



**Chin Association
of Maryland, Inc.**

**1628 16th St NW
Washington, DC 20009**

Two Years After the 2021 Military Coup: The Worsening Situation of Christians Across Burma



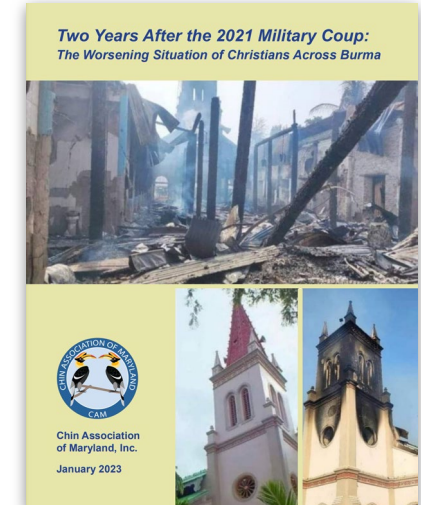
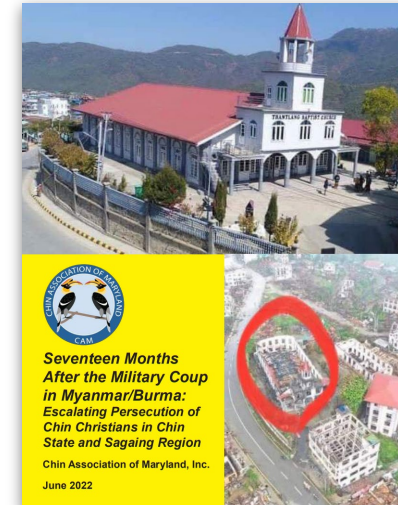
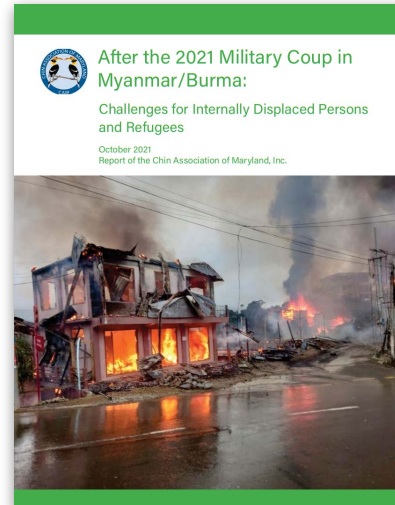
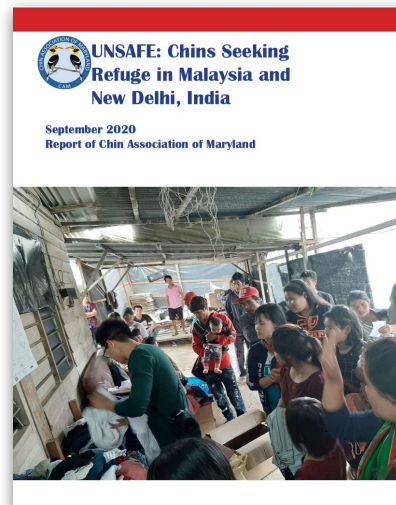
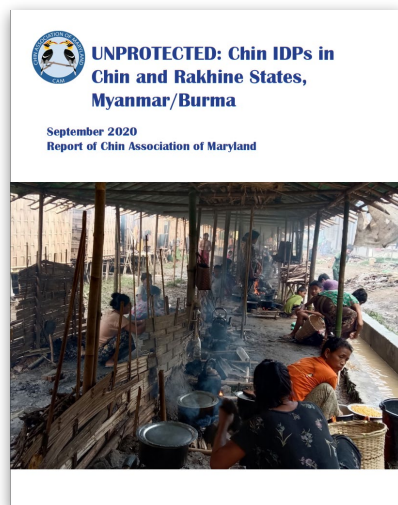
Zo Tum Hmung, Executive Director of the Chin Association of Maryland

