



SAC troops seen at the celebration of the diamond jubilee independence day (Photo: AFP)

Two Years After the Coup: Entrenching the Quagmire

Events

Myanmar's ruling junta, the State Administration Council (SAC), marked the second anniversary of its military coup on February 1 by submitting a six-month extension of its rule to the National Security and Defense Council (NDSC) for approval. The SAC used the pretext of an "atypical situation" in the country to argue that it had not yet been able to accomplish its objectives. The junta has reshuffled several of its ranks-and-files, and declared martial law in 37 townships. **(Please see the attached table No. 1).**

Preliminary Analysis

The violent crackdowns in many places across Myanmar during a two-year military purge have forced many in the country, especially young people, to become radicalized. They have been able to find “no alternative but armed struggle” to change the regime. As a result, many newly formed armed groups have emerged. At least 577 groups have been identified, and more than 8,000 clashes have occurred in the last two years. The number of clashes since the coup alone is more than double the number recorded over the last decade before the coup. The junta claims that 132 out of 330 townships are unpacified and out of control, which has created substantial military pressure for the junta. Meanwhile, society has suffered from the numerous setbacks in almost every aspect. **(Please see ISP-Myanmar’s special issue, “The Bricks have Fallen,” for analysis on the second anniversary of the coup.)**

The Bricks Have Fallen . . .

Seven Setbacks Since
the Military Coup and Rays of
Hope For the Society

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Myanmar’s citizens still oppose military rule whenever they have the opportunity, given the SAC’s lack of legitimacy. The “silent strikes”—organized non-violent efforts to demonstrate their disapproval of military rule—provide sufficient evidence. The SAC’s security dilemma is directly linked with its crisis of legitimacy and represents a significant political risk.

The six-month extension of military rule and the declaration of martial law in 37 townships might represent an attempt to extend its control over more of the country and deter security threats ahead of a general election. On the other hand, the SAC could be losing its opportunity to secure a viable exit strategy. Its restrictive new party by-laws clearly indicate an intent to maintain political control. The junta will never secure a political exit strategy through coercion, violence, and political disenfranchisement.



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Scenario Forecast

It is unlikely that the SAC could hold a general election and create a stable environment throughout the country, even after the end of the six-month extension of its rule, widespread martial law, and its other coercive measures. The attached data and map indicate the prevalence of security incidents within the last two years. Areas where martial law has been imposed do not correlate to areas where conflicts have taken place. There could be some other reasons. Further extensions of SAC rule might be submitted in the future, with the excuse of ongoing security concerns. It can be expected to have more SAC crackdowns and oppression in the coming six months. These actions will drive a worsening humanitarian crisis in the country and have spill-over effects on regional security and stability.

