

Inter-Rebel Conflict and Network Dynamics in Post-Coup Myanmar
(2021–2025)

By

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Abstract

Which rebel groups fight among each other in Myanmar's ongoing civil war? Which regions are most affected by this violence? And how has inter-rebel conflict evolved in the wake of the 2021 military coup? While existing research has largely focused on inter-rebel dynamics during the pre-coup era, this thesis turns to the contemporary landscape, offering a detailed analysis of rebel group interactions in post-coup Myanmar. Drawing on conflict event data from 2021 to 2025, the study traces the shifting alliances, rivalries, and fault lines among armed actors. It maps where inter-rebel violence is most concentrated and identifies which groups are the key players in the conflict. Designed through a visual storytelling approach, the research presents these complex dynamics in an accessible form, combining data-driven insights with network visualization to illuminate the strategic, political, and territorial motivations behind inter-rebel behavior. This study contributes to the broader understanding of insurgent fragmentation, alliance formation, and the evolving nature of Myanmar's civil war.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no material previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgement is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for this thesis is accurate:

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Signed: THINT MYAT

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	1
II.	Background: Historical and Political Context of the Myanmar Civil War	5
III.	Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	8
IV.	Source of Data.....	11
V.	Methods: Network Construction and Temporal Scope	13
VI.	Research Questions	14
VII.	Results and Discussion	15
	1. Introduction to Results.....	15
	2. Mapping the Inter-Rebel Conflict Network, 2021–2025	16
	3. Yearly Evolution of Hostilities (2021–2025).....	20
	4. Time Series Analysis of Hostile Interactions	29
	5. Rebel Group Alliances and Cooperative Dynamics in Inter-Rebel Conflicts.....	32
VIII.	Limitations	39
IX.	Conclusion	39
	Bibliography	42
	Appendices.....	45

List of Figures

Figure 1. Full-period Network of Inter-Rebel Hostility (February 2021– April 2025)	18
Figure 2. Sample Self-Looping Nodes: Rebel groups’ self-directed conflict incidents	19
Figure 3. Inter-Rebel Hostility Network in 2021	20
Figure 4. Inter-Rebel Hostility Network in 2022	21
Figure 5. Inter-Rebel Hostility Network in 2023	23
Figure 6. Inter-Rebel Hostility Network in 2024	25
Figure 7. Inter-Rebel Hostility Network in 2025	27
Figure 8. First Hostile Interactions Between Rebel Groups in Myanmar (February 2021 – April 2025)	30
Figure 9. Monthly Total Inter-Rebel Conflict Events in Myanmar (February 2021 – April 2025)	31
Figure 10. Rebel Alliance Network Before Operation 1027	34
Figure 11. Rebel Alliance Network After Operation 1027	37

List of Abbreviations for Armed Groups

- ARSA – Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
- CNF/CNA – Chin National Front / Chin National Army
- HPDF – Homalin People's Defence Force
- KIA – Kachin Independence Army
- PLA – People's Liberation Army of Manipur
- PNLO/PNLA – Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization / Pa-Oh National Liberation Army
- PNO/PNA – Pa-Oh National Organization / Pa-Oh National Army
- PSLF/TNLA – Palaung State Liberation Front / Ta'ang National Liberation Army
- RCSS/SSA-S – Restoration Council of Shan State / Shan State Army-South
- SNA – Shanni Nationalities Army
- SSPP/SSA-N – Shan State Progress Party / Shan State Army-North
- ULA/AA – United League of Arakan / Arakan Army
- ZRA – Zomi Revolutionary Army

I. Introduction

One of the longest-running conflicts in the world exists in Myanmar and involves a complex web of ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) and state actors engaged in both cooperation and violent confrontations. To understand the shifting power dynamics of the rebellion and the complex nature of inter-rebel conflict, the post-coup period in Myanmar offers a crucial new framework for analyzing the relationships between allies and adversaries among the various parties involved. The military coup of February 1st, 2021 marked a decisive reset of the country's political landscape, as control over the central authority reverted to the pre-democratic elite. This group is commonly denoted with its anglicized Burmese name “Tat Ma Daw”, or officially as the State Administrative Council (SAC), is led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. The roots of the Myanmar Civil War trace back to the period of gaining independence following the end of the Second World War.¹ Yet the nature of rebellion has undergone a continuous transformation. Over the decades, old allies have turned into rivals, and new strategic alliances have formed in response to shifting political and military landscapes. It is undoubtedly too broad to comprehensively trace or cover the overall dynamics that have evolved over the past eight decades. Instead, a more effective approach is to focus on the emerging dynamics that have unfolded in the past four years following the recent political upheaval.

There are notable similarities between the conflicts in Myanmar and those observed in civil wars throughout the world. According to Krause, “the structure of a national movement is first defined by the number of significant groups it contains because the most powerful

¹ A. J. Stockwell, “Southeast Asia in War and Peace: The End of European Colonial Empires,” in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, ed. Nicholas Tarling, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 325–86.

groups play the dominant role in campaign dynamics and outcomes.”² Understanding the group dynamic can provide valuable insights into the structure of the revolution movement to draw comparisons with similar patterns of violence, alliance formation, and resource struggles in the global context. However, Myanmar's conflict remains unique in its localized group formations and historical complexities. This study aims to bridge a critical gap in the understanding of Myanmar's conflict dynamics by shifting the focus from traditional government–rebel confrontations to the often-overlooked conflicts among rebel groups themselves. Through an examination of alliance formation and the evolving patterns of inter-rebel violence within Myanmar's dense tropical jungles, this study highlights the internal fractures that continue to shape the broader civil war.

The latest phase of this civil war involves a wide array of political parties along with their respective armed organizations, each pursuing distinct but sometimes overlapping objectives. Addressing these objectives in a systematic structural approach requires more than exploring certain popular groups, which are the main players in this conflict. Like many civil conflicts, the rebel groups in Myanmar were deeply influenced by ethnic identities, cultural differences, ideologies and historical backgrounds.³ This diversity became particularly visible during the period of democratic backsliding following the 2021 military coup, followed by a widespread uprising known as the Spring Revolution. Various resistance efforts, both non-violent protests and armed confrontations, took place continuously and resulted in significant casualties with far-reaching impacts across the country. According to the report number (15) from ‘Data for Myanmar’ on December 31, 2024, following the cases after the military coup in 2021, a total of 112,485 civilian homes have been destroyed by arson attacks, in which

² Peter Krause, *Rebel Power: Why National Movements Compete, Fight, and Win*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), 1.

³ Martin J. Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, 2. (updated) ed, Politics in Contemporary Asia (Dhaka: Univ. Press [u.a.], 1999).

108,645 were deliberately set ablaze by the Myanmar military and its affiliated groups.⁴ It is indisputable that SAC has remained proactive in military operations in its declared position to suppress rebellion and maintain control over key territories. On the other hand, the long-standing movements of the rebels have drawn increasing attention, as their internal unity and strategic objectives often clash despite their collective opposition to the military rule. To address these complexities, this research applies network analysis to visually map and clarify the evolving relationships of conflict and cooperation among Myanmar's rebel groups from 2021 to 2025.

Despite the widespread resistance, the fragmentation of power and mobilization within the Spring Revolution remains unclear. While the majority of strong rebel groups and the opposition parties have openly declared their overarching goal of ending the military dictatorship, until this point, there is no unified definition of what ending the dictatorship entails. There are diverse objectives among the rebels, including autonomy of the occupied territories, cease-fire agreements,⁵ confederate statehood,⁶ federal democracy,⁷ self-determination⁸ and so forth. During the four-plus years since the military coup, armed clashes between the Myanmar military and resistance forces have dramatically intensified. Beyond the battlefield, Myanmar's political instability has contributed to broader socio-economic and

⁴ Data for Myanmar, "Documenting the Monthly Impact of Arson Attacks on Civilian Homes" (Data for Myanmar, January 2025), <https://www.facebook.com/data4myanmar/>.

⁵ The Irrawaddy, "MNDA Leader Vows to Uphold China's 'Peace' Policy on Myanmar," *The Irrawaddy*, January 29, 2025, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/ethnic-issues/mndaa-leader-vows-to-uphold-chinas-peace-policy-on-myanmar.html>.

⁶ Rajeev Bhattacharyya, "Arakan Army Commander-in-Chief Twan Mrat Naing on the Future of Rakhine State," *The Diplomat*, September 6, 2024, <https://thediplomat.com/2024/09/arakan-army-commander-in-chief-twan-mrat-naing-on-the-future-of-rakhine-state/>.

⁷ National Unity Government of Myanmar, "About," National Unity Government of Myanmar, accessed April 16, 2025, <https://nugmyanmar.org/about/>.

⁸ Karen National Union, "Objectives," Karen National Union, accessed April 16, 2025, <https://knuhq.org/en/about/objectives>.

criminal phenomena, including transitional online scamming operations,⁹ ethnic genocides,¹⁰ military conscription,¹¹ the rebels' territorial expansion and mass displacement.

⁹ Leila Goldstein, "Thousands Rescued from Illegal Scam Compounds in Myanmar as Thailand Launches Huge Crackdown," *The Guardian*, February 19, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/19/myanmar-scam-call-centre-compound-rescues-thailand-crackdown>.

¹⁰ Al Jazeera Staff, "Rohingya 'Genocide Intensifying' as War Rages in Myanmar's Rakhine: BROUK," *Aljazeera*, June 26, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/6/26/rohingya-genocide-intensifying-as-war-rages-in-myanmars-rakhine-brouk>.

¹¹ Kelly Ng, "Myanmar: Young People Attempt to Flee Ahead of Conscription Order." *BBC*, February 26, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-68345291>.

II. Background: Historical and Political Context of the Myanmar Civil War

Myanmar's contemporary civil war is rooted in the long history of colonialism, contested ideological power, ethnic fragmentation and a series of uprisings. Since gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1948, Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, has been plagued by cycles of conflicts and authoritarian rule. Between September 1945 and early 1948, Burma was the only territory where the former colonial authority was unable to maintain even an informal presence.¹² For Britain, decolonization in Burma was marked by failure, as post-independence Burma experienced immediate civil conflict and the collapse of political cohesion.¹³ The post-independence government of Burma failed to establish a truly inclusive political framework, resulting in immediate resistance from ethnic minorities who had been promised varying degrees of autonomy during the colonial transition. This laid the foundation for the formation of numerous ethnic armed organizations and other rebel forces, some of which have endured for more than seventy years.

Over the decades, various EAOs emerged to represent their respective ethnic communities, often establishing parallel administrative and military structures in contested regions. These groups vary widely in ideology, military capacity, and strategic orientation. Some have signed ceasefire agreements with the central government; others continue to wage armed resistance.¹⁴ Despite having communication through umbrella organizations like the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) or the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee (FPNCC), inter-rebel cooperation has historically been fragile even

¹² Stockwell, *Southeast Asia in War and Peace: The End of European Colonial Empires*.

¹³ Stockwell.

¹⁴ Joe Kumbun, "The UNFC: Reasons Behind Signing and Not Signing the NCA," *The Irrawaddy*, February 14, 2018, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/opinion/guest-column/unfc-reasons-behind-signing-not-signing-nca.html>.

within ethnically similar groups. Understanding the evolution of these groups also requires attention to the diverse geographical, economic, and tactical contexts in which they operate.

The nature of conflict in Myanmar is also deeply shaped by terrain and regional political economies. Ethnic strongholds in states such as Kachin, Kayin, Shan, Chin, and Kayah present logistical and tactical environments distinct from urban centers like Mandalay and Yangon. The adoption of drones, remote explosives, and hit-and-run tactics by various groups reflects this diversity in operational environments. Moreover, borderland regions with contested opium production or resource wealth exhibit persistent patterns of violence, often driven by economic motivations and prolonged state neglect.¹⁵ These conditions have produced highly localized patterns of resistance and armed conflict that continue to shape rebel strategies today.

On February 1, 2021, SAC seized power in a coup d'état, arresting and killing elected members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) by claiming the results of the 2020 general election were fraudulent. The coup marked a turning point in Myanmar's political history, and the post-coup period witnessed the formation of People's Defense Forces (PDFs), local militias organized by anti-junta civilians, youth activists, and defecting military personnel. Many of these groups pledged loyalty to the National Unity Government (NUG), a shadow government formed by exiled NLD leaders and ethnic representatives.

For the first time in decades, previously dispersed resistance groups, including PDFs and long-standing EAOs, found themselves fighting a common enemy.¹⁶ This convergence led to new forms of cooperation, joint military operations, and political coordination. However, the longstanding history of inter-rebel conflict that predates the emergence of the PDFs has not

¹⁵ UNODC, "Myanmar Opium Survey 2024 Cultivation, Production, and Implications," Myanmar Opium Survey 2024 (UNODC, December 2024), https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Myanmar/Myanmar_Opium_Survey_2024.pdf.

¹⁶ Frontier, "NUG Settling in for Long Fight against Junta," *FRONTIER MYANMAR*, April 28, 2022, <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/nug-settling-in-for-long-fight-against-junta/>.

disappeared. Tensions, misunderstandings, and even direct clashes between armed groups continue to appear, often rooted in deep historical grievances and political events that occurred decades prior. Given the evolving nature of these armed groups, including frequent name changes, shifting alliances, and ideological repositioning, the dynamics of contemporary group formation in the past four years have evolved, with different political trends compared to before the coup.

III. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The study of civil wars has increasingly turned toward understanding not only the dynamics between rebel groups and the state, but also the relationships among rebel groups themselves. To understand the complexity and fragmentation of modern insurgencies, Myanmar's civil war presents a critical case for exploring these dynamics, as its multi-ethnic, multi-organizational landscape reflects a layered and evolving system of both cooperation and confrontation among armed actors.

