

**BURMA COUP WATCH FOR MONTH OF MAY 2021:
LACKING CONTROL AND CONCERN, JUNTA TRIES TO KEEP ITSELF ALIVE**

- The junta, still unable to gain political, territorial, or economic control in the fourth month since its forcible and unconstitutional power grab, has engulfed the entire country in armed conflict.
- Security forces created battlefields in more towns and cities, expanded airstrikes on Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, and Sagaing States/Regions, and shelled villages in all of these places as well as in Shan State.
- During May alone, security forces killed at least 125 civilians and displaced over 150,000. There were 530 violent attacks that either targeted or failed to protect civilians in the first three weeks of May, and a total 2,098 incidents 1 Feb–21 May.
- In total, they have killed over 1,000 civilians, injured thousands more, displaced over 200,000 mainly ethnic minority people, and detained at least 5,554 politicians, activists, journalists and others, in attacks against the democracy movement.
- The National Unity Government (NUG) formed an interim armed force, began a constitutional reform process, and took other democratic, inclusive governance measures. It suggested granting ICC jurisdiction over events since 1 February.
- Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing snubbed ASEAN's 5-point consensus by escalating violence and discarding commitments without consequences—ASEAN members instead moved to remove the call for an arms embargo at the UN General Assembly.
- The junta's oppressive attempts to gain control of the country is disintegrating the economy. The value of the Kyat fell by 20% since January, inflating costs for people already impacted by the crippling economic impacts of the coup and COVID-19.
- Junta leaders, secure in their access to foreign currency through oil, gas, and natural resource exploitation, seem willing to accept destruction of the domestic economy as the price of territorial control.
- In order to avert worse violence and create space for dialogue and negotiations, the movement in Burma and allies urge that:
 - The UN, foreign states, and international finance institutions (IFIs) must expand sanctions;
 - These actors must engage with the NUG as the legitimate government of Burma, rather than the junta; and
 - The UN Security Council must take a more active role, in the face of ASEAN's weakness and the junta's intransigence.

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Four months into the coup, security forces have killed over 1,000 civilians, detained 5,554, and displaced over 200,000 in their crackdown on the democracy movement and anybody they perceive as an enemy.¹ Civilians have resisted the junta's abuses by forming community defense groups, attacking security forces in urban areas, and refusing to benefit the junta economically. Junta leaders dropped their pretenses and made clear that their violence is only aimed at their own enrichment.

For further incident details, see ALTSEAN's thematic coup trackers for the month of May:

[CONFLICT/DISPLACEMENT](#) [PROTESTS/CDM/CRACKDOWNS](#) [CRPH/NUG](#)
[INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES](#) [BUSINESS/ECONOMIC RESPONSES](#) [WOMEN](#)

NUG fights for democracy

During May, the National Unity Government (NUG) moved quickly to outline its visions for democratic governance, a democratic education system, and a democratic military. It also said it is considering accepting International Criminal Court jurisdiction over crimes perpetrated since 1 February.²

On 7 May, the junta designated the CRPH, NUG, and NUG's People's Defense Force as terrorist organizations, meaning that anybody suspected of affiliation with the groups could face life in prison.³

Appointments and administration

On 3 May, the NUG announced the appointment of Minister of Human Rights U Aung Myo Min, Minister of Labour Nai Thuwanna, Deputy Minister of Human Rights Ba Ham Htan, Deputy Minister of Labour U Kyaw Ni, Deputy Minister of Education Dr. Sai Khaing Myo Tun, and Deputy Minister of International Cooperation Mrs. Hkaung Naw.⁴ It is now Burma's most diverse government, with 59% of ministers from nine different ethnic minorities, 28% women, and the first openly gay minister.

On 6 May, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Investment introduced members of its Finance Commission.⁵ On 18 May, the Ministry of International Cooperation appointed Mr. Rubicon Ngwazah as Director of the Ministry's Department of Emergency Response Cooperation (MOIC-EM), and of Mr. Aphu Doe as Director of the Ministry's Department of Humanitarian Cooperation (MOIC-HC).⁶

On 7 May, the Ministry of Defense laid out policies for the defense sector, key provisions of which included: (1) alignment with foreign policies; (2) civilian leadership; (3) civilian control of defense affairs and legislation; (4) judicial oversight for military offenses; (5) clear guidance on the military hierarchy, no discrimination, and handbooks for different departments and units; (6) consistency with international laws of war; (7) media access to defense affairs information; (8) a civilian-controlled budget, parliamentary oversight of spending, and responsiveness of the budget to other policy and the Union's political and economic situation; and (9) cooperation with international community.⁷

On 20 May, the NUG announced the formation of the Basic Legal Affairs Commission for drafting the Federal Constitution.⁸ On 23 May, the Ministry of Federal Union Affairs announced progress toward a new constitution, and described the national unity consultative council (NUCC). It said drafting will take place in an inclusive, accountable and transparent manner. The NUCC includes elected representatives, parties, EAOs, general strike committees, CSOs, and student, youth, labor, and farmers'

¹ Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) (31 May 2021) Daily Briefing in Relation to the Military Coup; Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) (updated 21 May 2021) Data Export Tool, available at <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>

² NUG (30 May 2021) Press Statement 1/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/122614289959211>

³ Irrawaddy (10 May 2021) Myanmar Junta Declares National Unity Government, CRPH, Defense Forces as 'Terrorist' Groups

⁴ CRPH (3 May 2021) Announcement 26/2021; CRPH (3 May 2021) Announcement 27/2021,

<https://crphmyanmar.org/appointment-of-union-ministers-and-deputy-ministers/>

⁵ NUG (6 May 2021) Information on the Finance Commission,

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/114941454059828>

⁶ NUG (18 May 2021) Ministry of International Cooperation: Appointment of the Director of the Department of Emergency Response Cooperation of the Ministry of International Cooperation; NUG (18 May 2021) Ministry of International Cooperation: Appointment of the Director of the Department of Humanitarian Cooperation of the Ministry of International Cooperation,

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/119187813635192>

⁷ NUG (7 May 2021) NUG Ministry of Defense: Basic Principles of Defense,

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/115264064027567>

⁸ NUG (20 May 2021) Basic Legal Affairs Commission for drafting Federal Constitution,

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/119492633604710>

organizations. There will be a national-level conference, based on the FDC roadmap, to include even broader participation.⁹

Military reform

On 5 May, the NUG announced the establishment of the People's Defence Forces, as a forerunner to the Federal Democratic Armed Forces and a means to effective security sector reform.¹⁰ On 17 May, the Ministry outlined basic principles on the People's Defense Force (PDF). It said, among other things, that PDF members must respect their ethics and the military code of conduct, and the PDF may cooperate with other defense forces, in accordance with the military code of conduct.¹¹

