



***Seventeen Months
After the Military Coup
in Myanmar/Burma:
Escalating Persecution of
Chin Christians in Chin
State and Sagaing Region***

Chin Association of Maryland, Inc.

June 2022





Copyright © June 2022 CAM, Inc.
All rights reserved

<https://chinmd.org>
info@chinmd.org

3132 Priscillas View
Ellicott City, MD 21043
443-936-8616

Cover photos:

Thantlang Baptist Church

Burned Thantlang Baptist Church

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chin Association of Maryland, Inc. (CAM) is grateful to the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Summit 2022 Co-Chairs, the Senate Co-Chairs, and the House Co-Chairs for organizing the 2022 summit, a timely and important international event. We are thankful for the opportunity to be an IRF Summit Partner. We also thank session organizers, the American Baptist Churches USA, Religious Prisoners of Conscience (ROPC), and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, for the opportunity to be part of their panels and to explain the escalating persecution of Chin Christians in Chin State and Sagaing Region and to discuss efforts to restore a federal democracy and peace in Myanmar/Burma seventeen months after the military coup.

CAM prepared this report to augment our IRF presentations and as a tool for further advocacy with Congress and the Administration to promote religious freedom. CAM is grateful to Chin churches in the United States for their financial support for writing and publishing this report. CAM is also grateful to those who have provided information from inside Myanmar/Burma. Without their support, this report would not have been possible. We are indebted to Chin community members especially those in Myanmar/Burma and in Mizoram State, India on-the-ground assessments for this report. We acknowledge Dr. Jennifer Siegel who was a consultant for this report. She compiled and edited the report, including background information and case information. We also acknowledge CAM's team of wonderful interns, Kaylee Perrin (Maurer School of Law, Indiana University), Courtney Davis (Maurer School of Law, Indiana University), and John Indergaard (Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University) who helped tremendously with the compiling and editing of the report.

The names of people in photos or who provided personal accounts or photos used in the report and the names of people interviewed have not been included to protect their safety and security.

We have tried our best to describe and analyze in good faith the emerging situations of religious persecution of Christian Chins in the wake of the military coup and its aftermath in Myanmar/Burma. However, if we have inadvertently made any errors in this report, they are our own.

Zo Tum Hmung
Executive Director
Chin Association of Maryland, Inc.

I. Executive Summary

The Chin Association of Maryland (CAM) prepared this report to share with participants and augment its presentations at the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Summit on June 28-30, 2022, at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC. CAM also prepared the report for further advocacy with Congress and the Administration to promote religious liberty.

Seventeen months after the February 2021 Military Coup in Myanmar/Burma, this report focuses specifically on the systematic persecution of Christian Chins from September 2021 to June of 2022 by the Burmese military, also known as the Tatmadaw. They carried out their persecution through the burning, destruction, and occupying of Christian Churches and affiliated religious buildings as well as through the abuse, killing, and arbitrary detention of Christian leaders. Through the publication of this report, we hope to shed light once again on the pattern of persecution by the Tatmadaw against minority religious groups in Myanmar/Burma.

On March 21, 2022, CAM welcomed and applauded US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's declaration that the Burmese military committed genocide and crimes against humanity against the Rohingya ethnic and religious minority in Rakhine State, Myanmar/Burma.^{1,2} In a deliberate campaign against the Rohingya that included a "scorched earth"³ campaign resulting in mass killings and forced displacement and deportation of more than 700,000 to Bangladesh.⁴ This genocidal campaign marked the culmination of years of persecution; for decades, the Burmese state denied citizenship to the mostly Muslim Rohingya, leaving them stateless and without access to government services. CAM Executive Director Zo Tum Hmung issued a further statement to the Washington Post, "Issuing a statement is great, but it's not enough. Time is critical, because if the military thinks the United States is too busy with Ukraine to deal with Myanmar, they will think they can do whatever they want."⁵

On April 25, 2022, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) released their Annual Report on the state of religious freedom around the world. CAM welcomed the report and the recommendations related to Burma, especially the redesignation of Burma as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC).⁶ CAM also commended the recommendations to "Actively support international efforts to hold the Tatmadaw, Burmese agencies, and officials accountable through the international legal system for atrocities against religious communities..."

Just as the Tatmadaw must be condemned and held accountable for their ruthless brutality against the Rohingya Muslims of Rakhine State, so they must be condemned and held accountability for their brutality against the Christians in Chin State and Sagaing Region.

-
- 1 Blinken, Antony, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken on the Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity in Burma", March 21, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-the-united-states-holocaust-memorial-museum/>
 - 2 Chin Association of Maryland, Inc. (CAM) Media Statement, "CAM Statement on the Determination of Genocide Against Rohingya," March 30, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/2022/03/30/cam-statement-on-the-determination-of-genocide-against-rohingya/>
 - 3 Human Rights Council, *Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar*, September 28, 2018, p. 15, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/FFM-Myanmar/A_HRC_39_64.pdf
 - 4 United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), *Rohingya Refugee Crisis Explained*, August 25, 2021, <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/rohingya-refugee-crisis-explained/#:~:text=The%20Rohingya%20have%20suffered%20decades,to%20seek%20refuge%20in%20Bangladesh.>
 - 5 Rogin, Josh, "Biden's Rohingya genocide declaration can't just be empty words," *Washington Post*, March 24, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/03/24/us-genocide-designation-rohingya-myanmar-prevention-atrocity/>
 - 6 CAM Media Statement, "Statement on the US Commission on International Religious Freedom 2022 Annual Report," May 1, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/2022/05/01/statement-on-the-us-commission-on-international-religious-freedom-2022-annual-report/>

