

# Civilians killed in attack on wedding in Mingin

Alleged airstrike kills at least 19 civilians, including children

REPORT BY MYANMAR WITNESS, 11 September 2024

**Graphic Warning:** This report contains graphic information and imagery. While efforts have been made to blur details, the report includes information which some readers may find distressing.

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## Key Event Details

- **Location of Incident:** Ma Taw (မတော) village, Mingin (မင်းကင်း) township, Sagaing (စင်ကိုင်း) region, [22.894784, 94.531276].
- **Date/Time of Incident:** 3 June 2024.
- **Alleged Perpetrator(s) and/or Involvement:** Myanmar Air Force (MAF), Myanmar Military.
- **Summary of Investigation:**
  - Myanmar Witness verified that at least 19 people, including women and at least two children, were killed in Ma Taw village, Mingin township in Sagaing region.
  - Myanmar Witness assesses that the event likely occurred between 1 - 6 June 2024 based on changes observed in Sentinel-2 imagery.
  - A wedding was likely taking place during the time of the attack due to the presence of a wedding pandal, utensils for a large meal, and corroborating media reports.
  - Myanmar Witness is almost certain that heavy weaponry was used to carry out the attack. Analysis of imagery and available information suggest that it was likely an airstrike.

# Summary of event

On 3 June 2024, an [alleged airstrike](#) and a follow-up [mortar strike](#) hit the location of a wedding in Ma Taw (မတော) village, Mingin (မင်းကင်း) township, Sagaing (စင်္ကြံ) region. Reports from multiple sources, including a local People's Defence Force (PDF) group (source redacted due to safety concerns), media outlets such as [Myanmar Now](#), and pro-State Administration Council (SAC) accounts such as [Myanma Honor](#), claimed it was the wedding of a PDF leader. The sources also allege that there was no known active fighting in the area on the date of the incident. The airstrike reportedly occurred while people were [gathering](#) at the building hosting the wedding ceremony and another nearby building where food was being served, killing up to 30 people and wounding around 60. However, exact numbers vary across different sources ([Khit Thit](#), [Myanma Honor](#)). Up to seven children were reportedly among the fatalities ([Khit Thit](#), [Myanmar Now](#)).



Figure 1: Location of Ma Taw Village, Mingin Township, Sagaing Region, map created by Myanmar Witness

# Myanmar Witness incident verification

## Location of the incident

Myanmar Witness analysed various images and videos reportedly of the incident, geolocating them to the east side of Ma Taw village, across the Chindwin river from Mingin town. Using satellite imagery, six pieces of footage have been geolocated. These images reveal:

- A damaged decorated building with a pandal and a dead body in front (figure 3)
- Scattered and broken bowls and plates inside a building likely used for serving food to guests (figure 3)
- Damaged ground and trees (figure 4)
- Bodies of fatalities gathered on the ground (figure 5)

The footage shared shows extensive damage to a site in Ma Taw village, the same location where multiple sources claim a wedding was taking place. Imagery analysis strongly indicates that an explosion occurred, such as a heavy weapon strike, supporting claims made in media reports.