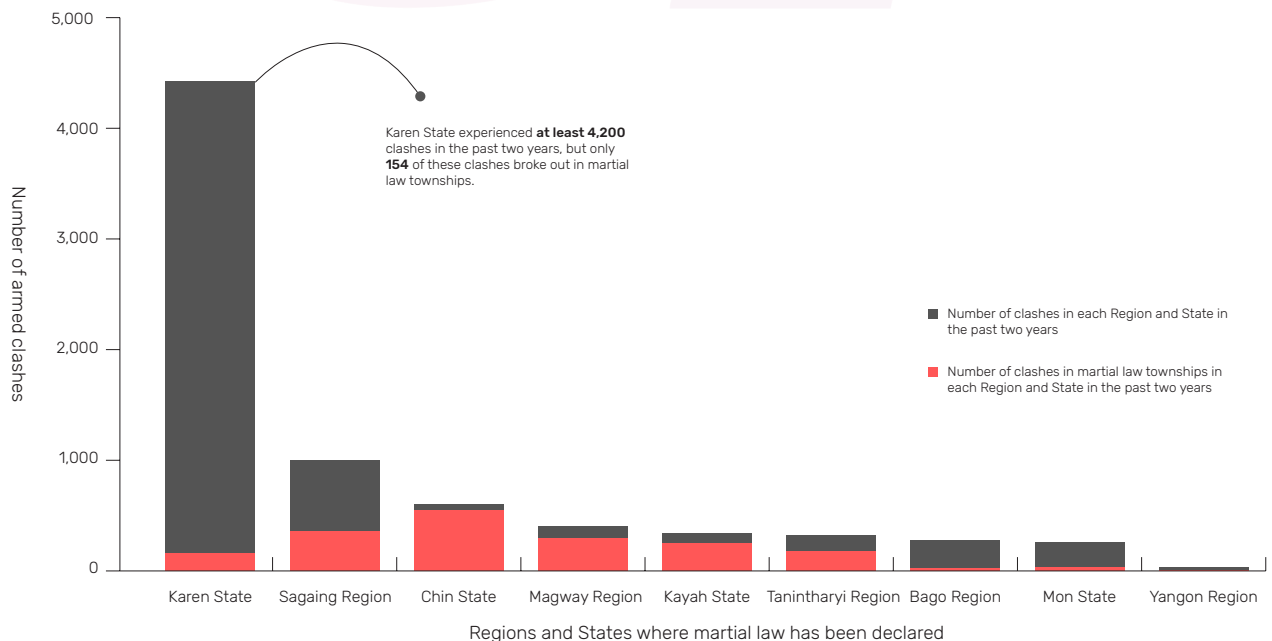
ISP's OnPoint section aims to provide a concise preliminary analysis and scenario forecast on the current significant events and developments.

■ Martial Law Townships (Table 1)

On the second anniversary of the military coup, the SAC submitted its extension to the NDSC, and declared martial law in 37 townships. Since martial law had already been declared in 7 townships, there are **44 townships** in total where martial law is effective. The junta claims that **132 out of 330 townships** are unpacified and out of control.

37 townships where martial law is newly declared				
Sagaing Region (11 townships)	Indaw	Bago Region (5 townships)	Htantabin	
	Banmauk		Okpho	
	Kawlin		Nattalin	
	Pinlebu		Paungde	
	Myaung		Paukkhaung	
	Salingyi		Kayah State (4 townships)	Demoso
	Pale			Hpruso
	Yinmarbin			Shadaw
	Khin-U		Tanintharyi Region (2 townships)	Bawlake
	Taze			Tanintharyi
	Ye-U		Mon State (1 township)	Palaw
Chin State (7 townships)	Tedim	Ye		
	Tonzang	Karen State (2 townships)	Kyainseikgyi	
	Falam		Kawkareik	
Magway Region (5 townships)	Kanpetlet	7 townships where martial law had already been declared		
	Matupi	Yangon Region (6 townships)	Dagon Myothit (North)	
	Thantlang		Dagon Myothit (Seikkan)	
	Hakha		Dagon Myothit (South)	
	Gangaw		North Okkalapa	
	Tilin		Hlaingtharya	
	Saw		Shwepyithar	
	Pauk	Chin State (1 township)	Mindat	
	Myaing			