On the same day, the Ministry gave instructions for the formation of People's Defense Groups (PDGs), emphasizing compliance with the code of conduct, a clear chain of command, complementarity with the PDF, protection of civilians, and financial transparency.¹²

On 23 May, the Ministry announced more foundational information about the PDF, including its oath, flag, responsibilities, military culture, chain of command, and mechanisms of civilian control/oversight. It said the PDF's responsibilities are civilian protection, national defense, cooperation with allies, opposing dictatorship, and disaster management and rescue operations.¹³

Labor and the economy

On 22 May, the Ministry of Labor articulated policies to respond to the current hardships of workers: including defending the rights of labor forces in Burma and **ensuring labor laws meet democratic standards**. It also highlighted the need to introduce **labor courts** as a long-term program and amend the employer-employee relations/dispute law; and the need for laws addressing **child labor, migrant laborers, temporary workers, and minimum wages differentiated by sector and location**.¹⁴

On 23 May, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry called for a **boycott of military-owned businesses and related products and services**, and produced a graphic what to boycott.¹⁵ On 26 May, it reiterated that **investment permits issued after 1 Feb are null and void**, and put banks and financial entities involved in junta-approved (or unapproved) projects on notice that such projects are "unauthorized, illegal and not in compliance with the laws and regulations on Myanmar."¹⁶

The PDF Code of Conduct includes:

- Follow laws of armed conflict, engage only with military objectives, use only necessary force and cause the least possible damage, protect civilians and do not harm civilian property, and value religious building and cultural heritage.
- Leaders must set an example and treat their subordinates well, without discrimination.
- Soldiers must follow orders and duties given by different leadership levels, cooperate with a spirit of camaraderie, commit no discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, gender, abstain from drug use, and commit no social violations.
- Only target and destroy military dictatorship mechanisms; never target or threaten civilians; and never target or attack schools, hospitals, religious, social or cultural sites, ambulances, health care or rescue workers.
- Treat POWs and those who surrender in accordance with Geneva Conventions.
- No disrespect, bullying, insults, disturbance, or harassment of civilians, using civilians as hostages or human shields, avoid taking civilian property and absolutely no taking such property without fair compensation. Provide special protection to vulnerable groups such as children, people with disabilities, women, and elderly.
- No sexual exploitation, violence, or disrespect against women or children.

NUG (26 May 2021) Ministry of Defense PDF Military Code of Conduct, [facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/121454170075223](https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/121454170075223)

⁹ NUG (23 May 2021) Ministry of Federal Union Affairs Statement 1/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/120609483493025>

¹⁰ NUG (5 May 2021) Notification 1/2021: Announcement on the Establishment of People's Defence Force, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/115217634032210>

¹¹ NUG (17 May 2021) Ministry of Defense Announcement 1/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/118634603690513>

¹² NUG (17 May 2021) Ministry of Defense Directorate 1/2021 for People's Defense Groups, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/118655140355126>

¹³ NUG (23 May 2021) Ministry of Defense announcement about PDF, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/120535930167047>

¹⁴ NUG (22 May 2021) Ministry of Labor statement, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/120432340177406>

¹⁵ NUG (23 May 2021) Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry Statement 1/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/120613350159305>

¹⁶ NUG (26 May 2021) Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry Announcement 3/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/121514940069146>

On 30 May, it welcomed the recent decision to distribute dividend payment to shareholders of Moattama Gas Transportation Company (MGTC), but urged foreign oil companies TOTAL and Chevron to go further. It noted that these dividend distributions are only worth around USD 40 million/year, compared to USD 1.4 billion/year in junta revenue from the oil and gas sector. It called on TOTAL and Chevron to **withhold all payments from the junta**, and noted that new US sanctions on the junta's State Administration Council (SAC) mean these companies should be on notice that continued payments carry legal risks.¹⁷

Foreign assistance

In May, NUG Minister of International Cooperation Dr. SaSa appealed to the Parliaments of Germany, the UK, and Japan, the US government, the EU and the international community, for humanitarian and other assistance. He called for assistance with **cross-border food support, education programs, health services** including vaccines, and **shelter for the displaced**. He urged foreign governments to encourage Burma's neighbors to open borders for humanitarian assistance and aid.

In addition to seeking official recognition of NUG as the government of Burma, he also sought support for increased financial pressure on the junta, in particular through stronger sanctions on junta-affiliated businesses such as Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise; an international arms embargo that includes dual-use technology; creation of a no-fly zone over Burma, and accountability for the junta at the ICC.¹⁸

Education & Health

On 21 May the Ministry of Education called on teachers to attend its Program of Primary [school] Teacher Training (PPTT) and join the corps of teachers under its new, reformed education system.¹⁹ On 15 May, it announced that it was developing an interim education program that will include basic, higher, and vocational education. It called for the establishment of education boards at the township level for interim basic education. It requested university-level students and their parents to refuse the junta's pressure to return to university, and instead join NUG's interim university entrance programs.²⁰

It acknowledged 53 temporary interim councils, and called on remaining councils to form.²¹ It had called, on 26 April, for the councils to be established, to address the Ministry policies, objectives, and values at the university level.²² The NUG also appealed to the Sangha (Buddhist) Council, on 5 May, to delay religious exams, despite the junta's attempts to force it to do otherwise.²³

On 15 May, it requested businessmen and factory owners to employ students who have not been able to complete their degrees in light of the pandemic and now the coup.²⁴

¹⁷ NUG (30 May 2021) Ministry of Planning, Finance and Investment Announcement 4/2021: Statement to TOTAL's Press Release, stopping MGTC's dividend payments, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/122654256621881>

¹⁸ NUG (6 May 2021) Dr. Sasa Address to the German Parliamentarians, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/115001484053825>; NUG (6 May 2021) Request from Dr. Sasa to the German Parliament on humanitarian and human rights assistance, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/117184357168871>; NUG (15 May 2021) Letter from Dr. Sasa to the American people and government, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/117867993767174>; NUG (12-15 May 2021) The Union Minister of the MoI and NUG Spokesperson H.E. Dr. Sasa's Address to the Parliamentarians of the United Kingdom - UK, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/118628143691159>; NUG (26 May 2021) Joint Statement from the National Unity Government and the Japan Parliamentary Group Supporting Democratization in Myanmar, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/122020846685222>

¹⁹ NUG (21 May 2021) Ministry of Education Statement 14/2021: PPTT batch 7, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/119939910226649>

²⁰ NUG (15 May 2021) Ministry of Education Statement 11/2021: Notification to first-year students planning to attend universities, degrees, colleges, and institutes, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/118268870393753>; NUG (15 May 2021) Ministry of Education Statement 12/2021: Asking to establish education boards in respective townships for interim basic education, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/118284037058903>

²¹ NUG Ministry of Education (11 May 2021) Statement 7/2021 Statement of acknowledgement, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/116859070534733>