A valuable lens to understanding these internal rebel dynamics is through Peter Krause's *Rebel Power*. Krause's analysis of rebel group dynamics within national movements offers a valuable comparative framework for understanding how power is unevenly distributed among rebel actors.¹⁷ His work highlights how internal hierarchies, competition, and the pursuit of dominance among rebel groups can significantly shape the trajectory and cohesion of broader revolutionary or resistance movements. According to Krause, the typology of movement structures includes the hegemonic, united and fragmented, based on the number of significant groups and their alliances.¹⁸ In fragmented movements, dominant groups may prioritize maintaining their strategic goal of statehood within the rebellion rather than winning the war as a common goal to ensure equal power-sharing, leading to both rivalry and sabotage.¹⁹ This framework is especially relevant to post-coup Myanmar, where a range of pre-existing and newly formed groups coalesce under the common goal of resisting military rule yet remain divided by ideology, territorial ambitions, and identity politics. The competition for power and legitimacy within the rebellion often undermines the potential for unified resistance, which in turn affects both the trajectory of the conflict and the possibility for negotiated peace.

¹⁷ Krause, *Rebel Power: Why National Movements Compete, Fight, and Win*.

¹⁸ Krause.

¹⁹ Krause.

Additional literature pertinent to this study examines the formation of alliances in civil wars, particularly among rebel groups. Fotini Christia emphasizes that “relative power considerations dictate both alliance choices and – to a certain degree – group fractionalization in multiparty civil wars.”²⁰ According to the coalition theory of Riker discussed by Christia, weaker warring groups may be reluctant to join coalitions with stronger partners due to fears that, after securing victory, the dominant group could renege on its commitments and turn against its weaker allies.²¹ This reflects a credible commitment problem, where the stronger actor cannot guarantee it will not exploit its post-conflict advantage. Kalyvas, in his book on *The logic of violence in civil war*, claimed that “civil war is a process that connects the collective actors’ quest for power and the local actors’ quest for local advantages.”²² Many scholars have frequently explained how group coalitions come out of short-term strategic interests such as access to resources, arms, or territorial control. Christia, for example, argues that while identity shapes the initial composition of rebel groups, it does not causally determine alliance formation, as identity-based narratives are typically elite-driven justifications for alliances formed primarily on tactical grounds.²³ These global perspectives on the civil wars help explain the frequent breakdowns and reconfigurations of alliances in protracted conflicts like Myanmar's.

In the context of Myanmar’s armed conflicts, David Brenner offers a nuanced analysis of rebel authority that moves beyond treating rebel groups as unified actors. In *Rebel Politics*, he argues that rebel leaders face a dual struggle: externally against the state, and internally against rival factions within their organizations.²⁴ His framework emphasizes how support,

²⁰ Fotini Christia, *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). 31.

²¹ Christia.

²² Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 383.

²³ Christia, *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*.

²⁴ David Brenner, *Rebel Politics: A Political Sociology of Armed Struggle in Myanmar’s Borderlands* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, an imprint of Cornell University Press, 2019).

coercion, and legitimacy operate in complex ways between leadership, local communities, and rank-and-file members.²⁵ While Brenner's work provides deep insight into the internal politics of specific groups like the Kachin Independent Organization and Karen National Union, my research takes a broader view of Myanmar's nationwide rebellion landscape in the aftermath of the 2021 military coup. Rather than focusing on intra-group dynamics, I analyze the evolving relationships between multiple armed actors using a network approach to understand how new alliances, rivalries, and conflict areas shift across the wider conflict.

Tracing the conflicts after the 2021 coup of the Myanmar civil war is an exceptionally complex task, with numerous armed groups that often bear similar names. The rebellion landscape can be overwhelming and nearly impossible to grasp for an ordinary reader. Thus, this research addresses such challenges by using network analysis as a visual storytelling tool, by mapping out the relationships of inter-rebel conflict and cooperation between groups over time. This network approach helps to simplify, clarify, and make sense of the evolving dynamics of Myanmar's fragmented resistance. The network is constructed based on observed conflict and alliance ties among rebel groups from 2021 to 2025. Due to limitations in data accessibility and consistency, the analysis is primarily visual, focusing on network structure and the evolution of inter-group relationships. Yearly comparisons are also highlighted to see the shifts in emerging hostilities and patterns of stability or fragmentation within the broader rebel landscape.

²⁵ Brenner.

IV. Source of Data

The dataset used in this study spans the full period following the military coup in Myanmar, covering events from February 1, 2021, to April 1, 2025. The four-plus years after the coup period captured the evolution of conflict, highlighting both the intensification of state-led repression and the growth of armed resistance across various regions. The data originates from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), which documents detailed accounts of conflict-related incidents globally.²⁶ ACLED data is freely accessible through academic institutions and partner agreements, from which I obtained access for this study and focuses exclusively on conflict events occurring within Myanmar. The inter-rebel networks examined in this study are based only on selected Event Types from the ACLED dataset, specifically, ‘Battles’ and ‘Explosions/Remote violence’, to capture the range of armed confrontations taking place in the country.

To further account for the tactical variation in the use of violence, a set of Sub-Event Types from the ACLED data source was included. These incidents encompass a range of violent actions such as air and drone strikes, armed clashes, shelling or missile attacks, suicide bombings, grenade and IED explosions, as well as abductions or forced disappearances. These categories are used to construct conflict networks by identifying patterns of interaction among the rebel groups. Overall, these categories reflect the multifaceted nature of Myanmar’s civil war and the diverse tactics employed by both state and non-state actors, particularly in areas of intense contestation.

In terms of actor classification, the ACLED dataset used in this study categorizes actors into ‘State forces’, ‘Rebel groups’, and ‘Political militias’. This allows for an exploration of

²⁶ Clionadh Raleigh, Roudabeh Kishi, and Andrew Linke, “Political Instability Patterns Are Obscured by Conflict Dataset Scope Conditions, Sources, and Coding Choices,” *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 10, no. 1 (February 25, 2023): 74.

the interactions among established ethnic armed organizations, newly emergent People's Defense Forces, and other political militias. After cleaning and refining the dataset, the analysis focuses exclusively on inter-rebel violence, examining how confrontations among non-state actors evolve over time and across different regions.

Rebel groups in Myanmar resemble the froth on a mug of steamed milk, flickering into view only to dissolve, then reappearing as the heat rises once again. Their fluid and unstable nature makes the internal dynamics of inter-group conflict difficult to pin down. The fragile line that separates cooperation from hostility among different groups is often blurred and gives way to a volatile environment where the ongoing civil war resembles relentless battles, fueled by rapidly advancing technologies and a constantly shifting political terrain. It is becoming harder to tell who is allied with whom, which has made the war more confusing and unstable.

Given the fluid and often ambiguous nature of actor labels in the ACLED data, particular care was taken during preprocessing. Actor names were not harmonized, as some groups appeared under different labels, and it was not always possible to confidently determine whether they referred to the same organization. Instead, the data was refined by removing pro-SAC militias, including the well-known Pyusawhti group,²⁷ as well as unidentified actors, unnamed rebel groups, and loosely organized civilian armed groups such as farmers' militias. Although some militias were categorized as "Rebel groups" in ACLED dataset, they were excluded if there was clear evidence of alignment or control by the SAC. Duplicate entries and international actors not relevant to Myanmar's internal conflict were also removed. This refinement process resulted in a dataset that more accurately reflects the dynamics among identifiable rebel forces opposing the military junta.

²⁷ John Buchanan, *Militias in Myanmar* (The Asia Foundation, 2016).

V. Methods: Network Construction and Temporal Scope

The inter-rebel network is constructed with actors as nodes, including political militias and rebel organizations such as the PDFs and EAOs, with conflict events and their association serving as edges. Edges represent instances of direct confrontation, co-involvement in battle events, or mutual targeting. These are undirected and weighted, with edge weights indicating the number of interactions between actors. Separate networks are generated on a yearly basis, as well as specifically for major coordinated rebel military ‘Operation 1027’, to track the evolution of conflict dynamics and enable a temporal analysis of shifting alliances, escalations, and actor prominence.

Network analysis is widely used in political science, yet it has rarely been applied to the complex realities of multiparty civil wars.²⁸ In Myanmar, rebel groups often operate within overlapping territorial claims and ideological spaces. Fluid command structures and shifting alliances create a dynamic battlefield where today’s ally may become tomorrow’s rival. Thus, the network approach captures not just who is fighting, but how the relationships between actors evolved in conflict and cooperation intertwine and can explore where local power dynamics may drive broader strategic outcomes.

²⁸ Steven T. Zech and Michael Gabbay, “Social Network Analysis in the Study of Terrorism and Insurgency: From Organization to Politics,” *International Studies Review* 18, no. 2 (June 2016): 214–43.

VI. Research Questions

Throughout this study, the dynamics of inter-rebel conflict and alliance formation in post-coup Myanmar have been systematically mapped and analyzed. By tracing patterns of hostility through network analysis, identifying potential central actors, examining regional vulnerabilities, and visualizing key trends through network graphs, this research underscores the fluidity, fragmentation, and complexity of Myanmar's evolving rebel landscape.

This evolving inter-rebel environment raises a central question for this research: to what extent are emerging relationships between rebel groups shaped by enduring structural patterns of cooperation and rivalry, and to what extent are they temporary, tactical responses to shifting battlefield pressures? While certain relationships, especially among dominant or long-established rebel groups, exhibit relative stability over time, others undergo rapid transformation, raising critical questions about whether such changes are driven by strategic imperatives, ideological realignments, leadership transitions, or opportunistic adaptations to evolving conflict dynamics. Although definitive generalizations are difficult, the observed patterns suggest that cooperation among rebel groups is shaped less by shared ideology or ethnic identity and more by historical grievances, battlefield conditions, personalistic political relationships, and pragmatic calculations rooted in survival, territorial opportunity, and leadership-level negotiations.

VII. Results and Discussion

1. Introduction to Results

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the study on inter-rebel conflict and rebel group network dynamics in Myanmar during the post-coup period from February 1st, 2021, to April 1st, 2025. Drawing on original datasets of conflict events and instances of group cooperation, this analysis examines two main dimensions: patterns of hostile interactions between rebel groups and the formation of alliances within inter-rebel conflicts at different stages of the conflict.

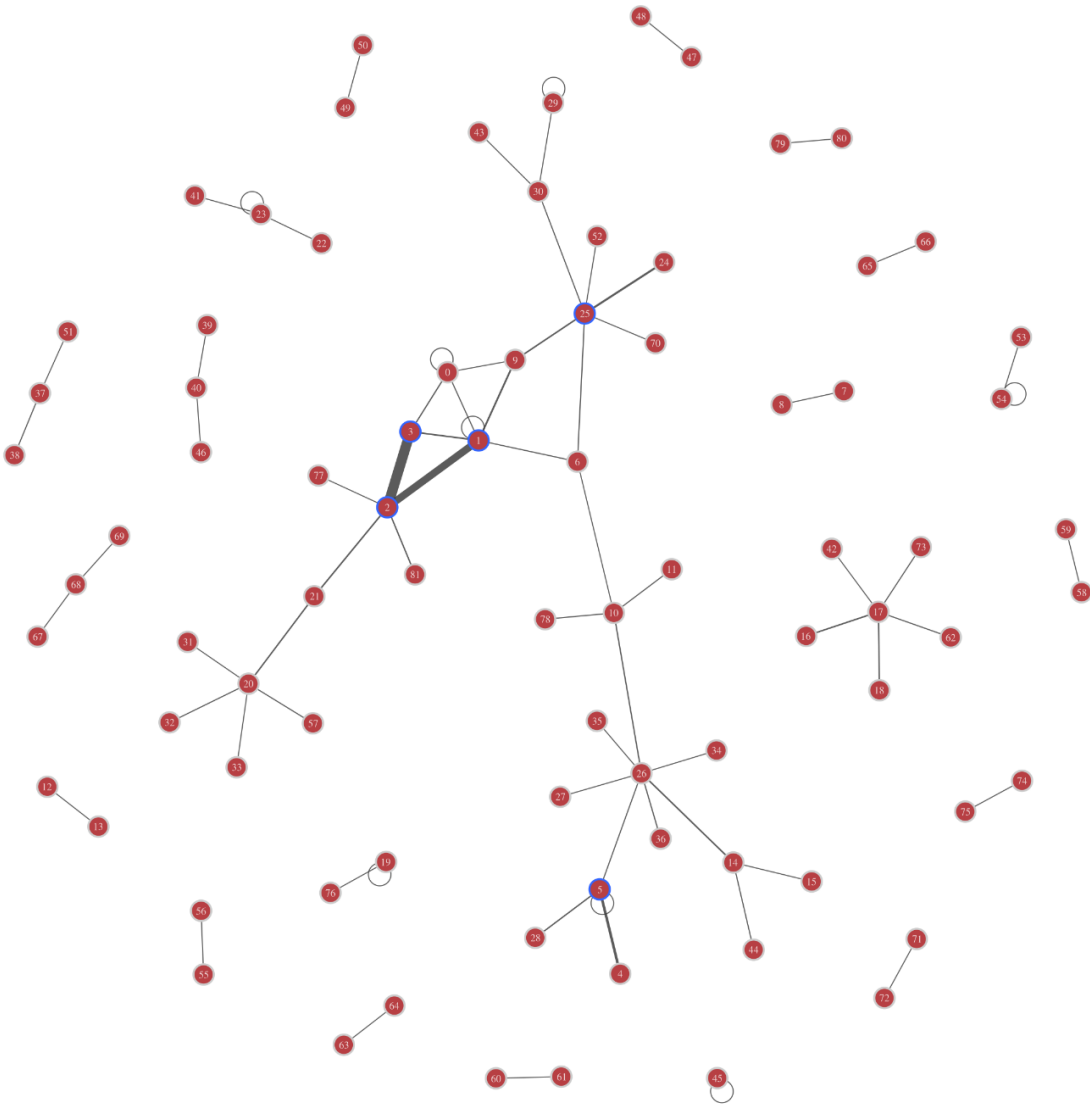
The findings are organized into several sections. First, the overall structure and yearly evolution of hostile inter-rebel relationships are explored through network visualizations and escalation trends. Next, the analysis examines the dynamics of rebel alliances, with particular attention to the impact of coordinated operations such as Operation 1027, the largest and most significant joint offensive by the Three Brotherhood Alliance and allied forces against the military junta since the 2021 coup. The resulting network visualizations highlight key actors and patterns of interaction. Finally, regional dynamics are analyzed to better understand the geographic distribution of inter-rebel conflict and the strategic positioning of key armed groups across Myanmar.