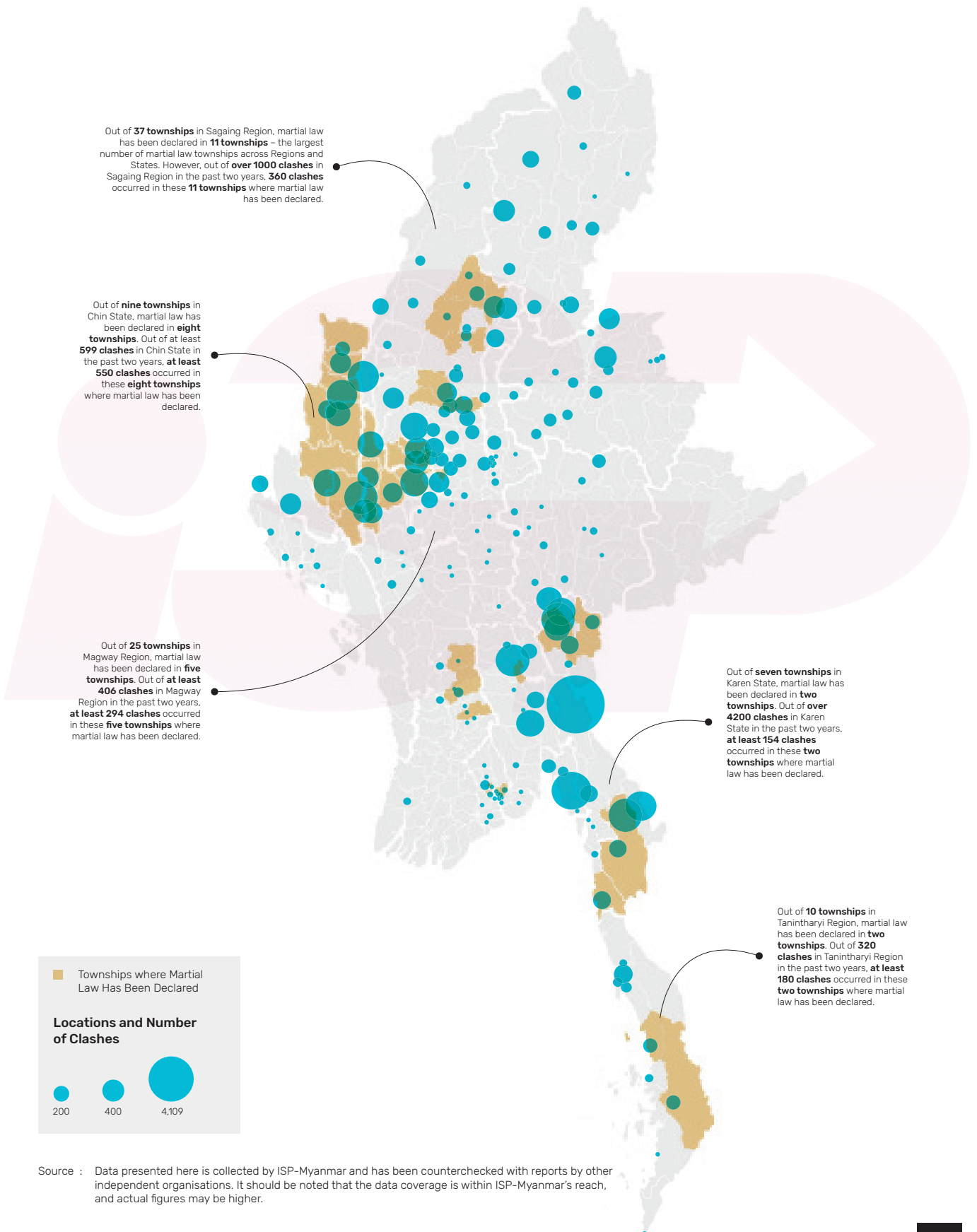
■ Comparisons of Armed Clashes Broke Out in Martial Law Townships (Table 2)



Source : Data presented here is collected by ISP-Myanmar and has been counterchecked with reports by other independent organisations. It should be noted that the data coverage is within ISP-Myanmar’s reach, and actual figures may be higher.

■ Clashes and Martial Law Townships in the Past Two Years

This figure shows locations and number of clashes, and townships where martial law has been declared in the past two years since the coup (from February 2021 to January 2023). It points out that locations and number of clashes do not directly match with townships where martial law has been declared.



Source : Data presented here is collected by ISP-Myanmar and has been counterchecked with reports by other independent organisations. It should be noted that the data coverage is within ISP-Myanmar's reach, and actual figures may be higher.

■ Armed Groups in Martial Law Townships

This figure shows locations and number of clashes, which occurred in the past two years since the coup (From February 2021 to January 2023) and armed groups active in martial law townships. Active armed groups in **44 townships** where martial law has been declared are **units under eight Light Infantry Divisions (LIDs)** on the side of State Administration Council (SAC) and **at least a total of 107 battalions, brigades and columns** on the side of revolutionary forces.