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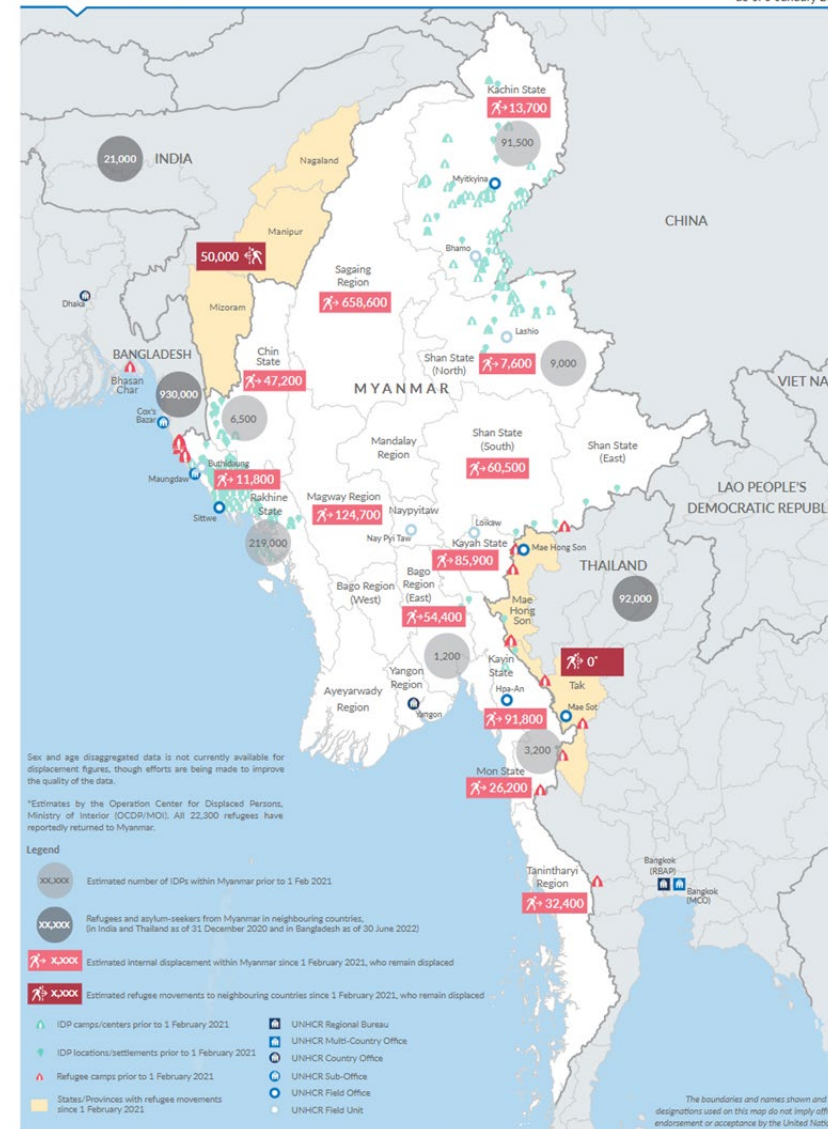
Who We Are

- The Chin Association of Maryland is a non-profit organization based in Ellicott City, Maryland with an advocacy office in Washington, DC. CAM advocates for Chin and other refugees and IDPs in Burma, as well as religious freedom and human rights. CAM also works to empower the local Chin community in Maryland to successfully integrate into American society.
- Since the February 2021 military coup, CAM has produced three reports on the situation of IDPs and refugees and the Christian minority in Burma. Today, we are presenting key findings and cases from our latest report, published in January 2023.



Key Findings

- Our previous two reports focused on Chin State; the latest report finds the same pattern of persecution targeting Christian communities across Burma
- Since the 2021 coup, the Burmese military, also known as the Tatmadaw, has only increased its persecution of religious minorities with attacks on religious leaders, churches, and civilians
- These attacks constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, driving Burma's refugee and IDP crisis
- As of January 2023, UNHCR reported 72,000 refugees and 1,215,000 internally displaced persons since the 2021 coup
- Approximately 50,000 mainly Chin refugees fled to India, with 45,150 still in the border states of Mizoram and Manipur