To this end, CAM has continued to document widespread and intensified violence against religious minorities, especially those in Chin State and Sagaing Region that have taken place after the February 2021 coup d'état against Myanmar/Burma's democratically-elected civilian government and Chinland Defense Forces/Chin National Army.^{7,8} The Tatmadaw has been routinely targeting the civilian population in Chin State, which is 85% Christian,⁹ as part of its strategy to combat pro-democratic militias and EAOs. Widespread and violent attacks have led to the mass displacement of Christian Chins including 36,000 displaced within the country to internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps and over 39,800 who have fled Myanmar/Burma to neighboring India mostly in Mizoram State, but also Manipur and Nagaland States.¹⁰ In this report, CAM documents cases of religious persecution by the military focusing on key instances of targeted burning, systematic destruction, and the occupation of Christian churches and affiliated buildings, as well as the abuse, killing, and arbitrary detainment of Christian pastors and leaders. In Thantlang Town alone, the Tatmadaw has burned 11 churches since September 2021. The entire population of the town has been displaced internally or to neighboring Mizoram State, India.

Report Methodology

This report focuses on the experiences of the Christian Chin, especially focusing on those targeted and displaced since the military coup of February 1, 2021. Most of the photographs and content are from CAM's previous report, *After the 2021 Military Coup in Myanmar/Burma: Challenges for Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees* as well as ongoing statements and regular monthly news updates produced by CAM. CAM is regularly provided with reliable information on this emergent crisis gathered by IDP and refugee community leaders on the ground in Myanmar/Burma and Mizoram State, India. It is difficult to identify and confirm the battalions of the Burmese military responsible for burning churches, houses, and killing pastors because the military uses different uniforms and identities, however, CAM has been investigating the military and the commanders responsible for the attacks.¹¹ The identities of community leaders providing information are kept confidential due to the security situation in Myanmar/Burma as well as Mizoram State, India. To provide the larger political and human rights context, the report is further supplemented with various reports by UN agencies, other reputable international organizations in the region, and reputable media sources.

-
- 7 CAM, *After the 2021 Military Coup in Myanmar/Burma: Challenges for Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees*, October 2021. <https://chinmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/After-the-2021-Military-Coup-in-MyanmarBurma.pdf>
- 8 CAM regularly produces statements (<https://chinmd.org/statements/>) and a monthly newsletter highlighting emergent events affecting Chin and other religious minorities in Myanmar/Burma.
- 9 Republic of the Union of Myanmar, *The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Report Volume 2-C*, July 2016, Accessed via ReliefWeb <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/2014-myanmar-population-and-housing-census-report-re-ligion-census-report-volume>
- 10 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Myanmar Emergency Regional Update*, June 1, 2022 <https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/2501>
- 11 It has been reported that the Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 266 based in Hakha Town and LIB 269 and LIB 222 are stationed in Thantlang town. Some battalions came to Hakha from Sagaing Region and other regions as well. Since the entire population of Thantlang town has fled, it is difficult to confirm the LIBs.

II. Recommendations

CAM firmly believes that the atrocities committed by the Tatmadaw against the Chin Christians constitutes religious and ethnic persecution, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. CAM therefore calls upon the Biden administration and congressional leaders to take further steps to protect Myanmar/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 Myanmar/Burma, including against religious minorities such as the Chins;
2. Strengthen protection and assistance for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Myanmar/Burma, including by increasing US cross-border, humanitarian assistance from Thailand and India, and by urging increased access for UN agencies and their implementing partners to those in need, especially IDPs and others needing humanitarian assistance in Chin State;
3. Strengthen protection and assistance for Chins and other refugees from Myanmar/Burma in India's Mizoram State, including by funding local efforts to meet the needs of recent arrivals, and by urging increased access for UN agencies and their implementing partners to Chin refugees and others in need in Mizoram State, including the Mizo community;

To the US Congress:

1. Pass the Burma Act of 2021 (S. 2937), which the House passed on April 7, 2021 (HR 5497). The legislation should be amended to promote religious freedom, to require the imposition of targeted and coordinated sanctions, and to provide other accountability mechanisms to punish those committing atrocities against religious minorities, including against the Chin Christians;
2. Increase funding to strengthen protection and humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons in Myanmar/Burma, and to strengthen protection, humanitarian assistance, and pursuit of durable solutions for refugees from Myanmar/Burma in New Delhi, India, Malaysia, and Thailand;
3. Increase funding to investigate and document human rights abuses by the Tatmadaw against religious minorities in Myanmar/Burma, including against Chins;
4. Conduct a Congressional Fact-Finding mission to the Thai-Burma border area and Indo-Burma border area related to the humanitarian protection needs of refugees from Myanmar/Burma and related to the atrocities against religious minority refugees, including Christian Chins.

III. History of Religion and Religious Persecution in Myanmar/Burma

Myanmar/Burma is in Southeast Asia and borders China, India, Thailand, and Bangladesh. It is made up of seven ethnic states and seven regions and has a population of approximately fifty-seven million.¹² Sixty-eight percent of the population is from the Burman ethnic group, which is primarily Buddhist, and the remaining 32 percent are from numerous ethnic nationalities and religious minorities. Chin State is the only majority-Christian state, with Christians comprising 85 percent of the population.¹³

Chinland was an independent territory until the British annexation in 1896 as were the Kachin Hills, Shan State, and Burma.¹⁴ Each was separately invaded, occupied, and governed by British colonists under separate regulations and acts. In 1947, the Burman General Aung San and Chin leaders, as well as Kachin and Shan leaders signed the Panglong Agreement to form a federal union that would provide equal rights and equal standing for the majority Burmans and minority ethnic groups, with a special focus on self-determination and autonomy for minority ethnic groups. On February 1, 1948, almost one year after the signing of the Panglong Agreement, the Union of Myanmar/Burma gained independence from Great Britain and became a state; Chinland was one of the founding members of the Union.