²² NUG Ministry of Education (26 Apr 2021) Statement 2/2021 Acknowledgement of the temporary interim university councils, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/111660971054543>

²³ NUG (5 May 2021) Appeal to the revered Sangha Council, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/114652087422098>

²⁴ NUG (15 May 2021) Ministry of Education Statement 10/2021: Request to businessmen and factory owners, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/118255353728438>

In May, the Ministry promised to ensure the job security of all those participating in CDM, regardless of whether they were fired or resigned.²⁵ It continued to denounce civil servants supporting the junta and pressuring CDM members, blacklisting 89;²⁶ but said there will be a program for integrating those who went back to work but want to join CDM again.²⁷

The Ministry of Health also denounced civil servants continuing to serve the junta and harass CDM members, and listed 20 such people to be fired.²⁸ On 10 May, the NUG honored 65 CDM participants and published a Certificate of Acknowledgement, thanking and honoring them for their participation.²⁹ On 12 May, the **Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation** thanked civil servants from this Ministry for protesting, and thanked them for their sacrifices.³⁰

Air strikes, artillery, and attacks on towns

The Tatmadaw continued to wage war against ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), local defense forces, and people it believes oppose the coup. It launched major offensives against small towns in Chin and Karenni/Kayah States, and fired missiles on communities nationwide from land and the skies.

In just the first three weeks of May, there were over 530 violent attacks on civilians or armed clashes, bringing the total number of incidents between 1 February and 21 May to 2,098.³¹

The Tatmadaw's frequent troop movements in May suggest that it either does not have enough forces where it needs them, or it does not have sufficient support from its troops already stationed there. Experts have suggested that the Tatmadaw's ceasefire in Rakhine State right before the coup was aimed at freeing up the soldiers there, who comprised half of its mobile reserves.³²

Similarly, as it ramped up air force activity in Chin and Karenni States, it reduced air force activity in Kachin and Karen/Kayin States, suggesting it has limited aerial resources.³³ Numerous KIA attacks on military-owned jet fuel tankers, which import jet fuel from China, have caused Puma Energy to cease supplying the Myitkyina airport and will hamper the military's capacity to carry out air attacks.³⁴

Junta's reliance on Border Guard Force, Militias

4 May Local media reported that the junta was collecting lists of people living in Manaung Township (Rakhine State) in order to assess deaths among village tract militia members and replace them. The junta planned to "restructure" militias, which residents fear will aid the military.³⁵

13 May It was reported that Border Guard Force (BGF) casinos and informal border gates had reopened for business in Karen State; the junta cancelled NLD-initiated investigations into the Yatai New City project at Shwe Kokko, and agreed to restart the project as a joint venture with the military. In return, the BGF deployed soldiers throughout Hpapun and Kawkareik Townships (Karen State), Thaton Township (Mon State), and parts of Tanintharyi Region.³⁶

²⁵ NUG (14 May 2021) Ministry of Education Statement 8/2021 regarding teachers' and civil servants' job security and livelihood, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/117537813800192>

²⁶ NUG Ministry of Education (2 May 2021) Statement 6/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/113846397502667>; NUG (15 May 2021) Ministry of Education Statement 9/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/118254010395239>

²⁷ NUG (21 May 2021) Ministry of Education Statement 13/2021: announcement regarding non-CDM, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/119927750227865>

²⁸ NUG Ministry of Health (5 May 2021) Statement 3/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/114470917440215>; NUG Ministry of Health (10 May 2021) Statement 4/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/116562150564425>

²⁹ NUG (10 May 2021) Statement 3/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/116255687261738>

³⁰ NUG Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (12 May 2021) Letter thanking CDM heroes, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/116836887203618>

³¹ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) (updated 21 May 2021) Data Export Tool, available at <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>

³² Asia Times (18 Feb 2021) Why Myanmar's military will win in the end

³³ Nathan Ruser (updated 24 May 2021) Myanmar Clashes (April 2021 – Current), <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1lqfmadhB42AQQDekATeyMCbFRu8hfY67oH-PGgVcAtY>

³⁴ Myanmar Now (29 May 2021) Puma halts petrol supply to Myitkyina airport

³⁵ BNI (4 May 2021) State Administration Council collecting lists to restructure militia in Manaung Twsp

³⁶ Frontier Myanmar (13 May 2021) With conflict escalating, Karen BGF gets back to business

- 18 May It was reported that the junta-allied Rawang people's militia along the Kachin-China border, used UNICEF aid to recruit people against the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and PDF.³⁷
- 25 May The Karenni People's Defense Force (KPDF) claimed that members of the Pa'O National Organization (PNO) fought alongside the Tatmadaw during a clash with KPDF in Pekhon Township on 24 May, and. A KPDF member said that the PNO was using "secret roads" to move forces to support the military. The PNO denied the claim.³⁸

Chin State: The Mindat siege, war crimes and perfidy

The Chinland Defence Force (CDF) defended Mindat from the Tatmadaw with guerrilla tactics in March and April, and on 27 April the two sides declared a ceasefire and exchanged prisoners. However, the Tatmadaw attacked on the town on 12 May with heavy artillery and reinforcements, and declared martial law on 13 May.³⁹ It blocked access to water and energy, and roads for food supplies.⁴⁰

On 13 May, junta troops killed a teenager and injured six others.⁴¹ On 14 May, the Tatmadaw used artillery and indiscriminate sniper fire on the CDF.⁴² On 15 May, the Tatmadaw killed at least 5 civilians, and injured ten. It also destroyed homes as it laid siege to the town. The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) reported on apparent evidence of war crimes.⁴³ The Tatmadaw used civilians as human shields, continued artillery and air strikes, and flew in several hundred reinforcements.⁴⁴ On 16 May, CDF forces outside Mindat attacked a nine-truck convoy of Tatmadaw reinforcements.⁴⁵

The NUG condemned the violence and called for international assistance to stop the bloodshed.⁴⁶

On 24 May, local relief volunteers said that 90% of Mindat town's population had fled the city since the Tatmadaw attacked it on 14–15 May (i.e., over 8,000 people). There were 12,000 people in 14 IDP camps across the Township, all in need of emergency support.⁴⁷

The Tatmadaw also brought violence elsewhere in Chin State:

- 2–4 May In Hakha, the CDF attacked two checkpoints and killed eight soldiers. Military trucks moving from Kalay to Hakha were attacked with home-made mines.⁴⁸ The CDF also ambushed troops near a military-owned bank; two men and one woman who lived nearby were arrested.⁴⁹
- 12 May CHRO condemned the torture and death of two Chin civilians by soldiers from Tatmadaw LIB 266, based in Hakha. It called for an independent investigation into the deaths and allegations of systematic torture at the LIB 266 military detention center at Mount Rung.⁵⁰
- 14 May Local media outlets reported the formation of the Zomi National Volunteer (ZNV) as a new fighting force to support the Zomi Revolutionary/Reunification Army (ZRA) and fight for self-determination of Zomi People in Tedim and Tonzang Townships.⁵¹

