



MYANMAR WITNESS

A project by



CENTRE for
INFORMATION
RESILIENCE

CHILD CASUALTIES ACROSS MYANMAR'S 2025-2026 MILITARY-LED ELECTION

An Investigation Into Reported Harm To Children Before,
During And After The Military-Led Vote

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31 August 2026

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.

DIGITAL SAFETY NOTE: Some pro-military media sources are referenced throughout this report; please consider using a VPN for access.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Child casualties continue to be recorded before, during and after Myanmar's 2025 - 2026 military-led election, according to Myanmar Witness's investigation. Between 28 September and 25 April 2026, Myanmar Witness has identified 96 incidents involving children, amounting to 214 child casualties in total.

The investigation examined whether patterns of child casualties changed across the pre-election, election and post-election periods and assessed the types of attacks, locations, reported actors and publicly available responses associated with these incidents. Several incidents involved more than one child; therefore, the total number of casualties is higher than the number of incidents recorded.

Across the dataset, 129 child injuries and 85 child deaths were reported. Of these, 48 (29 injuries and 19 deaths) were independently verified using available visual evidence. Verification varied across incidents due to differences in the availability and quality of publicly available information.

Based on Myanmar Witness's investigation, the key findings indicate:

- The Myanmar Air Force (MAF) was the most frequently reported actor associated with recorded child casualty incidents, accounting for 61 reported actor attributions (61%) ([Section 4.6](#)). Most incidents attributed to the MAF involved airstrikes, which were the most frequently recorded incident type and were associated with the highest number of reported child injuries and deaths ([Section 4.1](#)).
- Child casualties were recorded across all three reporting periods, including during the election period, despite it covering a substantially shorter time frame than the pre-election and post-election periods.
- Residential locations, including houses, villages and surrounding areas, were the locations most frequently associated with documented child casualty incidents. Educational facilities and religious buildings were also repeatedly identified ([Section 4.4](#)).
- Myanmar Witness identified only two publicly available responses from pro-military media and social media sources relating to recorded child casualty incidents. No official public response from the Myanmar military acknowledging the reported child casualties was identified ([Section 4.7](#)).
- Of the 96 recorded incidents, 38 were geolocated, 31 were chronolocated, and 24 were verified through both geolocation and chronolocation, while the

remaining incidents could not be fully verified due to limitations in available open-source information.

Taken together, these findings indicate that children continued to face reported risks in conflict-affected civilian areas throughout the reporting period. The predominance of reported MAF-attributed airstrikes, together with the continued recording of child casualties in homes, educational facilities and religious buildings, highlights the ongoing risks faced by children in locations where civilians live, go to school and worship.

2 INTRODUCTION

Myanmar has experienced ongoing armed conflict since the military seized power in February 2021. The conflict has resulted in widespread civilian casualties, with children under the age of 18 remaining among the groups most affected. Reports published by the [Assistance Association for Political Prisoners \(Burma\)](#), media outlets such as [Myanmar Now](#), and [social media sources](#) indicate that children have been killed and injured in a range of conflict-related incidents, including airstrikes, heavy weapons attacks, armed clashes, arson attacks and detentions.

Between 28 December 2025 and 25 January 2026, the Myanmar military [conducted](#) a military-led election, presenting it as part of a political transition. During this period, armed conflict continued across many parts of the country.

This report examines patterns of child casualty incidents recorded before, during and after the election period (28 September 2025 and 25 April 2026) to assess whether they changed across the pre-election, election and post-election periods. The precise definitions of these reporting phases are set out in the Methodology (Section 3).

Using information collected from open sources, this report also examines the types of incidents associated with child casualties, the types of locations in which children were reportedly killed or injured, the alleged actors involved and any publicly available responses. It also highlights how reported and verified child casualty patterns varied across the three reporting periods.

Understanding these patterns is important for assessing the risks faced by children during armed conflict and for informing discussions on the protection of civilians, particularly children, in conflict-affected areas.

3 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 collected and analysed child casualty incidents documented between 28 September 2025 and 25 April 2026. For this investigation, the reporting period was divided into three phases: the pre-election period (28 September to 27 December 2025), the election period (28 December 2025 to 25 January 2026), and the post-election period (26 January to 25 April 2026).

Relevant incidents were identified from the Myanmar Witness database using Burmese keywords relating to children and minors. Keywords used to identify relevant incidents included:

Keywords in Burmese	Translation
ကလေး / ခလေး	child
ကိုရင်	novice
လသား	infant
မွေးကင်းစ	newborn
အသက်မပြည့်	underage
ကျောင်းသား / ကျောင်းသူ	student
ဆယ်ကျော်သက်	teenager
နို့တိုက်အရွယ်	infancy
၁၈ နှစ်အောက်	under 18 years
၁ နှစ်/ တစ်နှစ်, ၂ နှစ်, ၃ နှစ်/ သုံးနှစ်, ၄ နှစ်/	1/one year, 2/two years, 3/three years,

လေးနှစ်, ၅ နှစ်/ ငါးနှစ်, ၆ နှစ်/ ခြောက်နှစ်, ၇ နှစ်/ ခုနှစ်နှစ်, ၈ နှစ်/ ရှစ်နှစ်, ၉ နှစ်/ ကိုးနှစ်, ၁၀ နှစ်, ၁၁ နှစ်, ၁၂ နှစ်, ၁၃ နှစ်, ၁၄ နှစ်, ၁၅ နှစ်, ၁၆ နှစ်, ၁၇ နှစ်	4/four years, 5/five years, 6/six years, 7/seven years, 8/eight years, 9/nine years, 10/ten years, 11/eleven years, 12/twelve years, 13/thirteen years, 14/fourteen years, 15/fifteen years, 16/sixteen years, 17/seventeen years
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The extracted dataset was reviewed to remove duplicate records, false positives (records identified through the keyword search that were not related to child casualties), and incidents that did not meet the inclusion criteria for child casualty incidents. The final dataset included 96 unique child casualty incidents.