In these visualizations, nodes color-coded in blue represent the mentioned groups with the highest levels of interaction in the findings, both hostile and cooperative, across the dataset. Some figures do not display blue-highlighted nodes when the overall number of nodes is unnecessary to meaningfully distinguish the top groups. In addition, the edges connecting nodes are weighted, with thicker lines representing stronger levels of interaction, allowing the intensity of relationships between groups to be visually assessed. Overall, the findings provide a detailed account of how the post-coup environment has shaped the evolution of Myanmar's

revolutionary movement, particularly the shifting patterns of conflict and cooperation among diverse rebel groups.

2. Mapping the Inter-Rebel Conflict Network, 2021–2025

Visualizing the inter-rebel network and intensity of inter-rebel conflicts following the 2021 military coup provides a comprehensive view of the hostile interactions among Myanmar’s rebel groups. Rather than focusing on a few well-known random actors, this approach aims to present the full landscape of inter-rebel conflict activities. The full-period network, based on four-plus years of conflict data, reveals a fragmented yet interconnected landscape of conflict (see Figure 1). Some groups are completely isolated or involved only in dyadic conflicts, while others are embedded within larger clusters. These core clusters contain major rebel groups interconnected through repeated hostilities, indicating the presence of multiparty conflict and broader systemic patterns of violence.



0: MNTJP/MNDAA: Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party/Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army	42: Ramanya Army
1: PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army	43: CNO/CNDF UCR: CNO/CNDF Upper Chinlwin Region
2: RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South	44: Chinland Defense Force - Mara
3: SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North	45: Crocodile Column
4: ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army	46: People's Defense Force - Kanbalu District
5: ULA/AA: United League of Arakan/Arakan Army	47: People's Defense Force - Launglon
6: PDF: People's Defense Force	48: People's Defense Force - Dawei District
7: KNLP/KNLA: Kayan New Land Party/Kayan New Land Army	49: People's Defense Force - Kawlin
8: Nay Pyi Taw PDF - Battalion 802	50: PDO/PDA: People's Democratic Organization/People's Democratic Army
9: KIO/KIA: Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army	51: UNLF: United National Liberation Front
10: ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army	52: HPDF 124: Homalin People's Defense Force 124
11: PDA: People's Defense Army	53: ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army-Eastern Command
12: People's Defense Force - Thayarwady District	54: Chinland Defense Force - Tonzang
13: People's Defence Force Western District Yangon	55: NSCN-K: National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Khaplang
14: MDF: Maraland Defense Force	56: NSCN-Ang Mai: National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Ang Mai
15: Chinland Defense Force - Lautu	57: People's Defense Force - Pekon
16: Kaw Thoo Lei Army	58: People's Defense Force - Yesagyo
17: KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army	59: People's Defense Force - Myingyan District Battalion 5
18: KTLA-TCJF (Tanintharyi)	60: People's Security Force
19: People's Defense Force - Chaung-U	61: Zamani Revolution Force/MMU Myaung
20: PNO/PNA: Pa-Oh National Organization/Pa-Oh National Army	62: MSDF: Mon State Defense Force
21: PNLO/PNLA: Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization/Pa-Oh National Liberation Army	63: People's Defense Force - Gangaw Battalion
22: People's Defense Force - Palaw	64: PDB: Phoenix Defence Battalion
23: KNDO: Karen National Defence Organization	65: KPC: KNU/KNLA Peace Council
24: HPDF: Homalin People's Defense Force	66: Lion Battalion Commando Special Force
25: SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army	67: People's Defense Force - Shwebo
26: CNF/CNA: Chin National Front/Chin National Army	68: GZ Special Task Force - Wetlet
27: Chinland Defense Force - Kanpetlet	69: People's Defense Force - Sar Taung Gyi Village
28: RSO: Rohingya Solidarity Organization	70: People's Defense Force - Hkamti District
29: PLA: People's Liberation Army of Manipur	71: KNPP/KA: Karenni National Progressive Party/Karenni Army
30: People's Defense Force - Tamu District	72: KNPLF: Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front
31: Pehkon People's Defense Force - 2	73: DKBA (Benevolent): Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (2010-)
32: KNDF: Karenni Nationalities Defense Force	74: People's Defense Force - Shwebo District
33: Bee Column	75: Bo Tiger People Defense Force (Wetlet)
34: Chinland Defense Force - Mindat	76: Hnalone Hla Lu Maik Gyi Myar A Phwe: Big Beautiful Hearted Hoodlums
35: YDF: Yaw Defense Force	77: UWSP/UWSA: United Wa State Party/United Wa State Army
36: Chin Brotherhood Alliance	78: Zomi Federal Union/People's Defense Force - Zoland
37: KNO/KNA: Kuki National Organization/Kuki National Army	79: People's Defense Force - Yinmarbin
38: Unidentified Armed Group (India)	80: Hero Tiger Force
39: People's Defense Force - Yinmarbin District	81: NA-B: Northern Alliance
40: BNRA: Burma National Revolutionary Army	
41: Pu Ri Yakha Nyi Naung Sit Kyaung: Pu Ri Yakha Brother Column	

Figure 1. Full-period Network of Inter-Rebel Hostility (February 2021– April 2025)²⁹

An analysis of node strength (weighted degree) highlights five rebel groups that dominate the structure of inter-rebel conflict. The Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South (RCSS/SSA-S) (Node 2) exhibits the highest level of conflict activity, with a strength of 197. This is followed by the Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North (SSPP/SSA-N) (Node 3), with a strength of 120, and the Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (PSLF/TNLA) (Node 1), with a strength of 98. Other highly active groups include the United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA) (Node 5), with a strength of 29, and the Shanni Nationalities Army (SNA) (Node 25), with a strength of 27. These strength values are calculated based on each group's total involvement in clashes, encompassing both offensive actions against other groups and instances in which they were attacked. A full list of the top ten groups ranked by node strength is provided in Appendix 1 for

²⁹ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>

further reference. This highlights how a small number of actors account for a disproportionate share of hostile interactions during the post-coup period.

These findings reveal the asymmetrical nature of the post-coup conflict, where a few key actors engaged in frequent and intense hostilities, while many smaller groups either participated minimally or remained isolated. The presence of prominent groups at the core of the network suggests that inter-rebel violence is concentrated around strategic players. In addition to inter-group hostilities, the network visualization also reveals the presence of several self-loops, where a group's conflict incidents are directed inward toward itself (see Figure 2).

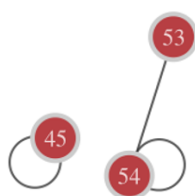


Figure 2. Sample Self-Looping Nodes: Rebel groups' self-directed conflict incidents³⁰

Self-loops in the network typically represent cases of internal violence, such as internal purges, accidents, or breakdowns in discipline. For example, Node 45, representing the Crocodile Column, exhibits a self-loop resulting from an internal killing: on 9 January 2024, in Khan Ti village of Palaw Township (Myeik District, Tanintharyi Region), eight members of the Crocodile Column and the Palaw Regional Defense Force captured and killed a 40-year-old Crocodile Column member who was on leave, for reasons that remain unclear.³¹ Another instance involves Node 54, around mid-August 2023 in Khianglam town (Tonzang Township, Falam District, Chin State), a self-loop involving CDF-Tonzang was recorded when its B-2 unit detained and later killed the commander of its B-3 unit, accusing him of military affiliation by first releasing him after he signed a pledge and surrendered eight firearms, then executing

³⁰ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

³¹ Raleigh, Kishi and Linke, "Political Instability Patterns Are Obscured by Conflict Dataset Scope Conditions, Sources, and Coding Choices".

him upon a second detention.³² These incident portrays how internal rivalries and accusations of betrayal can escalate into fatal confrontations, reinforcing the volatile nature of rebel groups even within the same nominal organization. Although self-directed incidents are relatively rare compared to inter-group hostilities, their occurrence underscores the fragmented nature of rebel group cohesion within itself in Myanmar's ongoing civil war.

3. Yearly Evolution of Hostilities (2021–2025)

To better understand the progression of inter-rebel conflict dynamics, yearly network graphs were constructed for each year from 2021 to 2025. Each yearly network captures the hostile interactions reported within that calendar year, highlighting changes in conflict intensity, group prominence, and network structure over time. It is important to note that the 2021 network begins from February 1st, following the military coup, while the 2025 network includes only until April 1st, reflecting an incomplete dataset for the last year. Detailed rankings of the top rebel groups by strength (weighted degree) for each year are provided in Appendix 2.

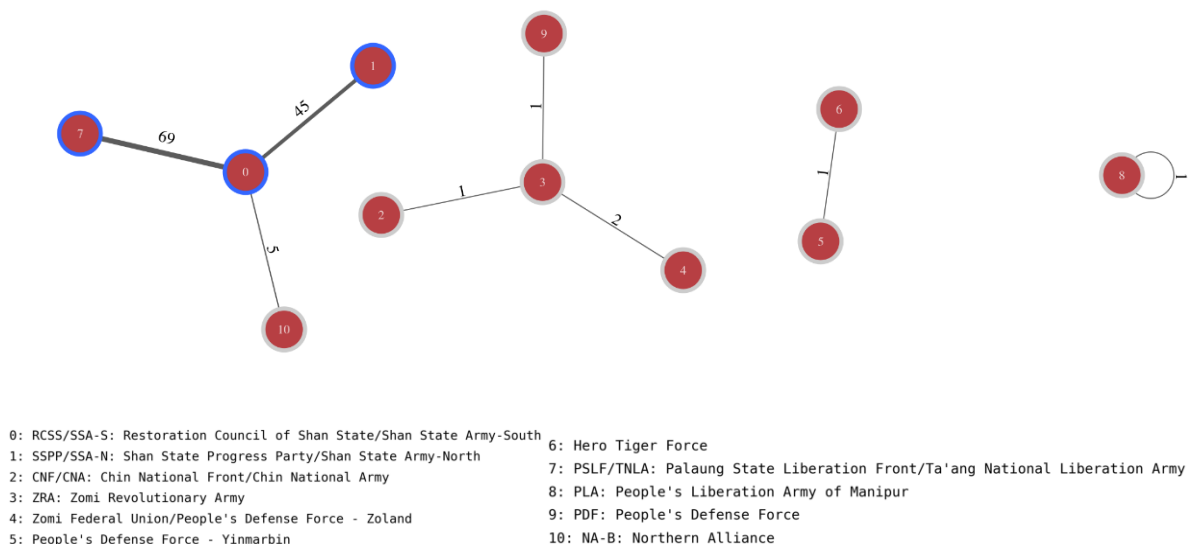


Figure 3. Inter-Rebel Hostility Network in 2021³³

³² Raleigh, Kishi, Linke.

³³ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

The 2021 network (see Figure 3) reveals an early period of heightened inter-rebel hostility characterized by two main active clusters. Major groups such as RCSS/SSA-S, PSLF/TNLA, and SSPP/SSA-N emerged as central actors. Rather than being driven primarily by the collapse of democratically elected central authority from the outcome of the military coup, many of these clashes reflected longstanding disputes, particularly between RCSS/SSA-S and PSLF/TNLA, whose rivalry intensified in the early post-coup period.³⁴ While the PSLF/TNLA had already been actively engaging SAC forces following the coup, the RCSS/SSA-S remained primarily focused on consolidating control over contested areas within Shan State, while maintaining its commitment to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).³⁵ Smaller groups, including newly emerged mainland forces such as the National Unity Government's People's Defense Forces (NUG's PDFs) and local anti-junta units like the Hero Tiger Force, also appeared within the network but occupied more peripheral positions.

