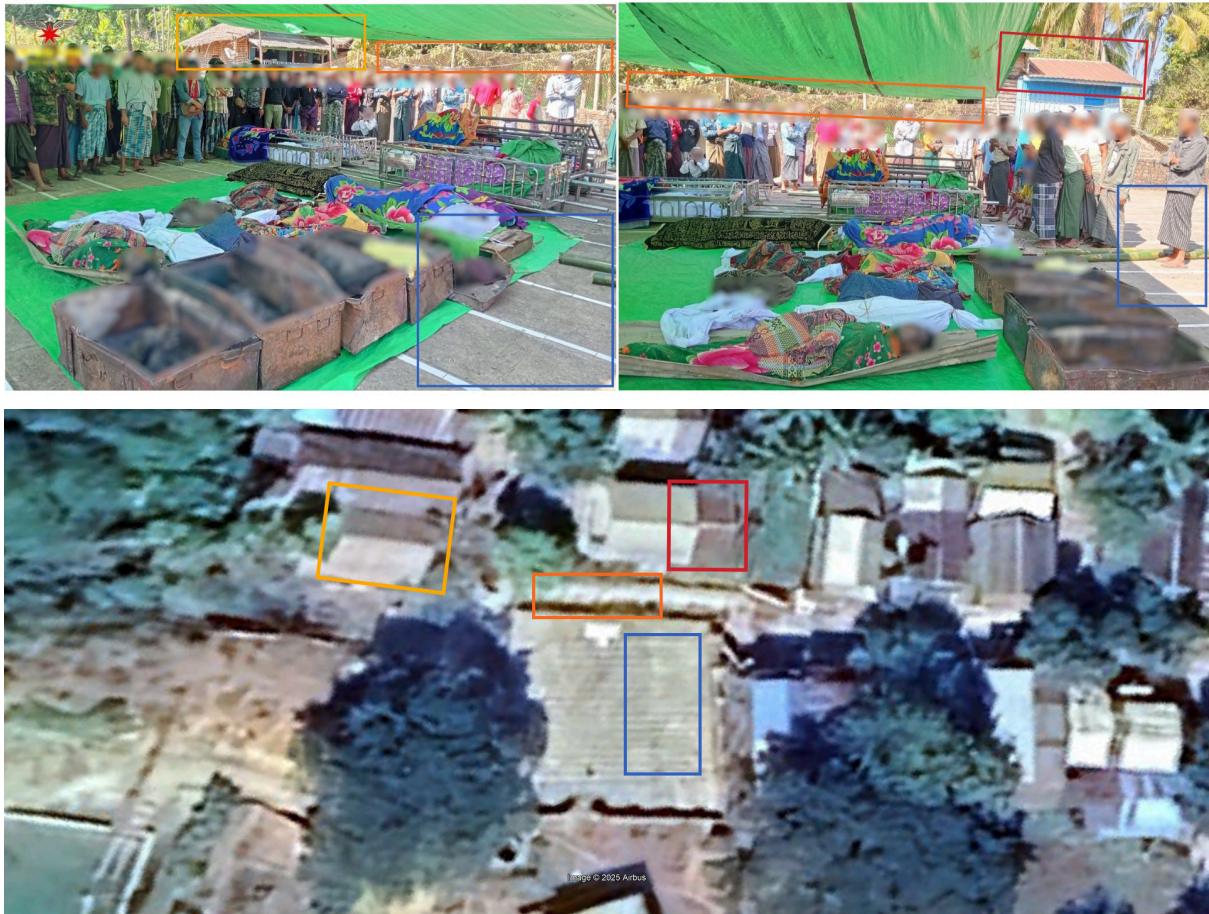


Figure 9: Myanmar Witness geolocated an image of alleged victims of the Kyauk Ni Naw village incident being laid to rest at an Islamic place of worship at 18.903138, 93.953988 (Source: [GRAPHIC] [AA Info Desk](#) & [Arakan Princess Media](#)).



Figure 10: Myanmar Witness conservatively counted the visible bodies in the geolocated footage of the Kyauk Ni Maw incident, and the number is around 21 (Source: [GRAPHIC] [AA Info Desk](#))

This case was chosen as it highlights the devastating nature of air attacks on villages in Myanmar continuing into 2025. The particularly intense nature of this case study, and its location in Rakhine as a [historical site of brutal conflict](#), highlights a recurring pattern in the seemingly isolated airstrikes collected by Myanmar Witness. These airstrikes appear to be more general and indiscriminate, with significant human costs, both in terms of infrastructure and loss of life.