The analysis examined the reported incident type (airstrikes, heavy weapons, landmines, etc.), alleged actor, type of location (house, school, playground, ceremony, etc.), reported and verified child casualties, including both deaths and injuries, and the level of available verification for each incident. Where sufficient evidence was available, incidents were independently verified through geolocation and chronolocation using publicly available information, including media reports and social media content.

This report distinguishes between reported and verified child casualties. Reported casualty figures are based on publicly available claims, while verified casualty figures include only casualties that Myanmar Witness was able to independently corroborate using available evidence.

This investigation is based on publicly available information, including media reports, social media posts, photos and videos. The availability and quality of this information varied between incidents. In some cases, limited visual evidence or insufficient information meant that reported child casualties could not be independently verified. In other cases, sources reported that children had been killed or injured without specifying the number of casualties.

4 KEY FINDINGS

4.1 INCIDENT TYPES

Airstrikes were the most frequently recorded incident type in the dataset, with 61 recorded entries (63.5%). In this report, airstrikes and drone attacks are presented as separate incident types. Heavy weapons were the second most frequently recorded incident type, with 12 entries (12.5%), followed by drone attacks with eight (8.3%),

landmines with six (6.3%), and paramotor and gyrocopter attacks with five (5.2%). Four entries (4.2%) involved children reportedly playing with unexploded ordnance (UXO). Gunfire was recorded in two entries (2.1%), while rape and other acts of violence were each recorded in one entry (1%).

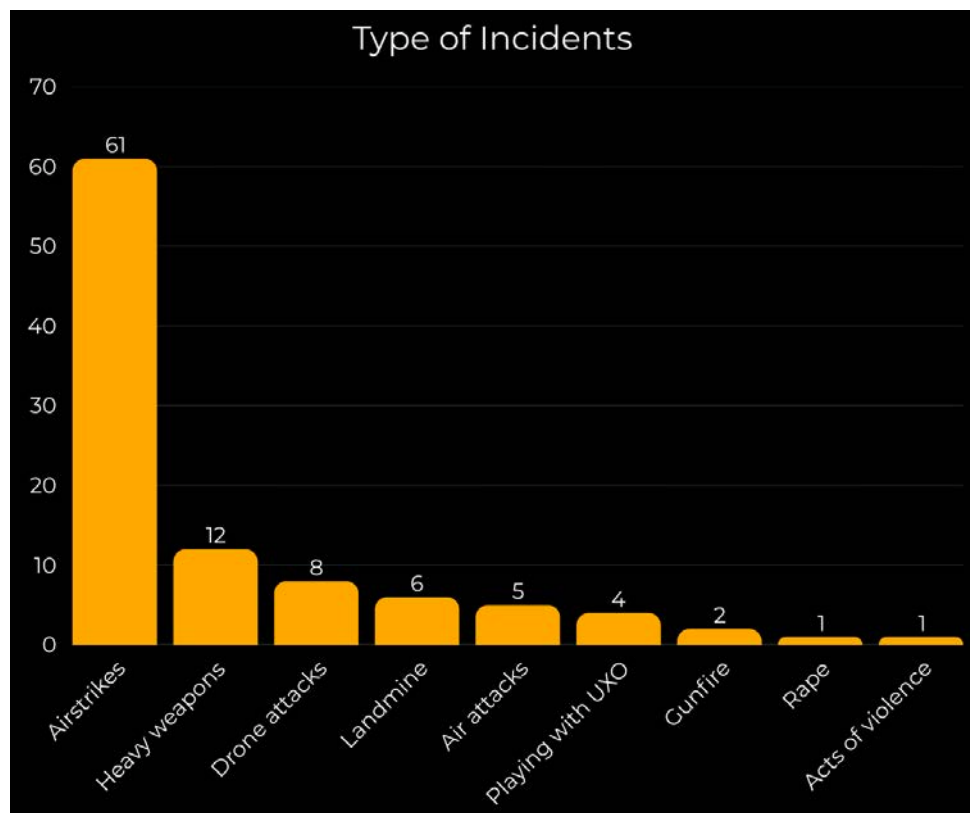


Figure 1: A bar chart showing the reported types of Incidents resulting in child casualties.

The number of airstrikes recorded was approximately five times greater than the second most frequent category, heavy weapons attacks. This finding potentially reflects the military's [increased use of airstrikes](#) in expanded military operations, including reported attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in violation of international humanitarian law.

Child casualties by incident type

Incident Type	Injuries	Deaths
Airstrikes	61	62
Heavy weapons	16	5

Drone attacks	20	6
Landmines	7	2
Playing with UXO	6	3
Gunfire	-	-
Rape	-	-
Acts of violence	-	-

As indicated in the table above, airstrikes were associated with the highest number of reported child casualties, resulting in 61 reported injuries and 62 reported deaths. Although identified less frequently, drone attacks, paramotor and gyrocopter attacks were also connected with a significant number of child casualties.