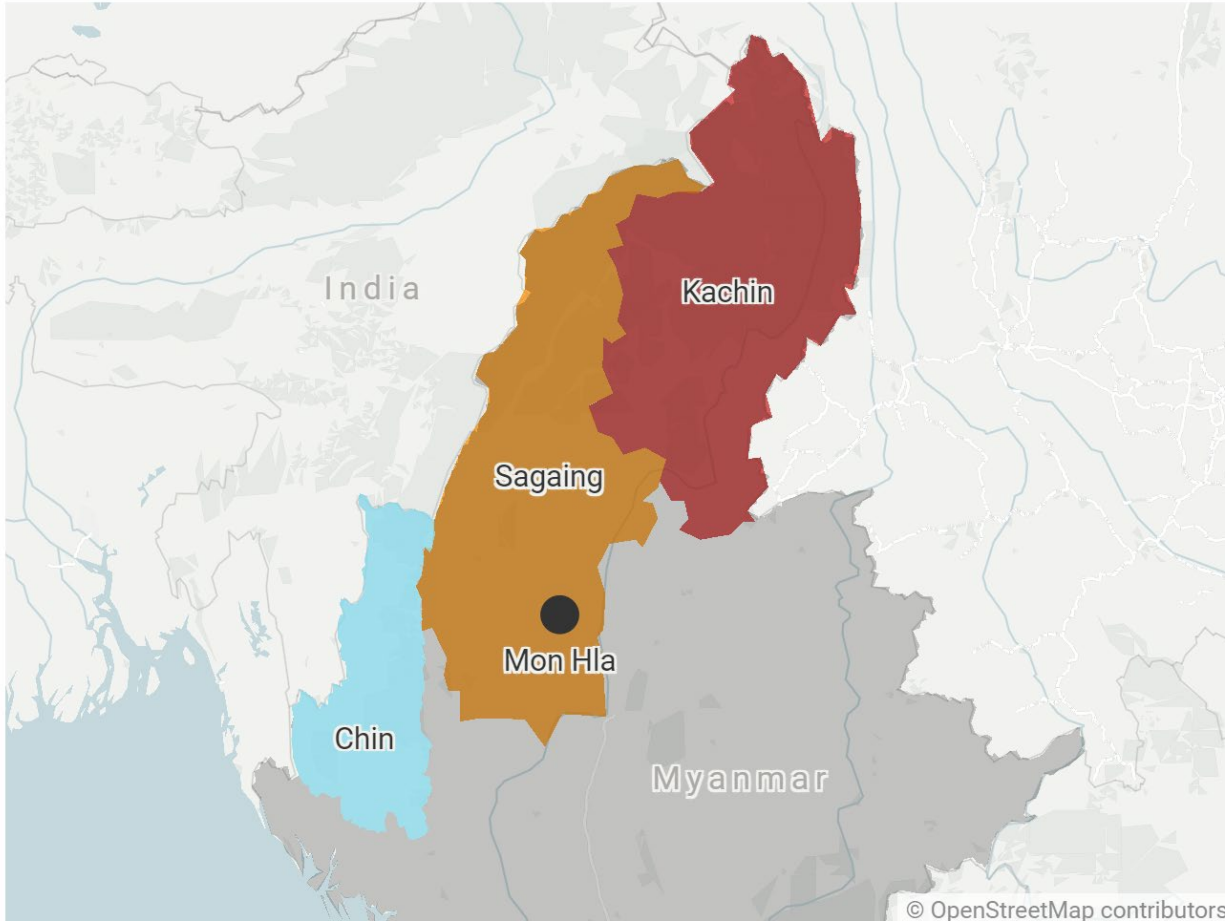
Case 1: Burning of Assumption Church



Source: CAM, "Two Years After the 2021 Military Coup: The Worsening Situation of Christians Across Burma," 2023

- January 15, 2023
- Historical Bayingyi village of Chan Thar, Sagaing Region
- The 129-year-old Assumption Church and surrounding religious buildings burned by Tatmadaw troops

Case 2: Burning of Mon Hla Village



- On November 24, 2022, the Tatmadaw burned down hundreds of houses, a church, and a school in the Bayingyi village of Mon Hla, Sagaing Region, killing three civilians
- Mon Hla was the hometown of Cardinal Charles Maung Bo of Yangon and Archbishop Marco Tin Win of Mandalay

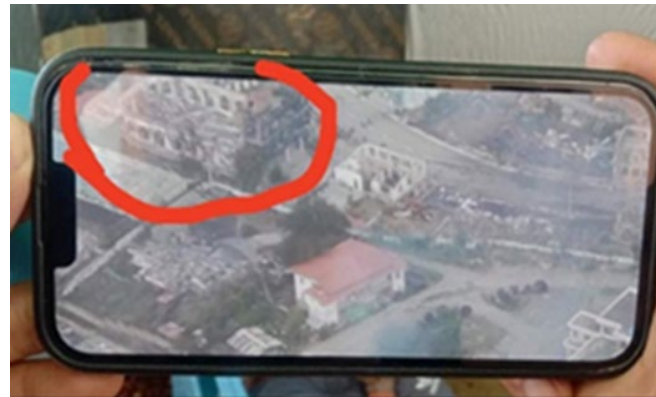
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Source: CAM, "Two Years After the 2021 Military Coup: The Worsening Situation of Christians Across Burma," 2023