In March 1962, General Ne Win staged a military coup and established an authoritarian regime that lasted over five decades. The military regime nationalized the American Baptist Mission's institutions including missionary schools in Chin State and deported missionaries. The regime deported the last missionary to Chinland, Rev. Dr. Robert Johnson, in May of 1966 to the United States (US). The Tatmadaw, the Burmese military, became known for brutally persecuting ethnic nationalities, religious minorities, and democracy activists. Ethnic nationalities continued to struggle in their fight for self-determination and autonomy, including for a federal democratic union and ethnic, political, religious, and cultural rights. They formed ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) to defend against the Tatmadaw. Successive military regimes have continued persecuting minority religious groups including Chin Christians.

The Tatmadaw and its governing political body, the State Administration Council (SAC; formerly State Peace and Development Council), have a long history of actively persecuting Christian and Muslim religious minorities. The Tatmadaw's repeated interference with Christians' and Muslims' abilities to practice their faith, repeated persecution, and repeated conversion strategies reveal the Tatmadaw and SAC's general policy of persecution and conversion of religious minorities. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has long reported the abuses of the Tatmadaw against Christians and Muslims and has consistently recommended Myanmar/Burma be designated by the US State Department as a "Country of Particular Concern (CPC)." Since 1999 the State Department has followed this recommendation under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

12 Maizland, Lindsay, "Myanmar's Troubled History: Coups, Military Rule, and Ethnic Conflict," *Council on Foreign Relations*, February 10, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/background/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>

13 Republic of the Union of Myanmar, *The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Report Volume 2-C*, July 2016, Accessed via ReliefWeb, <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/2014-myanmar-population-and-housing-census-union-report-religion-census-report-volume>

14 Panglong Agreement: Defining Panglong Agreement, Panglong Promises, and Panglong Spirit, June 12, 2019, p. 60, <https://www.pyidaungsuinstitute.org/index.php/en/publications/item/602-panglong-agreement-defining-palong-agreement-panglong-promises-and-panglong-spirit>

Since the military coup of 2021, grave acts of religious persecution against the Chin and other religious minorities have continued with impunity and increased in scale and scope, causing widespread displacement and need for humanitarian assistance. President Biden signed the H.R. 2471 - Consolidated Appropriations Act 2022 on March 15, 2022, which included \$136,127,000 in assistance for Burma. While CAM welcomes and appreciates this funding from Congress and the Biden Administration, it urges the US to further increase funding to help meet the UN's 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan, which calls for \$826 million to deliver aid to the 6.2 million displaced persons in Burma.¹⁵ Noeleen Heyzer, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar recently underscored the severity of displacement in the country: over one million IDPs are displaced around the country and 14.4 million people, one-quarter of the entire population, require humanitarian assistance.¹⁶ She reiterated, "the political crisis unleashed on 1 February 2021 has opened new frontlines that had long been at peace."¹⁷ Tom Andrews, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, further underscored the gravity of the situation in Myanmar in a recent report stating, "The junta's relentless attacks on children underscore the generals' depravity and willingness to inflict immense suffering on innocent victims...The international community's approach to the coup and the junta's atrocities has failed. States must take immediate coordinated action..."¹⁸

The military has systematically targeted religious leaders including through the murder of religious leaders and targeting them for arrest. Furthermore, the military targeted religious institutions by ransacking and destroying religious buildings across the country.

15 CAM Media Statement, "Statement on Welcoming \$136 million in U.S. Assistance for Burma," March 23, 2022. <https://chinmd.org/2022/03/30/cam-statement-on-welcoming-136-millions-in-u-s-assistance-for-burma/>

16 Heyzer, Noeleen, Remarks by Special Envoy Noeleen Heyzer at the informal meeting of the General Assembly on Myanmar, June 13, 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/remarks-special-envoy-noeleen-heyzer-informal-meeting-general-assembly-myanmar-13-june-2022#:~:text=Today%2C%2014.4%20million%20people%2C%20or,had%20long%20been%20at%20peace.>

17 Ibid.

18 UN Human Rights Council, A/HRC/50/CRP.1: Conference Room Paper of the Special Rapporteur, "Losing a Generation: How the military junta is attacking Myanmar's children and stealing their future," June 13, 2022, <https://is.gd/3DYBae>



(left) Displacement trends of IDPs (green) and internationally displaced (red) from Myanmar/Burma since the military coup of February 2021 as of May 16, 2022.

Source: Myanmar UNHCR displacement overview 16 May 2022 ¹⁹

(right) Map indicating scale of displacement in Chin State, Myanmar after the February 1, 2021 military coup as well as protracted displacement prior to the coup.

