

BURMA HUMAN RIGHTS YEARBOOK 2007
CHAPTER 3

**EXTRA-JUDICIAL,
SUMMARY OR ARBITRARY
EXECUTIONS**

*“Everyone has the right to life, liberty
and security of person.”*

- Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

3.1 Introduction

Under international human rights and humanitarian law, all persons possess the right to life and the right not to be arbitrarily deprived of that life. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) clearly states that “*Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person*”. Burma, as a member of the United Nations (UN) and also having reaffirmed its position to uphold the values of the UDHR in 1994 thus has a responsibility to its citizens to ensure that this right is protected. Similarly, Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, to which Burma acceded in 1992, prohibits “*at any time and in any place whatsoever ... violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds*”.

As Burma is a State Party to both of these documents, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), as the military junta currently ruling Burma, must abide by the principles laid out therein, and besides which, both of these tenets are widely recognised as being customary international law, and as such are binding on all States, regardless of whether they have ratified the law or not. In light of this, all extra-judicial killings and summary or arbitrary executions perpetrated in Burma (or anywhere else for that matter) are conducted in direct contravention of several fundamental principles of international law.

When the SPDC, its agents, or any of its allied ceasefire armies arbitrarily or extra-judicially kills any members of the civilian population, they terrorize and subjugate that population to the rule of fear and intimidation. The right to live free from fear of such arbitrary terror is an inalienable right to be enjoyed by all persons irrespective of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The SPDC has continued to consistently disregard these international standards, with a high number of incidents of violence against civilians resulting in death throughout 2007. The extra-judicial killing of unarmed civilians continued to occur under the ruse of counter-insurgency campaigns against many of Burma’s varied ethnic minorities, against individuals accused of a crime, and with near-unanimous international condemnation, against unarmed and peaceful protesters. The manner in which violence was employed throughout these different settings strongly suggests not a mere lapse of judgement, but rather a deliberate and calculated strategy to cow and subjugate the population.

As noted in the *Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2006*, the SPDC, through its pervasive military force continued to pursue large-scale military assaults against the civilian population of Northern Karen State throughout 2007, most notably, though not exclusively, in the three northern Karen districts of Toungoo, Nyaunglebin, and Papun. This offensive, having commenced in November 2005, has differed from many previous annual dry season offensives in that the attacks on undefended civilian villages have also continued throughout the two rainy seasons since the offensive began. The typical pattern followed by the SPDC has been to mount assaults on villages in the hills of Karen State as soon as the weather permits it following the end of the rainy season. This is done so as to depopulate those areas where the SPDC cannot effectively exert control over the local population and forcibly relocate the villagers living there into SPDC-controlled areas.¹ Such attacks persisted, largely unknown, just as they have for years, even as the international community was condemning the violence being visited upon protestors in Rangoon and other parts of the country. The harassment and murder of local civilians is a key component of these attacks.

Since the commencement of the offensive, many different theories have been proffered by various commentators regarding the underlying reasons behind the offensive. “*Why now?*” is a question that has often been asked. At first, some groups were claiming that the offensive was being conducted in order to “*pacify*” a safe zone around the new capital at Naypyidaw, 100 kilometres to the north. This theory was originally supported primarily

because the offensive began soon after the capital was suddenly relocated, however, this logic seems unlikely in that Shan and Karenni States, which are both closer to Naypyidaw, and which both also experience armed conflict were not subjected to similar attacks as those being witnessed in Karen State. Furthermore, as the offensive progressed, the attacks moved southwards down into Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts away from Naypyidaw, rather than northwards as would be otherwise expected. As this started to happen, some groups then suggested that the impetus for the attacks must be to secure the area around the sites of the proposed hydroelectric dams to be built on the Salween River. However, this theory is also flawed in that the most intensive attacks ever since the attacks began have not been in the areas surrounding the proposed dam sites, but rather further to the northwest.

A third and far more plausible theory would be that the SPDC is looking to extend its control over the area by expanding its road networks. This serves numerous purposes. Firstly, it allows for the rapid mobilization of large numbers of troops along those roads; secondly, it permits an increased military presence in the area as new army camps are invariably set up along the length of those roads; and thirdly, roads create barriers that bisect the area into smaller and more easily-manageable sections through which SPDC army units can mount their patrols in search of the internally displaced and across which those displaced persons typically dare not cross for fear of being seen as they step out into the open and be fired upon. Further supporting this theory are the geographic distribution of attacks and how these coincide with a number of road projects that the SPDC has planned to complete for years. The most intensive and unrelenting attacks have been in southeastern Toungoo District and northern Papun and northern Nyaunglebin Districts where the three districts meet. For the past several years, the SPDC has been attempting to depopulate these areas and construct a network of roads that would crisscross this area and link all three districts together. Concurrent to the attacks in these areas, the SPDC has continued to work on these roads throughout 2007, both through the use of heavy machinery as well as the forced and unpaid labour of local villagers (For more information, see Chapter 5: Forced Labour and Forced Conscription), and at year's end, reports emerged of the completion of the road linking Bu Hsa Kee in Toungoo District with Ma La Daw in Nyaunglebin District as well as a second road linking Bu Hsa Kee with Pwa Ghaw in Papun District.²

In Burma's ethnic states, where the SPDC incessantly wages its war of attrition against the communities living there in order to dominate and intimidate them, extra-judicial killing and murder is a complementary tactic to a range of methods employed to control and oppress the population, including forced displacement, destruction of food supplies, and restriction of movement. (For more information see Chapter 6: Deprivation of Livelihood). Villagers living in these areas are frequently reminded that they will be "*shot on sight*" if seen outside their villages, or if they attempt to remain behind after their village has been forcibly relocated by the military. Similarly, villagers living in areas under SPDC control are often told that they will be shot for failing to meet the regular demands of forced labour and extortion exacted upon them by the military. Meanwhile, the internally displaced who choose to live beyond SPDC control and exploitation must be ever vigilant and prepared to flee whenever an SPDC army (or any of their allied ceasefire armies) patrol approaches their hiding site in the forest. Such hiding sites, when discovered, are typically shelled with mortars before the troops advance into them, shooting and destroying everything in sight. (For more information see Chapter 16: Internal Displacement and Forced Relocation). Many other civilians are killed under the pretext of having affiliations with opposition groups. In most cases, little or no evidence is presented to support such a claim, and in those instances when it is, that which used is typically very dubious.

Under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the intentional targeting of civilians in this manner represents a crime against humanity in that it is being carried out “as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against [the] civilian population”.³ Moreover, on 28 April 2006, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted UNSC Resolution 1674 (2006), stating that the deliberate targeting of non-combatants and the systematic perpetration of human rights violations “may constitute a threat to international peace and security” and as such clearly falls within the UNSC’s mandate which is required “where necessary, to adopt appropriate steps” for action. Furthermore, the Resolution also “reaffirms the provisions of paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document regarding the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”, and in having adopted this Resolution, the UNSC is thus obliged to act to prevent such mass atrocities.⁴ However, in January 2007, both Russia and China, two of Burma’s most ardent supporters, voted against the adoption of a new Resolution which, if passed would have led to UN Security Council action on the situation in Burma.⁵

The SPDC’s campaign of military expansionism in rural and ethnic areas draws heavily upon the use of forced labour. SPDC army units regularly force convicted prisoners and captured villagers alike to porter loads for the soldiers in frontline areas where many of them are killed by landmines or in crossfire during skirmishes between the SPDC and armed opposition groups. Many more are also killed by the soldiers when they become too weak to continue to carry a load and are no longer able to serve a purpose for the unit (For more information, see Chapter 5: Forced Labour and Forced Conscription). At the end of January 2007, one such porter was found beaten to death near the border of Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts in Karen State.⁶ In a report released in May 2007, the Free Burma Rangers (FBR) maintained that since the beginning of the offensive in northern Karen State, as many as 265 convict porters out of the estimated 1,700 employed had been executed, died after stepping on a landmine or died of illness. While many had been shot, many more were beaten to death or had their throats slashed to save on bullets. Many of those who became too weak to continue were simply left to die where they fell.⁷ Realising that they will likely die, either at the hands of the soldiers, by stepping on a landmine, or through illness and disease, many convict porters attempt to flee and take their chances in the jungle. Those captured while trying to do so are generally brutally executed to serve as an example to the others, while those who do get away then have to contend with the thousands of landmines that contaminate frontline areas (For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines).

