Two killed in separate incidents, as hundreds flee amid military build-up

One casualty was reported in Kyaukme, in northern Shan state, while the other was in Sagaing region's Kani township

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Regime forces are seen in Yangon on March 31 (EPA-EFE)

Two anti-coup protesters were killed in northern Myanmar over the weekend as the military continued its push to crush resistance to its rule.

One person was reported dead in the northern Shan State town of Kyaukme on Saturday, while another died during a shootout in Sagaing Region's Kani Township on Sunday.

Aung Ko Ko Phyo, a 25-year-old government employee who had joined the Civil Disobedience Movement, was shot in the head as he was leaving the monastery where he had temporarily ordained as a monk during the Thingyan holidays.

According to local sources, Aung Ko Ko Phyo, who worked for the Department of Electrical Power, was shot near Kyaukme's Wailuwun monastery at around 9pm on Saturday.

"He was on his way to his teacher's home. He had just left the monkhood because it was the end of Thingyan," a Kyaukme resident told Myanmar Now.

There were numerous witnesses to the incident, the source added, noting that it occurred in the centre of town.

A doctor who treated him said he died from a bullet wound and would be cremated on Monday.

The troops who killed him removed his body from the scene soon after the shooting. Family members were told they could collect it on Sunday.

The body of Aung Ko Ko Phyo, 25, who was shot dead in Kyaukme on April 17

However, according to a local news agency, his mother was forced to sign a release before she was allowed to claim his body stating that her son had been stabbed to death and that the military was not involved in his killing.

Residents of Kyaukme, a trading town located about 175km northeast of Mandalay, have held regular protests against the military since it seized power in a coup on February 1.

On Sunday, another man died after the arrest of a local man led to a five-hour confrontation between regime forces and civilians in Sagaing region.

The shootout, which occurred on the Monywa-Kalaywa-Yargyi road between Mingin and Kani townships, began at around 1pm, a resident of the area told Myanmar Now.

“[Soldiers] fired a shot and came into the village. They arrested a local and that’s when the fighting began,” said a resident of Sal Yar Chaung, the village where the arrest was made.

At least 100 soldiers were involved in the clash, according to another villager.

No further details were available about the man who died. Residents said that some of the military forces may have been injured by homemade hunting rifles and air guns used by members of a village defence team.

Residents say that hundreds of people have fled the area since Sunday, as more army troops pour in and conduct door-to-door raids targeting local civilians.

“They came into the village in the morning. There were a lot of them. They were searching every house, so we had to run. It looks like they’re setting up base,” said a resident of Chaung Ma Kyway, one of the affected villages.

The shootout on Sunday came days after a similar incident on April 15 left six civilians dead and at least 20 others missing.

Many parts of Sagaing region have been tense since late last month amid efforts by the regime to crack down on strongholds of the anti-coup movement.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, more than 730 civilians have been killed by the junta nationwide as of April 17.