³⁷ Irrawaddy (18 May 2021) Kachin State Militia Recruits for Myanmar's Junta: Villagers

³⁸ Kantarawaddy Times (25 May 2021) PNO Supporting Tatmadaw During Fighting in Karenni State, KPDF Claims

³⁹ BBC (22 May 2021) Myanmar: The small embattled town that stood up to the army; SAC (13 May 2021) Martial Law Order 4/2021; SAC (13 May 2021) Martial Law Order 5/2021

⁴⁰ Myanmar Now (19 May 2021) Junta cuts off water and food supplies to rebel town of Mindat

⁴¹ Irrawaddy (13 May 2021) Chin Teenager Killed as Myanmar Regime Bombards Resistance Town

⁴² Chindwin (via Twitter) (14 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/ChindwinNews/status/1393124581469155334>

⁴³ Chin Human Rights Organization (via Facebook) (15 May 2021) <https://www.facebook.com/ChinHumanRightsOrganization>

⁴⁴ Irrawaddy (15 May 2021) Myanmar Junta's Troops Use Civilians as Human Shields in Assault on Mindat

⁴⁵ Irrawaddy (16 May 2021) Chin Civilian Resistance Continues to Fight Myanmar's Junta

⁴⁶ NUG (15 May 2021) Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children Affairs Statement 2/2021,

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/117895223764451>; NUG (15 May 2021) Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Announcement 3/2021 Calling Immediate Attention on Mindat,

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/118006803753293>; NUG (15 May 2021) Statement by Dr. Sasa: Mindat Chin

State of Myanmar under intensive terrorist attacks by the junta 'SAC' forces,

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/118026227084684>

⁴⁷ BNI (24 May 2021) 90 % of Mindat's People have fled in terror from the military's brutal bombardment of their township

⁴⁸ Myanmar Now (4 May 2021) Eight regime soldiers killed in clashes in Hakha, say Chin resistance fighters

⁴⁹ Myanmar Now (5 May 2021) Chin resistance fighters 'kill another soldier' in ambush at military-owned bank

⁵⁰ Chin Human Rights Organization (via Facebook) (13 May 2021)

<https://www.facebook.com/ChinHumanRightsOrganization/photos/a.451414138243470/4190426014342245>

⁵¹ Chindwin (via Twitter) (14 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/ChindwinNews/status/1393184023833423873>

- 18 May The Vice chairman of Mizoram's (India) State Planning Board said that **15,400 people had fled from Burma to India** and the number was increasing daily. Around 6,000 were staying in the Mizoram State capital Aizawl. Some had tested positive for COVID-19.⁵²
- 21 May In Hlanzawl village, Falam Township the Chin National Defense Organization (CNDO) clashed with the Tatmadaw.⁵³
- 21 May On the Kalay-Falam Road in Falam Township, CDF fighters ambushed a military convoy heading to Hakha Town and killed six Tatmadaw soldiers, including a Captain. It also attacked a regime checkpoint near Hakha University and killed four soldiers.⁵⁴
- 21 May In Kun Pun village, Mindat Township, regime troops disguised themselves as civilian IDPs. When they got close enough, they opened fire on the CDF, supported by rocket launchers. Earlier, soldiers in Mindat pretended to surrender to CDF members, and then fired at them.⁵⁵
- 23 May It was reported that “most” of Matupi town had fled, fearing a Tatmadaw attack.⁵⁶
- 31 May The local administration said that the Tatmadaw fired artillery over Aye Sakahan IDP camp, Mindat Township—which was white-flagged—forcing several people in the camp to flee.⁵⁷

Karenni State: Airstrikes, shelling of Demoso and Loikaw

The Tatmadaw brought its campaign of violence to another new front, by fighting in Karenni State.

- 7 May The Karenni People's Defense Force (KPDF) was formally established, and will establish chapters in every township in the State. It plans to cooperate with NUG and the local PDF.⁵⁸
- 21 May The KPDF captured three junta checkpoints and killed three police officers in Demoso and Bawlakhe Townships. The Tatmadaw shelled residential areas of Demoso, and deployed up to 1,000 soldiers from LIB 102 along its main road, who fired on civilians.⁵⁹
- 23 May The KPDF clashed with the Tatmadaw in Demoso Township, killing 20 Tatmadaw soldiers.⁶⁰ Later the Tatmadaw launched an airstrike with an attack helicopter.⁶¹
- 24 May The Tatmadaw attacked Ka Yan Thar Yar village, Loikaw Township with heavy weapons including artillery, displacing the entire village.⁶² It **bombed a church** in the village, where civilians were hiding, killing four and injuring six.⁶³
- 25 May The Tatmadaw attacked three villages in Demoso Township and clashed with the KPDF. Locals reported six flights landed in Loikaw and saw them unload soldiers and equipment.⁶⁴
- 26 May A civilian volunteer said that fighting between the Tatmadaw and KPDF since 21 May had **displaced around 70,000 people in Karenni and Southern Shan States**. IDPs needed food and shelter, but there were only enough plastic sheets for the elderly, women, and children.⁶⁵
- 31 May The Tatmadaw launched air strikes with helicopter gunships against the KPDF in Demoso town. Military units based in Loikaw fired heavy artillery indiscriminately at the town.⁶⁶

⁵² Reuters (18 May 2021) More than 15,000 people from Myanmar shelter in Indian border state - official

⁵³ Chindwin (via Twitter) (21 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/ChindwinNews/status/1395593752027275264>

⁵⁴ Myanmar Now (22 May 2021) Six soldiers, including one captain, killed in Falam ambush

⁵⁵ Myanmar Now (23 May 2021) Regime soldiers 'disguised themselves as civilians fleeing their homes' to ambush Chin resistance fighters

⁵⁶ BNI (27 May 2021) Fearful Fighting Will Erupt Residents Flee Town in Southern Chin State

⁵⁷ Hnin Zaw (via Twitter) (31 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/hninyadanazaw/status/1399364281750130689>

⁵⁸ BNI (13 May 2021) Karenni People's Defense Force Must Be "Systematic" To Succeed, KSCC Says

⁵⁹ Myanmar Now (22 May 2021) Karenni resistance fighters kill three police officers as military attacks residential areas with artillery

⁶⁰ KNIC (via Twitter) (23 May 2021) https://twitter.com/KnIC_Karenni/status/1396423937693675522

⁶¹ Ro Nay San Lwin (via Twitter) (23 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/nslwin/status/1396443791272333319>

⁶² Hanna Yuri (via Twitter) (24 May 2021) https://twitter.com/hannayuri_tweet/status/1396668619145154560