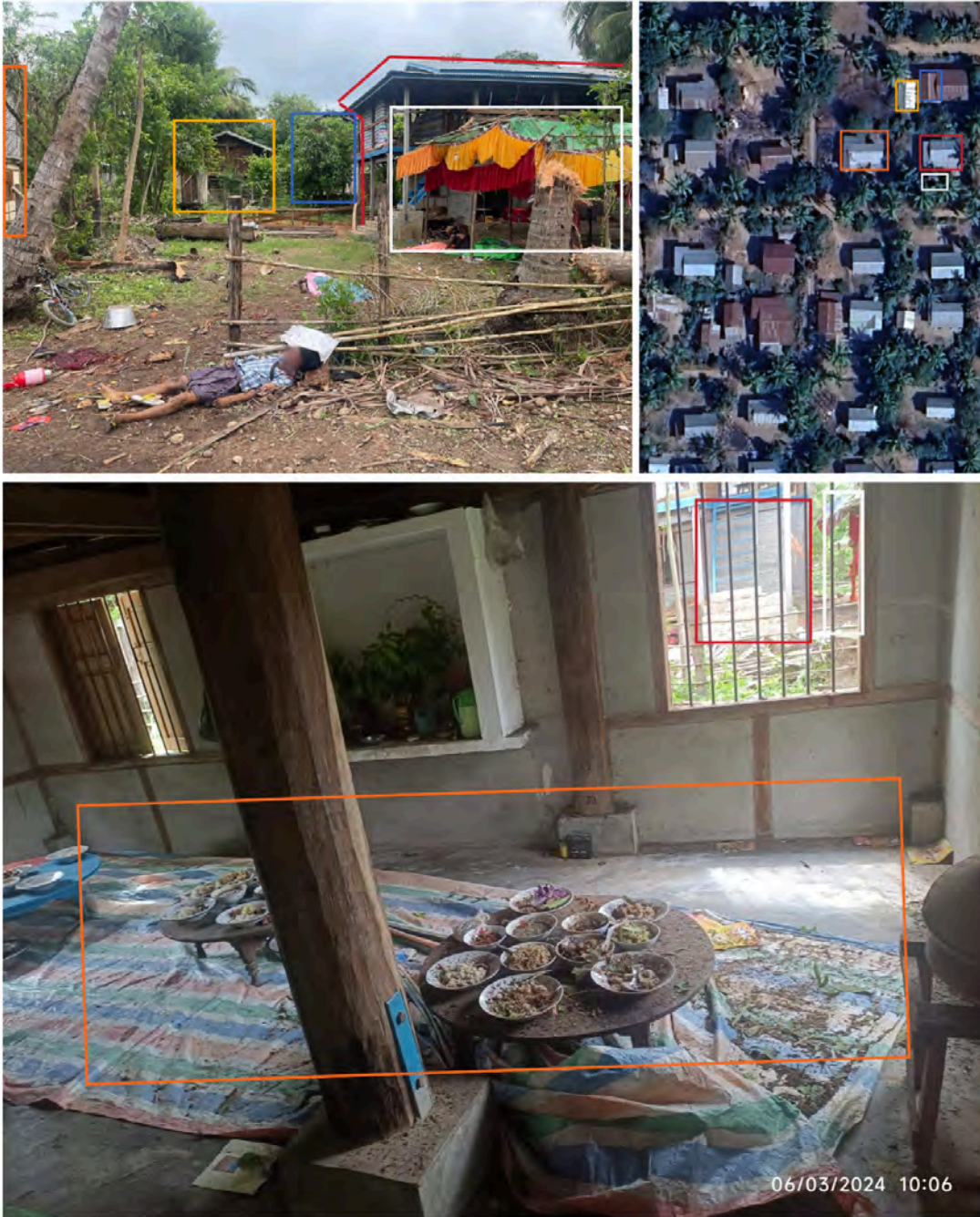


Figure 3: Imagery showing bodies of fatalities, destroyed trees, damaged buildings, a pandal and area where food was likely served. All are geolocated by Myanmar Witness to be within close proximity to one another [22.894839, 94.531282] (source: [Myanmar Now](#)).





Figure 4: Imagery of buildings west of the pandal and coconut trees heavily damaged [22.894906, 94.531086] and [22.894621, 94.531027] (source: [Myanmar Now](#)).



Figure 5: Bodies of fatalities placed together near the location of the pandal (orange box) [22.895135, 94.531034] (source: [Khit Thit](#)).





Figure 6: Imagery and satellite imagery of a crater and damaged trees near the possible site of the explosion [22.894357, 94.530979] (source redacted due to safety concerns).





Figure 7: PICINT showing geolocated locations of imagery relating to the incident.

## Date and time of the incident

It is highly likely the incident occurred between 1 - 6 June 2024, based on satellite imagery analysis and reverse-image searching of the images geolocated above.

The images geolocated to Ma Taw village, in the section above, were first uploaded online after the event, not before, indicating an increased likelihood that they were from this event and that the event took place on 3 June.

Sentinel-2 imagery of the incident location in Ma Taw village is available for [1](#), [3](#) and [6 June 2024](#); however, the location is covered by clouds in imagery from 3 June. Sentinel-2 imagery taken on 1 and 6 June 2024, shows changes on the ground at the location in question, shown with the red boxes in figure 7.



Figure 7: Comparison of Sentinel-2 imagery on [1](#) (left) and [6 June 2024](#) (right).

The earliest published reports and footage of the incident appeared on 3 June 2024, with all reports claiming that the incident occurred on that same day. Multiple sources, including those with pro-democracy and pro-SAC leaning, consistently reported that the incident took place at around 08:00 local time ([BBC](#), [Myanmar Now](#), [Khit Thit Media](#), [Myanma Honor](#)), adding credence to the claim that the incident took place on 3 June 2024.

