

Who's Who in the Two Major Anti-Regime Offensives in Myanmar?

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Since the onset of Operation 1027 and Operation 1111, two remarkable coordinated military offensives being waged against the Myanmar regime, many people may have been wondering who's who in the operations, which have so far captured over 300 regime bases and around 20 towns in just over six weeks.



Simply put, it's a fight between the Myanmar military junta and anti-regime forces. However, on the ground, it involves sophisticated coordination among dozens of anti-regime groups, from established ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) to armed resistance groups, largely made up of young people, that sprung up after the 2021 coup.

To help readers make sense of this complex situation, The Irrawaddy lists below about 30 resistance groups, including 10 ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), that are actively participating in the operations.

The well-organized operations have inflicted significant defeats on the military regime, which has lost hundreds of troops and control of territory across northern Shan, Kachin, Rakhine, Chin and Karenni (Kayah) states and Magwe, Sagaing and Mandalay regions.

The lists below may not be complete, as the situation is fluid. Some groups operate under several names, and some are expanding their operations into different parts of the country.

Apart from the two operations, the Myanmar junta also faces escalating attacks from other resistance groups and EAOs in Karen and Mon states and Yangon, Tanintharyi and Bago regions, as well as in its nerve center, Naypyitaw.

Resistance groups and EAOs participating in Operation 1027

Main groups:

1. The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the armed wing of the Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party (MNTJP) representing the ethnic Kokang people.

The MNDAA has existed since 1989 and is based in the Kokang region of northern Shan State. An estimated 5,000 MNDAA troops are taking part in the operation.

2. The Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the armed wing of the Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF).

The TNLA has existed since 1992 and is active in northern Shan State. An estimated 8,000 TNLA troops are taking part in the operation.

3. The Arakan Army (AA), the armed wing of the United League of Arakan (ULA).

The AA was founded in 2009 and is based in Rakhine State. It is also active in Karen, Shan, Kachin and neighboring Chin states, and in Magwe and Sagaing regions.

The AA has deployed an estimated 3,000 troops for the operation in northern Shan State, apart from its other areas of operation.

4. The People's Liberation Army (PLA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB, founded in 1939).

The CPB founded the PLA following the 2021 military coup. The PLA is based in Sagaing Region and is also active in northern Shan. An estimated 500 troops are involved in the operation across northern Shan.

5. The Burma People's Liberation Army (BPLA), an anti-regime resistance group founded following the 2021 military coup.

The BPLA is active in Karen State and northern Shan.

An estimated 200 BPLA troops are involved in the operation across northern Shan.

6. The Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF), an anti-regime resistance group founded following the 2021 military coup.

The KNDF is active in Karenni State and southern Shan State. KNDF fighters are coordinating with the operation in northern Shan.

7. Mandalay People's Defense Force (Mandalay PDF), one of the armed forces of the civilian National Unity Government (NUG).

Mandalay PDF was founded following the 2021 military coup and is active in upper Mandalay Region and northern Shan. An estimated 1,200 PDF fighters are involved in the operation in northern Shan State and upper Mandalay Region.

8. Mogoke People's Defense Force Battalions (Mogoke PDF), under the civilian National Unity Government (NUG), was founded following the 2021 military coup. It is active in Mogoke Township, upper Mandalay Region. An estimated 400 Mogoke PDF fighters are taking part in the operation.

9. The Burma National Revolutionary Army (BNRA).

The BNRA is a local resistance group founded following the 2021 military coup and is active in Mandalay, Magwe and Sagaing regions. The BNRA is also fighting regime troops alongside other resistance groups in northern Shan State.

10. The Danu People's Liberation Front (DPLF).

It was founded in 2022 and is active in Shan State. It is also involved in the operation in northern Shan.

Secondary groups

11. The Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the armed wing of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO).

The KIA was founded in 1961 and is active in Kachin and northern Shan states, and Sagaing Region.

12. The Chin National Defense Force (CNDF), the armed wing of the Chin National Organization (CNO).

The CNDF was founded after the 2021 military coup and is active in Chin State and neighboring Sagaing Region.

13. The Chin National Army (CNA), the armed wing of the Chin National Front (CNF).

The CNA was founded in 1988 and is active in Chin State and neighboring Magwe and Sagaing regions.

14. The Kuki National Army (KNA), the armed wing of the Kuki National Organization (KNO).

The KNA was founded in 1988 and is active in northeast India and Chin State as well as in Sagaing.

15. The All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF).

The ABSDF was founded in 1988 and is active in Kachin, Mon and Karen states and Sagaing, Magwe and Bago regions.

16. Myingyan District People's Defense Force (Myingyan District PDF). It is active in Mandalay Region.

17. Many other PDFs and local resistance groups across Magwe, Mandalay and Sagaing regions and Chin State

Resistance groups participating in Operation 1111 in Karenni State

1. The Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF).

The KNDF was founded following the 2021 military coup. It has become a powerful armed group and is active in Karenni State and southern Shan State. An estimated 8,000 KNDF troops are involved in the operation in Karenni State.

2. The Karenni Army (KA), the armed wing of the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP).

The KA was founded in 1957 and is active in Karenni State. An estimated 3,000 troops are participating in the operation in Karenni State.

3. The Karenni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF).

The KNPLF is a communist, Karenni nationalist insurgent group.

It was founded in 1978 and is active in Karenni State. An estimated 600 of its troops are participating in the operation in Karenni State.

4. The Urban Revolutionary Front (URF).

The URF was founded following the 2021 military coup and is active in southern Shan State and Karenni State.

5. Demoso People's Defense Force (Demoso PDF).

Demoso PDF was founded following the 2021 military coup and is active in Karenni State.

6. Loikaw People's Defense Force (Loikaw PDF).

Loikaw PDF was founded following the 2021 military coup and is active in Karenni State.

7. Pekon People's Defense Force (Pekon PDF).

Pekon PDF was founded after the 2021 military coup and is active in Karenni State.

8. Moby People's Defense Force (Moby PDF)

Moby PDF was founded in 2021 and is active in northern Shan State and Karenni State.

9. Hpruso People's Defense Force (Hpruso PDF).

Hpruso PDF was founded in 2021 and is active in Karenni State.

10. Hpasawng People's Defense Force (Hpasawng PDF). It was founded in 2021 and is active in Karenni State.

11. Several PDF groups under the NUG operating in military regions of southern Shan State and Karenni State.

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