⁶³ ND-Burma (via Twitter) (24 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/NDBurma/status/1396649877346537476>

⁶⁴ Myanmar Now (25 May 2021) Junta's forces attack civilians in Kayah State in retaliation for local resistance

⁶⁵ Kantarawaddy Times (26 May 2021) Civilians Affected By Fighting in Karenni State Need Emergency Support; Irrawaddy (27 May 2021) More Than 70,000 People Displaced as Fighting Rages in Eastern Myanmar

⁶⁶ Reuters (1 Jun 2021) Myanmar carries out air strikes after militia attacks - witnesses

Kachin State: The KIA fights back, but Tatmadaw still kills civilians

The Kachin Independence Army (KIA) attacked, and in some cases overran, bases and outposts garrisoned by the Tatmadaw in Hpung Chyan, Putao Township;⁶⁷ Tanggau Bum, Hpakant Township;⁶⁸ Mile 6, Sumprabum Township;⁶⁹ Point 531, Putao Township;⁷⁰ Madang Yang, Mansi Township;⁷¹ Man Da Bum, Mansi Township;⁷² Lagat Kawng, Momauk Township;⁷³ Mile 16, Sumprabum Township;⁷⁴ and Kone Law, Momauk Township.⁷⁵ It attacked a police base in Mansi, killing a police Major and seriously wounding the Chief of Police.⁷⁶ It also fired on two boats and a plane being used to bring in Tatmadaw reinforcements.⁷⁷

The Tatmadaw tried to recapture its positions, often firing indiscriminately on villages in the process:

- 3 May A Tatmadaw helicopter **bombed a monastery** in Kung Law village, killing three villagers and a monk, and injuring at least six others.⁷⁸ The KIA shot down a Tatmadaw helicopter nearby a few minutes later, apparently using a surface-to-air missile.⁷⁹
- 4 May Tatmadaw troops fired indiscriminately at Lung Bra, Mansi Township, hitting one villager in the leg, following a clash with KIA Battalion 6.⁸⁰
- 5 May After a KIA attack, the Tatmadaw fired artillery into Num Laung, Momauk Township.⁸¹
- 7 May The Tatmadaw launched six air strikes on KIA positions near Myothit and Kone Law villages, Momauk Township, attempting to recapture Alaw Bum Mountain.⁸²
- 19 May Locals in Momauk town said that 3,000 people arrived from elsewhere in the Township, after being displaced by heavy Tatmadaw shelling and inability to reach their farms or gather food. They were sleeping on the ground, and locals could only deliver aid in secret.⁸³
- 20 May Tatmadaw shells hit seven homes in Myothit and Kung Law villages, Momauk Township.⁸⁴
- 24 May Tatmadaw LIR 437 shelled Alaw Kung village, Momauk Township, killing a 6th-grader.⁸⁵

Karen State: Airstrikes targeting civilians continue, IDPs at risk

Continued Tatmadaw airstrikes and fighting in Hpapun Township led to large-scale displacement.

- 6 May UNHCR staff met with the Governor of Mae Hong Son Province (Thailand) to discuss support and protection for the 2,160 new Karen refugees in the Province.⁸⁶

⁶⁷ Kachinland News (5 May 2021) Battles rage across Kachin region as daily air raids on Salawng Kawng

⁶⁸ FreeKachin (via Twitter) (6 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/FreeKachin/status/1390258224876638211>

⁶⁹ Kachinland News (7 May 2021) Airstrikes, artillery shellings and ground battles continue unabated

⁷⁰ Kachinland News (10 May 2021) KIA troops attack a ship carrying SAC troops, Battles rage in Putao and Manton

⁷¹ Kachinland News (12 May 2021) SAC carries out 6 airstrikes on Jaw Maw and Madang Yang as fighting rages; Kachinland News (14 May 2021) SAC's fighter jets raid KIA's Hpri Hta Bum as ground battles rage

⁷² Kachinland News (13 May 2021) Air raids on Madang Yang as battles intensify, KIA attacks SAC's military convoy; Kachinland News (14 May 2021) SAC's fighter jets attack KIA's Man Da Bum

⁷³ Kachinland News 19 May 2021) SAC troops withdrew from Lagat Kawng Post

⁷⁴ Kachinland News (23 May 2021) KIA troops overrun 2 SAC frontline posts, fighting continues

⁷⁵ Kachinland News (24 May 2021) Multiple attacks by KIA troops reported on Sunday

⁷⁶ 74 Media (via Twitter) (3 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/The74Media2019/status/1389237111560179717>; BNI (5 May 2021) Police major killed in Mansi attack

⁷⁷ Kachinland News (2 May 2021) Air raids and artillery fires show no sign of abating in Momauk; Kachinland News (5 May 2021) Battles rage across Kachin region as daily air raids on Salawng Kawng

⁷⁸ Kachinland News (3 May 2021) 4 killed and 6 injured by SAC's airstrikes on Kung Law village

⁷⁹ 74 Media (via Twitter) (3 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/The74Media2019/status/1389093378743103489>; 74 media (via Twitter) (3 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/The74Media2019/status/1389125284461355010>

⁸⁰ Kachinland News (5 May 2021) SAC troops' random gunfire injured a Lung Bra villager

⁸¹ Kachin News (7 May 2021) Burma Army Shells Village in Kachin State

⁸² Kachinland News (8 May 2021) SAC's fighter jets attack Salawng Kawng and Alaw Bum in 6 sorties

⁸³ Myanmar Now (19 May 2021) Humanitarian crisis looms for thousands of IDPs in Momauk

⁸⁴ Kachinland News (21 May 2021) Several houses hit by SAC troops' random mortar fires

⁸⁵ Kachinland News (25 May 2021) SAC's 437th LIR shellings kill a teenage boy in Momauk

⁸⁶ Bangkok Post (7 May 2021) Talks held with UN to help fleeing Karen

- 7 May The Arakan National Council (ANC) announced it was fighting alongside the KNLA. In Oo Thu Hta, KNLA and ANC forces captured a Tatmadaw base and a stockpile of mortar rounds.⁸⁷ Four Tatmadaw jets dropped eight bombs on Hsaw Bwe Der village.⁸⁸
- 7 May Tatmadaw air strikes hit civilian targets and killed multiple civilians in Bu Tho, despite daily plane and drone reconnaissance flyovers, suggesting deliberate targeting of civilians.⁸⁹
- 12 May Local CSOs reported small arms and artillery fire in Mae Kha Hta. More junta-aligned BGF soldiers were reportedly moving into the area, the site of several Karen IDP refugee camps.⁹⁰
- 25 May Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN) released “Terror from the Skies,” which reported that the Tatmadaw’s ground and air attacks had displaced 70,000 people, or 90% of Hpapun’s rural population; that forces had looted food, animals, and other belongings from civilians; and that between 27 March and 7 May, there were 27 air strikes across Hpapun.⁹¹ The Karen National Union previously reported that 80% of IDPs were women, children and elderly.⁹²