5.2 CASE STUDY 2: MYINGYAN, MANDALAY REGION

5.2.1 BACKGROUND

On 26 January 2025, between [0700-0800 local time](#), multiple news organisations reported that the Sin Gut (ဆင်းဂွတ်) [21.6490097, 95.41912842] village school in Myingyan Township, Mandalay was heavily damaged. It is alleged that this damage was caused by the MAF after an air attack involving a fighter jet, with a report from Mandalay Free Press (MFP) [GRAPHIC link] indicating the involvement of a [helicopter](#). Though the exact model is not further specified by these sources, several sources online, including the [NUG Ministry of Human Rights](#), claim the strike was carried out by an MI35 helicopter.

The incident is alleged to have resulted in between [14](#) and [20](#) deaths at Sin Gut village. Local news, both from [pro-military](#) and anti-military aligned channels (source redacted due to privacy concerns), suggests the school was under the control of the village's PDF when it was attacked. Pro-military sources claim that public reports from the PDF gave the Myanmar military intelligence on activities and locations, which were then used to carry out the airstrike. A private anti-military source reported that the incident resulted in the deaths of four soldiers from the Myingyan Township PDF, eight soldiers from the village's PDF, and six civilians - including a four-year-old boy and a five-month-old girl.

Online local news, including the [MFP](#) on Facebook and [\[WARNING: GRAPHIC\] Telegram](#), posted images of individuals who were injured and likely deceased. The casualties appear to be visibly young and male, with no images of children. However, this does not discount claims of civilian casualties, as Myanmar Witness also identified a geolocated image of a slightly smaller figure under a blanket in the school compound (figure 19).

This case is significant as it highlights the complexities of this kind of research. For example, this case is classified by Myanmar Witness' methodology as an 'isolated' incident, meaning there were no prior events within seven days or a 10km radius. However, even sources that are neutral or more sympathetic toward the PDFs, report that PDF members were killed in the airstrike. An isolated strike does not

necessarily mean the area is not contested, but that, at the time of the incident, there did not appear to have been active fighting in the location, or that the individuals were not engaged in combat at the time of the bombing. It is possible that there may have been active PDF members. This case aligns with [Myanmar Witness's](#) ongoing work on the potential use of schools as a site of conflict and what that can mean for those living and learning in Myanmar.

5.2.2 MYANMAR WITNESS ANALYSIS

Myanmar Witness geolocated and chronolocated multiple pieces of UGC associated with this incident and believes it is likely that an airstrike incident by the MAF occurred, damaging Sin Gut village school and the village at large, where the village's PDFs allegedly controlled the village before it was damaged. This included UGC showing:

- Destruction of what Myanmar Witness deems highly likely to be a school compound in Sin Gut village (figure 11).
- Destruction potentially consistent with that caused by an airstrike, including craters in the ground of the compound (figures 14 and 15).
- Images of two potential victims in blankets (figure 17).

The school infrastructure in Sin Gut village has been assessed as having sustained major damage (such as severe roofing and wall damage that could potentially render the school potentially inoperable). This level of damage could have been caused by the alleged airstrike on the village, but no UGC showing an aircraft was identified. Additionally, Myanmar Witness did not identify any information on flight tracking channels that could be consistent with flight times related to this incident.

5.2.3 LOCATION

UGC identified by Myanmar Witness and geolocated to Sin Gut village, demonstrates damage to the village compound school structures and school gates at around 21.649348, 95.416413 (figure 11). Myanmar Witness classified the visible damage to the school as major, rendering this school potentially inoperable due to the damage caused.



Figure 11: Myanmar Witness geolocated the damaged school to around 21.649348, 95.416413 (Source: removed for privacy and Google Earth Pro).

5.2.4 DATE AND TIME

The incident allegedly took place on 26 January 2025. [Sentinel-2](#) imagery shows changes to the urban area in the school compound area of Sin Gut village at [21.649348, 95.416413] between 24 January 2025 and 29 January 2025, suggesting that some type of damage occurred in the area during this timeframe (figure 12). This aligns with the reports of the airstrike event taking place on 26 January 2025.