Some incidents were assigned more than one incident type. As a result, the total number of recorded incident-type entries exceeds the total number of unique incidents. Casualties from a single incident may therefore be associated with more than one incident type and should not be summed across categories.

4.2 CASUALTY PATTERNS

Myanmar Witness counted the number of child deaths and injuries conservatively, only relying on reported numbers from the media and official statements (figure 2). The total child casualties in all periods are 129 injuries and 85 deaths. Out of them, 29 child injuries and 19 child deaths were identified and verified through user-generated content (UGC), including photographs and video footage. The rest remain as claimed due to the limited footage.

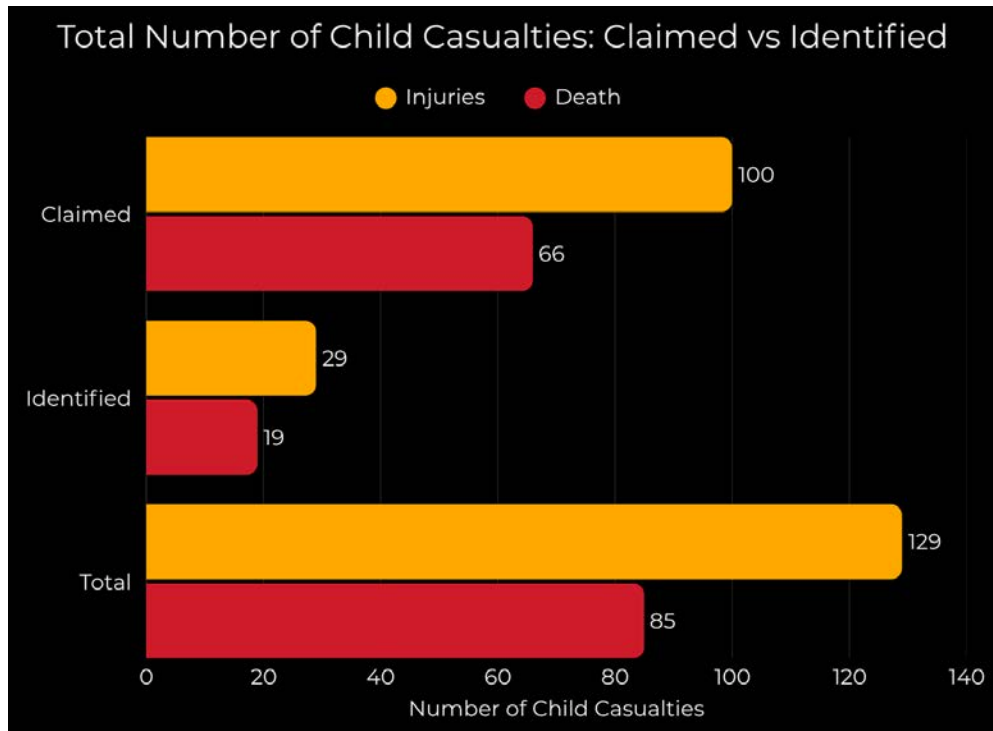


Figure 2: Total number of child injuries and deaths across claimed, identified and total reported.

Figure 3 below shows that reported child injuries and deaths were recorded before, during and after the election period. Although the election phase covered a shorter time frame than the pre-election and post-election periods, child casualties continued to be reported during this time, indicating that children remained exposed to conflict-related violence during the military-led election period.