In addition to the extra-judicial executions being carried out in Burma’s rural areas, a large number of killings were also committed in the urban centres during 2007. Most notably, in September 2007, the SPDC enacted a brutal crackdown on peaceful protests that were being staged across the country, in which dozens of demonstrators were reported to have been killed. The bloody crackdown on Buddhist monks and unarmed civilian protesters once again brought the SPDC’s repressive and heavy-handed tactics under international scrutiny as armed police and military personnel fired into crowds with live ammunition. (For more information, see Chapter 11: The Saffron Revolution – The 2007 Pro-Democracy Movement).

Initially sparked over a sudden and dramatic rise in fuel prices, which in turn drove commodity prices up, the protests rapidly grew in both size and number as well as becoming more overtly political in nature. By mid-September, dozens of demonstrations were being held daily across the country and the Buddhist Sangha (monastic community) had boycotted the military and called for excommunication of the SPDC, yet it was not until 18 September 2007 that the junta responded with force:

"In the isolated northern western city of Sittwe in Arakan State, far from the eyes of not only the international community but also the rest of the Burmese population, protests were broken up by authorities with the first display of the use of force on 18 September. Security forces fired rubber bullets and tear gas into the crowds, and monks and civilians alike were beaten".⁸

It remains unclear if anyone was killed in this initial crackdown in Sittwe, although no reports have emerged to that effect. Meanwhile, protests elsewhere in the country continued unabated, seemingly unaware of the crackdown in Arakan State. In Rangoon, demonstrations continued to grow with an estimated 100,000 people on the streets in protest against the SPDC. In a rare and uncharacteristic display of self-control, and with the world now watching, the military waited one more week before they countered. It was not until the morning of 26 September 2007 that the junta responded; and respond they did with a predictable and disproportionate level of force, despite repeated calls from the international community to exercise restraint. Live ammunition was fired directly into crowds of unarmed protestors, killing dozens and wounding many more. Riot police and paramilitary forces baton charged columns of demonstrators, beating monks, men, women and children with batons, resulting with a number of protestors being beaten to death. The protests and crackdowns continued in this vein over the next three days until the violence being visited upon them, coupled with the large numbers of arrests (For more information, see Chapter 1: Arbitrary Detention and Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances), effectively put the demonstrations down.

When the violence had come to an end and in the face of near-universal international condemnation for its actions, with even China publicly denouncing them for their excessive use of force, the SPDC announced that 15 persons had been killed during the protests. Reliable evidence, however, exists to suggest that the death toll was in fact far higher. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in Burma, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro asserted that he had evidence of more than 30 dying in Rangoon alone.⁹ Furthermore, by the end of January 2008, four months after the protests, at least 84 persons who had been involved in the demonstrations still remained missing. Similar to what had happened following the mass protests of 1988; we may never know how many people were killed, although it is, without a doubt, far higher than the number provided by the regime. (For more information on the protests, see Chapter 11: The Saffron Revolution – The 2007 Pro-Democracy Movement).

The heavy-handed suppression of the September protests, although the most internationally notorious of 2007, are but a single instance of a routine and institutionalised approach of aggression towards the civilian population. International efforts to punish and isolate the regime were renewed in response to these events, which are reminiscent of the violent suppression of demonstrations in 1988, although it remains to be seen as to how effective these efforts will be. Inconsistent action by the international community and a general lack of accountability among the SPDC has seen extra-judicial, arbitrary and summary executions further embedded as a standard tactic of control of civil disorder. The excessive use of violence during the crackdown on protestors is less startling when viewed in the context of the strategy of suppression of ethnic minorities. The same tactics often practiced in rural ethnic minority areas, as described above, were in this case merely employed in an urban setting.

Just as hostile activity against the population carries on in the absence of clear signals from the international community, so do subordinate soldiers in the SPDC army murder civilians without any signal to desist from superiors in the chain of command.

The UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigations of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions demand that all investigations into extra-judicial killings receive the full cooperation of the State, pronouncing that:

“States are obliged to carry out impartial and exhaustive investigations into all allegations of arbitrary executions, with a view to clarifying the circumstances, identifying those responsible, bringing them to justice, compensating the victims or their families, and taking all necessary action to prevent the recurrence of similar acts in the future. The result of such investigations must be made public.”

However, such principles continued to remain alien to the SPDC for the duration of 2007, with attempts by victims’ families seeking compensation and justice typically resulting in harassment, intimidation, bribery or denial. Civilians seeking redress from the authorities for human rights violations perpetrated against them are often harassed and intimidated into silence. Meanwhile the offending parties go unpunished and often emboldened to continue commit similar abuses, knowing that they can do so without fear of reprisal. Citizens from Matupi Township in Southern Chin State discovered just this after a member of their community, U Tin Ceu, 33, was killed by SPDC army soldiers in February 2007. According to reports, U Tin Ceu was killed on 26 February 2007 by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #140 (Major Ye Myint Oo commanding) under allegations that he had established contact with the opposition Chin National Army (CNA). Following his death, local villagers wrote a letter of complaint addressed to Senior General Than Shwe, however, *“Instead of redressal [sic.], the authorities arrested [the] six complainants for reporting the murder to the army brass”*. Commenting on the impunity under which the military operates in Burma, a relative of U Tin Ceu later stated that *“There were lot of injures on the body of U Tin Ceu. Though it has been quite a few months since the killing, we haven't heard of any action being taken for the murder which was committed without any reason”*.¹⁰ This example illustrates the standard SPDC approach to anyone daring to attempt to call the security forces to account for deaths at their hands, and as can be seen in the incidents listed below, this strategy was employed on numerous occasions during 2007.

Ultimately, in the context of Burma, extra-judicial killings are a logical extension of a State which firmly positions itself against a civil society that is perceived as a threat to its own continued rule and as such, is viewed as an enemy to be defeated. The junta seeks to intimidate and subjugate the population, thus frustrating the development of independent civil society while at the same time exploiting them for the military’s own expansion and enrichment.

3.2 Extra-Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions - Partial list of incidents for 2007

Arakan State

On 5 January 2007, Htwee Maung, 30, died in hospital following his arrest the previous evening by Police Corporals Kyaw Myint and Soe Nain. The examining doctor noted that excessive force had been used against Htwee Maung and, according to a report by Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC); his family was warned not to report the matter or make any complaints regarding his death.¹¹

On 2 February 2007, an SPDC army deserter was killed in a clash between a group of deserters and soldiers from LIB #537, from which they deserted in Rathidaung Township.¹²

On 29 March 2007, the NaSaKa tortured, gang raped, and killed Amena, 42, from Sindiphrang in Buthidaung Township. After forcibly entering her home they accused her son of having affiliations with Rohingya opposition groups and proceeded to assault her. The doctor refused to carry out a post-mortem on her body.¹³

On 4 April 2007, 33-year-old Abdu Rahim was shot and killed by NaSaKa (Border Security Force) soldiers in Buthidaung Township. He had been fishing when a patrol boat called out to him. He ran in fear and was shot down by personnel from Camp #20 of Taung Bazar under NaSaKa Area #9, commanded by Major Kyai Hline.¹⁴

On 18 May 2007, 28-year-old U Maung Thein Aung from Akyab Township died in Kauk Kouk labour camp, Mrauk U Township.¹⁵

On 21 May 2007, 15-year-old Mohammed Rafique from Pa Dinn village in Maungdaw Township was tortured to death by NaSaKa personnel for possession of a mobile phone.¹⁶

On 9 July 2007, Nabi Hussain from Bawli Bazaar village tract in Maungdaw Township was arrested and tortured by the SaRaPa (Military Intelligence). He was admitted to hospital the following day where he died. Hussain had been arrested for ferrying cattle between Burma and Bangladesh without informing the proper authorities, and in failing to do so, avoided paying the bribes and extortion that is typically demanded of cattle traders.¹⁷