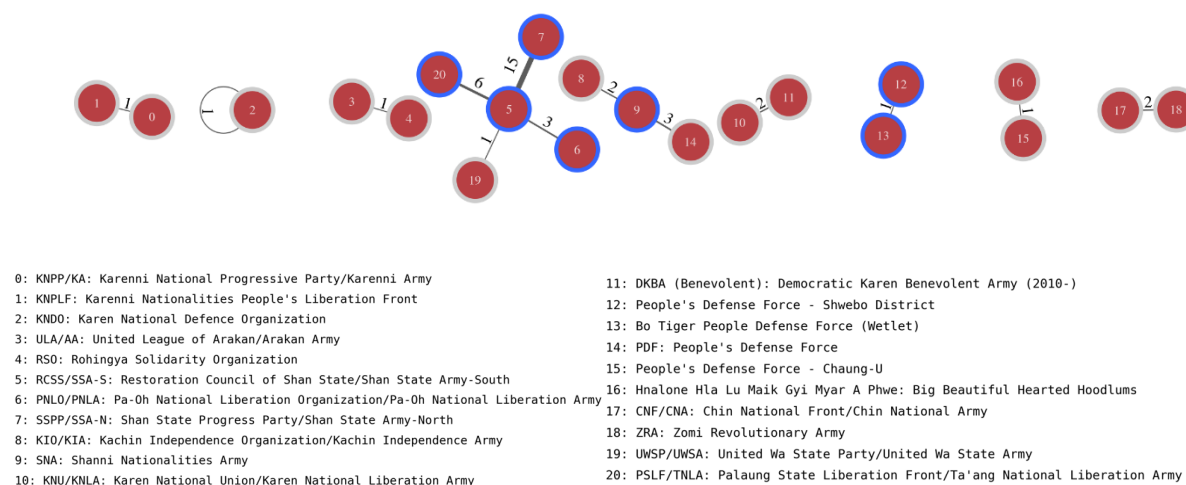


Figure 4. Inter-Rebel Hostility Network in 2022³⁶

By 2022 (see Figure 4), the network displayed increased fragmentation. Although RCSS/SSA-S, SSPP/SSA-N and PSLF/TNLA continued to be key players, new groups such

³⁴ Stein Tønnesson, Min Zaw Oo, and Ne Lynn Aung, "Pretending to Be States: The Use of Facebook by Armed Groups in Myanmar," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 52, no. 2 (March 15, 2022): 200–225.

³⁵ Shan, "RCSS Will Remain in NCA," *Shan Herald Agency for News*, August 23, 2023, <https://english.shannews.org/archives/26402>.

³⁶ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

as SNA and Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization (PNLO/PNLA) gained more prominence in conflict dynamics. Significantly, the People's Defense Forces, represented by various nodes, emerged as increasingly active participants in hostile incidents, reflecting the rise of decentralized resistance movements beyond the traditional borderland strongholds. This shift marks a critical transformation in Myanmar's conflict geography, with violence and inter-rebel conflicts expanding into the heartland, challenging the conventional notion that ethnic conflict is confined to the periphery. However, incidents such as the clash between PDF-Shwebo and PDF-Wetlet demonstrate that internal conflicts among mainland anti-junta forces are frequently fueled by poor coordination, miscommunication, and the absence of a unified command structure.³⁷ Despite these developments, the network largely remained composed of isolated clusters, suggesting that while conflict incidents persisted, the formation of broader or expansive rivalries among the rebel groups was still limited.

³⁷ Frontier, "Conflicts Deepen between Resistance Groups in Sagaing," *FRONTIER MYANMAR*, February 3, 2023, <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/conflicts-deepen-between-resistance-groups-in-sagaing/>.

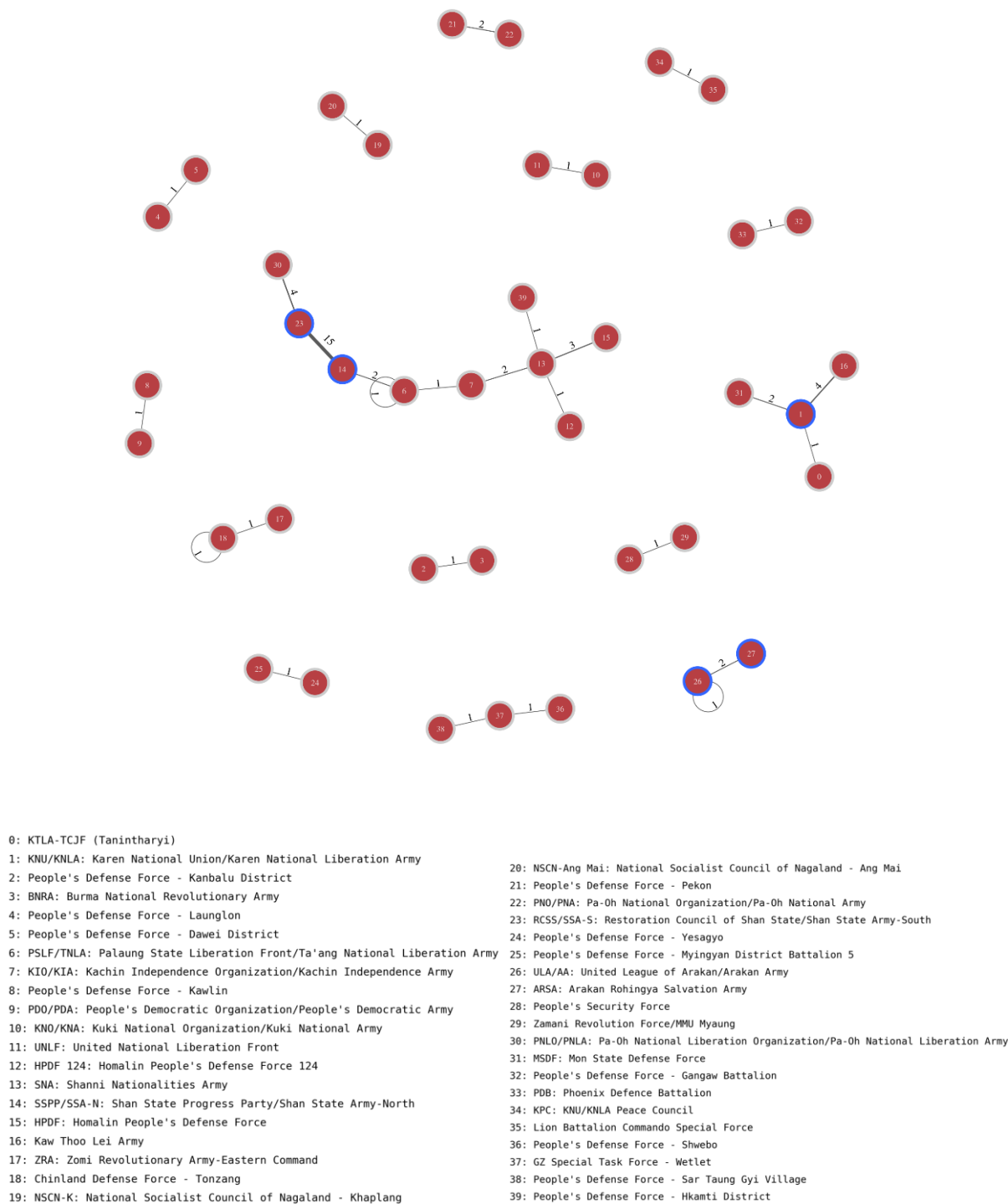
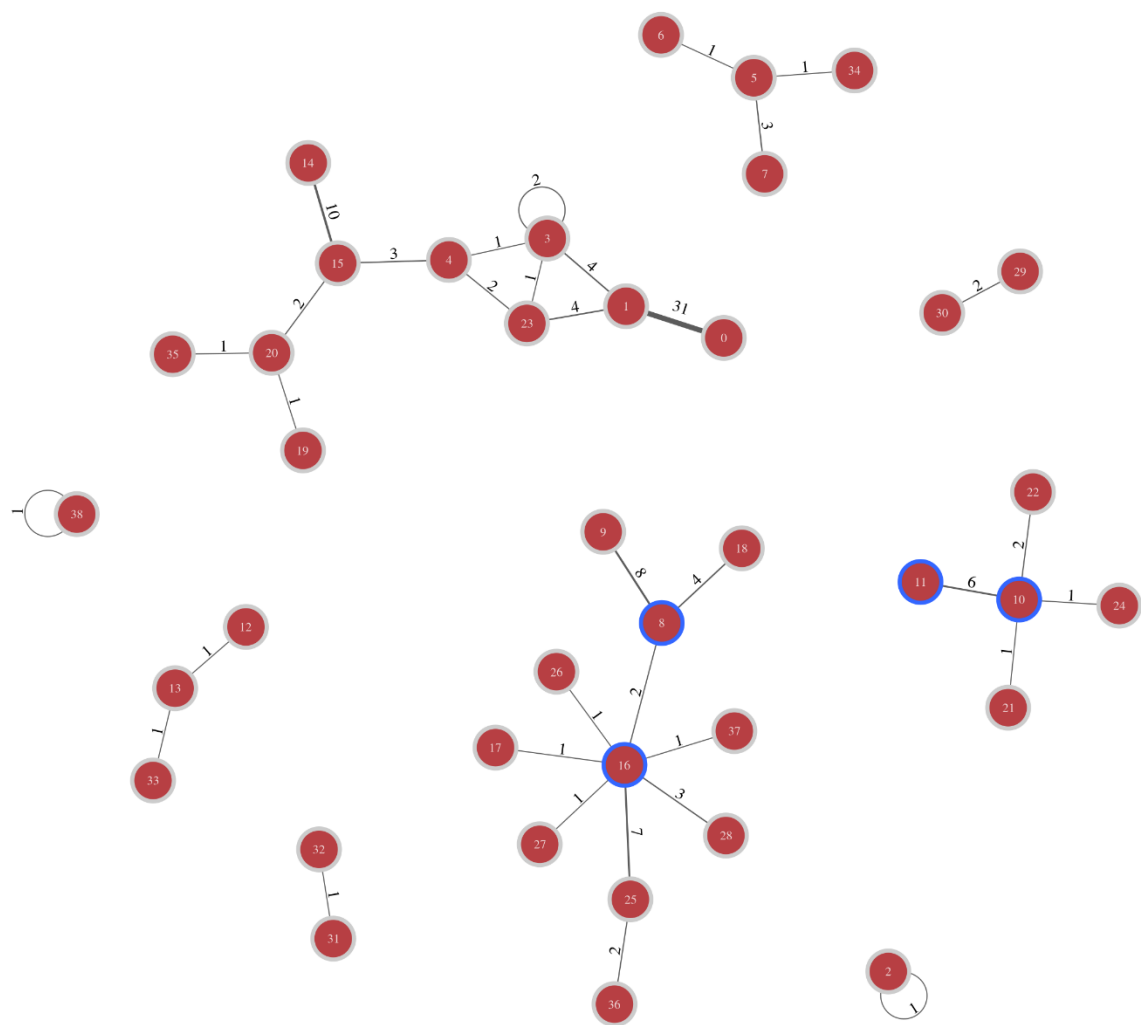


Figure 5. Inter-Rebel Hostility Network in 2023³⁸

³⁸ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>

The 2023 network (see Figure 5) reveals a further fragmentation of the conflict landscape, marked by an increase in the number of groups and isolated clusters. Major actors such as RCSS/SSA-S and SSPP/SSA-N, both operating primarily within Shan State, remained among the most active participants. The Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/KNLA) also rose in prominence, reflecting intensifying localized conflicts in southeastern Myanmar. Groups such as the United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA) and the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) continued to feature among the top participants, albeit at lower overall strength levels. Their presence suggests the reemergence of tensions between the Arakanese Buddhist and Rohingya Muslim ethnic groups in western Myanmar.



- | | |
|--|---|
| 0: RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South | 20: People's Defense Force - Tamu District |
| 1: SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North | 21: Pekhon People's Defense Force - 2 |
| 2: People's Defense Force - Chaung-U | 22: KNDF: Karenni Nationalities Defense Force |
| 3: MNTJP/MNDAA: Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party/Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army | 23: PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army |
| 4: KIO/KIA: Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army | 24: Bee Column |
| 5: KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army | 25: MDF: Maraland Defense Force |
| 6: Kaw Thoo Lei Army | 26: Chinland Defense Force - Mindat |
| 7: KTLA-TCJF (Tanintharyi) | 27: YDF: Yaw Defense Force |
| 8: ULA/AA: United League of Arakan/Arakan Army | 28: Chin Brotherhood Alliance |
| 9: ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army | 29: KNO/KNA: Kuki National Organization/Kuki National Army |
| 10: PNO/PNA: Pa-Oh National Organization/Pa-Oh National Army | 30: Unidentified Armed Group (India) |
| 11: PNLO/PNLA: Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization/Pa-Oh National Liberation Army | 31: People's Defense Force - Yinnarbin District |
| 12: People's Defense Force - Palaw | 32: BNRA: Burma National Revolutionary Army |
| 13: KNDO: Karen National Defence Organization | 33: Pu Ri Yakha Nyi Naung Sit Kyaung: Pu Ri Yakha Brother Column |
| 14: HPDF: Homalin People's Defense Force | 34: Ramanya Army |
| 15: SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army | 35: CNO/CNDF UCR: CNO/CNDF Upper Chindwin Region |
| 16: CNF/CNA: Chin National Front/Chin National Army | 36: Chinland Defense Force - Mara |
| 17: Chinland Defense Force - Kanpetlet | 37: ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army |
| 18: RSO: Rohingya Solidarity Organization | 38: Crocodile Column |
| 19: PLA: People's Liberation Army of Manipur | |

Figure 6. Inter-Rebel Hostility Network in 2024³⁹

³⁹ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

New actors emerged as key participants in 2024, particularly the Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA) and the Pa-Oh National Organization/Pa-Oh National Army (PNO/PNA) (see Figure 6). While the PNO/PNA, based in southern Shan State, have been involved in the continuation of longstanding conflict dynamics within Shan State, the increasing involvement of the CNF/CNA signals the expansion of inter-rebel conflict into Chin State. The CNF/CNA, representing Chin nationalist interests, became involved in clashes not only against some of the Chinland Defense Forces within the Chin Brotherhood Alliance but also against ULA/AA, as both groups competed for territorial influence along the contested border between Chin and Arakan States.⁴⁰ Some assumptions suggest that, unlike CNF/CNA, the other Chin alliances receive support from the ULA/AA, motivated by the strategic need to maintain access through the Chin State. Given that central mainland Burma remains largely under SAC control, ULA/AA is unable to secure direct supply routes through the central region and thus relies on maintaining influence over Chin territory to facilitate resource flows from India and other northern areas. These developments indicate that by 2024, inter-rebel conflict had extended into the western regions of Myanmar, reflecting a broader geographic spread of hostilities.