## Analysis of wedding event claims

A wedding was highly likely taking place when the attack occurred.

Online sources gathered and analysed by Myanmar Witness, including media outlets such as [BBC](#), [Myanmar Now](#), as well as pro-SAC sources such as [Myanma Honor](#), have reported that



the attack was carried out during a wedding. The posts from pro-SAC channels claiming that the incident took place at a wedding significantly strengthen this claim, as statements from pro-SAC channels confirming this, portray the Myanmar military unfavourably.

Geolocated footage (figure 3) shows tables, plates and utensils, indicating that a large number of people would receive food in this location. Additionally, analysis of UGC reveals that a decorative pandal is at the site of the incident (figure 8). Such pandals are commonly used on special occasions in Myanmar, including as wedding decorations. No other common traditional or religious events are celebrated in early June in Myanmar, and therefore Myanmar Witness considers it likely that the imagery shows a wedding celebration.

The victims' are dressed in plain clothes. While this does not indicate a special occasion or military operation (figure 9), the small rural village is not a wealthy area, and thus, people may not wear clothing considered 'special attire' even during a special occasion.



*Figure 8: Decorative pandals such as these at the site of the alleged attack are often used for special events such as weddings (sources: [HRDT - NLD](#), [Myanmar Now](#)).*

## Was the wedding also a military target?

It is possible that the event was specifically targeted as it was allegedly the wedding of a PDF leader, where PDF members were likely in attendance.

Several sources claimed that the wedding was for a PDF leader. The BBC [conducted](#) an interview with the reported bride of the wedding, who sustained a head injury due to the explosion. She claimed that there were SAC informants in the village and that the attack was specifically targeting the wedding. Although this claim could not be verified by Myanmar

Witness, the Myanmar Air Force (MAF) has previously conducted similar attacks targeting gatherings of resistance-aligned civilians, such as the airstrike on a Kachin Independence Organisation [anniversary gathering](#) in October 2022. It is possible that the attack specifically targeted this wedding because of PDF involvement.

A video shared by a pro-SAC source [claims](#) that the wedding was attended by PDF members, and that PDF troops were planning to attack Mingin town (see: 2:04). However, apart from an image that shows what appears to be two pieces from a used munition, no footage of weapons or ammunition was shared. Additionally, the bodies of the fatalities appear to be wearing plain clothes (figure 9) and show no evidence of uniforms. However, this is not conclusive due to the limited footage available online.

Myanmar Witness assesses that it is almost certain the incident occurred during a wedding event. This event may be of interest to international lawyers to determine whether the wedding was a legitimate military target and whether the use of heavy weapons (see analysis below) constitutes a violation of the [principle of proportionality](#).

## Forensic review of imagery of fatalities

Reports on the number of fatalities vary between 20 and 32. According to a report by a local PDF group (source redacted due to safety concerns), 23 people including two children were killed on-site, and several more died while being transported to receive medical care.

Forensic review of the UGC confirms with near certainty that at least 19 bodies, including at least two children, are visible in the imagery, (figures 9 and 10). In figure 9, the body of a child labelled '3' is not clearly visible. However, Khit Thit's Telegram post [provides](#) multiple images showing other angles of the same scene (figure 10). By cross-referencing these images, through matching the clothes and a partially visible face, Myanmar Witness assesses with almost certainty that it is the body of a child.

Analysis of the imagery also shows that the bodies of the victims suffered high levels of trauma (figure 11). This indicates that a high-intensity explosion happened at the site of the incident, which likely caused a high number of fatalities, consistent with the claims that an airstrike hit this location.





Figure 9: Myanmar Witness identified with a high level of confidence at least 19 separate bodies, including two children labelled 3 (see figure 10 for detailed analysis) and 17 (source: [Khit Thit](#)).



Figure 10: Cross-referencing of imagery appearing to show the body of a child (source: [Khit Thit](#)).



Figure 11: Blurred image of human remains showing high levels of trauma (source: [Khit Thit](#)).

## Analysis of airstrike claim

Multiple sources reported that two explosions were caused by an airstrike, and the [BBC](#) reported an additional 60mm mortar strike shortly after the initial alleged airstrike (sources redacted due to privacy concerns). The damage visible in UGC is consistent with the use of a heavy weapon. However, there is no conclusive evidence to confirm the use of an airstrike or other ground-based heavy weaponry.