On 2 October 2007, the body of an unidentified male was found on the banks of the Naff River. The NaSaKa sent the body to Rathidaung hospital for an autopsy but the cause of death remains unknown. The bodies of two unidentified monks had been found by villagers the previous week in Min Chaung Creek near Sittwe. Their causes of death also remain unknown as the bodies were taken away by the authorities.¹⁸

On 17 October 2007, the body of Ko Nyi Pu Lay was found decomposing in the Gwa River in Taungup Township. He had earlier fled his home on 1 October 2007 for fear of arrest and had been missing for four days. He was an NLD member and had been involved in the September pro-democracy protests. (For more information, see Chapter 11: The Saffron Revolution – The September 2007 Pro-Democracy Movement). Arakan NLD Joint-Secretary U Thain Hlaing later reported that although Ko Nyi Pu Lay's body was sent for an autopsy, the police report had stated that they found no significant injury to his body. His family were not informed of his death until they had filed a missing person's report. His wife was later interrogated and threatened by the police on 3 November 2007 who subsequently became too frightened to speak about her ordeal.¹⁹

On 20 October 2007, NaSaKa member Aung Kyaw Htwe was stabbed and killed by another NaSaKa member in Maungdaw Township. The assailant was detained at the NaSaKa Headquarters after Aung Kyaw Htwe's body was cremated on the 22 October 2007.²⁰

At approximately 1:00 pm on 26 October 2007, 15-year-old Ziabul Haque from Padaga Ywathit village in Maungdaw Township was sodomised and strangled to death. He had been crossing a NaSaKa outpost in NaSaKa Area #4 when two NaSaKa personnel accosted and raped him before strangling him to prevent him from reporting the incident. Relatives of Ziabul Haque sent his body for an autopsy on 27 October 2007 which reported him to have been sodomised and strangled to death. Police inquiries about his death were made, although no further reports emerged as to the outcome of these.²¹

On 1 November 2007, 22-year-old Maulvi Yasmin, from Bassora village (a.k.a Tha Win Chaung) in Maungdaw Township, was shot and killed by the authorities while bathing in a stream. He and his brothers were on the run after killing two villagers and burning their homes in a land dispute. Despite being guilty of murder, Maulvi Yasmin had the right to a fair trial and should not have been killed extra-judicially.²²

On 17 November 2007, Taslim Ara, 11, from Nazi Para village was abducted, raped and killed by a NaSaKa member in NaSaKa Area #1, Maungdaw Township. The accused was arrested by a NaSaKa captain and the girl's body was sent to an SPDC-run morgue for an autopsy.²³ Following this, the perpetrator, known only as Myint, was tortured by his NaSaKa colleagues, subsequently dying of his wounds on 25 November 2007.²⁴ A report from the *Narinjara News* reports the same incident, but gives the date as 20 November 2007 and the name of the girl as Tasafinar Begun.²⁵

On 26 November 2007, Mohammed Sayed, 22, from Bakka Ghona village, Maung Thanu, 25, and an unidentified youth, both from Thaya Goon Rakhine village were shot and killed by NaSaKa personnel based in Bakka Ghona camp in Maungdaw Township as they were collecting firewood. Reports maintained that they believed them to have been illegally cutting teak trees, which had been prohibited in the area. No action was taken against the NaSaKa personnel responsible for the shootings.²⁶

On 27 November 2007, an unidentified Muslim, illegally cutting teak in Maungdaw Township, was shot and killed by NaSaKa personnel from the Three-Mile outpost.²⁷ The Arakan Women's Association (AWA) reported that another villager, Maung Sein Nu, who was cutting wood alongside the first victim, was also shot at and subsequently died of his wounds on 28 November 2007.²⁸

In November 2007, 17-year-old Johora Begum, from Maung Nama Alay Rwa village, reportedly died of a heart attack while being forcibly abducted and assaulted in her home in Maungdaw Township. Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) Chairman Zubair was accused of the crime by the victim's relatives. Johora's family reported the assault to the UNHCR, the Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC) Chairman, the District PDC Chairman and the NaSaKa Headquarters, but no action was taken against the suspect.²⁹

Chin State

In February 2007, SPDC army soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #140 arrested seven civilians from Matupi Township for reportedly paying taxes to the Chin National Front (CNF), killing three of them. The bodies of the three victims were later found by local villagers. The victims were:

1. Mum Hte;
2. Khun Ling; and
3. Tin Cung.³⁰

In April 2007, 25-year-old Hung Ling, VPDC chairperson for Cun Nam village in Mindat Township, 32-year-old Maung Khe, VPDC chairperson for Lung Phunu village in Rezua Township, and Ting Co, VPDC chairman for Sangseh village Rezua Township were all executed by SPDC army soldiers under allegations of supporting the CNF. The men were killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #104 and LIB #304, operating under Colonel San Aung, commanding officer of Tactical Operation Command (TOC) #2 based in Matupi.³¹

On 3 October 2007, 31-year-old Bawi Ceu from Hrangpi village in Thangtlang Township was shot and killed by SPDC police officers. He was shot while running away from the officers to avoid paying a penalty for failing to report his presence in Thangtlang Township. All visitors are required to report their presence to the local council office. After his death the police spread the rumour that he had been shot while attempting to buy alcohol for the Chin National Army (CNA; the armed wing of the CNF).³²

Irrawaddy Division

On 11 January 2007, 20-year-old Myint Thein from Maubin, died while under interrogation by the police. His wife was later told by police that he had died of malaria, despite his body displaying clear evident signs of torture.³³

On 11 January 2007, Maung Chan Kun, 20, was beaten to death by police while in detention in Pantanaw. Deputy Police Superintendent Soe Moe, who led the investigation, blamed his death on malaria; however, his family reported that they had been intimidated by the police into refraining from complaint, suggesting that he had died at the hands of the police officers.³⁴

Kachin State

On 30 July 2007, 22-year-old Maran Seng Awng was beaten to death by Special Anti-Drug Squad police officers under Khin Zaw, Deputy Anti-Drug Squad Chief for Myitkina Township. According to the report, the assault took place in the home of a known drug dealer, though failed to mention what Maran Seng Aung was doing there or why the police beat him. His parents were refused access to his body to perform even the minimum funerary rites and were warned not to discuss the case with anyone. The police paid his parents 300,000 kyat in 'compensation' to encourage them to keep their silence.³⁵

In September 2007, and as in other parts of the country, SPDC army soldiers raided a number of monasteries in Kachin State, in an attempt to quell the nationwide mass pro-democracy protests by removing the monastic community from the demonstrations through a series of mass arrests. Unconfirmed reports spoke of at least four monks being killed during these raids. On 25 September, the soldiers raided the Yuzana Kyaunghtai Monastery, and in doing so, severely beat the Deputy Abbot U Thillavantha about the head.

He, along with many of the other resident monks was taken into custody where the beatings continued. The following day, he was reported dead as a result of the injuries that he had sustained from the beatings, however, the pathologist was forced to declare the cause of death as a pre-existing heart condition.³⁶

On 17 October 2007, it was reported that at least four monks had been killed in Kachin State during the crackdown on the anti-regime pro-democracy protests in September. According to reports, Major General Ohn Myint, commanding officer of the Northern Regional Command was responsible for overseeing the repression of protests in Kachin State.³⁷

Karen State

On 2 January 2007, village headman Ti Reh from Phukra village in Northern Karen State was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #250 at their nearby army camp. According to reports, KNLA soldiers had recently ambushed the SPDC unit and his torture and murder was conducted as retaliation for this. SPDC army soldiers often lash out and attack the nearest village following any attacks that they come under from the KNLA, typically accusing the villagers of providing information to the resistance and thus being complicit in the attack. The soldiers also reportedly razed nine paddy storage barns to further make their point.³⁸

On 3 January 2007, Karen villager Saw Po Hla was killed by SPDC army soldiers led by Htway Aye in Kyauk Tan village of Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District.³⁹

On 19 January 2007, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #75, led by Battalion Commander Thaug Sih, killed 47-year-old Saw Boh Sha from Yay Shan village in Toungoo District.⁴⁰