Meanwhile, the PNO/PNA, which had signed a ceasefire agreement with the then-ruling State Peace and Development Council on 11 April 1991, increased its visibility in southern Shan State by expanding its troop presence and reinforcing its alignment with the State Administration Council.⁴¹ This expansion led to repeated confrontations with its same ethnicity rival, the PNLA, which opposed the PNO and its alliance with the SAC, exposing

⁴⁰ Lorcan Lovett, "Q&A: 'The CNF Will Be Abolished after the Revolution', Says Chin Leader Sui Khar," *FRONTIER MYANMAR*, February 14, 2025, <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/qa-the-cnf-will-be-abolished-after-revolution-says-chin-leader-sui-khar/>.

⁴¹ Shan Herald Agency for News, "Pa-O Regions Militia Groups and Myanmar Military Junta," *Burma News International*, January 5, 2022, <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/pa-o-regions-militia-groups-and-myanmar-military-junta>.

internal fragmentation and competition within the Pa-O community.⁴² The 2024 network reveals how these localized rivalries and strategic realignments intensified broader fragmentation within the rebel landscape.

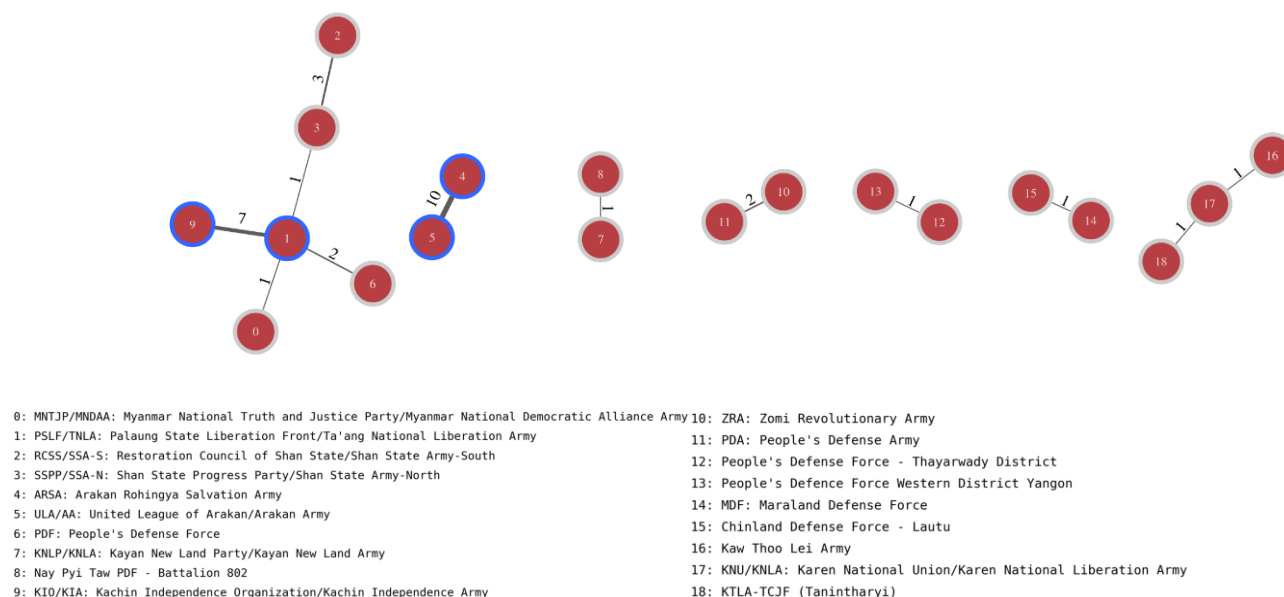


Figure 7. Inter-Rebel Hostility Network in 2025⁴³

The 2025 network (see Figure 7), based on data collected during the first three months of the year, captures only a partial snapshot of inter-rebel dynamics. Although the recorded number of hostile incidents appears lower compared to previous years, due to the dataset covering partially, this period coincided with a noticeable rise in public discussion and media coverage of inter-rebel tensions within Myanmar. Among the groups active during this period, PSLF/TNLA, ARSA, and ULA/AA remained the most prominent. Notably, tensions between the PSLF/TNLA and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) escalated, although confrontations were largely non-lethal.

⁴² Khun Oo, "Crisis in the Pa-O Region: A Renewed Conflict-Zone in Myanmar," *Transnational Institute (TNI)*, March 14, 2024, <https://www.tni.org/en/article/crisis-in-the-pa-o-region#:~:text=Fighting%20continued%20in%20Hsihseng%20and,no%20reliable%20estimates%20or%20figures.>

⁴³ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>

Rather than involving armed clashes, incidents between TNLA and KIA featured the raiding of KIA offices and the physical assault of KIA personnel within TNLA-occupied territories, reportedly driven by TNLA's objective of eliminating KIA presence from its areas of control.⁴⁴ Footage of these confrontations circulated widely on social media, further amplifying public awareness of inter-rebel tensions. Meanwhile, tensions between the ULA/AA and Rohingya communities intensified, partly fueled by SAC-led conscription programs that drafted Rohingya individuals to fight against the AA.⁴⁵ These dynamics reignited deep-seated ethnic grievances dating back to the Rohingya genocide, with racial tensions in Arakan State continuing to rise during the early months of 2025.

Across the five years, the evolution of the networks illustrates a pattern of persistent localized hostilities combined with shifting regional center of conflict. Certain groups, notably RCSS/SSA-S, SSPP/SSA-N, PSLF/TNLA, and ULA/AA, maintained central roles throughout, while new actors occasionally rose to prominence depending on localized dynamics. The relatively limited emergence of large, interconnected hostile blocs suggests that while internal disputes continued, the broader trajectory leaned toward fragmented and regionally compartmentalized conflict rather than system-wide escalations. The yearly evolution also hints at a strategic adaptation by many rebel groups: despite historical rivalries, many actors appeared increasingly willing to de-escalate inter-rebel fighting in favor of external collaboration against a common enemy, the military junta, especially after late 2023.

⁴⁴ Raleigh, Kishi and Linke, "Political instability patterns are obscured by conflict dataset scope conditions, sources, and coding choices".

⁴⁵ Kaori Hizume, "Myanmar Junta Forces Rohingya to Fight on Frontlines," *NHK World*, November 8, 2024, <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/backstories/3620/>.

4. Time Series Analysis of Hostile Interactions

The months following the February 2021 military coup witnessed a significant reshaping of rebel group dynamics, marked by the persistence of longstanding rivalries alongside the emergence of new actors. The surge in hostile interactions during the post-2021 coup period reflects the diversification of the conflict landscape, as increasingly localized and decentralized resistance movements entered the civil war.

The broader evolution of inter-rebel dynamics is captured through a time series analysis of first hostile interactions between groups, shown in Figure 8. This graph displays the monthly number of "first-time" hostile encounters between groups from February 2021 to March 2025, alongside a three-month moving average to highlight underlying trends. To trace the development of new rivalries, a dataset was created recording each group's initial act of hostility against another during the conflict period. A first hostile interaction is defined as the first recorded attack by one group on another, marking the beginning of a new antagonistic relationship. This method allows for tracking not just the frequency of clashes, but also the formation of new hostilities over time. A detailed list of first hostile interactions is provided in Appendix 3.

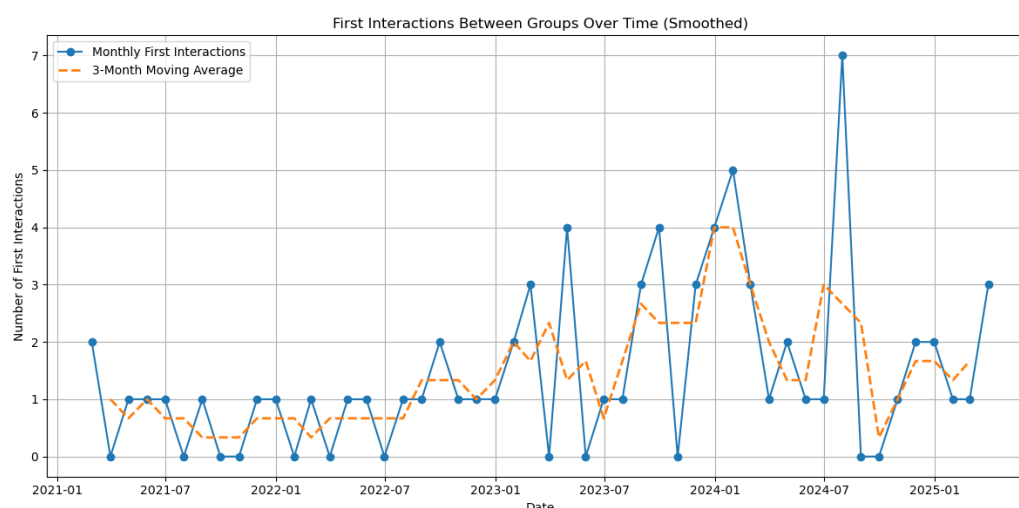


Figure 8. First Hostile Interactions Between Rebel Groups in Myanmar (February 2021 – April 2025)⁴⁶

The time series reveals several notable patterns. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, the number of first-time hostile interactions remained relatively low, indicating that many early clashes were likely continuations of pre-existing rivalries rather than the emergence of new conflicts. However, beginning in 2023 and peaking in 2024, there was a significant rise in new hostile encounters. This trend aligns with the rapid proliferation of newly formed People’s Defence Forces and the geographic expansion of conflict into mainland Burma, where the majority of the ethnic Burmese population resides, which is distinct from the long-standing conflict zones in ethnic minority areas where violence has persisted for decades.

In addition to examining first-time hostile interactions, the overall trend of inter-rebel conflict activity was also analysed, as shown in Figure 9. Following an initial surge of inter-rebel clashes in early 2021, the trend exhibited a sharp decline through late 2021 and remained relatively low throughout most of 2022. Although inter-rebel conflict activity declined sharply and remained low through the end of 2022, it has been steadily increasing ever since. Notably, following Operation 1027, a major coordinated rebel offensive initiated on October 27, 2023,

⁴⁶ Data taken from ACLED. “Data Export Tool.” Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

the frequency of clashes between rebel groups began to increase once again. This resurgence likely reflects both the expansion of rebel activity and intensified territorial competition during a period of heightened military operations across the country.

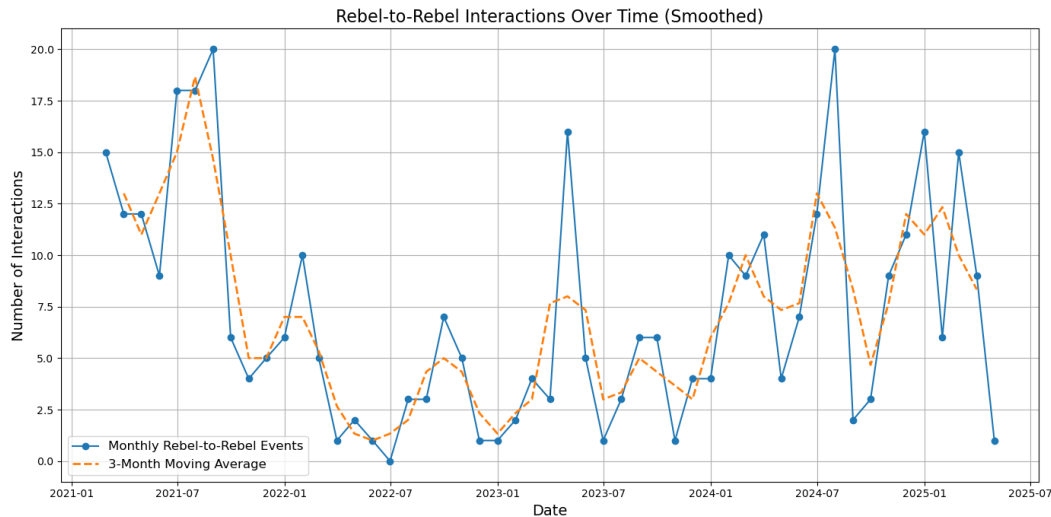


Figure 9. Monthly Total Inter-Rebel Conflict Events in Myanmar (February 2021 – April 2025)⁴⁷

These patterns point to a conflict environment characterized by recurring cycles of escalation followed by partial stabilization, as rebel groups sought to balance competition with efforts to consolidate territorial gains and manage their expanding operations. While the overall trend of inter-rebel hostilities reveals broad patterns of escalation and stabilization, a closer examination of individual actor behavior is necessary to fully understand the dynamics shaping Myanmar’s conflict landscape. In particular, the rise of new anti-junta forces, such as the National Unity Government’s PDFs and various locally organized self-supporting PDFs that operate outside the formal chain of command, has added further complexity to the evolving conflict environment.