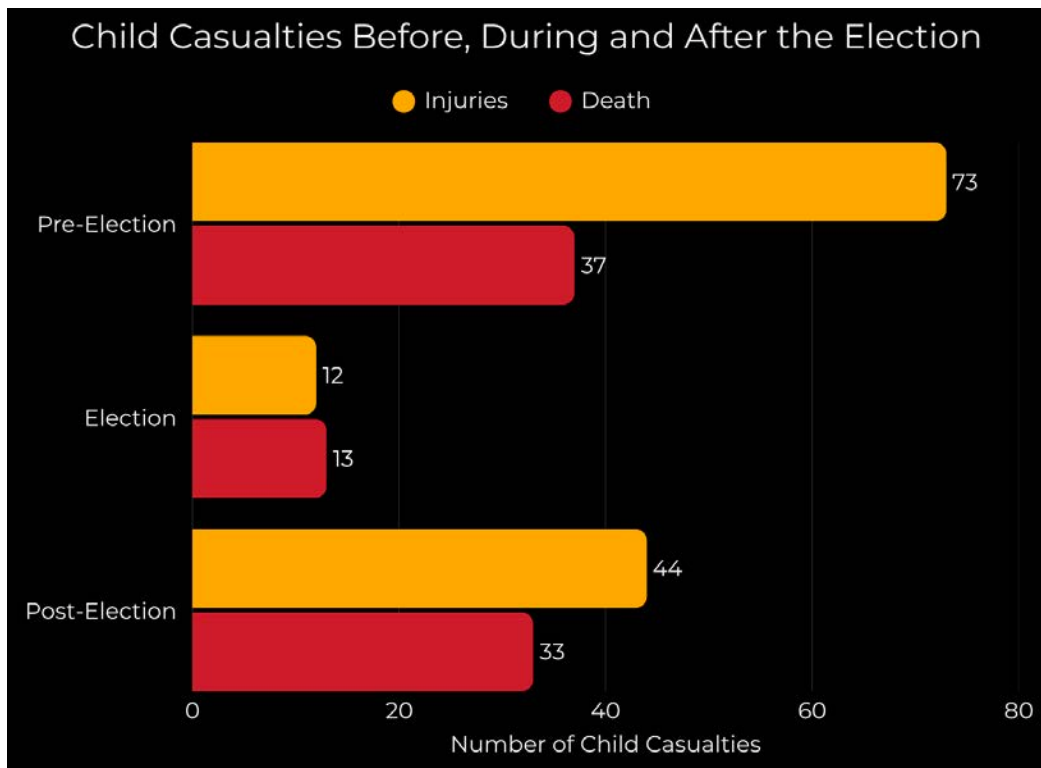


Figure 3: Reported child injuries and deaths across the pre-election (28 September 2025 to 27 December 2025), election (28 December 2025 to 25 January 2026) and post-election (26 January 2026 to 25 April 2026) periods.

The casualty figures presented in this section should be interpreted with caution. Not all reported casualties could be independently verified because the availability of visual evidence varied between incidents.

In addition, the three reporting periods differed in duration, particularly the election period (28 December 2025 to 25 January 2026), which covered a shorter time frame than the pre-election period (28 September 2025 to 27 December 2025) and post-election period (26 January 2026 to 25 April 2026). Therefore, the reported figures are intended to describe observed patterns rather than direct comparisons of incident frequency across reporting periods.

4.3 GEOGRAPHY

A total of 96 recorded child casualty incidents were identified across 12 states and regions during the reporting period, except Ayeyarwady and Yangon. Incidents were recorded most frequently in Sagaing Region (23 incidents), followed by Rakhine State (13), Mandalay Region (12), Shan State (12), Kachin State (9), Chin State (8), and Magway Region (7).

The volume of incidents in Sagaing Region, Rakhine State, Mandalay Region and Shan State is consistent with reports of the intensity of the current conflict situation and military operations documented across these areas during the reporting phases.

Figure 4 below shows the geographic distribution of the recorded child casualty incidents across Myanmar. The distribution was generally consistent with areas that experienced sustained armed conflict during the reporting period. Just a note, that these findings describe where the recorded incidents occurred but do not explain why they occurred.

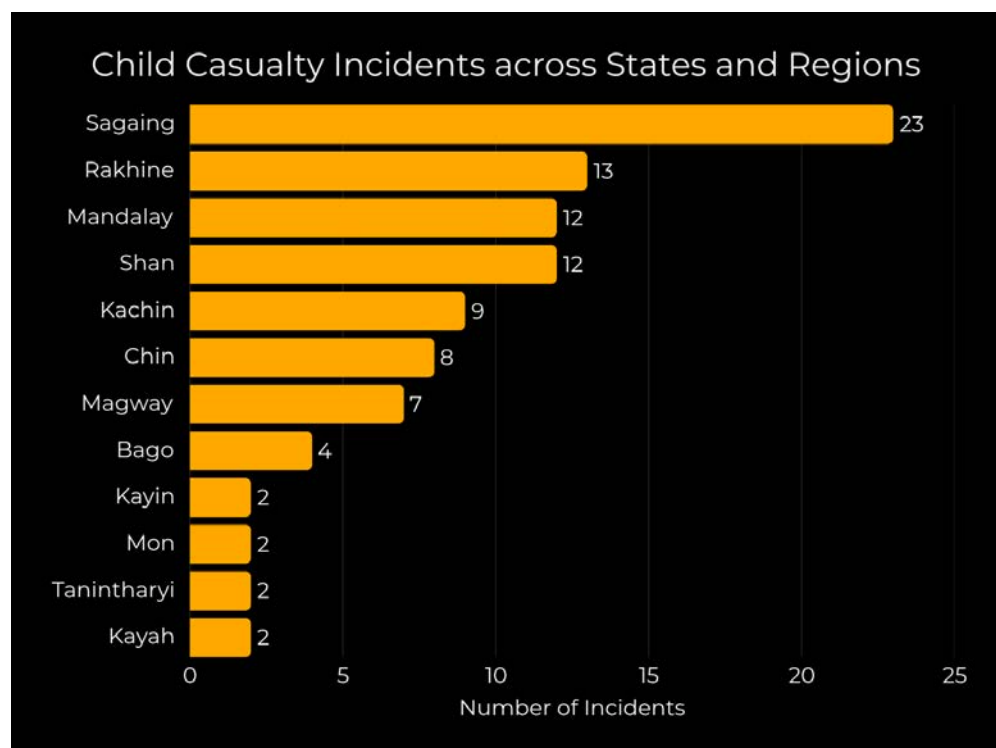


Figure 4: Geographic distribution of recorded child casualty incidents across Myanmar.

Regional differences in incident types were also observed. Airstrikes were the most frequently recorded incident across most regions, particularly in Sagaing, Mandalay, Chin, and Shan. In contrast, Rakhine State showed a more varied pattern, with incidents associated with airstrikes, heavy weapons, drone attacks, landmines, and other forms of violence. These patterns suggest that the types of incidents affecting children varied across different conflict settings.