On 19 January 2007, Saw Aah Loo, 46, a Karen villager from Toungoo District, was killed by SPDC army soldiers.⁴¹

On 19 January 2007, SPDC army soldiers killed 45-year-old Saw Kyaw Neh Win from Zee Pyu Gone village in Toungoo District.⁴²

On 19 January 2007, Saw Maung Sha, 48, was killed by SPDC army soldiers in Toungoo District.⁴³

On 19 January 2007, unidentified SPDC army soldiers shot and killed 15-year-old Saw Hta Kyah in Toungoo District.⁴⁴

On 19 January 2007, Saw Hta Roo Roh, 30, from Toungoo District was killed by SPDC army soldiers.⁴⁵

On 20 January 2007, 26-year-old Saw Taw Loo Koo from Tu Mu Der village, Toungoo District was killed by SPDC army soldiers.⁴⁶

On 29 January 2007, Saw Taw Luku, 26, was shot and killed by the SPDC army troops near Hu Mu Der in Toungoo District. According to reports, the soldiers responsible were operating in a combined column comprised of soldiers from MOC #16 based at Klaw Me Der.⁴⁷

On 21 February 2007, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #590 shot and killed villagers Saw Tun Win Nay and Sheh Myint in Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District.⁴⁸

On 21 February 2007, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #576 shot and killed Saw Echo Win Naing from Paw Pi Der village and Saw San Myint from Ktee Htau Loh village near the Shwegyin River in Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District.⁴⁹

On 24 February 2007, 22-year-old Saw Moh Shu Htoo from Nyaunglebin District was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #378 as he was returning home from a nearby market where he was buying rice.⁵⁰



Photograph of an unidentified convict porter who had been beaten to death by SPDC army soldiers from the unit that he had been attached to. This photo was taken on 17 January 2007.
[Photo: FBR]

According to a report released on 23 February 2007, three civilian buffalo traders from Dooplaya District were shot and killed by an SPDC army soldiers from IB #36 on 28 December 2006. The three victims were reportedly dressed in KNLA soldiers' uniforms before they were shot to mask the fact that they had knowingly killed civilians simply so that they could steal their money. The soldiers reportedly made off with 15 million kyat. The names and ages of the three victims were:

1. A Lupoe, 41, from Lo Shan village;
2. Neing Htaw Ko, 43, from Htee Hto Kaut village; and
3. Pah Pae, 34, from Mae K'wa village.⁵¹

On 26 February 2007, SPDC army soldiers opened fire on a group of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District, killing 22-year-old Saw Ma Shar Htoo.⁵²

On 1 March 2007, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #589, led by Soe Aung, shot and killed a porter who had been badly injured when he had walked into a tripwire, detonating the landmine that it was attached to. It is common practice for frontline SPDC army units to either kill porters who are no longer able to carry their loads or to simply leave them where they fall to die. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines).⁵³

On 8 March 2007, a thirty-something Karen Catholic priest was killed by crossfire during a clash between the KNU and the DKBA in Vallay village, Dooplaya District. Attention of his death was raised on 18 March 2007 in a demonstration staged by more than 600 Karen villagers from the area who protested against the ongoing conflict and human rights abuses by various different armed factions operating in the area.⁵⁴

On 15 March 2007, Saw Say Nu from Ler Kay Doe village in Papun District was shot dead in a sniping attack by SPDC army troops from Dweh Loh SPDC army camp.⁵⁵

On 21 March 2007, SPDC army troops from LIB #501 operating under MOC #1 in Lu Thaw Township of Papun District shot and killed three villagers near Th'Dah Der village. The three victims were travelling to the market in Th'Dah Der village to buy rice at the same time the SPDC army unit was advancing to attack it. The three men were all shot at point blank range where it would have been obvious that they were non-combatants. The names, ages and home villages of the victims were:

1. Saw Ta Ro Hsaw, 40, from Ku Day village;
2. Saw Pa Hta Lu, 47, from Tay Soe Der village; and
3. Saw Ta Yeh Gay, 40, from Thay Thu Der village.⁵⁶

On 4 April 2007, SPDC army soldiers shot and killed Saw Wee Ti, 28, during an attack on Kheh Der village in Kyauk Kyi Township of Nyaunglebin District.⁵⁷

On 5 April 2007, Saw Ah Po, 29, from Yay Shan village in Toungoo District, lost his two-year-old daughter when SPDC army soldiers from IB #75 fired "*heavy weapons*" – most likely mortar fire – into their village without warning. He also was wounded in the attack.⁵⁸

On 5 April 2007, SPDC army soldiers killed 19-year-old Saw Eh Doh from Shan See Bo village in Toungoo District.⁵⁹

On 9 April 2007, Saw Pa Wee, 30, from Kheh Der village in Kyauk Kyi Township, Nyaunglebin District was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #541 operating under MOC #9.⁶⁰

On 10 April 2007, 82-year-old Saw Thar Char from Mi Pa Ler village in T'Nay Hsah Township of Pa'an District was shot and killed by DKBA soldiers.⁶¹

On 15 April 2007, 18-year-old Saw Bleh Kloh Htoo was arrested and executed by a column of SPDC army soldiers comprised of soldiers from LIB #371 and LIB #372, operating under MOC #5 near the Yaw Tho Ber IDP site in Tantabin Township, Toungoo District. Prior to beating him to death, the soldiers had tortured him by putting out his eyes and slicing his mouth open with a knife.⁶²

On 15 April 2007, SPDC army soldiers tortured and executed 24-year-old Saw Da Lalu. According to reports, he was killed by the same column of SPDC army soldiers comprised of soldiers from LIB #371 and LIB #372 who had tortured and killed Saw Bleh Koh Htoo described above.⁶³

On 15 April 2007, Saw Bpya Klor Mu, 19, was executed by a column of SPDC army soldiers from LIB #371 and LIB #372.⁶⁴

On 18 April 2007, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #346 killed 28-year-old Saw Dtay Dtay from Peh Kaw Der village, Toungoo District.⁶⁵

On 27 April 2007, 17-year-old Saw Aye Say Mu from the Ta Lay Klo area of Papun District was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #88 based at Ta Maw Kyo.⁶⁶

On 28 April 2007, an SPDC army column comprised of soldiers from LIBs #103, #301, and #416, along with IB #13 operating under the MOC #1 killed 61-year-old Saw Aw Hkar from Htee Bwee Khee village in Papun District during a sustained offensive to depopulate the region.⁶⁷

In April 2007, DKBA soldiers tortured and beat Saw Tha Chin before shooting him in Gaw Khaw Law Kho village in Dooplaya District. This attack reportedly took place in the context of a larger series of attacks on suspected KNU locations in the region that had begun on 30 March 2007. The photograph shown below displays Saw Tha Chin's body as it was found under his house. See the photograph below.⁶⁸



The body of Saw Tha Chin who had been beaten, tortured and then killed by DKBA soldiers in Dooplaya District of Karen State. [Photo: FBR]

Beginning on 11 May 2007, SPDC army troops renewed attacks on numerous civilian villages in the Ler Wah area of Kyauk Kyi Township, Nyaunglebin District, displacing an estimated further 540 persons. According to reports, an unnamed 61-year-old man was shot and killed during similar attacks in April.⁶⁹

On 1 May 2007, 35-year-old Saw Htoo Ray (a.k.a Saw Tu Tu) from Klaw Mee Der village in Toungoo District was shot and killed while in his betelnut plantation near Pwee Kee village by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #542 under Battalion Commander Thaung Htain Soe. This incident was also reported by the KNU, who agreed with all details, but maintained that the soldiers hailed from LIB #539 Column #1. Saw Kya Soe, 51, Saw Ka Lay, 50, and Saw Kin Rin, 43, were also arrested. Saw Kya Soe and Saw Ka Lay were later reported as having been executed on 4 May 2007, although no further reports have emerged as to the fate of Saw Kin Rin.⁷⁰

On 1 May 2007, Saw Kay Kay, 24, from Beh Lah Lay Koh village in Toungoo District was killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #542 and LIB# 544, led by Battalion Commander Thaung Htaik Soe and Battalion, Commander Hla Htay respectively.⁷¹