⁴⁷ Data taken from ACLED. “Data Export Tool.” Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

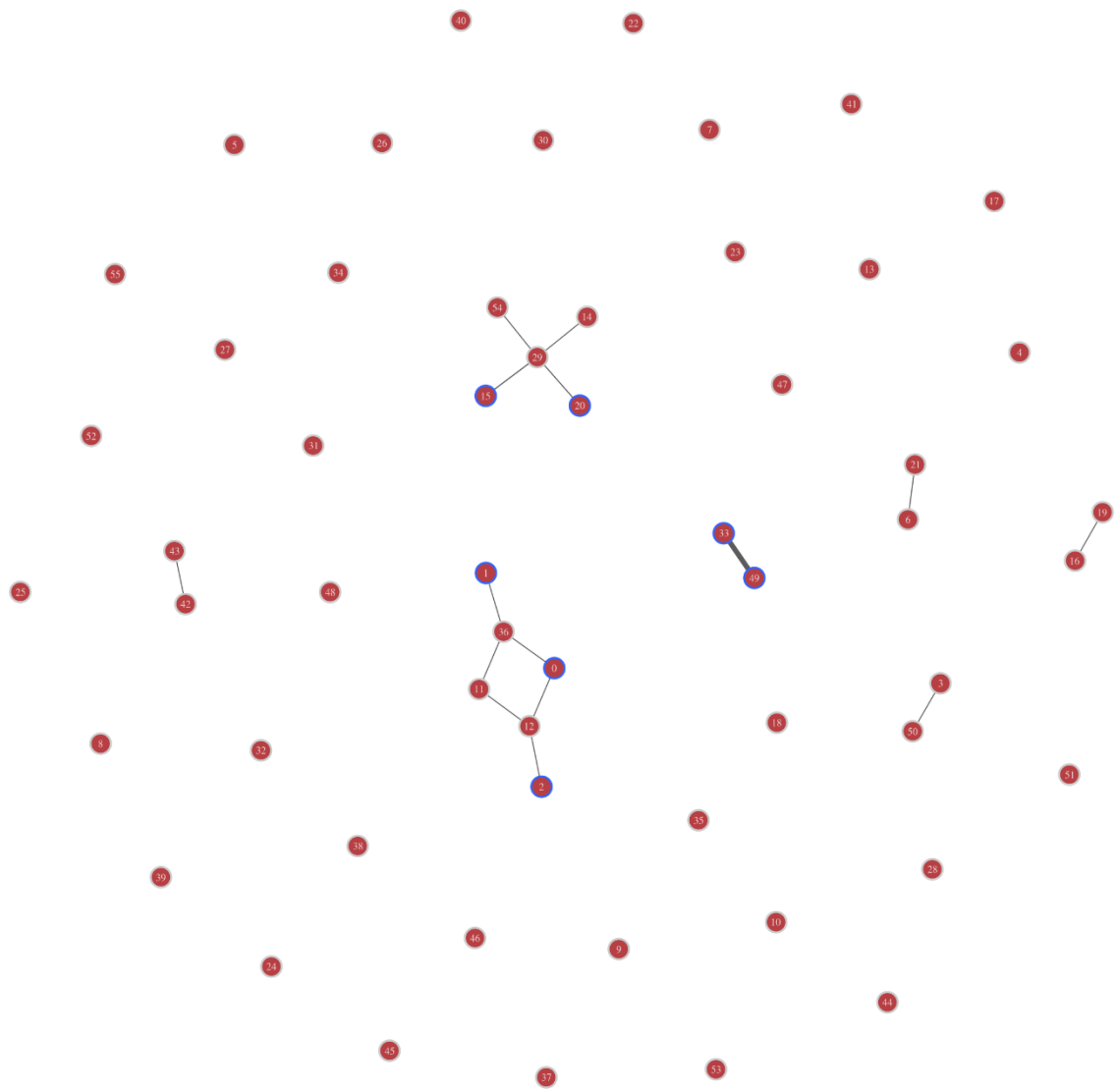
5. Rebel Group Alliances and Cooperative Dynamics in Inter-Rebel Conflicts

While much of Myanmar's post-coup civil conflict was characterized by hostility among rebel groups, patterns of alliance-building within inter-rebel conflicts also emerged. Rather than focusing solely on cooperation between the rebels against the military junta, this chapter examines alliances formed specifically during inter-rebel conflicts based on the instances where groups stood together to defend allies or assert control against rival factions.

Mapping these alliances offers a sharper view into deeper inter-group loyalties beyond pragmatic anti-state coalitions. Notably, some nodes in the network remain unconnected, representing groups that did not ally with any other actor during periods of inter-rebel conflict. These isolated positions portray the uneven nature of rebel cooperation, where some groups operated independently amid tensions. The overall four-plus-year alliance network is presented in Appendix 4, where nodes highlighted in blue indicate the most frequently allied forces across the entire period of analysis.

Before Operation 1027, the alliance structure among rebel groups was dominated by a few powerful dyads among well-established ethnic armed organizations (See Figure 10). The strongest connection was observed between the two Northern Shan State groups, PSLF/TNLA and SSPP/SSA-N, who initially maintained exceptionally high mutual strength and close operational cooperation. However, this alliance broke down on 23 September 2023, when hostilities erupted between the two groups for the first time.⁴⁸ This rupture underscores the fragility of even the strongest rebel alliances, as underlying disputes, shifting strategic interests, and unforeseen tensions emerge amid the broader instability of the conflict environment.

⁴⁸ Raleigh, Kishi and Linke, "Political instability patterns are obscured by conflict dataset scope conditions, sources, and coding choices".



0: HPDF 124: Homalin People's Defense Force 124	26: NSCN-Ang Mai: National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Ang Mai
1: HPDF: Homalin People's Defense Force	27: NSCN-K: National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Khaplang
2: HPLDF: Homalin People's Local Defense Force	28: PDB: Phoenix Defence Battalion
3: ALP/ALA: Arakan Liberation Party/Arakan Liberation Army	29: PDF: People's Defense Force
4: ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army	30: PLA: People's Liberation Army of Manipur
5: Bo Tiger People Defense Force (Wetlet)	31: PNLO/PNLA: Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization/Pa-Oh National Liberation Army
6: Border Guard Force	32: PNO/PNA: Pa-Oh National Organization/Pa-Oh National Army
7: CNF/CNA: Chin National Front/Chin National Army	33: PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army
8: Chinland Defense Force - Tonzang	34: People's Defense Force - Chaung-U
9: DKBA (Benevolent): Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (2010-)	35: People's Defense Force - Gangaw Battalion
10: GZ Special Task Force - Wetlet	36: People's Defense Force - Hkamti District
11: HPDF - Moe Kyoe: Homalin People's Defense Force - Thunder	37: People's Defense Force - Myingyan District Battalion 5
12: HPDF: Homalin People's Defense Force	38: People's Defense Force - Pekon
13: Hero Tiger Force	39: People's Defense Force - Sar Taung Gyi Village
14: Hnalone Hla Lu Maik Gyi Myar A Phwe: Big Beautiful Hearted Hoodlums	40: People's Defense Force - Shwebo
15: KIO/KIA: Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army	41: People's Defense Force - Shwebo District
16: KNDF: Karenni Nationalities Defense Force	42: People's Defense Force - Yelekyun
17: KNDO: Karen National Defence Organization	43: People's Defense Force - Yesagyo
18: KNPLF: Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front	44: People's Defense Force - Yinmarbin
19: KNPP/KA: Karenni National Progressive Party/Karenni Army	45: People's Security Force
20: KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army	46: RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South
21: KPC: KNU/KNLA Peace Council	47: RSO: Rohingya Solidarity Organization
22: Kaw Thoo Lei Army	48: SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army
23: Lion Battalion Commando Special Force	49: SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North
24: MSDF: Mon State Defense Force	50: ULA/AA: United League of Arakan/Arakan Army
25: NA-B: Northern Alliance	51: UWSP/UWSA: United Wa State Party/United Wa State Army
	52: ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army
	53: ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army-Eastern Command
	54: Zamani Revolution Force/MMU Myaung
	55: Zomi Federal Union/People's Defense Force - Zoland

Figure 10. Rebel Alliance Network Before Operation 1027⁴⁹

Other important alliances included emerging new mainland armed forces such as the People's Defense Forces, forming early partnerships with larger ethnic armies like the KIO/KIA and KNU/KNLA, as well as localized militias. In northwestern Myanmar, the Homalin People's Defence Force (HPDF) demonstrated strong operational ties with the KIA, extending beyond simple local coordination. What I found out from my online casual communication with a PDF soldier from the No. 4 Special Regiment of the National Unity Government's army from the north of Myanmar, most of their strategic decisions were co-directed by the KIA and NUG's Ministry of Defense.⁵⁰ This close relationship between HPDF and KIA has led to frequent clashes with SNA, due to the nature of the intersection of operational coordination and deep-seated ethnic rivalries. These tensions are rooted in historical grievances, particularly the perception of political favoritism toward the Kachin. The creation of Kachin State under the first Prime Minister of the Union of Burma, which promised to include Bhamo District and appoint a Kachin chairman in exchange for Kachin leaders abandoning the secession clause, ultimately resulted in traditionally Shanni-inhabited areas

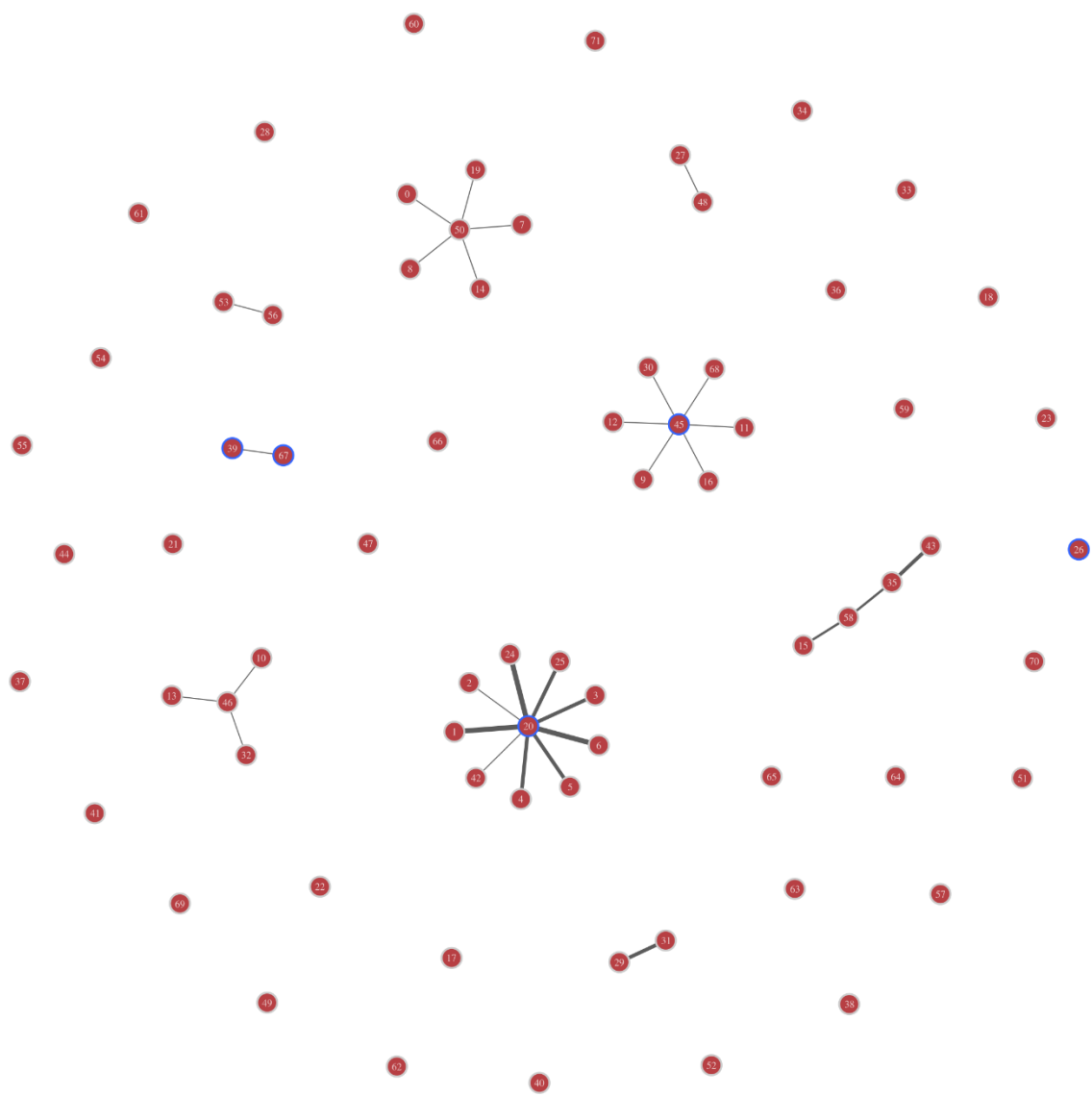
⁴⁹ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

⁵⁰ Anonymous. Personal interview with Thint Myat on Zoom. April 27, 2025

being incorporated into Sagaing Region under the 1974 BSPP Constitution, which effectively erased the prospect of a Shanni State from the map.⁵¹ Such unresolved legacies of exclusion continue to fuel disputes among various ethnic groups, shaping both alliances and enmities on today's battlefield.

Following Operation 1027, the alliance landscape shifted noticeably. Cooperation became more widespread, involving a broader range of actors, particularly Chin-based forces and local PDFs (see Figure 11). As explained in the 2024 inter-rebel hostility network analysis, although the CNF/CNA experienced clashes with certain Chin defense forces, such as CDF-Mindat and the Maraland Defense Force, it nevertheless emerged as a central hub for alliance formation, forging numerous cooperative ties across the Chin region. Notably, the Maraland Defense Force, an ethnically Chin rebel group, has maintained a connection with the Arakan Army (AA); when considered alongside the history of clashes between the CNF/CNA and AA, this suggests that such conflicts are not merely rooted in ethnic divisions. Rather, they reflect shifting strategic alignments and survival-oriented decisions made by armed groups in an increasingly volatile conflict environment, even as their primary focus remains on combating the SAC.