Sagaing Region: Multiple forces fight back

- 5 May The Shanni Nationalities Army (SNA) fought with the Tatmadaw LIB 57 and LIB 222 in Kaunghein, Khamti Township. This was the third such clash since 1 February.⁹³
- 11 May It was reported that clashes between the Tatmadaw and local defense forces on 6–7 May forced 3,000–5,000 people from over 30 villages in Kani Township to flee their homes.⁹⁴
- 11 May The Tamu People’s Defence Force claimed that it killed at least 15 soldiers in two separate clashes in Tamu Township.⁹⁵
- 22–23 May The local PDF clashed with junta forces in several places in Kani Township. Military vehicles trying to retreat from the clashes triggered a landmine outside of Kani Town.⁹⁶
- 22 May The KIA burned down two compounds garrisoned by security forces but owned by the crony conglomerate MEHL, in Machyang Hka and Nam Si Bum villages, Hkamti Township. The Tatmadaw responded with an air strike that injured a civilian.⁹⁷
- 25 May Local self-defense groups attacked Tatmadaw targets along the Chindwin River in Nyaung Yin, Kani Township. The Tatmadaw retaliated with indiscriminate shelling.⁹⁸

Shan State: Human shields

- 3 May It was reported that Tatmadaw had used villagers as forced laborers and human shields, and looted property, during an operation against the RCSS/SSA in Namzarng in late April.⁹⁹
- 4 May In Kutkai Township, continued fighting between the Brotherhood Alliance and Tatmadaw displaced 500 civilians, severely wounded five, and destroyed several houses.¹⁰⁰
- 5 May The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) captured a Tatmadaw LIR 9 base in Mangban, Kutkai Township. It shared pictures of captured weapons and ammunition

⁸⁷ Myanmar Now (8 May 2021) Rakhine nationalist group joins KNU in fight against military

⁸⁸ Nimrod Andrew (via Twitter) (7 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/NimrodAndrew/status/1390575288480768001>

⁸⁹ Mat Walsh (via Twitter) (8 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/mattywalsh/status/1391041856033619968>

⁹⁰ Matt Walsh (via Twitter) (12 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/mattywalsh/status/1392407873871773698>

⁹¹ Karen Peace Support Network (25 May 2021) Terror from the Skies: Coup regime’s escalated offensives cause mass displacement across Mutraw

⁹² RFA (13 May 2021) Displaced Women, Children Face ‘Humanitarian Crisis’ Following Myanmar Coup

⁹³ BNI (10 May 2021) Five soldiers killed and one wounded in a clash between SNA and army

⁹⁴ Myanmar Now (11 May 2021) Kani Township sees dramatic rise in number of displaced after latest clashes

⁹⁵ Myanmar Now (12 May 2021) Two attacks on regime forces in Tamu leave 15 soldiers dead

⁹⁶ Irrawaddy (23 May 2021) Myanmar Resistance Fighters Continue to Battle Junta Troops in Sagaing

⁹⁷ Irrawaddy (22 May 2021) Police Killed as KIA Attacks Junta Positions at Jade Mine: Residents

⁹⁸ Irrawaddy (26 May 2021) Two Myanmar Resistance Fighters Killed in Sagaing Clash

⁹⁹ SHRF (via Twitter) (3 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/shanhumanrights/status/1389062495873114112>

¹⁰⁰ Jaw Tu Hkawng (via Twitter) (5 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/JawTuHkawng/status/1389790724573458433>

and said it killed 30 Tatmadaw troops and a Captain.¹⁰¹ The Tatmadaw responded by shelling MNDAA and TNLA positions in Nam Khong, Kutkai Township on 7 May.¹⁰²

17 May In Nampachi, Kutkai Township, KIA Battalion 39 ambushed and destroyed a fuel tanker transporting jet fuel for the military.¹⁰³

Violent crackdowns on resistance

In May, the junta continued to unleash lethal violence throughout the country, killing, injuring, or otherwise harming civilians in the towns and cities of each State and Region. UNICEF reported that as of 7 May, junta forces **had killed 53 children under the age of 18**, including seven girls, and at least **1,000 children and youths remained detained without access to lawyers or their families**.¹⁰⁴

Abductions and Hostage-taking

6 May AAPP reported 40 cases of hostage-taking by security forces since 1 February.¹⁰⁵

7 May In Mudon (Mon State), regime forces took the wife and 20-day-old baby of protest leader U Than Win hostage, while searching for anti-regime activists.¹⁰⁶

10 May In Hpakant (Kachin State), security forces abducted ten civilians and their family members for joining the CDM.¹⁰⁷

16 May Security forces raided human rights defender U Htein Min Khaing's home in Mandalay; not finding him, they arrested his son, Aung Khant Min Htein, a university student.¹⁰⁸

19 May In Mawlamyine (Mon State), junta forces raided homes and abducted eight students.¹⁰⁹

22 May Security forces abducted activist Lay Lay Naing in Meiktila (Mandalay Region).¹¹⁰

Arbitrary Detention

2 May Security forces arrested 12 people, including three on ART medication, at the NLD AIDS Center in Yangon.¹¹¹

11 May In Dawei (Tanintharyi Region), junta troops arrested 13 people, including a teenager, violently broke up a crowd preparing to protest, and shot at protesters hiding in houses.¹¹²

11 May The Karenni National Progressive Party is negotiating the release of the 74 detained youth who were arrested by military troops after a capacity building training on April 30.¹¹³

21 May In Myitkyina, security forces violently arrested Kachin activists and Lum Zaung and Seng Nu Pan, both of whom were candidates in the 2020 elections and former political prisoners. They also arrested three others, including the younger brother of Seng Nu Pan.¹¹⁴

¹⁰¹ FreeKachin (via Twitter) (5 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/FreeKachin/status/1389977543541940225>

¹⁰² Shan Herald (11 May 2021) Conflict Between Tatmadaw and Northern Alliance Persists in Kutkai Township

¹⁰³ Kachinland News (18 May 2021) SAC troops shell KIA's frontline outposts, KIA attacks SAC's oil trucks; Shafiur Rahaman (via Twitter) (18 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/shafiur/status/1394534856835600384>

¹⁰⁴ Radio Free Asia (7 May 2021) Myanmar's Military Junta Kills, Detains Youths in Crackdown on Protest Movement

¹⁰⁵ Radio Free Asia (6 May 2021) No Holds Barred: Myanmar Junta Grabs Family Members to Get at Wanted Protesters

¹⁰⁶ Irrawaddy (7 May 2021) Wife and Newborn Baby of Anti-Regime Activist Held as Hostages by Myanmar Junta