Figure 12: Low-resolution satellite imagery shows subtle ground changes to Sin Gut Village in the area of the school compound between [24 January 2025](#) and [29 January 2025](#) (Source: Sentinel-2).

Myanmar Witness also chronolocated some of the earlier images of the damage to Sin Gut village. The earliest image, determined through [Suncalc](#) (shadow calculation from the angle of a shadow in the image of the school sign), is likely from 0800 and 0900 local time on 26 January 2024 (figure 13). This suggests that reporting around the claims about the time of the airstrike by pro and anti military channels are potentially correct, with photos of the destruction being taken an hour or so after the event, and hence chronolocated to slightly later in the day but still close to the timeframe the incident was alleged to have happened.

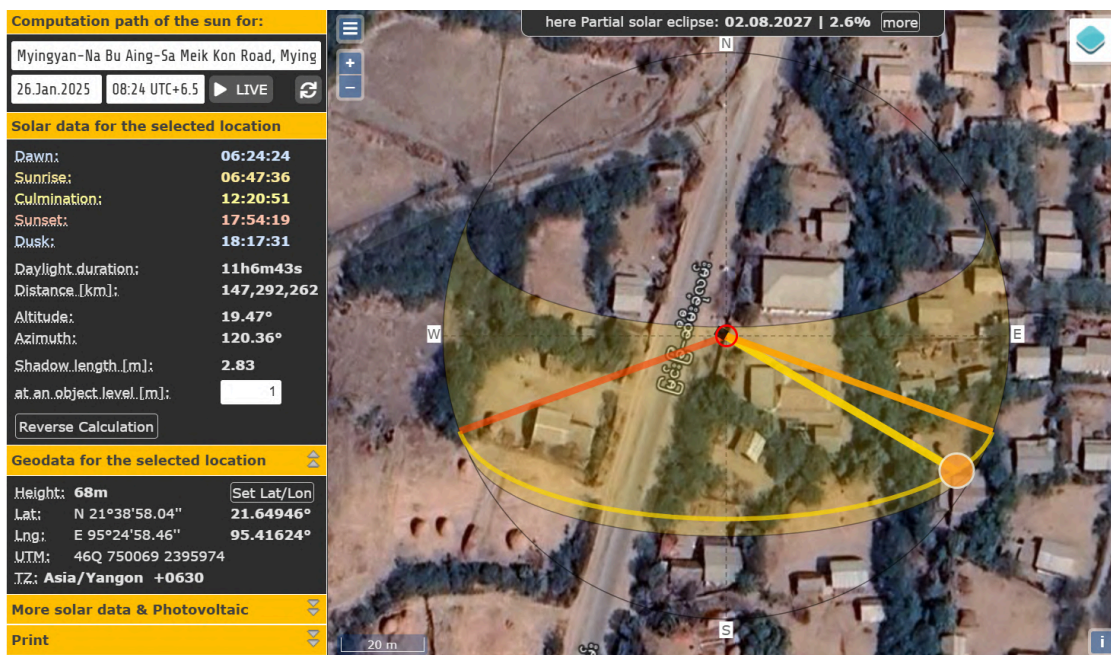


Figure 13: A shadow cast by the Sin Gut Village school gate suggests that the image, if taken on 26 January 2025, was likely taken after 0800 but before 0900 local time (Source: [Mandalay Free Press](#) and [suncalc.org](#)).

Therefore, the geolocation and chronolocation of this incident mark damage to Sin Gut village as highly likely to have occurred between 24 January 2025 and 29 January 2025. The incident reportedly took place on 26 January 2025 and reports

(from multiple sources, both pro and anti-SAC) began reporting, still in line with reports. However, analysis of the airstrike allegedly involved in this case is less certain; the following will detail Myanmar Witness's analysis of investigating this claim.

5.2.5 STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

The damage to the school does not appear consistent with fire damage, as there are minimal signs of scorching or ash near the structures (figure 16). The building and gate show evidence of impact, with both small and large holes present. UGC (redacted for privacy concerns) collected indicates significant damage both inside and outside the building.