⁵¹ Sai Wansai, "Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Northern Burma: SNA Clashes with KIA Doesn't Bode Well for Both Parties," *Shan Herald Agency for News*, August 23, 2022, <https://english.shannews.org/archives/25272>.



0: Central Region Task Force	37: KTLA-TCJF (Tanintharyi)
1: Chinland Defense Force - Mara	38: Kaw Thoo Lei Army
2: Chinland Defense Force - Matupi	39: MDF: Maraland Defense Force
3: Chinland Defense Force - Paletwa	40: MNTJP/MNDAA: Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party/Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army
4: Chinland Defense Force - Senthang	41: Nay Pyi Taw PDF - Battalion 802
5: Chinland Defense Force - Thantlang	42: PDA: People's Defense Army
6: Chinland Defense Force - Zophei	43: PDF: People's Defense Force
7: IPDF: Inle People's Defense Force	44: PDO/PDA: People's Democratic Organization/People's Democratic Army
8: KNDF: Karenni Nationalities Defense Force	45: PLA: People's Liberation Army of Manipur
9: KYKL: Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup	46: PNLO/PNLA: Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization/Pa-Oh National Liberation Army
10: PDF: People's Defense Force	47: PNO/PNA: Pa-Oh National Organization/Pa-Oh National Army
11: PREPAK-Pro: People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak-Progressive	48: PRDF: Palaw Regional Defence Force
12: PREPAK: People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak	49: PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army
13: SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North	50: Pehkon People's Defense Force - 2
14: SSRY: 1008 Infantry - Southern Shan Revolution Youth	51: People's Defence Force Western District Yangon
15: STF Tamu: Special Task Force Tamu	52: People's Defense Force - Chaung-U
16: UNLF: United National Liberation Front	53: People's Defense Force - Dawei District
17: ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army	54: People's Defense Force - Kanbalu District
18: BNRA: Burma National Revolutionary Army	55: People's Defense Force - Kawlin
19: Bee Column	56: People's Defense Force - Launglon
20: CNF/CNA: Chin National Front/Chin National Army	57: People's Defense Force - Palaw
21: CNO/CNDF UCR: CNO/CNDF Upper Chindwin Region	58: People's Defense Force - Tamu District
22: Chin Brotherhood Alliance	59: People's Defense Force - Thayarwady District
23: Chinland Defense Force - Kanpetlet	60: People's Defense Force - Yimmarbin District
24: Chinland Defense Force - Lautu	61: Pu Ri Yakha Nyi Naung Sit Kyaung: Pu Ri Yakha Brother Column
25: Chinland Defense Force - Mara	62: RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South
26: Chinland Defense Force - Mindat	63: RSO: Rohingya Solidarity Organization
27: Crocodile Column	64: Ramanya Army
28: HPDF 124: Homalin People's Defense Force 124	65: SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army
29: HPDF: Homalin People's Defense Force	66: SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North
30: KCP: Kangleipak Communist Party	67: ULA/AA: United League of Arakan/Arakan Army
31: KIO/KIA: Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army	68: UNLF: United National Liberation Front
32: KNDF: Karenni Nationalities Defense Force	69: Unidentified Armed Group (India)
33: KNDO: Karen National Defence Organization	70: YDF: Yaw Defense Force
34: KNLP/KNLA: Kayan New Land Party/Kayan New Land Army	71: ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army
35: KNO/KNLA: Kuki National Organization/Kuki National Army	
36: KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army	

Figure 11. Rebel Alliance Network After Operation 1027⁵²

In addition, transnational left-wing insurgent groups like the People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) expanded rebel networks across the Myanmar borderland through alliances with northeast Indian movements. One self-loop case involving the PLA is particularly important to highlight: a factional firefight erupted when several cadres attempted to desert the camp, resulting in six deaths, reportedly due to pressure from the Myanmar Army to either remain inactive within Myanmar or support military operations against the anti-coup resistance.⁵³ This incident illustrates how alliance-building can become precarious when leadership decisions are contested or disobeyed, potentially leading to internal conflict and the violent breakdown of group cohesion. As Christia argues, drawing on Schelling's *Strategy of Conflict* and Elster's *Social Norms and Economic Theory*, alliance behavior in civil wars is primarily driven by efforts to balance the distribution of power.⁵⁴ This often leads to internal

⁵² Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>

⁵³ Raleigh, Kishi and Linke, "Political instability patterns are obscured by conflict dataset scope conditions, sources, and coding choices".

⁵⁴ Christia, *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*.

tensions within groups when deciding whether to support a weaker side or remain neutral. The PLA case reflects these dynamics, where internal cohesion was undermined not just by external coercion but by strategic divergences and fears of losing influence, echoing the broader risks that arise when the balance of power within rebel alliances is threatened.

Overall, the inter-rebel alliances examined in this chapter reveal a complex and often fragile web of cooperation shaped by more than just opposition to the military junta. Many of these alliances have emerged out of necessity, formed to navigate immediate threats, assert territorial control, or maintain influence within contested regions. Yet, they are also driven by deeper factors such as ethnic identity, competing political visions, and shifting strategic priorities. While these relationships are evident across the conflict landscape, their durability remains uncertain in the face of evolving military pressures and internal fragmentation. The decision to focus on alliance patterns before and after Operation 1027 reflects both the analytical significance of that turning point and its resonance with the Myanmar public's internal politics. As the first major instance in which SAC strongholds fell to coordinated resistance by Operation 1027, such an event marked a shift in the war's momentum. In this context, examining how rebel coordination evolved, not only against the junta but also in managing internal rivalries, offers critical insight into the broader transformation of Myanmar's resistance networks.

VIII. Limitations

While ACLED offers a comprehensive dataset, limitations persist. Underreporting in remote areas, inconsistencies in actor identification, and reliance on third-party media sources introduce potential biases. The line between PDFs and informal local militias can be blurry, and conflict events may be unevenly captured depending on media coverage and accessibility. Despite these challenges, its level of detail allows researchers to identify patterns, relationships, and localized conflict dynamics that were previously difficult to trace. This provides a foundation for more informed analysis and improved peace-mapping efforts. The ACLED dataset remains the most granular and systematic source for mapping conflict dynamics in contemporary Myanmar.

IX. Conclusion

Beyond individual anomalies, the broader structure of inter-rebel hostilities reveals which actors are most embedded within the conflict network. The CNF/CNA stands out as the most entangled group, clashing with seven distinct rebel actors. Following CNF/CNA, other groups also played prominent roles in shaping the inter-rebel conflict landscape. Both the PSLF/TNLA and SNA were involved in hostilities with six other rebel groups, meanwhile, RCSS/SSA-S, PNO/PNA, and KNU/KNLA were each involved in conflicts with five different rebel groups, and ULA/AA, Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA), and MNTJP/MNDAA each clashed with four. This level of interaction points to the importance of alliance-building and conflict mediation across Myanmar.

The regional distribution of inter-rebel conflicts reveals a clear concentration in Shan State. Shan alone accounts for over 65% of recorded incidents, making it the epicenter of

internal armed group fragmentation. This concentration is largely due to the presence of numerous well-established ethnic armed organizations with overlapping territorial claims and long histories of both cooperation and rivalry. Sagaing, Magway, and Bago Regions, home to a predominantly Bamar population and strongholds of the newly formed post-coup People's Defense Forces, account for 13.2% of all inter-rebel clashes, likely reflecting the challenges posed by their loosely connected command structures. Chin and Rakhine States each account for approximately 7% of incidents. In Rakhine, where powerful actors like the Arakan Army dominate, conflict dynamics have been shaped by deep-rooted religious divisions alongside shifting strategic interests. Overall, this geographic distribution shows that inter-rebel conflict in Myanmar is not confined to its ethnic borderlands but extends into central, Bamar-majority areas, reflecting a war shaped by overlapping diverse factors and political motivations.

From the beginning of the 2021 military coup, Myanmar's civil war has transformed into a nationwide, multi-generational struggle with new resistance groups and a widening scope of armed conflict. The decentralized and locally rooted PDFs are increasingly aligning themselves with the K3C alliance, comprising four of the country's oldest ethnic armed organizations: the Kachin Independence Organization, Karen National Union, Karenni National Progressive Party, and Chin National Front.⁵⁵ While many PDFs sought coordination through K3C, other local armed groups gravitated toward the Three Brotherhood Alliance (AA, MNDAA and TNLA) or joined emerging student-led armed movements across the country. This expanding network of actors reflects the growing ideological diversity, geographical spread, and generational depth of the anti-junta resistance. Despite tensions and occasional clashes among rebel groups, the broader aspiration to dismantle military dictatorship and build a more inclusive Myanmar continues to unify many factions.

⁵⁵ "NUG and K3C Release a Common Position," Springsprouts, February 1, 2024, <https://www.springsprouts.info/en/updates/common-stand-of-nug-and-k3c>.

Foreign powers, particularly China, have made repeated attempts to broker peace between the junta and ethnic armed organizations, but these efforts have so far failed to bring about lasting ceasefires. Even the temporary peace overtures following the devastating March 28 earthquake, which severely impacted Central Myanmar, were short-lived as fighting quickly resumed.⁵⁶ The persistence of conflict, despite both natural disasters and diplomatic engagement, has kept the civil war ongoing and the course of resistance steady, while leaving the prospects for long-lasting peace still elusive.

In sum, this study reveals that inter-rebel conflict in post-coup Myanmar is shaped by a complex interplay of rebel group dynamics, historical grievances, and shifting strategic alliances. The research aims to support future scholars and peacebuilders in identifying key patterns and actors that warrant focused attention. Some rebel groups are deeply involved in intense bilateral rivalries, while others are entangled in widespread, multi-front conflicts. Both patterns are significant, as the path to conflict resolution depends on whether the disputes are concentrated and high-intensity or fragmented across multiple relationships. By building these dynamics through network visualization, this study provides a tool that allows researchers and practitioners to explore the conflict landscape through a deeper, more inclusive lens while ensuring that no group is left out of consideration in efforts toward peace. Ultimately, this study contributes to a broader understanding of rebel group behavior by examining these actors not as static entities, but as strategic, adaptive agents operating within the fluid and continuously evolving dynamics of civil war. As Myanmar's political crisis deepens, continued analysis of inter-rebel dynamics remains essential to any long-term vision for sustainable and inclusive peace.

⁵⁶ Moench, Mallory. "Myanmar Fighting Continues despite Post-Earthquake Ceasefires." *BBC*, April 7, 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp31wk21zveo>.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Top 10 Rebel Groups by Node Strength in the Overall Hostility

Network (2021–2025)⁵⁷

Rank 1:	RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South (Strength: 197.00)
Rank 2:	SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North (Strength: 120.00)
Rank 3:	PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (Strength: 98.00)
Rank 4:	ULA/AA: United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (Strength: 29.00)
Rank 5:	SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army (Strength: 27.00)
Rank 6:	ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Strength: 20.00)
Rank 7:	CNF/CNA: Chin National Front/Chin National Army (Strength: 19.00)
Rank 8:	KIO/KIA: Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (Strength: 18.00)
Rank 9:	KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (Strength: 16.00)
Rank 10:	PNLO/PNLA: Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization/Pa-Oh National Liberation Army (Strength: 13.00)

Appendix 2: Yearly Highest Rank Rebel Groups by Node Strength in the Hostile Network from (2021 to 2025)

Appendix 2.1: Yearly Highest Rank Rebel Groups by Node Strength in the Hostile Network

(2021)⁵⁸

Rank 1:	SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North (Strength: 39.00)
Rank 2:	RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South (Strength: 31.00)
Rank 3:	CNF/CNA: Chin National Front/Chin National Army (Strength: 16.00)
Rank 4:	SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army (Strength: 15.00)
Rank 5:	ULA/AA: United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (Strength: 14.00)
Rank 6:	MNTJP/MNDAA: Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party/Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (Strength: 10.00)
Rank 7:	PNO/PNA: Pa-Oh National Organization/Pa-Oh National Army (Strength: 10.00)
Rank 8:	HPDF: Homalin People's Defense Force (Strength: 10.00)
Rank 9:	MDF: Maraland Defense Force (Strength: 9.00)
Rank 10:	ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Strength: 8.00)

⁵⁷ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

⁵⁸ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

Appendix 2.2: Yearly Highest Rank Rebel Groups by Node Strength in the Hostile Network

(2022)⁵⁹

Rank 1: RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South (Strength: 19.00)
Rank 2: SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North (Strength: 17.00)
Rank 3: KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (Strength: 7.00)
Rank 4: SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army (Strength: 7.00)
Rank 5: PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (Strength: 5.00)
Rank 6: Kaw Thoo Lei Army (Strength: 4.00)
Rank 7: ULA/AA: United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (Strength: 4.00)
Rank 8: PNLO/PNLA: Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization/Pa-Oh National Liberation Army (Strength: 4.00)
Rank 9: KIO/KIA: Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (Strength: 3.00)
Rank 10: HPDF: Homalin People's Defense Force (Strength: 3.00)

Appendix 2.3: Yearly Highest Rank Rebel Groups by Node Strength in the Hostile Network

(2023)⁶⁰

Rank 1: RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South (Strength: 25.00)
Rank 2: SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North (Strength: 15.00)
Rank 3: PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (Strength: 6.00)
Rank 4: SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army (Strength: 5.00)
Rank 5: PNLO/PNLA: Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization/Pa-Oh National Liberation Army (Strength: 3.00)
Rank 6: PDF: People's Defense Force (Strength: 3.00)
Rank 7: KND0: Karen National Defence Organization (Strength: 2.00)
Rank 8: KIO/KIA: Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (Strength: 2.00)
Rank 9: KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (Strength: 2.00)
Rank 10: DKBA (Benevolent): Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (2010-) (Strength: 2.00)