Where sufficient visual evidence was available, incidents were geolocated and chronolocated to support geographic and temporal verification. Of the 96 recorded incidents, 38 were geolocated, and 31 were chronolocated using the available open-source information. Of these, 24 incidents were both geolocated and

chronolocated, while 14 were only geolocated and seven were only chronolocated.

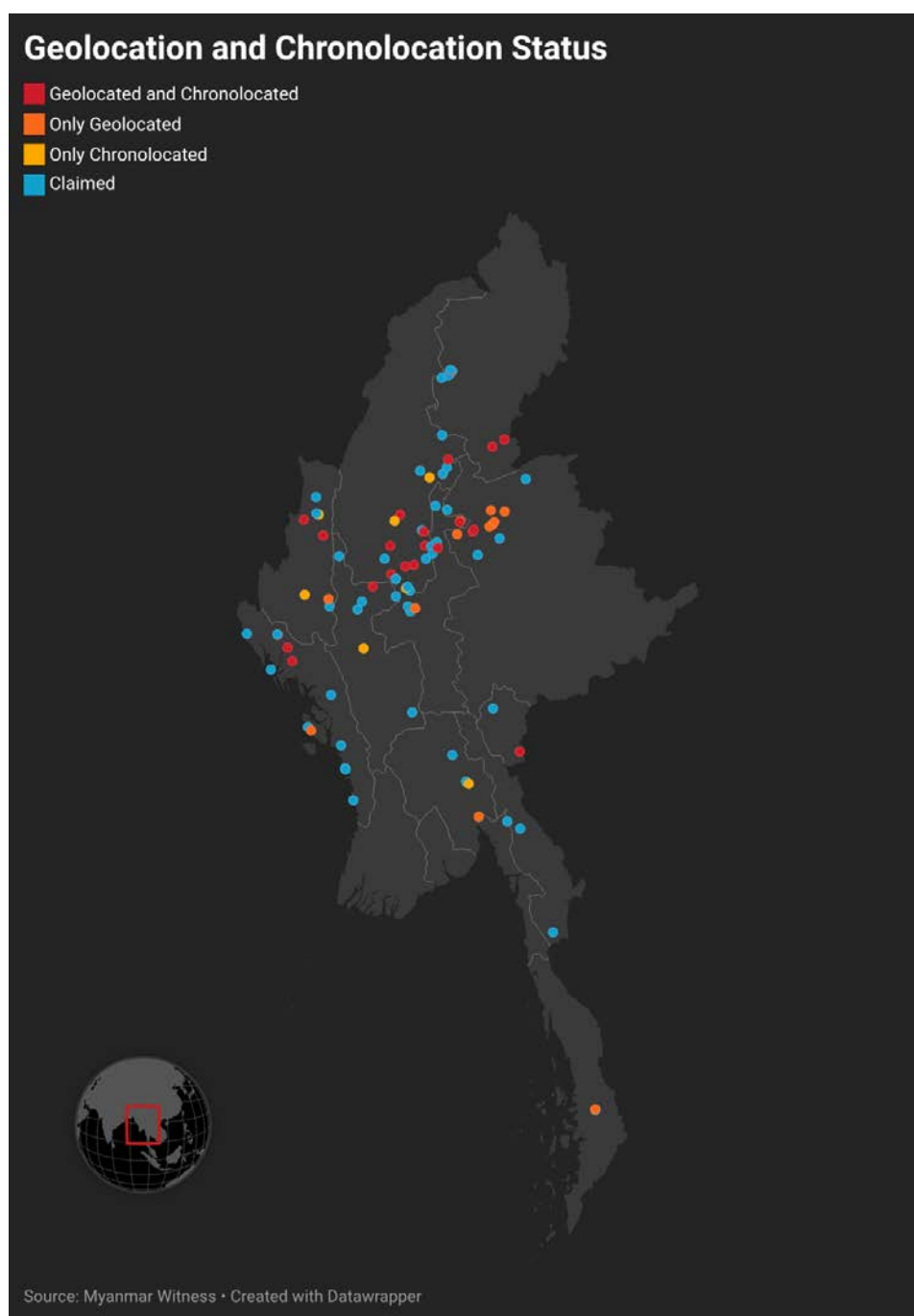


Figure 5: The map of geolocated, chronolocated and not geolocated and chronolocated incidents.

4.4 LOCATIONS

Child casualties were recorded across a range of civilian locations during the reporting

period. Figure 6 shows the distribution of recorded incidents across different location types during the pre-election, election, and post-election periods.