Myanmar Witness identified UGC showing craters in the ground, likely consistent with the use of heavy weaponry or airstrikes. While Myanmar Witness could not identify munitions for analysis, these findings appear to be consistent with claims that there was an attack in the village, possibly caused by heavy weapons or airstrike munitions (figures 14 and 15).



Figure 14: UGC shows damage to the ground next to the broken Sin Gut Village School entrance sign, geolocated to 21.649451, 95.416280 (Source: removed for privacy and [People's Spring](#)).



Figure 15: UGC shows damage to the ground next to a destroyed structure, geolocated to 21.649476, 95.416381 (Source: removed for privacy).

Myanmar Witness assessed damage to the destroyed geolocated structure and determined that this destruction could have been caused by an airstrike. Through analysis of the structural damage visible in the UGC, it is clear that a significant attack likely caused the extensive damage seen in the images of the school compound (source removed due to privacy concerns). It appears that much of the wall is broken and the roofing has collapsed in on itself, adding weight to the claim that an airstrike took place (figure 16).



Figure 16: UGC shows damage to the school structure in Sin Gut village that are potentially consistent with claims of an airstrike causing damage in the village (Source: removed for privacy).

5.2.6 VICTIMS

[Local media reports](#) claimed that between 14 and 18 people died during this event, including two children, women, other civilians and members of the PDF, with additional individuals reported as injured. Uploaded UGC show injured or deceased individuals on the ground (figure 17, left) and in the back of a truck (figure 17, right) - both of which are currently not geolocated. However, Myanmar Witness geolocated a figure covered with a red pattern blanket on the ground of the compound at around 21.649407, 95.416382, suggesting this geolocation could potentially be of a body in the area of the Sin Gut village school compound. Moreover, an image of a body (figure 13) was also chronolocated within two hours of the alleged incident, suggesting the recovery of victims was being handled two hours after the alleged airstrike (figure 18).



Figure 17: Images show injured and deceased individuals affected by the alleged airstrike. Not verified/geolocated by Myanmar Witness (Source: [Mandalay Free Press](#)).



Figure 18: Image shows a blanket over a large shape outside of one of the structures affected by the alleged airstrike. Geolocated by Myanmar Witness to 21.649407, 95.416382 (Source: [Mandalay Free Press](#)).

Myanmar Witness also notes a photo geolocated to the school compound at around 21.649480, 95.416457, showing a smaller shape, covered with a purple blanket (figure 19). This detail, which has been noted in other cases from Myanmar

Witness such as the [Kanan Airstrike report](#), could indicate that a child was potentially a victim of the alleged incident. This aligns with earlier claims that minors, including a five-month-old child, were among those killed in the attack. Myanmar Witness cannot conclusively verify the deaths of any individuals at the time of reporting, but similarly to Case Study 1, the use of blankets to cover bodies being common could suggest a child was killed in this incident.



Figure 19: A small shape covered by a purple blanket was geolocated by Myanmar Witness to around 21.649480, 95.416457 in multiple different photos, which could potentially align with reporting of the death of a child in this case (Sources: removed for privacy and [People's Spring](#)).

[Myanmar Now](#) uploaded footage claimed to be from the funeral, which has not been geolocated by Myanmar Witness (figure 20). However, Myanmar Witness used reverse image searching to determine if the images had surfaced on the internet before the alleged event date. No previous appearance of this footage was found, increasing the likelihood that they were related to the event in question.



Figure 20: Footage uploaded by Myanmar Now reports to show a funeral pyre for the victims, including shapes in blankets on the unlit pyre. This footage is currently not geolocated by Myanmar Witness (Source: [Myanmar Now](#)).

Despite the incident being alleged to have not led to any clashes in the area, as observed by Myanmar Witness through ACLED's database and source searches, it appears that an airstrike affected civilian infrastructure, which in turn has impacts on human lives, access to education, and the safety of minors. The strike is also claimed to have taken place due to the area's use by the opposition forces. While Myanmar Witness cannot definitively confirm the exact number of victims killed in this case, nor with complete certainty that an airstrike took place, this case study demonstrates the human impact on civilian infrastructure that Myanmar Witness continues to monitor. Importantly, these attacks appear to be isolated incidents and potentially do not meet the definition of 'necessary' as outlined by Myanmar military media statements.

