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SEIZING BANMAUK: AN UNVEILED FACE OF THE CONFLICT ECONOMY

Beyond a collaborative conquest by forces under the Military Region No. 1, the successful operation expands resistance's control over gold mines and border trade routes—critical lifelines for sustaining the conflict economy and for financing their fight.



Seizing Banmauk: An Unveiled Face of the Conflict Economy

After a six-day joint offensive of at least 18 resistance groups, Banmauk town on the Kachin-Sagaing border was seized on September 20. The joint operation, carried out under the command of the National Unity Government's Ministry of Defense (NUG's MOD) and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Military Region No. 1, marked a significant success. The victory extended resistance control beyond Banmauk itself—consolidating access to gold mining areas vital for sustaining their conflict economy and coffer, as well as securing strategic border trade routes.

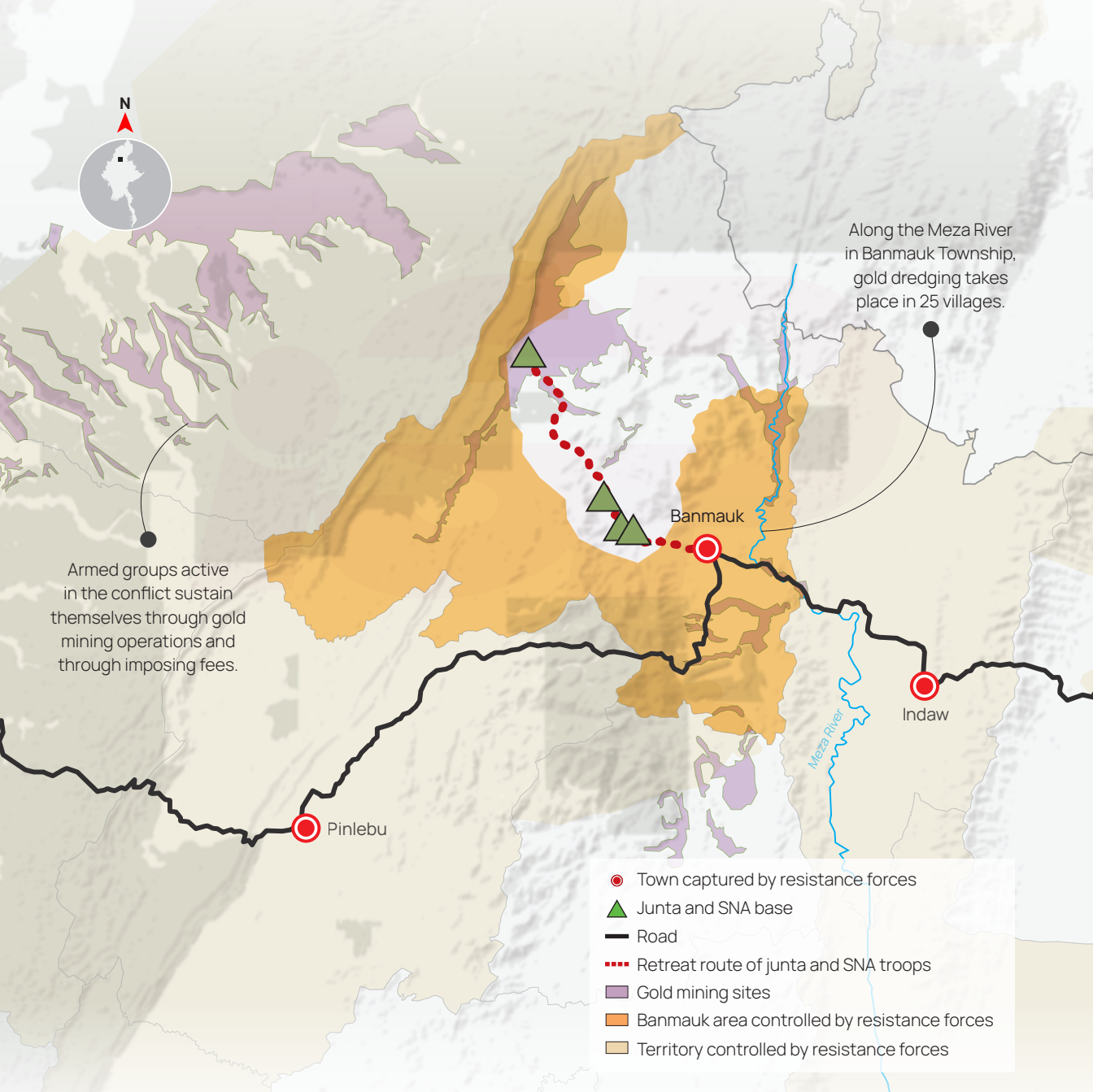
Militarily, Banmauk is not a major strategic hub. Its importance lies in its location along border trade routes that connect to both China and India. Previously, the town was held and blockaded by junta troops and the pro-junta militia, Shanni Nationalities Army (SNA). With its capture, resistance forces now control the full Banmauk–Tamu corridor to the Indian border, as well as the Banmauk–Indaw–Northern Shan state route. Banmauk is also a center of gold production. Gold mining pits scatter across the western outskirts of the town, while extensive dredging operations stretch along the Meza River. As of 2020, the area had 27 licensed mining plots and around 100 pending applications. Since the 2021 coup, however, gold extraction has expanded dramatically, with at least 1,200 pits and dredging sites now active. This has intensified the contest between resistance forces and junta troops, backed by the SNA, over control of Banmauk's lucrative goldfields.

Banmauk was a missing piece in the areas to sustain the conflict economy and fund the war machine. Resistance forces now control the entire township on three sides, with the north as the only exception (**see ISP Mapping No. 113**). Given its link to natural resources and the conflict economy of ground forces, the contest for territorial control could trigger counter-offensives and renewed escalation of conflict. ■

● Resistance Forces Secure Three Flanks of Banmauk

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On September 20, resistance groups seized Banmauk town on the Kachin–Sagaing border, extending their control across the eastern, western, and southern parts of the township. Only the northern sector remains outside their control. These secured flanks connect directly to Indaw, Paungbyin, Homalin, Wuntho, and Pinlebu townships—areas already under strong dominance of the resistance.



Data as of September 26, 2025, is part of research conducted by ISP-Myanmar's Conflict, Peace, and Security Studies. It may vary from other sources due to differences in methodology and data availability.