On 9 May 2007, DKBA and SPDC army soldiers attacked KNLA soldiers of KNLA Battalion #103 in Dooplaya District, killing two villagers and injuring a further three in nearby Maw Hto Lay village.⁷²

On 11 May 2007, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #542 (Thaung Htain Soe commanding) and #544 (Hla Htay commanding) attacked Oo Per village in Toungoo District, killing a number of villagers who lived there. The names and ages of those confirmed killed are shown below:

1. Saw Hta Nay Nah, 29;
2. Saw Koo May, 40; and
3. Saw Hta Kwah, 48.⁷³

On 11 May 2007, SPDC army soldiers mounted an assault on Wa Soe village, Toungoo District, killing Saw Der Hler Moh and 27-year-old Saw Blu Peh.⁷⁴

On 12 May 2007, an SPDC army column comprised of soldiers from LIB #542 (Thaung Htain Soe commanding) and #544 (Hla Htay commanding) continued their attacks on villages throughout eastern Toungoo District, killing a number of villagers. Other attacks by this column are listed above and below. During their attacks on this day, 34-year-old Saw Hta Wah from Beh Kah Lay Koh village and 40-year-old Saw Pu Doh were confirmed killed.⁷⁵

On 12 May 2007, the following civilian villagers from Toungoo District were killed by SPDC army soldiers. Though not stated in the original report, it is quite likely that the following four villagers were killed by an SPDC army column comprised of soldiers from LIB #542 (Thaung Htain Soe commanding) and #544 (Hla Htay commanding) who were active in the region at the time and who were responsible for several other deaths that same day. (See other incidents listed above and below for details).

1. Saw Maw Pu, 60;
2. Saw Ka Ma Taw, 55;
3. Saw Mee Maw, 34; and
4. Saw Ah Day, 28.⁷⁶

On 12 May 2007, SPDC army soldiers operating under LIB #542 and LIB #544 captured an unidentified 28-year-old woman from Ber Ka Lay Ko village in Toungoo District before raping and murdering her.⁷⁷

On 13 May 2007, 18-year-old Saw Ra Say was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers in Yaw Ki village, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District.⁷⁸

On 15 May 2007, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #542 led by Battalion Commander Thaung Htain Soe shot and killed three Karen villagers near Pwee Kee village in Toungoo District. Upon stumbling on the three villagers as they were resting in a field hut, the soldiers opened fire, killing Saw Hsa Min, 55, and Saw Moo Di, 36. Saw Kwah Kwah, 20, who was also resting in the hut, was taken by the soldiers back to the camp. Along the way, the unit was ambushed by a KNLA patrol to which the soldiers responded by killing Saw Kwah Kwah.⁷⁹

On 17 May 2007, 27-year-old Naw Bu Ru was killed by SPDC army soldiers while cutting grass in her field in the Pana Eh Per Ko area of Papun District. The soldiers dumped her body in her field hut and burned it along with the hut.⁸⁰

In May 2007, SPDC army soldiers shot and killed 19-year-old Naw Ku Lue before burning her body in her field hut in Papun District. Those responsible for the shooting were believed to have been operating under either LID #88 or MOC #1, both of whom were operating in the area at the time.⁸¹

On 25 May 2007, SPDC army soldiers from IB #488 and LIB #78 operating under LID #88, shot and killed three Karen villagers, including a seven-year-old boy, in Si Daw Koh village, Toungoo District. Then names and ages of the victims were:

1. Saw Ray Raih, 18;
2. Saw Law Kwauh, 36; and his son,
3. Saw Tar Noo Htoo, 7.⁸²

On 25 May 2007, 25-year-old Saw Koh Koh from Mwee Loh village in Toungoo District was killed by SPDC army soldiers operating under MOC #9.⁸³

On 25 May 2007, Saw Mah Heh, 38, from Shan See Bo village, Toungoo District was killed by SPDC army soldiers. Though not stated in the original report, it is quite likely that Saw Mah Heh was shot by SPDC army soldiers from MOC #9 who were operating in the area at the time and who were reported as having killed other villagers from the region that same day.⁸⁴

On 23 June 2007, SPDC army soldiers killed an entire family of five in Htee K'Bler village. Among those killed were four-year-old Kyaw Eh Wah and his brother 13-year-old Saw Pa Heh Soe. The children's 65-year-old grandmother, Naw Pler Poe, was also killed in the attack.⁸⁵

In June 2007, two young women whose names were not released, aged 18 and 22 from Takehder village in Luthaw Township, Papun District, were captured by SPDC army soldiers while gathering vegetables. Before being killed, both women were raped and mutilated by having their breasts and ears cut off.⁸⁶

On 2 July 2007, and according to the DKBA, two civilians, one of whom was only ten years old, were killed by stray bullets during a clash between DKBA and KNLA soldiers in Myanyanigone village, Dooplaya District. According to a statement made by the DKBA, the *"two villagers were killed when the KNU fired rounds into a grocery [store]"*. Though the KNU did not deny that there were civilian casualties, they claimed that the fighting had produced only one victim, however, failed to state if it was the adult or the child who had been killed.⁸⁷

On 5 July 2007, soldiers from LIB #30, based at the Htee Loh SPDC army camp in Toungoo District fired on a group of IDPs in the Mu Khi Pau Hga Loe area as they were returning from the market with food for their families. Saw Po Tay, 60, from Mwee Loh village was killed in the shooting.⁸⁸

On 7 July 2007, four villagers from Blut Doh village were stopped by a column of SPDC army soldiers from LIB #378 and LIB #388 who demanded to be shown the way to Wah Do Ko village in Nyaunglebin District. Three of the villagers refused the order and were summarily executed by the soldiers. The sole surviving villager accompanied the soldiers as a guide and was ordered to walk ahead of the column as a human minesweeper. Five days later, one of the soldiers was killed by a landmine, and in the confusion created by the blast the villager was able to escape. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines). The names of the three villagers who were killed were:

1. Saw Htoo Htoo;
2. Saw Mya Doh Moo; and
3. Saw Po Eh Do.⁸⁹

It was reported on 12 July 2007 that 60-year-old Saw Pho Thee from Kyauk Sin Taung was shot and killed as SPDC army soldiers from LIB #30 were patrolling through Tantabin Township of Toungoo District in search of villagers to capture and use as forced porters.⁹⁰

On 19 July 2007, SPDC army soldiers operating under LID #88 shot and killed three villagers in Yaw Ni See Zu Ko village in the Si Kheh Der area of Toungoo District. The victims' names were:

1. Saw Leh Nay Po, 27;
2. Saw De Ku Lu, 25; and
3. Saw Wa Wa, 35.⁹¹

On 25 July 2007, LIB #589 troops shot and killed Saw Thakler, 27, as he was tending his durian crop near Ma La Daw village in Nyaunglebin District. The same report that had reported this incident had also stated that this same unit had also killed an unnamed porter on the same day.⁹²

On 27 July 2007, Karen villager, Saw Henry, 29, from Htee Koh village in Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District was shot and killed by SPDC army troops operating under MOC #9 as he was returning to his village with rice for his family. The photograph shown below displays Saw Henry's body being mourned over by his wife and daughter.⁹³



The body of 29-year-old Saw Henry, who was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers from MOC #9 on 27 July 2007. [Photo: FBR]

On 27 August 2007, Saw Ko Tee Nor, 38, was shot and killed during an intensive SPDC army offensive against civilian villages, spearheaded by troops from LID #88 and MOC #1 in the Ler Mu Plaw and Yeh Mu Plaw areas of Papun District. According to the Free Burma Rangers (FBR) who reported the shooting, SPDC army soldiers had killed over 370 men, women, and children in northern Karen State since February 2006 when they had intensified their attacks in their region.⁹⁴

On 20 September 2007, 31-year-old Saw Na Htoo from Kheh Der village in Toungoo District was killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #375.⁹⁵

In September 2007, Colonel Kyi Min, Commanding Officer of KNLA Battalion #18 was killed in an ambush after returning from a discussion with SPDC army officers at their army camp. The SPDC denied responsibility for the ambush and instead blamed the attack on the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), who the SPDC ironically often accuse of conspiring with the KNU and a number of other opposition militias.⁹⁶