Source: UN OCHA Humanitarian Update No. 18 ²⁰

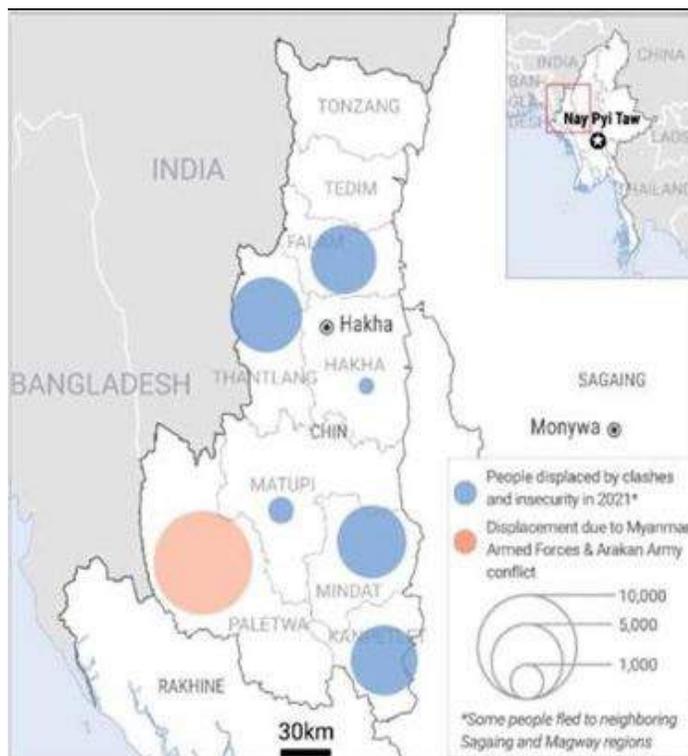
19 UNHCR, “Myanmar UNHCR displacement overview 16 May 2022,” May 2022, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92815>

20 UN Office for the Commission of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), October 2021, “Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 11, <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-update-no-11-1-october-2021>

IV. Grave acts of Religious Persecution Against Chin and other Religious Minorities Since the February 2021 Military Coup

According to USCIRF, conditions of religious freedom have declined significantly in Myanmar/Burma since the February 2021 military coup.²¹ The Tatmadaw has increased its persecution of Christian communities in what has been “likened to what the Rohingya have faced since 2017.”²² In a series of violent attacks in September 2021, including the shelling of villages and the arson of residences and businesses, Chin State became an epicenter of military violence, causing the displacement of thousands of Christian Chin civilians.

The following section of this report underscores key cases of persecution targeting Christians in Chin State including the a) burning, destruction, and occupation of churches and affiliated properties by the Tatmadaw; as well as the b) abuse, killing, and detention of pastors and Christian leaders by the Tatmadaw. While this list of cases is not exhaustive, it underscores key acts of systematic persecution of religious minorities committed with impunity by the Tatmadaw in Myanmar/Burma.



Map indicating scale of displacement in Chin State, Myanmar after the February 1, 2021 military coup as well as protracted displacement prior to the coup.²³

Source: [UN OCHA Humanitarian Update No. 11](#)

²¹ US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), *2022 Annual Report*, April 2022, p. 14 https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/2022%20USCIRF%20Annual%20Report_1.pdf

²² *Ibid*, p. 14

²³ UNOCHA “Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 11,” <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-update-no-11-1-october-2021>

THE BURNING, DESTRUCTION, AND OCCUPATION OF CHURCHES AND AFFILIATED PROPERTIES BY THE TATMADAW

Thantlang

The Tatmadaw has three military stations in Thantlang Township: one at a hotel, one at a Buddhist monastic school, and one at a police station. Before the Tatmadaw began its methodical attack, Thantlang's total population was 50,374.²⁴ From September to December 2021, Thantlang was "subject to wave after wave of mortar strikes . . . , slowly reducing the town to ashes."²⁵ As of the publication of this report, the military has burned residences in 28 separate instances in Thantlang town since September 2021,²⁶ which has amounted to 1,314 homes and at least 11 Christian churches, according to the Thantlang Placement Affairs Committee.²⁷ Because of this widespread destruction, the entire population of Thantlang Town has fled and is either internally displaced within Myanmar/Burma or taking refuge in neighboring Mizoram State, India.



On October 29, 2021, heavy shelling by the Tatmadaw resulted in the burning down of more than 164 buildings in Thantlang Town, including two churches, residences, and over 90 businesses. As of now, it is estimated that 1,314 homes and approximately 11 Christian churches, according to the Thantlang Placement Affairs Committee. Photo Source (left): The Chinland Post; Photo Source (right): Thantlang Placement Affairs Committee

Johnson Memorial Baptist Church

On September 14, 2021, the military regime opened fire on Thantlang's second largest church, the Johnson Memorial Baptist Church (JMBC), causing severe damage to the church building and property.²⁸ Approximately 8,000 residents, including some JMBC members, left their homes and sought refuge in temporary camps in nearby villages. Nearly 5,500 refugees fled to Mizoram State, India, just across the border.²⁹

24 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census - The Union Report, May 2015, https://www.citypopulation.de/en/myanmar/admin/hakha/040102_thantlang/

25 McBride, Alex, "Resistance to the Myanmar Regime in Chin State - A Photo Essay," The Guardian, January 24, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/jan/24/resistance-myanmar-regime-chin-state-photo-essay>

26 Aung Aung, "135 houses burnt down again by the junta's soldiers in Thantlang," *Tha Din*, June 4, 2022, <https://thadinn.com/135-houses-burnt-down-again-by-the-juntas-soldiers-in-thantlang/>

27 CAM, "Statement on the Burning of Houses in Thantlang, Chin State, Burma", April 30, 2022.

28 CAM, *After the 2021 Military Coup in Myanmar/Burma*

29 "Myanmar: Whole Town Flees amid Fierce Fighting," BBC, September 22, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58650762>

The Johnson Memorial Baptist Church was named in memory of the late Rev. Dr. Robert Johnson, the last American Baptist missionary to serve Chin State. He was preceded by other missionaries commissioned by the American Baptist Church headquartered in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, including Arthur and Laura Carson who first arrived in Hakha, Chin State on March 15, 1899. Dr. Johnson was deported by General Ne Win's military regime in 1966.