¹⁰⁷ Irrawaddy (10 May 2021) Regime Abducts Ten Civilians in Myanmar's Jade Town

¹⁰⁸ TU-Meiktila Students' Union (via Facebook) (16 May 2021)

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=333431831541293&id=101507484733730

¹⁰⁹ HURFOM (via Twitter) (19 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/HURFOM/status/1394823131949268992>

¹¹⁰ Zin Min Phyoo (via Facebook) (22 May 2021)

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1200516773741366&id=100013491640718

¹¹¹ Irrawaddy (3 May 2021) Myanmar Junta Arrests HIV/AIDS Patients in Yangon

¹¹² Myanmar Now (11 May 2021) On 100th day since Myanmar coup, junta troops arrest 13 Dawei protesters

¹¹³ BNI (11 May 2021) Negotiating to release 74 detained young people: KNN secretary

¹¹⁴ Wai Wai Nu (via Twitter) (21 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/waiwainu/status/1395631864472276999>; Irrawaddy (21 May 2021) Myanmar Death Toll at the Hands of the Junta Climbs to 810

Deaths in custody

- 7 May The Tatmadaw refused to hand over the body of Aung Myint Hlaing to his relatives in Pyay Township (Bago Region), after he died in custody.¹¹⁵
- 9 May Security forces returned to his family the body of poet Khet Thi with no internal organs, a day after detaining and torturing him, in Shwebo (Sagaing Region).¹¹⁶
- 9 May A man died while security forces were transporting him from Hakha (Chin State) to Kalay (Sagaing Region). Reports suggest he died from serious wounds from torture, but his body has not been returned to his family.¹¹⁷
- 12 May In Talokmyo village (Mandalay Region), a member of the All Burma Federation of Students Unions (Ba Ka Tha) was arrested and died during interrogation. Since February 1 about 100 students of Ba Ka Tha have been arrested for joining the CDM.¹¹⁸
- 16 May In Yangon, the family of Kyaw Kyaw, who was arrested and died during interrogation on May 14, got permission to bury his body. They were forced to sign a paper stating that he died from his medical conditions, though his body had wounds consistent with torture. The junta closely monitored the funeral, and did not allow family members to take pictures.¹¹⁹
- 19 May In Yangon, a diabetic man died in Insein Prison. Security forces had refused, since arresting him on March 6, to transfer him to a hospital despite his condition and support needs.¹²⁰

Extra-judicial killings

- 7 May Junta forces killed a teenager and arrested five others during a raid in Myingyan Township (Mandalay Region), after a bomb exploded at the house of a suspected informant.¹²¹
- 10 May In Namti (Kachin State), security forces killed one civilian and wounded three others who were outside after the junta-imposed 8pm curfew.¹²²
- 11 May In Thamin Chan village, Kani Township (Sagaing Region), around 20 junta forces shot and killed Ko Kyaw Myint, a man with a mental disability, who was cursing soldiers from his home. His parents begged the soldiers not to shoot him because he was mentally unwell.¹²³
- 24 May Tatmadaw soldiers tied a man's hands and then summarily executed him by shooting him in the head in Loikaw Township (Karenni State).¹²⁴
- 25 May In Salin Township (Magway Region), soldiers shot and killed a 24-year-old woman, and arrested seven people during a raid carried out in response to anti-coup graffiti.¹²⁵

Torture and abuse

While torture and abuse occur in relation to arrests and detention, these specific cases were reported:

- 11 May Security forces arrested eight youths in Muse (Shan State), and tortured at least two of them.¹²⁶
- 19 May Soldiers tortured and killed local election official Khin Maung Kyi in Taungdwingyi Township (Magway Region).¹²⁷

¹¹⁵ Myanmar Now (7 May 2021) Military refuses to hand over body of Pyay man who died in custody

¹¹⁶ Reuters (10 May 2021) Myanmar poet's body returned to family with organs missing

¹¹⁷ BNI (13 May 2021) Man Dies After Arrest by Burma Army in Chin State, Woman Dies From Shock in Sagaing Region

¹¹⁸ DMG (14 May 2021) Scores of Ba Ka Tha students arrested after joining CDM movement

¹¹⁹ AAPP (17 May 2021) Fatality List for May 17, 2021

¹²⁰ Myanmar Now (21 May 2021) Diabetic man dies after two months in Insein Prison

¹²¹ Myanmar Now (7 May 2021) Soldiers murder teenager in Myingyan before arresting his grandfather

¹²² Myanmar Now (11 May 2021) One dead, three injured in military shootings in Namti

¹²³ Irrawaddy (12 May 2021) Myanmar Junta Troops Shoot Dead Mentally Ill Man in Sagaing Region

¹²⁴ Myanmar Now (25 May 2021) Junta's forces attack civilians in Kayah State in retaliation for local resistance

¹²⁵ Myanmar Now (26 May 2021) Young mother shot dead during junta raid triggered by anti-coup graffiti

¹²⁶ SHAN news (13 May 2021) Armed Forces Detain Protesters in Muse, Explosions Rock Taunggyi; SHAN news (16 May 2021)

Burma's military regime targets youths in Shan State

¹²⁷ Myanmar Now (21 May 2021) Soldiers torture local election official to death in Magway Region

- 2 May It was reported that security forces had severely tortured American journalist Nathan Maung and his colleague during interrogation. The journalists were beaten, burnt with cigarettes and forced to kneel on ice while their hands were cuffed behind them.¹²⁸

Targeting politicians

- 3 May An explosion in Pyay Township (Bago Region) killed five people, including region NLD MP Thet Win Hlaing and three police defectors.¹²⁹
- 3 May Security forces arrested and detained NLD lawmaker Khun Kyaw Aye for violating article 505(a), **while he was visiting his sick wife** in Hopong Township (Shan State).¹³⁰
- 7 May Plain-clothes forces arrested two NLD central committee members and one NLD youth member in Yangon.¹³¹
- 12 May Security forces in Yangon arrested two female Rakhine NLD lawmakers, Daw Ni Ni May Myint and Daw Chit Chit.¹³²
- 15 May Junta forces detained NLD lawmaker Dr. Tin Min Htut in Pantanaw Township (Ayeyarwady Region).¹³³
- 12 May The Pyay Township (Bago Region) court sentenced student leader Ko Thant Zin Tun to six years jail for breaking COVID-19 rules, and for criticizing the coup. He was arrested on February 18 for protesting.¹³⁴
- 19 May The Ayeyarwaddy Region court charged with treason nearly 50 activists and NLD lawmakers, who had already been charged for opposing the coup. The new charges carry the death penalty or a life sentence.¹³⁵
- 21 May The junta-appointed election commission said that the NLD could be dissolved due to (alleged) electoral fraud, and NLD leaders would be prosecuted as traitors.¹³⁶
- 24 May NLD party-leader Aung San Suu Kyi had her first public court appearance and was allowed to meet with her defense counsel for the first time since the junta arrested her on 1 February.¹³⁷