On 6 November 2007, SPDC army troops from Military Operations Command (MOC) #1 and Light Infantry Division (LID) #88 renewed their attacks on the Yeh Mu Plaw area of Papun District, killing two villagers.⁹⁷

On 15 November 2007, 28-year-old Saw Ler Ghay, from Ler Wah village in Kyauk Kyi Township of Nyaunglebin District was shot and killed by a column of SPDC army soldiers from LIB #218 and LIB #219.⁹⁸

On 19 November 2007, 18-year-old Saw Bo Wah from Ta Baw Ko Der village in Papun District was shot and killed by SPDC army troops.⁹⁹

On 19 November 2007, Naw Nya Htoo from Ler Wah village of Kyauk Kyi Township, Nyaunglebin District was shot and killed by a column of SPDC army soldiers from LIB #218 and LIB #219. She was killed by the same column of soldiers as Saw Ler Ghay described above.¹⁰⁰

On 1 December 2007, Saw Blu Nay Moo, 23, was shot and killed by SPDC army troops in Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District.¹⁰¹

On 16 December 2007, five DKBA soldiers from DKBA Battalion #901 were reported to have been shot dead by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #203 after they refused to attack an unnamed KNLA base.¹⁰²

Karenni State

On 22 January 2007, SPDC army soldiers from Infantry Battalion (IB) #250 killed the village headman of Ktu Hkya Ku village.¹⁰³

On 2 April 2007, 34-year-old Nan Nu was shot in the stomach by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #509. The incident, which took place in Suphelaw village, Shadaw Township, left Nan Nu in a critical condition in Loikaw hospital 2 months later on 12 June 2007 when the report was made. Since that time, however, no further information as to her fate emerged. Her husband, who reported the incident to a local organization, was reported to have said that *"No recompense was made by the SPDC during [her] treatment in the hospital. [T]he wound had not healed yet and [the] treatment cost has already climbed to three to four hundred thousand [kyat], but she is still in serious condition"*.¹⁰⁴



An unidentified Karen villager, killed by SPDC army troops in Karen State during 2007. [Photo: FBR]

On 10 April 2007, Saw Lee Reh Kyaw, an FBR team member, was shot in the leg and captured by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #427 while attempting to aid Karenni villagers. He was tortured under interrogation by the SPDC before being executed two days later.¹⁰⁵

On 22 July 2007, a joint column of LIB #427 and Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front (KNPLF) soldiers shot and killed a Karenni villager from Pruso Township under allegations that he had contact with the Karenni resistance movement. Nye Reh Po Htya, 42, was apprehended in his home in Htee Byah Nye village and beaten by the soldiers. The village and village tract chairpersons tried to petition the soldiers for his release, who attempted to plead his innocence, stating that he was just a villager and had no affiliations

with the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP). All such attempts, however, failed and he was executed in the village cemetery later that same day. He is survived by his wife and four children.¹⁰⁶

Mandalay Division

On 27 July 2007, U Ohn Kyaing, 58, from Pan-aing village died while being transferred to prison as a result of the injuries he sustained during an earlier interrogation at Meiktila Police Station #1. It was reported that he was denied medical attention, despite the serious injuries he suffered.¹⁰⁷

On 29 July 2007, 36-year-old Ko Kyaw Htay died in custody while detained at Meiktila Police Station #1 after being tortured during his interrogation.¹⁰⁸

In September 2007, 42-year-old NLD member, Win Shwe, died under interrogation at a police interrogation centre in Palate, Kyaukpadaung Township. He had been arrested along with four other activists for joining the mass pro-democracy anti-SPDC protests on 26 September 2007. The authorities informed his family about his death on 9 October 2007, although the actual date of his death remains unknown. His family was denied the right to see his body, which was reported to have already been cremated.¹⁰⁹

Mon State

On 2 April 2007, it was reported that 50-year-old Nai Pha Dort from Khaw-Zar sub-Township in Ye Township was believed to have been executed after being arrested and tortured in December 2006. His family was not permitted to visit him while in detention and have since been told by SPDC army officers to stop sending food for him.¹¹⁰

On 26 June 2007, Nai Maw, 35, from Bayoun-ngae village in Ye Township was killed by SPDC army soldiers from MOC #19 following his arrest for allegedly selling pork to "*Mon insurgents*", although it is unclear which group they were referring to.¹¹¹

Pegu Division

On 9 February 2007, 18-year-old Maung Lin Lin Naing died in custody, according to a report by the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). He had been arrested the day before in Phadoe, Pegu (Bago) Division after being accused of theft by a storekeeper. He was later found hanging in his cell and his family were afterwards warned not to complain about his death.¹¹²

On 19 July 2007, Ko Htun Min Soe, a civilian motorcycle taxi driver was shot after escorting a soldier to Min Hla Sake village near Shwegyin in Eastern Pegu (Bago) Division. Witnesses reported that the soldier had shot Ko Htun Min Soe so that he could rob him. The soldier was reportedly from LIB #11, and all attempts to bring him to justice were reportedly frustrated by the battalion commander.¹¹³

Rangoon Division

On 18 March 2007, Ko Naing Oo, 36, was beaten to death by council officials following a dispute with his in-laws, although it remains unclear exactly which council the report was referring to. The post-mortem report was not released to the family and Naing Oo's father's job was threatened following the incident. A report in a local news journal stated that he had *"died from natural causes while 'sleeping soundly' at the council office where he had been brought for being drunk and disorderly"*. The report *"underlined that nobody [was] responsible for his death other than himself"*.¹¹⁴

In September 2007, public dissatisfaction with the continued rule of the SPDC manifested itself in the largest outward display of free speech in two decades as hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children from all walks of life took to the streets in protest in what quickly became known as the "Saffron Revolution", so named for the thousands of monks who joined and lead the protests. More than 227 separate demonstrations were staged in 66 locations across Burma during August and September, some of which had amassed crowds of up to a hundred thousand protestors. The largest and best documented protests were those that were staged in Rangoon. The following incidents are all of those who were killed by the SPDC and their agents for their part in the protests. The SPDC maintains that only 15 persons were killed during the protests, while the UN Special Rapporteur on Burma, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro has stated that evidence has emerged that more than double this number died in Rangoon alone. As many as 84 persons remained unaccounted for at the end of January 2008, many of whom who were feared to have also been killed. This number represents only those who could be identified and as such this figure should be considered conservative. With protests staged in no fewer than 66 towns and cities across the country, many of which lack reliable information, coupled with the systematic removal of the dead and wounded from the site of each crackdown, and the disposal of the bodies during secret night time cremations, the number of fatalities may well be as high as a hundred. Sadly, though, just as had happened following the 1988 protests, we may never know the true human toll. (For more information on the protests, see Chapter 11: The Saffron Revolution – The 2007 Pro-Democracy Movement).

On 26 September 2007, the SPDC confirmed the death of a 30-year-old man who they claimed was accidentally killed when hit by a ricocheting bullet fired by soldiers from LID #77 who were attempting to put the protests down. However, the SPDC's explanation was almost universally rejected.¹¹⁵

At approximately 11:45 am on 26 September 2007, a lone monk approached the violent crackdown on protestors outside Shwedagon Pagoda along Old Yae Tar Shae Road when he was set upon by security forces and beaten to death. Eyewitnesses to the scene testified to HRDU that three members of the riot police attacked the monk, beating him about the legs with their batons until he fell to the ground. He attempted to stand, using the Buddhist flag that he was carrying as a support, but the soldiers *"bashed the monk on his head and he collapsed onto his back. He vomited blood and died after the policeman ... hit him hard on his neck with a baton. They dumped his body in a truck like a piece of trash"*.¹¹⁶

On 26 September 2007, an unidentified monk, believed to be in his forties, was beaten to death by riot police during protests at Kyethun Pagoda in Rangoon at approximately 11:30 am. An eyewitness described the scene to HRDU:

“The riot police fired tear gas into the compound, and moved towards the crowd in formation. They heavily beat everyone that they caught. I saw many monks with bloody heads running away. One monk continued to sit in his spot. I think he was in his forties. He was facing Shwedagon [Pagoda] and praying, with the Buddhist flag held up in one hand. He was heavily beaten twice on his head. After that, he did not move, he just lay on the ground lifeless. About ten minutes later, they [security forces] removed his robes and redressed him in a t-shirt and longyi [sarong]. Two members of the riot police then picked up his body; one took the legs and the other the arms and they threw him onto their truck.”¹¹⁷

According to the AFP news agency, three unnamed monks were killed during demonstrations in the vicinity of Shwedagon Pagoda on 26 September 2007. According to the report, SPDC officials had confirmed the deaths, stating that two were beaten to death while the third was shot by an SPDC army soldier.¹¹⁸

On 26 September 2007, an eyewitness to the bloody crackdown on protestors at Thakin Mya Park in Rangoon told HRDU of how he had watched as an unidentified 20-year-old man who had also joined the protest was shot in the back by SPDC army soldiers. Though he was unable to state conclusively if the man had been killed, he did say that *“he fell down covered in blood”*.¹¹⁹

Late in the evening of 26 September 2007, SPDC army units raided Ngwe Kyar Yan Monastery in South Okkalapa Township, Rangoon. Dozens of shots were fired and an estimated 100 persons were arrested, the majority of whom were resident monks, were arrested and beaten by security forces. According to reports, one of the monks, U Sandima, died the following morning as a result of the injuries that he had sustained during the raid. According to the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRIC), Maung Kyaw Kyaw, a 33-year-old layperson who got caught up in the raids, was also killed.¹²⁰

On 27 September 2007, an eyewitness reported seeing at least five protestors shot by security forces in South Okkalapa Township, four of which he knew to be dead. Four of the victims were men, although he believed the fifth to only have been around 14 years old. Three of the men had been shot in the head, leaving *“big holes in the back of their heads”*, while the fourth man had been shot in the hip and it was unclear if he had been killed or not. The fifth victim, a high school student of around 14 years of age, was shot in the chest. It is quite possible that some of these victims are in fact the same individuals as those identified by Human Rights Watch (see those listed below), although without knowing their names and ages it is extremely difficult to say so conclusively.¹²¹

On 27 September 2007, and according to Human Rights Watch (HRW), at least eight persons were confirmed as having been killed by security forces during protests in South Okkalapa Township alone. The names and ages of those identified were:

1. Myo Min Htun, 22, shot in the head;
2. Aung San Oo, 18, shot in the head;
3. Yan Lynn Aung, 17, shot in the head;
4. Tun Tun Lwin, 31, severely beaten and later died in custody;
5. Ko Soe Than, 42, shot in the chest;
6. Zyar Naing, 16, shot in the chest;
7. Naing Myo Aung, 20; and
8. Than Aung, 43, beaten to death as he was trying to pick up his children from school.¹²²

On 27 September 2007, 50-year-old Japanese photojournalist Kenji Nagai was shot and killed by an SPDC army soldier during protests in the vicinity of Sule Pagoda. Photographic and video footage taken at the time clearly shows Nagai being shot in the back from point blank range. The soldier then stood over his body and fired again as he lay helpless on the ground. It appears as though he was deliberately targeted because he was a member of the international media in a vain attempt to suppress the flow of information. His body was later returned to Japan, although his camera, which he had been carrying at the time, was not.¹²³



Japanese photojournalist Kenji Nagai shot dead at point blank range by an SPDC army soldier during protests near Sule Pagoda in Rangoon, on 27 September 2007. [Photo: Reuters]

On 27 September 2007, one eyewitness reported seeing a young girl of around 15 years of age being severely beaten by Swan Arr Shin members: *“She was struck heavily three times by different soldiers [with bamboo staves], and was punched by Swan Arr Shin members. I saw her fall to the ground. She lay there completely still. Lots of blood was pouring from her head and body. I am sure she was dead”*.¹²⁴

On 27 September 2007, during protests outside Sule Pagoda, eyewitnesses have reported that they saw a number of people lying motionless on the street after security forces had opened fire into the crowd with live ammunition: *“When I looked back I saw two boys and one girl lying still on the ground. I do not know if they were alive or dead”*.¹²⁵

On 27 September 2007, another violent crackdown on protestors took place at the Pansodan Road Bridge near the Traders Hotel in Rangoon. Reports have emerged that a student leading the group and carrying a fighting peacock flag (a symbol of the Burmese democracy movement) was shot in the head at approximately 2:00 pm. The victim was identified as Ko Thet Naing, an NLD supporter from an unspecified location in Upper Burma, who had travelled to Rangoon specifically to participate in the protests. Following the shooting, SPDC army soldiers removed his body from the scene. Another eyewitness reported seeing a young unidentified woman shot during the same crackdown. According to the testimony, *“[t]he woman ... fell to the ground after being shot and lay motionless. The eyewitness was unsure of whether she was unconscious or dead”*.¹²⁶

On 27 September 2007, quite a violent crackdown took place just outside Tamwe Township State High School No.3. Several eyewitnesses have reported numerous deaths to have taken place at this time: *“A lot of people died on the spot. When we were hiding, the dead bodies and injured people were dragged by their legs and thrown onto the trucks and driven away”*. Similarly, another eyewitness testified that, *“a lot of people died as a result of these shootings. A lot of people tried to climb the walls at the side of the road, but they were very high”*. Some of those who tried to escape the carnage by climbing over the high walls

surrounding the school were also shot. Yet another witness to the massacre told HRDU that, *“Many people climbed over the wall to hide in the buildings [in the school]. ... People were climbing the wall to escape. I watched a young man get shot in the back. He did not move or make any sound after he fell. He was bleeding a lot”*. During the shootings, Maung Tun Lynn Kyaw, a student from the high school was shot in the head and killed in front of his mother, while 16-year-old Maung Thet Paing Soe, another student at the school, was also shot in the head at close range, killing him instantly.¹²⁷

On 27 September 2007, at Tamwe Township State High School No.3 in Rangoon, it has been reported that at least two pro-democracy protestors were run over and killed when an SPDC army truck drove directly into a crowd of protestors.¹²⁸

On 27 September 2007, unidentified security forces shot and wounded Tayok Kyi (‘Big Chinese’) during protests outside Tamwe Township State High School No.3 in Rangoon. He was carried home by his friends where he later died as a result of his injuries. The eyewitness who reported this also told HRDU that he saw at least five or six others die at the site of the crackdown outside Tamwe Township State High School No.3.¹²⁹

On 27 September 2007, SPDC army soldiers were reported to have even killed those who had tried to escape the violence of the crackdown at Tamwe Township State High School No.3: *“I saw a soldier shoot a person hiding in the drain. The soldier just stood above the drain, and fired down into it”*. The same witness also testified to seeing soldiers shoot one protestor who had surrendered to them:

“One man was hiding inside a small round water tank. The soldiers could find him easily, because he was shivering so much that the tank made a rhythmic noise. They told him to climb out, and told him that if he didn’t they would shoot. He didn’t dare to go out. ‘Bang!’ The soldier shot him and the bullet went through the tank. No sound came out of the tank after that”.¹³⁰

On 27 September 2007, 48-year-old U Than Aung was badly wounded in the protests, and though despite the severity of his injuries, he was denied medical attention. He subsequently died in detention at the GTI facility.¹³¹

On 27 September 2007, 16-year-old Maung Thet Paing Soe was shot and killed while participating in the protests. He was an NLD Youth member. His family was prohibited from performing the traditional funerary rites over his body, and were even refused permission to view a copy of his death certificate.¹³² Family members had to bribe the Chairman of the Dawbon Township Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), U Win Naing Oo, 8,000 kyat for permission to see his body. According to reports, alongside Maung Thet Paing Soe were 11 other bodies of citizens killed that day.¹³³ An Amnesty International (AI) report on the suppression reported the names of another of those killed as Maung Tun Lynn Kyaw, another student at Tamwe Township State High School No. 3.¹³⁴