Thantlang Baptist Church

In October of 2021, the military returned to the empty village of Thantlang and looted abandoned homes, seizing cash, liquor, and bags of rice.³⁰ One of the few remaining civilians witnessed soldiers breaking into his grocery store; shortly after, several buildings were set ablaze, including Thantlang's largest church, the Thantlang Baptist Church (TBC).³¹ On October 29, 2021 the TBC staff offices and staff quarters were looted and set on fire. On December 17, 2021, TBC's Community Hall, Prayer Rooms, and Evangelists Quarters were burned and destroyed. On December 30, 2021, TBC's Jubilee Memorial Hall, Guest House, and Pre-School were similarly burned and looted.

Church on the Rock and Thantlang Presbyterian Church

On October 29, 2021, the Tatmadaw subjected Thantlang Town to heavy shelling. More than 164 buildings burned down, including two small hotels, two churches—the Church on the Rock and the Presbyterian Church—over ninety businesses (e.g., restaurants, pharmacy, computer, grocery, textile, and watch stores), and many residences.³²

St. Nicholas Catholic Church and Thantlang Centenary Baptist Church

On November 26, 2021, the Tatmadaw led an arson campaign that lasted a total of three days.³³ The attack destroyed dozens of buildings, including St. Nicholas Catholic Church and Thantlang Centenary Baptist Church. Pastor Cung Biak Hum, who was killed by the Tatmadaw in this attack, was the pastor of the Thantlang Centenary Baptist Church. By early December 2021, the Chinland Defense Force (CDF) had already counted 530 Thantlang homes destroyed by fire.³⁴

United Pentecostal Church

On December 4, 2021, the military struck again, burning the United Pentecostal Church (UPC) and its clergy quarters.³⁵ Former Vice President Henry Van Thio, who was ousted in the 2021 coup, was a member and regular attendee of this church. It is highly likely that the soldiers based in Thantlang town knew about UPC's connection to the Vice President and targeted it on that basis.

30 Kelly, Meg, Shibani Mahtani and Joyce Sohyun Lee, "'Burn it all Down': How Myanmar's Military Razed Villages to Crush a Growing Resistance," *Washington Post*, December 23, 2021 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2021/myanmar-military-burn-villages-tatmadaw/>

31 Ibid.

32 CAM source on the ground in Chin State who will remain anonymous for security purposes.

33 "Another Church in Chin State Attacked by Burmese Army," International Christian Concern (Nov. 29, 2021), <https://www.persecution.org/2021/11/29/another-church-chin-state-attacked-burmese-army/>

34 Alex McBride, "Resistance to the Myanmar Regime in Chin State - A Photo Essay," *The Guardian* (Jan. 24, 2022), <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/jan/24/resistance-myanmar-regime-chin-state-photo-essay>

35 CAM Media Statement, "Statement on Burning of the United Pentecostal Church in Chin State Burma, December 7, 2021," <https://chinmd.org/2021/12/16/statement-on-burning-of-the-united-pentecostal-church-in-chin-state-burma/>

Thantlang Association of Baptist Churches and Thantlang Assembly of God

On December 30, 2021, the Tatmadaw burned the office building of the Thantlang Association of Baptist Churches (TBAC), which counts fifty-four member churches in Thantlang township, and burned the Thantlang Assembly of God Church.³⁶

Methodist Church and Gospel Baptist Church

On January 3, 2022, the Tatmadaw burned down two churches on the Sianginn block: the Methodist Church and its staff quarters and the Gospel Baptist Church and its staff quarters.³⁷

Holiness Church

From January 30 to February 1, 2022, the Tatmadaw set fires in Thantlang that destroyed ninety-four homes and the Holiness Church and its staff quarters.³⁸ Just two months later, on April 22, 2022, the military burned eighteen homes, including eight homes at the TABC Block and seven homes at the Lungtial Block.^{39, 40}

Johnson Memorial Baptist Church

On May 24, 2022, just eight months after the Tatmadaw initially shelled the JMBC, the Tatmadaw burned it down and destroyed the entire church.⁴¹ All members of JMBC are confirmed to be displaced within Myanmar/Burma or in Mizoram State, India. JMBC hosted eight pastors and about 2,800 members. On May 24 and 26, 2022, the Burmese military burned down 135 residences in Thantlang.⁴² This was the 28th time the military burned down residences in Thantlang.



On September 14, 2021, the Tatmadaw stationed in Thantlang Town fired on the Johnson Memorial Baptist Church in Thantlang Town, Chin State. On May 24, 2022 the Tatmadaw burned down the church. All members have been displaced within Myanmar or to neighboring Mizoram State, India. Photo Sources: CAM source, anonymous for security reasons.

³⁶ CAM Media Statement, "Statement on Burning of the Thantlang AG Church in Chin State, Burma," December 30, 2021, <https://chinmd.org/2021/12/>

³⁷ CAM Media Statement, "Statement on Burning of 123 Buildings in Chin State, Burma," January 8, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/2022/01/19/cam-statement-on-burning-of-123-building-in-chin-state/>

³⁸ CAM Media Statement, "Statement on Burning of 94 Buildings in Chin State, Burma," February 1, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/2022/02/01/cam-statement-on-burning-of-94-buildings-in-chin-state-burma/>

³⁹ CAM Media Statement, "Statement on the Burning of Houses in Thantlang, Chin State, Burma," April 30, 2022.

⁴⁰ "CAM Monthly News Update – April 2022," April 30, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/cam-monthly-news-update-april-2022/>

⁴¹ CAM Media Statement, "Statement on the Burning of the Johnson Memorial Baptist Church in Thantlang, Chin State," June 3, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/2022/06/>

⁴² CAM Media Statement, "Statement on the Burning the 135 Residences in Thantlang, Chin State, Burma," June 3, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/statements/>

Thantlang Baptist Church

On June 9, 2022, nine months after the Tatmadaw burned and looted the TBC, the Tatmadaw further destroyed the church, leaving it in rubble.⁴³ The TBC was the largest church in Thantlang, hosting eight pastors and over 3,000 members.