## Damage consistent with an airstrike

Figure 12 (top) shows a large crater on the ground close to the location of the pandal and building where food was set up, and figure 12 (bottom) shows multiple fallen coconut trees. As coconut trees are very sturdy, the damage was likely a result of one or more powerful explosions.





*Figure 12: (Top) Damage on the ground (white boxes) indicating a possible crater as a result of one or more explosions (source redacted due to safety concerns). (Bottom) Multiple coconut trees are visible as fallen on the ground. (source: [Myanmar Now](#)).*

Detailed forensic analysis by Myanmar Witness reveals evidence of human tissue, blood, internal components and bone fragments in the UGC (figure 11). The casualty count, visible body trauma, and injuries, are consistent with the use of a heavy weapon.

UGC (figure 13) [shows](#) what appears to be two pieces of used munition allegedly found at the site of the incident. The pieces of metal appeared to have endured rust, which indicates that the pieces may have been exposed to corrosion for some time. However, due to significant damage

to the material and tight framing of the images, Myanmar Witness cannot verify where or when the images were taken, nor conclusively identify the remnants.

The damage is consistent with that of an airstrike, however, there is no specific evidence confirming if the damage was caused by an airstrike, artillery, mortar, or other form of attack.



*Figure 13: Pieces of used munitions reportedly found at the site of the incident. Myanmar Witness has not been able to geolocate or identify the remnants (source: [HRDT - NLD](#)).*

## Analysis of aircraft path

Myanmar Witness investigated claims of aircraft sightings around the time of the incident by analysing two Telegram channels (sources redacted for privacy concerns) that provided details on aircraft movement. Differences of approximately one minute in the reported sightings are considered consistent and refer to the same aircraft during this analysis.

Myanmar Witness analysed trajectories by comparing average speeds, based on the time difference and distance between approximate locations of aircraft sightings (table 1, figure 14). The average speed the aircraft travelled is between 500 - 685 km per hour. Using this estimated aircraft speed range, the aircraft would have arrived at Ma Tau village between 08:17 and 08:22 am local time on 3 June 2024. This is consistent with the timeframe reported by sources for the attack, and the time of a reported airstrike by Channel 2 in the area of the incident (table 1). These claims and analysis are consistent with media claims identified.

Myanmar Witness concludes with very high confidence that heavy weapons were used. Although no conclusive imagery has been found to confirm airstrikes or ground-based heavy weapon strikes, the information collected, along with the imagery showing damage and fatalities, and flight path analysis indicates the likelihood that an airstrike targeted the area.



<b>Time of aircraft sighting</b>	<b>Time posted</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Post message (Translated and summarised by MW)</b>
07:48 - Channel 1 07:49 - Channel 2	07:49 07:51	Magway airbase [20.154184, 94.967754]	A jet fighter left northwest bound from Magway Airbase
07:58 - Channel 1	08:04	Chauk [20.893342, 94.820156]	A jet fighter flew by Chauk northbound
08:05 - Channel 2	08:08	Myaing [21.614083, 94.852960]	A jet fighter from Magway airbase flew past Myaing northwest bound
08:16 - Channel 2	09:01	Mingin district	A jet fighter from Magway airbase carried out an attack in Mahu Taung, Mingin district
08:31 - Channel 1	08:32	Myaing	A jet fighter from Magway airbase flew past Myaing southbound
08:43 - Channel 1	08:43	Chauk	A jet fighter flew by Chauk southbound
08:53 - Channel 1 08:54 - Channel 2	08:56 08:57	Magway airbase	A jet fighter landed in Magway airbase from the west A jet fighter landed in Magway airbase from the north

*Table 1: Timeline of reported aircraft sightings on the morning of 3 June 2024 relevant to the area of the incident (sources redacted due to privacy concerns).*