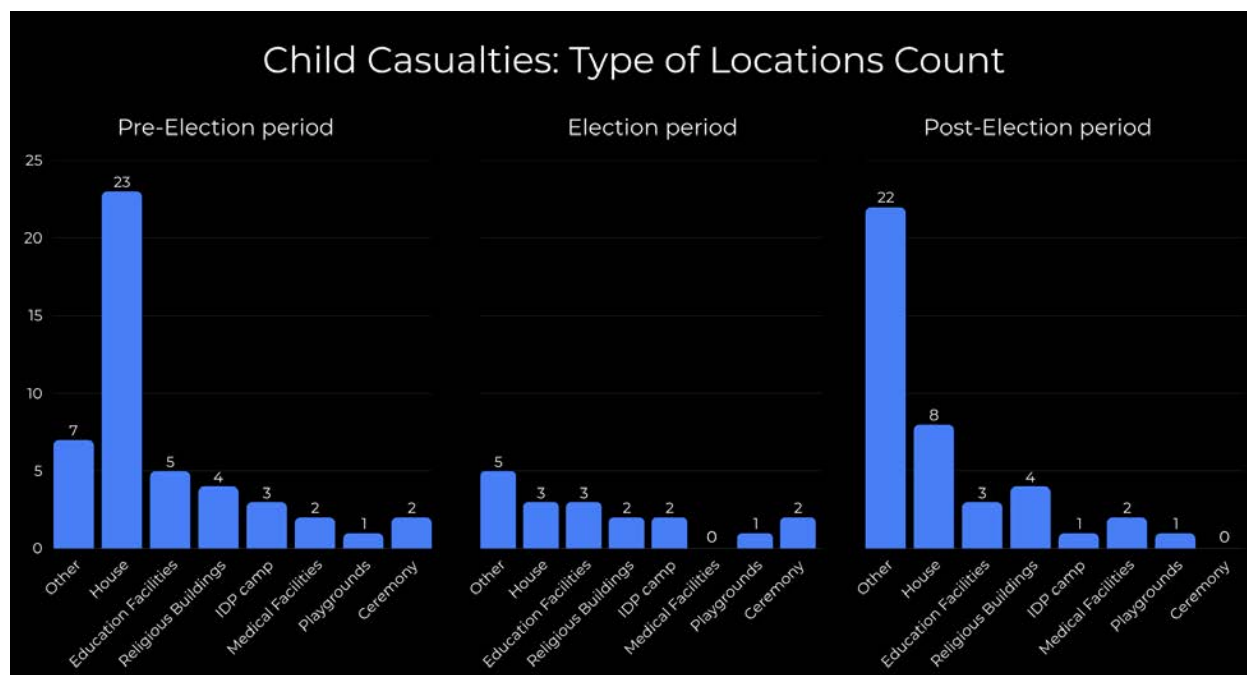


Figure 6: Types of locations associated with recorded child casualty incidents.

Excluding incidents categorised as "Other", houses were the most frequently recorded location type. In this report, residential locations include houses, villages, and surrounding residential areas. Incidents in residential locations were recorded most frequently during the pre-election period.

Education facilities and religious buildings were also commonly recorded. Available information did not always indicate whether these buildings were directly hit or whether children were harmed in or around them. Both are civilian objects protected under International Humanitarian Law. Another significant factor is that child casualties also reportedly occurred in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in all three periods.

The "Other" category included incidents where the location of the child casualties was not specified, incidents in which the victims were mentioned as IDPs but not in IDP camps and incidents with unique locations reported, such as a resistance force-controlled prison.

4.5 TIMING AND ELECTION PERIOD

Of the 96 child casualty incidents recorded 41 were recorded during the pre-election period, 17 during the election period, and 38 during the post-election period. The pre-election and post-election periods each covered approximately three months, while the election period covered approximately one month (28 December 2025 to 25 January 2026). Therefore, the incident counts should not be directly compared.

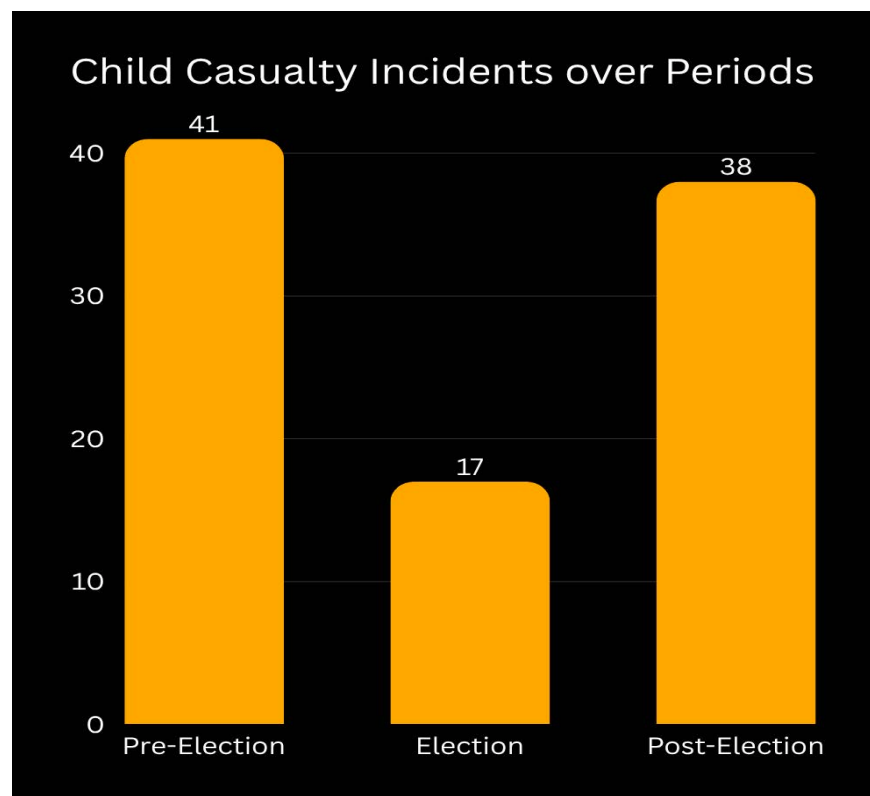


Figure 7: Recorded child casualty incidents by reporting period.