On 27 September 2007, two young unidentified men were taken to the Rangoon City Hall following their arrest where they were beaten to death by a civil official. According to the report, the two young had already been severely beaten and were covered in blood even as they arrived at the City Hall. *“Ko Kyaw Thein, a staff member with the Budget Department, took a bamboo stick from the police. ... He beat them again so that the blood came out from those boys’ mouths. Both of them died on the scene”*.¹³⁵

In September 2007 security officials killed 52-year-old U Hla Myint during the anti-regime protests despite the fact that he was not involved. According to reports, he was killed as he was attempting to collect his son from the State Middle School No.4.¹³⁶

On 28 September 2007, two more young unidentified men were beaten to death at Rangoon City Hall. They had been arrested by SPDC army soldiers operating under LID #66 who had also reportedly robbed them of all of their valuables after they died.¹³⁷

On 28 September 2007, three protestors were reported to have been shot and killed at the corner of Anawratha and Pansodan Roads in Rangoon at 2:00 pm.¹³⁸

On 28 September 2007, Nay Lin Tun, 28, from South Okkalapa Township was reportedly killed during protests in Rangoon. No further information regarding his death has been made available.¹³⁹

On 28 September 2007, Ko Htun Htun Linn, from South Okkalapa Township and Maung Kyaw Zeya Naing, a high school student, were killed during protests in Rangoon as SPDC security personnel fired their weapons into crowds and beat protesters. The Ministry of Home Affairs organised the funerals, limiting the number of family members allowed to attend and, as with many others who were killed, refused the families their right to conduct traditional ceremonies.¹⁴⁰

On 28 September 2007, Corporal Aung Kyaw Soe from Transport Battalion #1 killed two schoolgirls when he ran over them with the Toyota truck he was driving. The two schoolgirl's names were Ma Phyu Thant Ko and Ma Aye Amm. Their families were assured that the case would be dealt with fairly by the Chairperson of the District Peace and Development Council (DPDC) while UN Special Representative to the Secretary General, Ibrahim Gambari was in the country, however, on Gambari's departure the family was informed that no action would be taken and were threatened against filing any further complaints.¹⁴¹

On 29 September 2007, U Toke Lone Gyi (a.k.a U Han Tint Lin) from Shwe Pyi Thar Township, was arrested during protests near Sule Pagoda and later died in detention as a result of the heavy beatings that he received in custody.¹⁴²

On 29 September 2007, 40-year-old Pho Zaw was reportedly killed in the crackdown on protests on the streets of Rangoon.¹⁴³

On 29 September 2007, 18-year-old Sunny (a.k.a. Kala Malay) was reported as having been killed in the crackdown on protests on the streets of Rangoon. No further information regarding his death has been made available.¹⁴⁴

On the evening of 29 September 2007, SPDC army forces raided numerous monasteries in Thaketa Township, Rangoon, reportedly resulting in approximately 100 monks being arrested. One unnamed layperson was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers while standing guard to warn and protect the monks at Zaetawon Monastery. According to an eyewitness interviewed by HRDU, the soldiers had silently approached the monastery compound via Pazundaung Creek which ran behind the monastery. Upon raising the alarm, the soldiers shot and killed the man for doing so. His body was taken away by the soldiers as they left. Other reports maintained that at least three monks were also killed during the monastery raids in Thaketa Township.¹⁴⁵

On 30 September 2007, Than Aung, 48, died of injuries received during detention at an interrogation centre in Rangoon following his arrest on 27 September 2007 for his involvement in the protests.¹⁴⁶

During the mass protests in September, the regime established a number of temporary detention facilities around Rangoon where they could imprison and process those they arrested on the streets (For more information, see Chapter 1: Arbitrary Arrests and Enforced

or Involuntary Detention). Arrests quickly climbed into the thousands and existing facilities were soon swamped. One such facility was set up at the Government Technology Institute (GTI). A number of persons who had been detained at the GTI later reported the brutality they had endured and witnessed. Three separate detainees released from the GTI on 5 October 2007 had all reported witnessing the deaths of a number of fellow detainees. One civilian arrested for his part in the protests reported seeing over a dozen people die in detention due to lack of medical care: *"I could do nothing for a young novice who was dying beside me. We asked for help from the security guards, but they didn't do anything until they came to take away his dead body"*. A monk released that same day also reported witnessing 14 people die in detention, eight of whom were fellow monks while one was a young boy who had died on 27 September 2007. He attributed all of these deaths to the deplorable conditions in detention. Yet another detainee maintained that he had seen three people die in the GTI facility.¹⁴⁷



Two student activists shot dead by SPDC army soldiers during protests in Rangoon on 27 September 2007. [Photo: Reuters]

On 30 September 2007, 42-year-old Aung Kyaw Oo died while detained at the GTI detention facility in Rangoon.¹⁴⁸

On 30 September 2007, 30-year-old That Naing Oo (aka) Naing Oo died in custody while being interned at the Kyaikkasan interrogation centre in Rangoon.¹⁴⁹

On 7 October 2007, in a sick twist of irony, 29-year-old Special Anti-Drug Squad police officer Sergeant Hkangda La Tawng died of a methamphetamine overdose after eating food reported to have been prepared by a group referred to only as *"the authorities"*. He was in

Rangoon at the time, supporting the military in the suppression of the September popular protests. It is believed that the food had been spiked with the drug, although the report offered no theories as to why.¹⁵⁰

On 9 October 2007, two Rangoon University zoology students were reported to have been killed during detention at the Kyaikkasan interrogation centre. According to reports, they were drowned while under interrogation regarding their involvement in the September protests.¹⁵¹

On 24 October 2007, U Soe Myint from Taikkyi Township in Rangoon died in detention from the injuries that he had sustained during the September protests. He had been arrested for his involvement in the demonstrations and sentenced to Thayet Prison where he had died in the infirmary.¹⁵²

On 3 November 2007, NLD member Ko Ko Win, 22, died of head injuries a month after being beaten by security personnel during protests on 27 September 2007. Lawyer and NLD spokesperson Nyan Win called on the police to open files on Ko Ko Win and other demonstrators killed or missing during the protests, though little action has been taken.¹⁵³

Shan State

On 14 February 2007, SPDC army troops from LIB #518 shot and killed a villager from Mai Hai village in Mong Nai Township. The man, who was mentally handicapped, and known locally as 'mad man Wan Na', ran on seeing the troops who responded by shooting him in the chest.¹⁵⁴

In March 2007, Tao Jaw, a middle-aged woman from Southern Shan State, lost her husband in an attack by an unidentified SPDC army unit, who also later killed her father.¹⁵⁵

On 9 April 2007, Nan Ti Ya, 35, from Kunhing Township, and Naan In Keo, 27, from Kengtung Township, were shot and killed in Tachilek Township by SPDC army troops from LIB #526 while attempting to cross the border into Thailand.¹⁵⁶

On 30 April 2007, Zai Thun, 30, from Nawng Ung village in Mong Kung Township, was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #259. Though the SPDC army soldiers denied any responsibility for his death, one of the officers attended Zai Thun's funeral and paid his fellow villagers 15,000 kyat in compensation, urging them to cease any discussion of his death.¹⁵⁷

In the beginning of August 2007, 38-year-old Ko Maung Myint died in detention in Muse after being arrested for attempting to cross the border into China. His wife reported seeing significant bruising and injuries on his body at the hospital on 4 August 2007. The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), who reported this case, maintained that:

*"The increasingly frequent accounts of bloody assaults by the police and other local security forces in Burma speak to the fearlessness with which these personnel operate. Although the military regime pretends to invite complaints against state officers, in reality there are no avenues through they can be entertained properly – least of all where they involve allegations of murder – as all parts of the state apparatus are compromised and controlled".*¹⁵⁸

On 18 April 2007, 38-year-old Naang Gam from Waeng Kao village, Mong Nai Township was gang raped and killed by five SPDC soldiers from #3 Regional Training School. Naang Gam's naked body displayed signs strongly suggestive of her having been violently raped by several persons: *"Her neck was badly bruised and her blouse was lying close to her mouth. ... She appeared to have been gagged and strangled to death".*

Although they knew that Naang Gam had been raped and killed, her husband and two children, along with other local villagers chose not to seek redress or take the issue any further, for fear of further abuses.¹⁵⁹

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