6 CONCLUSION

Myanmar Witness' investigation assesses SAC narratives that claim airstrikes conducted by the Myanmar military are proportionate, necessary, and in response to immediate threats. By monitoring five States/Regions with limited active conflict in January 2025, Myanmar Witness has identified cases in all States/Regions where seemingly isolated incidents have taken place.

The case studies highlight further claims that these airstrikes take place in villages with civilian presence, sometimes without clear preceding clashes that would justify them as direct military responses. Moreover, the case studies examined illustrate both the indiscriminate nature of airstrikes and the complexities of conflict documentation in Myanmar. In isolated instances, children and

non-combatants potentially remain at risk from the Myanmar military, contradicting the SAC's justification that airstrikes are solely targeting armed opposition forces. The destruction of infrastructure, including schools and civilian homes, raises concerns about civilian spaces being affected by the ongoing conflict in Myanmar. Myanmar Witness recognises claims of PDF casualties; these do not necessarily validate SAC's narrative of proportionality, if there is little suggestion of ongoing active combat in those villages. The absence of clear provocation in several cases - in fact, 20 of the 32 distinct incidents - could question the legitimacy of airstrikes as counterinsurgency measures.

These findings reinforce concerns over the Myanmar military's broad use of airpower. By providing data on the impact of isolated incidents of airstrikes in a given month in Myanmar, Myanmar Witness seeks to highlight the widespread nature of these events and hold perpetrators to account for indiscriminate damage to civilian infrastructure and lives. Myanmar Witness will continue to verify airstrike incidents across Myanmar, with particular attention paid to whether airstrikes are preceded by armed clashes or appear to target areas without immediate provocation, cross-referencing military narratives with independent sources, to further analyse claims of proportionality and necessity.

7 ANNEX

7.1 ABBREVIATIONS

• Arakan Army	AA
• Armed Conflict Location and Event Data	ACLED
• Fire Information for Resource Management System	FIRMS
• Myanmar Air Force	MAF
• People's Defence Force	PDF
• State Administration Council	SAC
• User-Generated Content	UGC

7.2 AUTOMATION NOTES

Myanmar Witness uses Python along with open source modules such as geopy and pandas to calculate the geodesic between coordinates and time deltas. The automation does not apply to incidents that only have an approximate location of township/village and no exact coordinates. This ensures that all isolated airstrikes identified by the automation always satisfy the criteria of being outside 10 km and seven days from any other incidents.

The results of the automation also go through manual confirmation by an investigator.

7.3 LIMITATIONS

Myanmar Witness obtains information from an area of ongoing conflict. Resultantly, selection bias may occur due to internet outages, lack of connectivity, fear of reprisal, or restrictions on media. Myanmar Witness strives to eliminate bias by collecting digital content from multiple sources, including pro and anti-regime news and social media.

Myanmar Witness did not assess every database entry, as its methodology relies on pre-collected data stored in its database. For this specific investigation, Myanmar Witness is comparing its data to the ACLED database, which, while useful for identifying 'isolated' incidents, relies on open-source reporting. This may not capture all relevant incidents, particularly in hard-to-access regions, but could also follow particular reporting patterns, as its data does. Some local clashes or smaller-scale conflicts may go unreported, affecting the assessment of whether an airstrike was preceded by provocation, which can impact the overall accuracy of conclusions drawn from the dataset.

The automated analysis parameters used to determine potentially unprovoked airstrikes are also a limitation. The seven-day and 10km window is a conservative estimate, which may overlook indirect provocations or delayed responses to previous incidents. However, this was a limitation reckoned with by Myanmar Witness to under-include incidents as opposed to over-including them. Additionally, automated methods may miss important contextual factors, such as longer-term military buildups, ongoing tensions, or clandestine operations that could have influenced the airstrike decision - hence Myanmar Witness's decision to use case studies and manually analyse each dataset incident for its seven-day, 10km window.

The timeframe of the study focuses on January 2025, providing only a snapshot rather than a long-term trend analysis. While random sampling reduces selection bias, it does not account for seasonal variations or broader conflict patterns. A longer timeframe of this sort could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Myanmar military's airstrike patterns, particularly about 'isolated' and 'non-isolated' incidents. A focus on airstrikes does limit the broader context of Military activity in these regions, meaning other forms of military action or civilian harm, such as ground assaults or artillery shelling, are not assessed.