4.6 REPORTED ACTORS

While Myanmar Witness cannot fully verify the actors responsible for every reported child casualty incident, the Myanmar Air Force (MAF) was cited in 61 reported actor attributions (61% of the total), followed by the Myanmar Military with 29 reported actor attributions (29%). Most incidents attributed to the MAF involved airstrikes, with a small number involving drone attacks or combined airstrike and heavy weapon attacks, consistent with the incident type analysis presented earlier in this report.

Other reported actors included Pyu Saw Htee (2.0%), the Myanmar Navy (1%), and the

People's Defence Force (PDF) (1%). Six incidents (6%) were classified as "Unclear", as the available data did not attribute the incident to a specific actor.

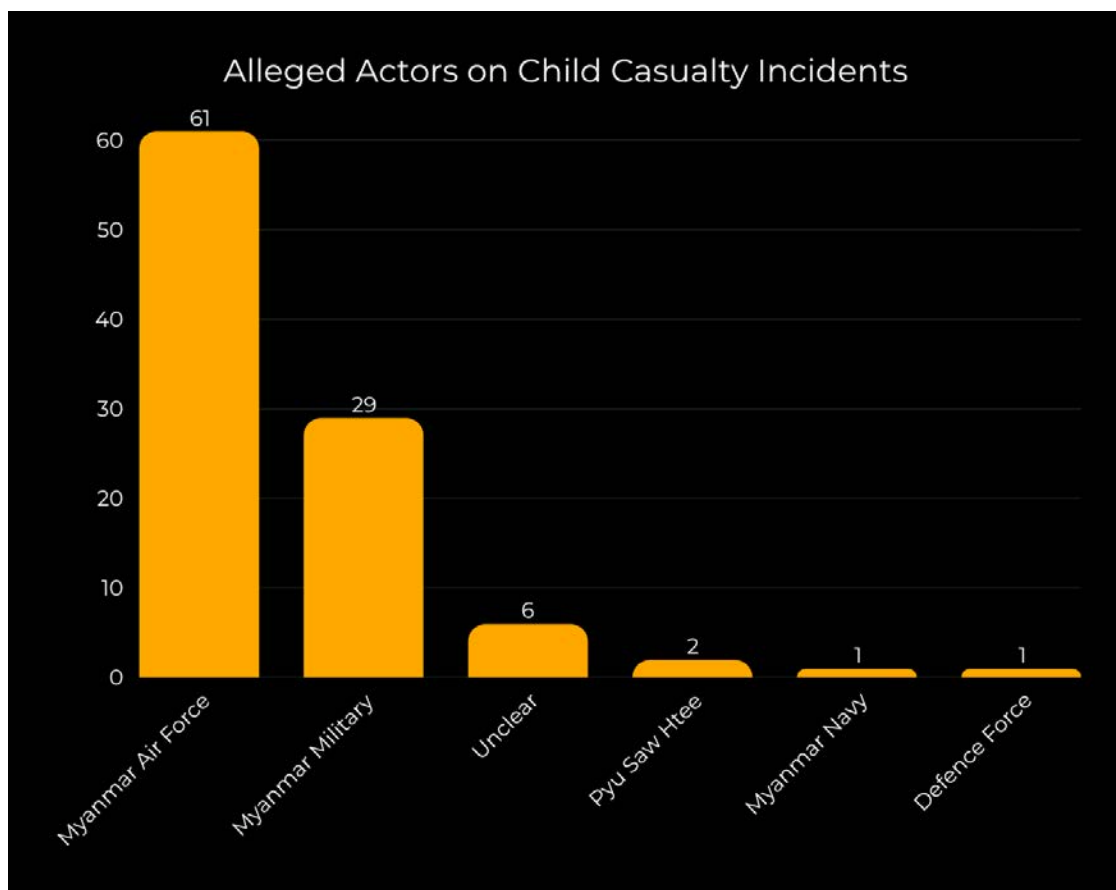


Figure 8: A chart showing the number of claimed actors reported in child casualty incidents

4.7 ACTORS RESPONSES

Myanmar Witness reviewed publicly available responses from actors and affiliated sources relating to recorded incidents involving child casualties. Across the reporting period, two responses from pro-military media outlets and social media accounts relating to recorded incidents were identified. It is important to add that no official public statement from the Myanmar military responding to the reported child casualties was identified.

4.7.1 Case Study 1

On 6 October 2025, the military [reportedly conducted an air attack](#) with a paramotor on Bon To village, Chaung-U township, Sagaing Region, resulting in multiple reported

civilian casualties, including children. Myanmar Witness investigated the reported incident and published the article – [Candlelight protest turns deadly: paramotor attack in Sagaing](#). According to the [National Unity Government \(NUG\)](#), three children were killed, and 20 others were injured in the attack.

Following the incident, responses were identified from pro-military media: [PCT News](#) and [Myanmar National Post News Agency](#), and a pro-military social media account on TikTok ([Kyaw Soe Oo](#)). These sources stated that the strike targeted PDF members and described it as a counter-terrorism operation based on information provided by local sources. They further stated that those killed were PDF members or supporters rather than civilians. Myanmar Military has reportedly conducted similar incidents on gatherings of civilians, perceived to be resistance-aligned, which Myanmar Witness has investigated, such as the [airstrike on a wedding in Mingin](#) in June 2024.