On October 24, 2021, the Tatmadaw set fire to the largest church in Thantlang, the Thantlang Baptist Church (TBC). On June 9, 2022 the military further destroyed the church leaving it in rubble. Photo Sources: Thantlang Baptist Church.

⁴³ CAM, Media Statement, “Statement on the Burning the Thantlang Baptist Church in Thantlang, Chin State, Burma”, June 9, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/2022/06/>

MINDAT

From April to September 2021, there were more than fifty confrontations between the military and local resistance groups in Mindat.⁴⁴ In April 2022, the military invaded Mindat and arrested civilians, including fifteen youths who the military later used as human shields.⁴⁵ The CDF resisted by fighting back and demanding that the military release the civilian detainees. On May 13, the Tatmadaw placed Mindat Town under martial law and used heavy artillery to initiate a three-day siege.⁴⁶ As the attack continued, the Tatmadaw killed at least five and injured fifty civilians. The BBC reported that the town's civilians gathered for daily political rallies urging the Tatmadaw to "free Mindat" from martial law.⁴⁷ Due to the violence, more than 90 percent of Mindat's 11,000 residents fled.⁴⁸

St. John Catholic Church

On August 31, 2021, junta troops occupied and destroyed St. John Catholic Church in Chat Village in Mindat.⁴⁹ Soldiers stole the church's consecrated host, opened the tabernacle, and demolished cabinets.⁵⁰

Grace Baptist Church

Between May and September 2021, the Burmese military occupied Grace Baptist Church in Mindat Township for approximately 5-months.⁵¹ During its occupation, the military vandalized the church and destroyed Bibles and hymn books.⁵²



Grace Baptist Church was occupied by the Burmese Military in Mindat between May and September of 2021. Photo Source: CAM source, anonymous for security reasons.

44 "Myanmar military destroys religious buildings in Chin State", *Myanmar Now*, September 3, 2021 <https://www.myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-military-destroys-religious-buildings-in-chin-state>.

45 Fishbein, Emily, Zau Myet Awng and Nu Nu Lusan, "'A humanitarian disaster in the making' in Myanmar's Chin State," *Al Jazeera*, May 18, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/18/a-humanitarian-disaster-in-the-making-in-myanmars-chin-state>

46 Ibid.

47 Head, Jonathan. "Myanmar: The small embattled town that stood up to the army," *BBC World News*, May 22, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-57197081>.

48 "Churches bear the brunt under Myanmar junta," *UCA News*, September 15, 2021, <https://www.ucanews.com/news/churches-bear-the-brunt-under-myanmar-junta/93967>

49 "Churches bear the brunt under Myanmar junta," People's Recover, Empowerment and Development Assistance, (Sept. 15, 2021), <https://www.preda.org/2021/churches-bear-the-brunt-under-myanmar-junta/>

50 UCA News, September 2, 2021, Churches bear the brunt under Myanmar junta, <https://www.ucanews.com/news/churches-bear-the-brunt-under-myanmar-junta/93967>

51 CAM, *After the 2021 Military Coup in Myanmar/Burma*, <https://chinmd.org/2021/11/05/myanmar-burma-challenges-displaced-persons-refugees/>

52 Ibid.

Kanpalet Township Baptist Association

On March 31, 2022, CAM was informed that the Tatmadaw in Kanpalet, Chin State fired and destroyed a multipurpose building of the Kanpalet Township Baptist Association.⁵³ The military also destroyed the Association's van ambulance.



The Tatmadaw in Kanpalet, Chin State fired and destroyed a multipurpose building of the Kanpalet Township Baptist Association as well as their ambulance. Photo Sources: CAM sources, anonymous for security reasons.

Taal Baptist Church

In July and August 2021, the Tatmadaw raided, looted, and occupied Taal Baptist Church, one of the only churches in Falam Township. During its occupation of the church and residential homes, the Tatmadaw disposed of bibles and choral songbooks and displaced around 150 Taal villagers.⁵⁴

Thlanrawn Village Christian Church and Thlanrawn Baptist Church

On October 13, 2021, the Tatmadaw initiated coinciding attacks in Falam Township. First, Tatmadaw soldiers entered Rialti Village and destroyed its only church and ten homes.⁵⁵ Military spokesperson Major General Zaw Min Tun denied all responsibility. Second, the Tatmadaw stationed two tanks and 51 military trucks carrying approximately 700 soldiers in Falam Township.⁵⁶ The CDF and the Chinland National Army (CAN) fired at the Tatmadaw in response to its invasion; then, the Tatmadaw retaliated by burning down thirteen houses in Thlanrawn Village, including a pastor's home.⁵⁷ Thereafter, the Tatmadaw looted and destroyed two churches, the

⁵³ CAM, Media Statement, "Statement on Shooting of Christian Church Properties in Kalaymyo, Sagiang Region and Kanpalet in Chin State, Burma", April 9, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/statements/>

⁵⁴ "Myanmar Regime Forces Loot and Vandalize Villages in Chin State", *The Irrawaddy*, August 30, 2021 <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-regime-forces-loot-and-vandalize-villages-in-chin-state.html>

⁵⁵ "Myanmar's Army Annihilates Villages During Their Progress into Chin State", *BL News*, October 21, 2021 <https://www.breaklinks.com/en/news/58276>

⁵⁶ "Myanmar's military torches 60 homes in Chin state since September", *Radio Free Asia*, October 28, 2021, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/burn-10282021190337.html>

⁵⁷ "Myanmar Junta Burn Church and Homes During Operations in Chin State", *The Irrawaddy*, October 15, 2021 <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-burn-church-and-homes-during-operations-in-chin-state.html>

Thlanrawn Village Christian Church and the Thlanrawn Baptist Church. Local accounts state that the Tatmadaw had initially tried to burn the latter church down but failed due to rainfall.⁵⁸



(left) On October 13, the Burmese Military burned 13 houses including a church in Thlanrawn Village, Falam Township. Photo Source: The Hakha Post.