⁵⁹ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

⁶⁰ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

Appendix 2.4: Yearly Highest Rank Rebel Groups by Node Strength in the Hostile Network

(2024)⁶¹

- Rank 1: RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South (Strength: 119.00)
- Rank 2: PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (Strength: 69.00)
- Rank 3: SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North (Strength: 45.00)
- Rank 4: NA-B: Northern Alliance (Strength: 5.00)
- Rank 5: ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army (Strength: 4.00)
- Rank 6: Zomi Federal Union/People's Defense Force - Zoland (Strength: 2.00)
- Rank 7: PLA: People's Liberation Army of Manipur (Strength: 2.00)
- Rank 8: CNF/CNA: Chin National Front/Chin National Army (Strength: 1.00)
- Rank 9: People's Defense Force - Yinmarbin (Strength: 1.00)
- Rank 10: Hero Tiger Force (Strength: 1.00)

Appendix 2.5: Yearly Highest Rank Rebel Groups by Node Strength in the Hostile Network

(2025)⁶²

- Rank 1: PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (Strength: 11.00)
- Rank 2: ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Strength: 10.00)
- Rank 3: ULA/AA: United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (Strength: 10.00)
- Rank 4: KIO/KIA: Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (Strength: 7.00)
- Rank 5: SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North (Strength: 4.00)
- Rank 6: RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South (Strength: 3.00)
- Rank 7: PDF: People's Defense Force (Strength: 2.00)
- Rank 8: ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army (Strength: 2.00)
- Rank 9: PDA: People's Defense Army (Strength: 2.00)
- Rank 10: KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (Strength: 2.00)

⁶¹ Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

⁶² Data taken from ACLED. "Data Export Tool." Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

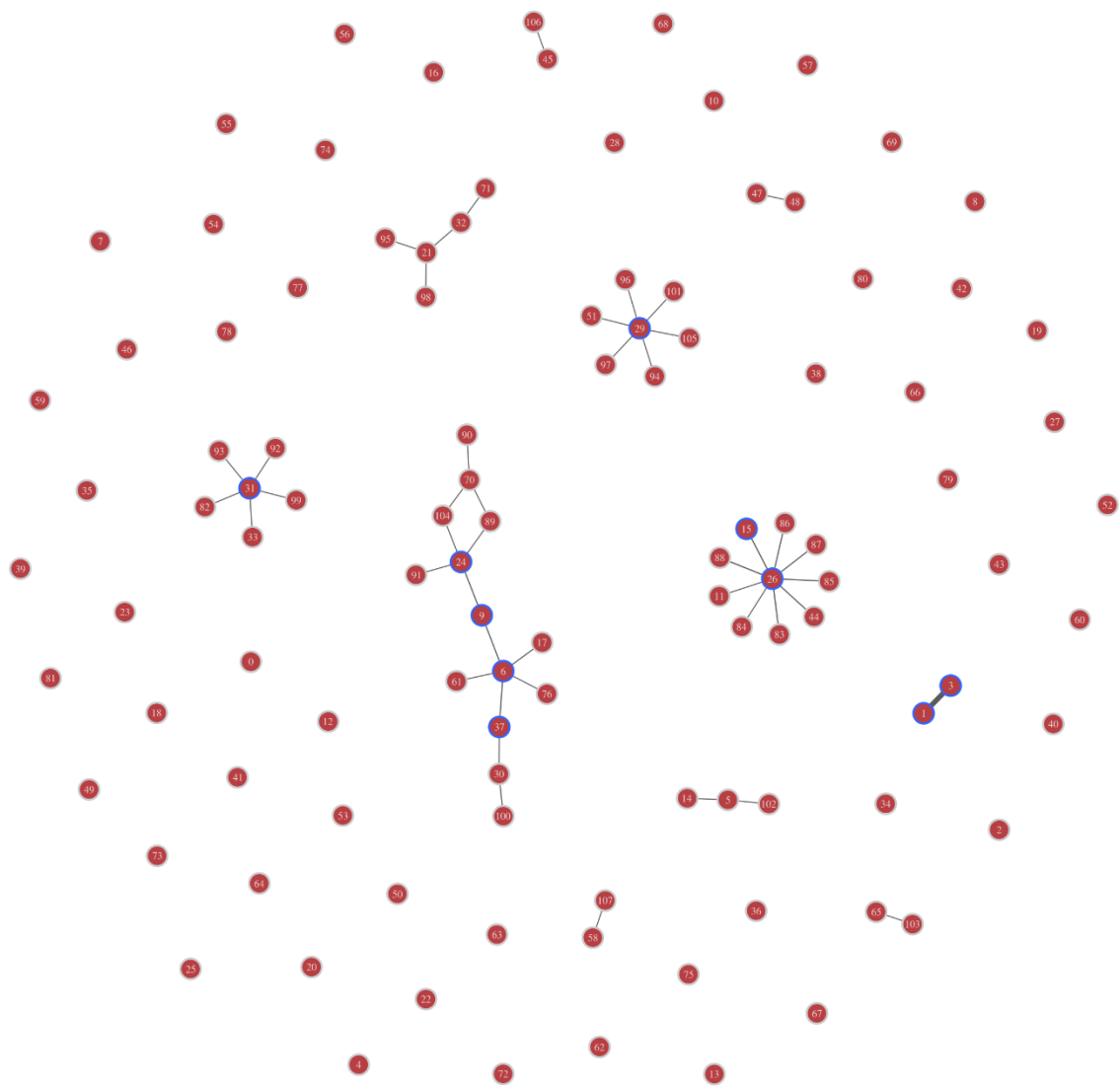
Appendix 3: Sample of First Hostile Interactions Between Rebel Groups (2021– 2025)⁶³

Actor 1	Actor 2	Event Type	Sub-Event Type	Region	Location
RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South	PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/ta'ang National Liberation Army	Battles	Armed clash	Shan-North	Par Hkar
SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North	RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South	Battles	Armed clash	Shan-North	Nar Ma Hkaw
RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South	NA-B: Northern Alliance	Battles	Armed clash	Shan-North	Yae Oe
ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army	PDF: People's Defense Force	Battles	Armed clash	Chin	Idim
ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army	Zomi Federal Union/People's Defense Force - Zoland	Battles	Armed clash	Chin	Idim
PLA: People's Liberation Army of Manipur	PLA: People's Liberation Army of Manipur	Battles	Armed clash	Sagaing	Nanyun
People's Defense Force - Yimmarbin	Hero Tiger Force	Battles	Armed clash	Sagaing	Lar Post
CNF/CNA: Chin National Front/Chin National Army	ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army	Battles	Armed clash	Chin	Ngalzang
RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South	PNLO/PNLA: Pa-O National Liberation Organization/Pa-O National Liberation Army	Battles	Armed clash	Shan-South	Hawkmal
RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South	UWSP/UWSA: United Wa State Party/United Wa State Army	Battles	Armed clash	Shan-East	Mongton
People's Defense Force - Chaung-U	Hnalone Hla Lu Maik Gyi Myar A Phwe: Big Beautiful Hearted Hoodlums	Battles	Armed clash	Sagaing	Chaung-U
SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army	PDF: People's Defense Force	Battles	Armed clash	Sagaing	Har Par
People's Defense Force - Shwebo District	Bo Tiger People Defense Force (Wetiet)	Battles	Armed clash	Sagaing	Wetiet
GNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army	DKBA (Benevolent): Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (2010-)	Battles	Armed clash	Kayin	Son See Myaing
KIO/KIA: Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army	SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army	Battles	Armed clash	Sagaing	Naung Pat
ULI/UA: United League of Arakan/Arakan Army	RSO: Rohingya Solidarity Organization	Battles	Armed clash	Rakhine	Maungdaw
KNDO: Karen National Defence Organization	KNDO: Karen National Defence Organization	Battles	Armed clash	Kayin	Kawkaesik
KNPP/KA: Karenni National Progressive Party/Karenni Army	KNPLF: Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front	Battles	Armed clash	Kayah	Bawlake
PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/ta'ang National Liberation Army	PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/ta'ang National Liberation Army	Battles	Armed clash	Shan-North	Ho Nawng
People's Defense Force - Hkamti District	SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army	Battles	Armed clash	Sagaing	law Si

Note: This table only presents the 20 recorded interactions of first hostile interactions.

⁶³ Data taken from ACLED. “Data Export Tool.” Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

Appendix 4: Overall alliance of rebels for inter-rebel conflict⁶⁴



⁶⁴ Data taken from ACLED. “Data Export Tool.” Accessed April 24, 2025. <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

0: MNTJP/MNDAA: Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party/Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army
1: PSLF/TNLA: Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army
2: RCSS/SSA-S: Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South
3: SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North
4: ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
5: ULA/AA: United League of Arakan/Arakan Army
6: PDF: People's Defense Force
7: KNLP/KNLA: Kayan New Land Party/Kayan New Land Army
8: Nay Pyi Taw PDF - Battalion 802
9: KIO/KIA: Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army
10: ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army
11: PDA: People's Defense Army
12: People's Defense Force - Thayarwady District
13: People's Defense Force Western District Yangon
14: MDF: Maraland Defense Force
15: Chinland Defense Force - Lautu
16: Kaw Thoo Lei Army
17: KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army
18: KTLA-TCJF (Tantharyi)
19: People's Defense Force - Chaung-U
20: PNO/PNA: Pa-Oh National Organization/Pa-Oh National Army
21: PNLO/PNLA: Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization/Pa-Oh National Liberation Army
22: People's Defense Force - Palaw
23: KNDO: Karen National Defence Organization
24: HPDF: Homalin People's Defense Force
25: SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army
26: CNF/CNA: Chin National Front/Chin National Army
27: Chinland Defense Force - Kanpetlet
28: RSO: Rohingya Solidarity Organization
29: PLA: People's Liberation Army of Manipur
30: People's Defense Force - Tamu District
31: Pekhon People's Defense Force - 2
32: KNDF: Karenni Nationalities Defense Force
33: Bee Column
34: Chinland Defense Force - Mindat
35: YDF: Yaw Defense Force
36: Chin Brotherhood Alliance
37: KNO/KNA: Kuki National Organization/Kuki National Army
38: Unidentified Armed Group (India)
39: People's Defense Force - Yimmarbin District
40: BNRA: Burma National Revolutionary Army
41: Pu Ri Yakha Nyi Naung Sit Kyaung: Pu Ri Yakha Brother Column
42: Ramanya Army
43: CNO/CNDF UCR: CNO/CNDF Upper Chindwin Region
44: Chinland Defense Force - Mara
45: Crocodile Column
46: People's Defense Force - Kanbalu District
47: People's Defense Force - Launglon
48: People's Defense Force - Dawei District
49: People's Defense Force - Kawlin
50: PDO/PDA: People's Democratic Organization/People's Democratic Army
51: UNLF: United National Liberation Front
52: HPDF 124: Homalin People's Defense Force 124
53: ZRA: Zomi Revolutionary Army-Eastern Command
54: Chinland Defense Force - Tonzang
55: NSCN-K: National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Khaplang
56: NSCN-Ang Mai: National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Ang Mai
57: People's Defense Force - Pekon
58: People's Defense Force - Yesagyo
59: People's Defense Force - Myingyan District Battalion 5
60: People's Security Force
61: Zamani Revolution Force/MMU Myaung
62: MSDF: Mon State Defense Force
63: People's Defense Force - Gangaw Battalion
64: PDB: Phoenix Defence Battalion
65: KPC: KNU/KNLA Peace Council
66: Lion Battalion Commando Special Force
67: People's Defense Force - Shwebo
68: GZ Special Task Force - Wetlet
69: People's Defense Force - Sar Taung Gyi Village
70: People's Defense Force - Hkamti District
71: KNPP/KA: Karenni National Progressive Party/Karenni Army
72: KNPLF: Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front
73: DKBA (Benevolent): Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (2010-)
74: People's Defense Force - Shwebo District
75: Bo Tiger People Defense Force (Wetlet)
76: Hmalone Hla Lu Maik Gyi Myar A Phwe: Big Beautiful Hearted Hoodlums
77: UNWSP/UNSA: United Wa State Party/United Wa State Army
78: Zomi Federal Union/People's Defense Force - Zoland
79: People's Defense Force - Yimmarbin
80: Hero Tiger Force
81: NA-B: Northern Alliance
82: Central Region Task Force
83: Chinland Defense Force - Mara
84: Chinland Defense Force - Matupi
85: Chinland Defense Force - Paletwa
86: Chinland Defense Force - Senthang
87: Chinland Defense Force - Thantlang
88: Chinland Defense Force - Zophei
89: HPDF 124: Homalin People's Defense Force 124
90: HPDF: Homalin People's Defense Force
91: HPLDF: Homalin People's Local Defense Force
92: IPDF: Inle People's Defense Force
93: KNDF: Karenni Nationalities Defense Force
94: KYKL: Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup
95: PDF: People's Defense Force
96: PREPAK-Pro: People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak-Progressive
97: PREPAK: People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak
98: SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North
99: SSRY: 1008 Infantry - Southern Shan Revolution Youth
100: STF Tamu: Special Task Force Tamu
101: UNLF: United National Liberation Front
102: ALP/ALA: Arakan Liberation Party/Arakan Liberation Army
103: Border Guard Force
104: HPDF - Moe Kyoe: Homalin People's Defense Force - Thunder
105: KCP: Kangleipak Communist Party
106: PRDF: Palaw Regional Defence Force
107: People's Defense Force - Yelekyun