It is important to note that none of the identified responses acknowledged the reported child casualties.

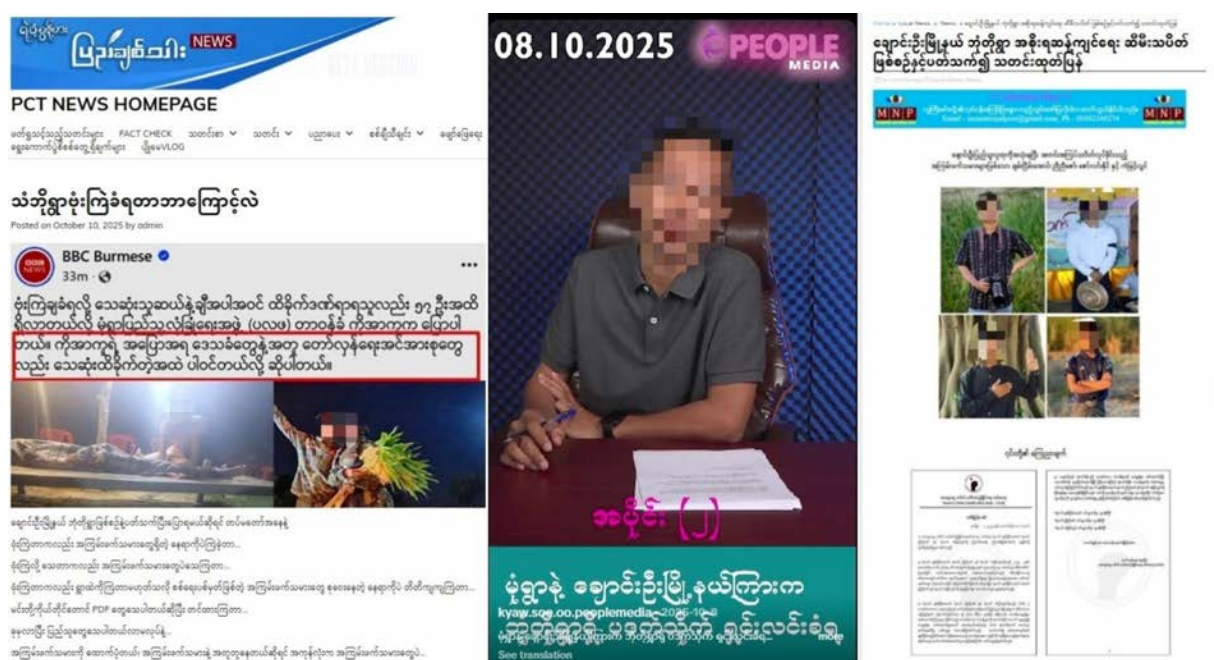


Figure 9: Screenshots of [PCT News](#), [Kyaw Soe Oo](#) and [Myanmar National Post](#) about the Bon To village airstrike, which claimed that the attack targeted PDF members and supported or lived alongside the PDF as terrorists.

4.7.2 Case Study 2

On 12 February 2026, the MAF reportedly conducted an airstrike on Kyauktaw

Township, Rakhine State, resulting in civilian casualties. The Arakan Army (AA), which controls the area, released a statement that the reported airstrike injured two children. Local media outlet [Development Media Group](#) (DMG) also reported that two children were injured in the attack and the incident happened while those children were studying together in a house.

Following the reported incident, a response was identified from the pro-military media outlet [People Media Myanmar](#). The report stated that the airstrike targeted an AA position and focused on reported AA troop casualties. The report also did not acknowledge the reported child casualties associated with the incident.



Figure 10: Screenshot of a [People Media article](#) claiming that an airstrike in Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine State, targeted an AA base and resulted in AA troop casualties.

According to the above case studies, pro-military sources responded to the strikes as operations targeting armed groups. Neither response acknowledged the reported child casualties or addressed reports of civilian harm.

5 INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (IHL)

The findings presented in this report raise serious concerns under International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Under IHL, parties to an armed conflict must distinguish between civilians and combatants and direct attacks only against military objectives. Civilian objects, including homes, schools and places of worship, are protected from attack unless they become military objectives.

These findings raise concerns regarding the principles of distinction, precautions and the protection of civilian objects. This is particularly relevant for incidents affecting homes, educational facilities, religious buildings and other civilian locations.

Under IHL, children are entitled to special respect and protection because of their particular vulnerability. The documented child casualties, including incidents affecting locations where children are commonly present, raise further concerns regarding these protections.

While Myanmar Witness does not make legal determinations regarding individual incidents, the findings presented in this report raise serious concerns under IHL.

References:

[International Humanitarian Law Article 52 - General protection of civilian objects](#)

[International Humanitarian Law Article 77 - Protection of children](#)

[The Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law by Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier](#)

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings presented in this report, Myanmar Witness makes the following recommendations:

- Parties to the conflict should take all possible precautions to minimise harm to civilians during military operations.
- Parties to the conflict should refrain from using explosive weapons in populated areas where civilians are at risk.
- Relevant authorities should support independent documentation and assessment of reported child casualty incidents to support future accountability efforts.

7 ABBREVIATIONS

Arakan Army	AA
Internally Displaced Persons	IDP
International Humanitarian Law	IHL
Myanmar Air Force	MAF
National Unity Government	NUG
People's Defence Force	PDF
Unexploded Ordnance	UXO