(right) The Burmese Military burned a church in Rialti Village, Falam Township on October 13, 2021. Photo Source: The Hakha Times

The Ramthlo Baptist Church and Ramthlo Assembly of God Church

In October, a convoy of Tatmadaw soldiers occupied two Christian churches in Ramthlo Village, the Ramthlo Baptist Church and the Ramthlo Assembly of God Church.⁵⁹ Later, on May 4, the Tatmadaw burned down ten residences in the village.⁶⁰

United Pentecostal Church

On May 5, in Tlangzar Villiage, the Tatmadaw soldiers burned down seventeen residential homes, including the United Pentecostal Church (UPC) Staff Quarters.^{61,62} These attacks led to the displacement of the entire population of Ramthlo and Tlangzar villages, which are located between Hakha and Falam. According to the villagers, the military convoy, which included two tanks and twenty trucks, was on its way to Kalaymyo, Sagaing Region from Hakha. Local sources indicated that it was very difficult to confirm the battalion's identity; however, they believed these soldiers were the same ones who had come to Hakha from Kalaymyo in early October 2021

58 Radio Free Asia, October 28, 2021, Myanmar's military torches 60 homes in Chin state since September, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/burn-10282021190337.html>

59 "Myanmar's Army Annihilates Villages During Their Progress Into Chin State", *BL News*

60 CAM Media Statement, "Statement on the Burning of 27 Houses including a UPC Staff Quarter at Ramthlo and Tlangzar Villages in Chin State, Burma," May 8, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/statements/>

61 Ibid.

62 "CAM Monthly News Update – February 2022," March 1, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/cam-monthly-news-update-february-2022/>

HAKHA TOWNSHIP

Sang Fen Memorial Church

On March 16, 2022, Tatmadaw soldiers based in Hakha entered the village of Zokhua in Chin State, staying until March 21.⁶³ The Tatmadaw occupied several Christian churches, including Sang Fen Memorial Church. Sang Fen Memorial Church was built in memorial of the late Reverend Sang Fen, one of the earliest Christian converts and preachers among Chin people under the American Baptist Mission in Chinland. The military also destroyed church properties.



Sang Fang Memorial Church, built in memorial of Rev. Sang Fen, one of the earliest Christian converts and preachers among Chin people under the American Baptist Mission in Chinland. The church was occupied by the Tatmadaw on March 16, 2022. Photo Source: Rev. Dr. Stephen Hre Kio.

Chungcung Baptist Church

In October of 2021 the military attacked and looted Chungcung Baptist Church in Chungcung Village in Hakha.⁶⁴



On October 14, 2021, the Burmese military occupied the Chungcung Baptist Church in Chungcung village in Hakha Township. They first stayed at the property then looted and destroyed parts of the property. Photo Sources: CAM source, anonymous for security reasons.

63 CAM Media Statement, "Statement On Destroying Of Churches In Zokhua Village And Burning Of Houses In Tinam Village," <https://chinmd.org/2022/03/30/cam-statement-on-the-destroy-of-christian-churches-in-zokhua-village-and-burning-of-houses-in-tinam-village-chin-state-burma/>

64 CAM, *After the 2021 Military Coup in Myanmar/Burma*

SAGAING REGION

Toungphila Baptist Church, Kalaymyo

On April 9, 2022 CAM was informed that the Tatmadaw based in Kalaymyo, Sagaing Region, fired rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), commonly known as shoulder launchers, on the Toungphila Baptist Church in Kalaymyo.⁶⁵ The Tatmadaw also fired RPGs at the church staff's residential building, destroying much of the three-story building. Following the Tatmadaw's use of the RPGs, soldiers entered the building to steal money and personal belongings.

When the Toungphila Baptist Church multipurpose building was attacked, the pastor, who lives with his family on the third floor, was not physically injured during the attack. However, the office staff was not as fortunate, as many of the staff members were physically injured. One staff member suffered severe injuries after Tatmadaw soldiers kicked, bit, and struck the staff member in the head with a gun.⁶⁶

The Killing and Detainment of Pastors by the Tatmadaw

Reverend Thian Lian Sang

On September 16, 2021, Reverend Thian Lian Sang, pastor of Falam Baptist Church in Shwe, Mandalay Township, Chin State, was arrested in front of his house and taken into custody by the military.⁶⁷ Upon arresting him, the military also confiscated 400,000 kyats (\$215 USD) that he and his family had received after his father's funeral, as well as his cell phone and those of his family members.⁶⁸ Reverend Sang was recovering from COVID-19 at the time of the arrest and is currently in a prison in Mandalay.