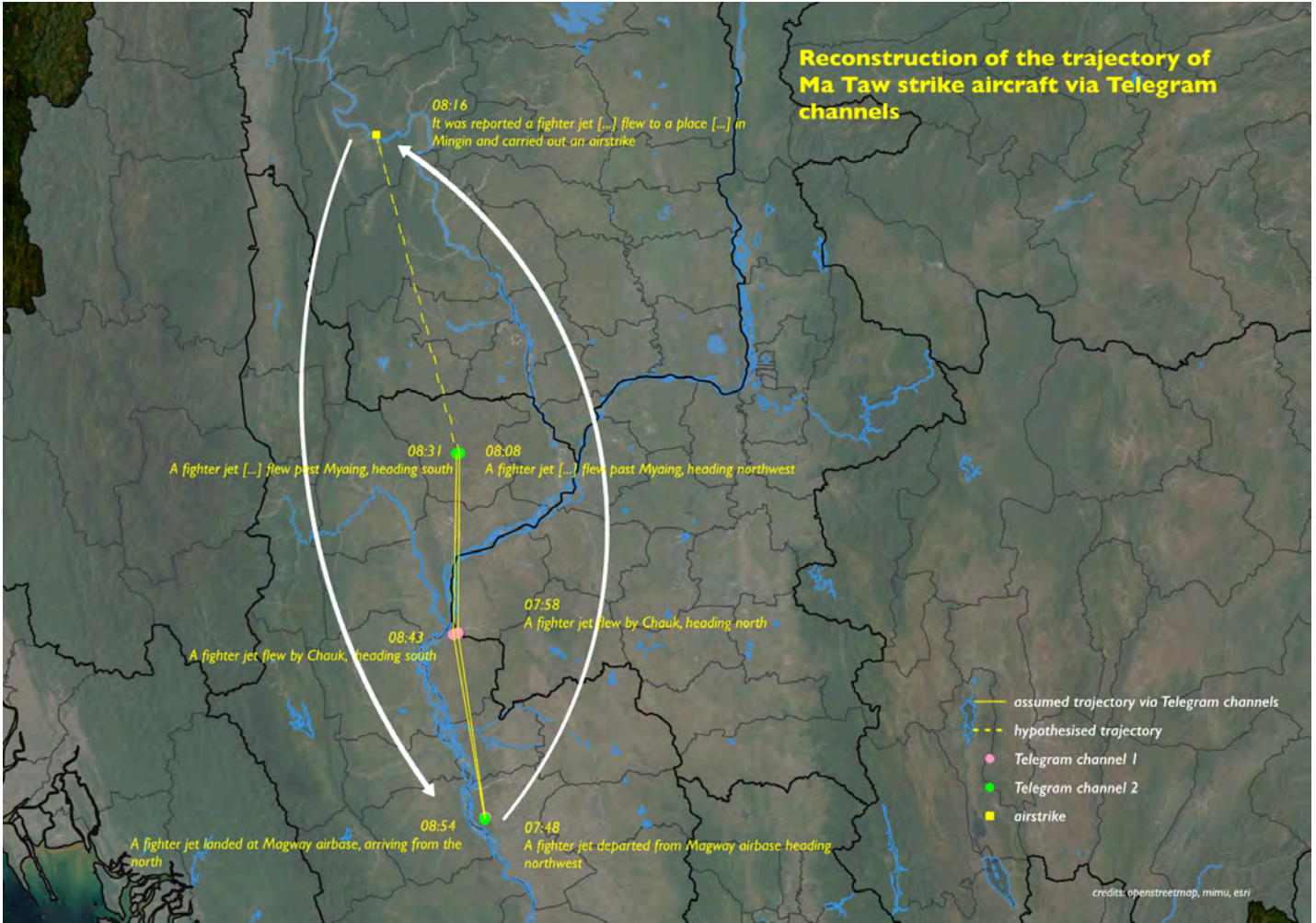


Figure 14: Reconstruction of the reported aircraft trajectory via Telegram channel messages (sources redacted due to privacy concerns).

**Attribution**

The MAF is the only actor in the conflict with access and capacity to use aircraft capable of carrying out an airstrike. It is highly likely that the MAF is responsible. Imagery showing the strike or aircraft would confirm the MAF's responsibility for the attack. If further evidence points to the use of mortars or artillery instead, it is highly likely that the Myanmar military, or affiliated Pyu Saw Htree forces in the vicinity, were responsible for the attack.



## Future monitoring

Myanmar Witness documents and investigates attacks in civilian-populated areas, including against high-impact events similar to this incident, such as the airstrike on a Kachin Independence Organisation [anniversary gathering](#) in October 2022. The SAC [deny](#) the use of airstrikes in civilian-populated areas, and Myanmar Witness will continue to monitor the use of aerial attacks against civilian gatherings as a target in military operations.

## Abbreviations

- Fire Information for Resource Management System      FIRMS
- Myanmar Air Force      MAF
- People's Defence Force      PDF
- State Administration Council      SAC
- User-generated content      UGC