Case 3: Burning of Johnson Memorial Baptist Church



Source: Google Earth, 11/12/2020



Source: CAM, "Two Years After the 2021 Military Coup: The Worsening Situation of Christians Across Burma," 2023

- Since September 2021, the Tatmadaw has burned down thirteen churches in the town of Thantlang, Chin State. The entire population has fled and is currently displaced.
- On May 24, 2022, junta forces burned down Johnson Memorial Baptist Church, built in memory of the last American Baptist missionary to the Chin people

Case 4: Burning of Thantlang Baptist Church



Source: Google Earth, 11/12/2020



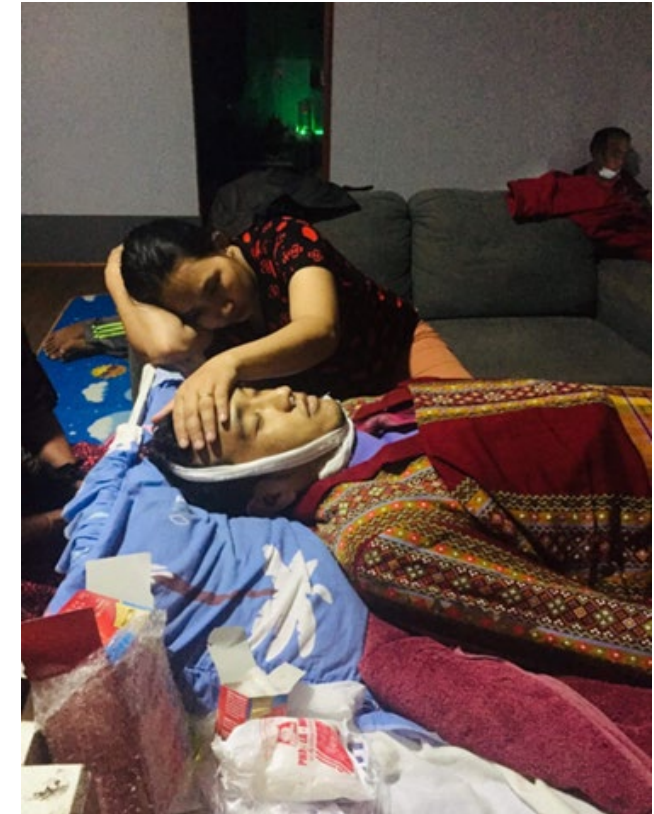
Source: CAM, "Two Years After the 2021 Military Coup: The Worsening Situation of Christians Across Burma," 2023

Photo Source: CAM, "Seventeen Months After the Military Coup in Myanmar/Burma: Escalating Persecution of Chin Christians in Chin State and Sagaing Region," June 2022

- On June 9, 2022, the Tatmadaw looted and burned the Thantlang Baptist Church, the largest church in town
- During CAM's March 2023 trip to Mizoram, India, a pastor from the church reported that the military exploited the site for its strategic hilltop location

Case 5: Killing of Pastor Cung Biak Hum

- On September 18, 2021, the Tatmadaw shot and killed Pastor Cung Biak Hum, age 30, of Thantlang Centenary Baptist Church as he went to lead firefighting efforts
- Tatmadaw soldiers cut off Pastor Hum's finger to steal his wedding ring



Source: CAM, "Two Years After the 2021 Military Coup: The Worsening Situation of Christians Across Burma," 2023



Key Recommendations

CAM firmly believes that the atrocities committed by the Tatmadaw against Burma's Christian minority constitute religious persecution, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. CAM therefore calls upon the Biden administration and congressional leaders to take further steps to protect Burma's religious minorities.

To the Biden Administration:

1. Actively impose targeted sanctions against the military officials who have committed atrocities against the people of Burma, including atrocities targeting religious minorities such as Christians in Chin, Kachin, Karen, and Karenni States as well as Sagaing and Mandalay Regions; and Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine State;
2. Designate atrocities against Christian minorities, especially the Chins, as war crimes and crimes against humanity, consistent with the designation of crimes targeting the Rohingya ethnic and religious minority



Key Recommendations

To the US Congress:

1. Conduct a Congressional Fact-Finding mission to the Indo-Burma border area and Thai-Burma border area related to the protection and humanitarian needs of IDPs and refugees from Burma and related to the atrocities, including gender-based atrocities, against religious minorities, including Christians
2. Conduct a Congressional hearing on the persecution of Christians in Burma
3. Increase funding to strengthen protection and humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons in Burma, and to strengthen protection, humanitarian assistance, and pursuit of durable solutions for refugees from Burma in India, Malaysia, Thailand, and Bangladesh