Pastor Cung Biak Hum

On September 18, 2021, only days after the Johnson Memorial Baptist Church attack, the Tatmadaw shot and killed Pastor Cung Biak Hum of Thantlang Centenary Baptist Church in Thantlang Township.⁶⁹ At the time of the shooting, the pastor was on his way to organize efforts to prevent a fire started by the military from spreading further into Thantlang's residential and commercial areas. The thirty-year-old pastor is survived by his wife and two children; witnesses reported that after killing Pastor Hum, Tatmadaw soldiers proceeded to cut off his finger and steal his wedding ring and mobile phone.⁷⁰

65 CAM Media Statement, "Statement on Shooting of Christian Church Properties in Kalaymyo, Sagiang Region and Kanpalet in Chin State, Burma", April 9, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/statements/>

66 CAM Media Statement, "Statement on Shooting of Christian Church Properties in Kalaymyo, Sagiang Region and Kanpalet in Chin State, Burma", April 9, 2022, <https://chinmd.org/statements/>

67 Baptist World Alliance, Statement Calling for the Release of Pastor Rev. Thian Lian Sang and Justice for Pastor Rev. Cung Biak Hum, September 20, 2021, <https://www.baptistworld.org/myanmar-advocacy-letter/>

68 Ibid.

69 The Irrawaddy, "Brother of Slain Myanmar Pastor Says Regime Fails to Take Accountability for Atrocities," September 24, 2021, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/brother-of-slain-myanmar-pastor-says-regime-fails-to-take-accountability-for-atrocities.html>

70 CAM Media Statement, "Statement on the Death of Pastor Cung Biak Hum, the Bombing of Religious Facility and Houses in Thantlang and Hakha, Chin State, Burma," September 21, 2021, <https://chinmd.org/2021/09/23/cbcusa-statement/>

While the SAC and Tatmadaw denied the allegations, deeming them “fake news”, an overwhelming amount of evidence supports the claim of Tatmadaw responsibility for Pastor Hum’s death.⁷¹



Pastor Cung Biak Hum of Thantlang Centenary Baptist Church in Thantlang Town was killed by the Burmese Military, as he was fighting house fires started by the military in Thantlang on September 18, 2021. Photo Source: CAM source, anonymous for security reasons.

Pastor Om Kui

On December 11, 2021, the Tatmadaw arrested and detained Pastor Om Kui while he was on his way to Kanpetlet to purchase food. On December 13, 2021, the pastor’s dead body was found on the side of a road; the cause of death is reported to be torture by the Tatmadaw.⁷²



Residents in Vombuk Village, Lawngtlai District, Mizoram State, help construct refugee camps for newly displaced from Myanmar/Burma. Photo Source: The Hakha Post.

71 The Global New Light of Myanmar, “Answer of Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, Leader of Information Team of Security Administration Council for the death of pastor from Christian Church in Thantlang,” September 22, 2021, https://www.gnlm.com.mm/answer-of-maj-gen-zaw-min-tun-leader-of-information-team-of-the-state-administration-council-for-the-death-of-pastor-from-christian-church-in-thantlang/?_cf_chl_man-aged_tk__=pmd_l9ykhhn5Fz7CDwoF6KpiWhUVarMYPtb19OINVVbm%C2%AC-BAo-1633639073-0-gqNtZGzNA5CjcnBszRT9

72 CAM Media Statement, “Statement on the death of Christian Pastor Om Kui in Burma,” December 15, 2021, <https://chinmd.org/2021/12/15/statement-on-the-death-of-christian-pastor-om-kui-in-burma/>



Map of Mizoram State, India⁷³



Map of India⁷⁴

73 CAM, "Unsafe: Chin Seeking Refuge in Malaysia and New Delhi, India," September 2020, <https://chinmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Chin-Refugees-Final-Oct-8-2020.pdf>

74 Matthew Wilch, Zo Tum Hmung, Jenny Yang, "Seeking Refuge: The Chin People in Mizoram, India", December 2011, <http://media.virbcdn.com/files/b3/FileItem-222256-SeekingRefugeTheChinPeopleinMizoram>



(top) Thantlang Town Burning 1. Photo Source: The Chinland Post

(bottom) Thantlang Town Burning 2. Photo Source: CAM source, anonymous for security reasons

ABOUT CAM

The Chin Association of Maryland, Inc. (CAM) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization based in Ellicott City, Maryland. CAM empowers the Chin communities in Maryland to be successfully integrated into American society. CAM also advocates for durable solutions for Chin and other refugees and internally displaced persons, and religious freedom and human rights in Burma. CAM has been documenting human rights and religious freedom violations. In 2020 and 2021 CAM produced three reports: *Unsafe: Chins Seeking Refuge in Malaysia and New Delhi, India*¹; *Unprotected: Chin IDPs in Chin and Rakhine States, Myanmar/Burma*²; and *After the 2021 Military Coup in Myanmar/Burma: Challenges for Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees*³. In addition, CAM also produces regular statements and monthly news updates.

Chins, virtually all of whom are Christians, are an ethnic nationality from Burma. They became Christians primarily due to the missionary efforts of the American Baptist Churches USA. They are a major recent US refugee group that fled from Burma to neighboring countries to escape ethnic, political and religious persecution by the Burmese military since 1962. In 2001, about 1000 Chin asylees came to the U.S through Guam, resettling largely in Maryland, Indiana, Florida, and Texas. Since 2002, the US has resettled many more Chin refugees coming through Malaysia and India. Chins now number 70,000 across the United States, with about 5,000 making Maryland their home.



-
- 1 CAM, "Unsafe: Chin Seeking Refuge in Malaysia and New Delhi, India," September 2020, <https://chinmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Chin-Refugees-Final-Oct-8-2020.pdf>
 - 2 CAM, "Unprotected: Chin IDPs in Chin State and Rakhine State, Myanmar/Burma," September 2020, <https://chinmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Unprotected-Chin-IDPs-Final.pdf>
 - 3 CAM, "After the 2021 Military Coup in Myanmar/Burma: Challenges for Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees," October 2021, <https://chinmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/After-the-2021-Military-Coup-in-MyanmarBurma.pdf>



IDPs & Refugee Care and Counselling (IRCC) program providing medical treatment in Bungkhua village, Thantlang Township, Chin State. Photo Source: Rev. Neely Laiuk