Increasing efforts to control media, restrict information

- 3 May Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing declared the media was “crucial” for democracy, days after the SAC revoked publishing licenses of Kachin News Journal and Voice of Myanmar.¹³⁸ The same day, the junta outlawed Kachin-based Myitkyina News Journal and 74 Media.¹³⁹
- 5 May Security forces raided the Lashio (Shan State) office of Ta’ang news organization Shwe Phee Myay News.¹⁴⁰
- 6 May Myanmar Now reporter Kay Zon Nway, who was arrested in late February and charged with incitement, was put in solitary confinement at Insein Prison. She was accused of staging a hunger strike, though in reality she started fasting for Ramadan.¹⁴¹

¹²⁸ Committee to Protect Journalists (21 May 2021) CPJ calls on Myanmar to release Kamayut Media editor Nathan Maung, news producer Hanthar Nyein

¹²⁹ Myanmar Now (4 May 2021) Pyay blast kills NLD lawmaker and three police defectors

¹³⁰ SHAN news (6 May 2021) NLD Lawmaker Arrested Visiting Sick Wife in Southern Shan State. Note: The illegal junta amended article 505(a) of the Penal Code to criminalize criticism of the coup.

¹³¹ Irrawaddy (7 May 2021) Myanmar Junta Forces Abduct Three NLD Members irrawaddy.com

¹³² DMG (13 May 2021) Two former NLD candidates including Taungup incumbent arrested

¹³³ Irrawaddy (16 May 2021) Another NLD Member Killed and Poet Burned to Death

¹³⁴ Irrawaddy (13 May 2021) Myanmar's Junta Sentences Four More to Prison for 'Incitement'

¹³⁵ Myanmar Now (20 May 2021) Nearly 50 Ayeyarwady Region activists and NLD lawmakers hit with treason charges

¹³⁶ Myanmar Now (21 May 2021) Junta-appointed election commission head suggests disbanding NLD, prosecuting leadership as 'traitors'

¹³⁷ Al Jazeera (24 May 2021) Aung San Suu Kyi in first public appearance since February arrest; Myanmar Now (24 May 2021) Suu Kyi says NLD will 'continue to exist' regardless of junta ban

¹³⁸ Myanmar Now (3 May 2021) Min Aung Hlaing hails 'freedom of expression' as his regime continues bid to destroy independent media

¹³⁹ CASS (5 May 2021) CASS Weekly Update 29 April - 5 May 2021

¹⁴⁰ Myanmar Now (6 May 2021) Jailed Myanmar Now reporter put in solitary confinement after starting fast for Ramadan

¹⁴¹ Myanmar Now (6 May 2021) Jailed Myanmar Now reporter put in solitary confinement after starting fast for Ramadan

- 12 May Democratic Voice of Burma correspondent Min Nyo was sentenced by a military court to three years in prison for his reporting. He is the first journalist to be convicted under the junta-introduced Section 505(A) of the Penal Code, which criminalizes free speech.¹⁴²
- 14 May Yuki Kitazumi was deported to Tokyo.¹⁴³ Detained since 19 April, he was charged on 4 May with spreading false news, facing up to three years in jail.¹⁴⁴ He shared harrowing testimonies of inmates at Insein prison: “some are deprived of meals for two days, others are questioned whilst being threatened with a weapon, or beaten if they try to deny the allegations.”¹⁴⁵
- 24 May Security forces arrested Danny Fenster, the American managing editor of Frontier Myanmar, while he was on his way to a flight out of the country.¹⁴⁶ He is the second American journalist detained; Nathan Maung, the American co-founder of local Burma news website Kamayut Media, has been in detention since 9 March, and has reportedly been tortured.¹⁴⁷

As of 27 May, security forces had detained at least 87 journalists, in all but three of Burma’s 15 States/Regions/Union Territory.¹⁴⁸

The junta’s **internet shutdown/restrictions** continued. Mobile data has been disconnected since 15 March, and public WiFi was limited from 18 March.¹⁴⁹ Satellite dishes remained illegal.¹⁵⁰ On 28 April, the junta apparently ended the nightly internet blackouts that began on 15 February.¹⁵¹ It was reported on 18 May that the junta plans to limit access to an internal network of only ‘whitelisted’ sites.¹⁵²

Resistance bites

Since 1 February, the junta has installed ward (in cities) and village tract (in rural areas) administrators, roles the military historically used to monitor communities. As of 21 May, at least 15 administrators had been killed, and at least 19 administrators’ offices set on fire.¹⁵³ Many roles are still vacant for safety reasons. A Tabayin Township (Sagaing Region) man explained: “There are 63 village tracts in Tabayin. These protection groups are active and robust in about 50 of them. [...] If the junta announced its picks [for administrators], these groups would attack them.”¹⁵⁴

Spyware for monitoring dissidents

Prior to the coup, the government ordered telecom and internet service providers (ISPs) to install intercept spyware that would allow the military to listen in on calls, view text messages and web traffic including emails, and track user locations without the assistance of telecoms and ISPs.

This spyware now enables the junta’s bulk collection of content and phone metadata. This is particularly significant because Burma lacks legal or regulatory safeguards to provide a check on such privacy invasions.

The junta now traces SIM cards and intercepts calls, and is allegedly already using this spyware to prosecute political dissidents. Civil servants working with the CRPH and NUG said they must often change SIM cards.

Operators are required by law to comply with junta demands, and to provide the junta with user information. Telecoms companies said if they do not comply, security forces will simply cut their lines and remove their licenses.

Reuters (20 May 2021) How Myanmar’s military moved in on the telecoms sector to spy on citizens

Security forces have felt the brunt of increasing attacks. On 28 May, a pagoda compound used as a Tatmadaw base was bombed, injuring four soldiers, and a shootout followed.¹⁵⁵ On 27 May, there were

¹⁴² AP (13 May 2021) Myanmar military court gives DVB reporter 3 years in prison

¹⁴³ BBC (14 May 2021) Myanmar: to release arrested Japanese journalist

¹⁴⁴ Reuters (4 May 2021) Japanese journalist charged in Myanmar for spreading false news

¹⁴⁵ Frontier Myanmar (15 May 2021) Freed Japanese journalist tells of prisoner abuse in Insein

¹⁴⁶ CNN (26 May 2021) American journalist detained in Myanmar while trying to fly out of country

¹⁴⁷ Committee to Protect Journalists (21 May 2021) CPJ calls on Myanmar to release Kamayut Media editor Nathan Maung, news producer Hanthar Nyein

¹⁴⁸ Reporting ASEAN (updated 27 May 2021) IN NUMBERS: Arrests of Journalists and Media Staff in Myanmar

¹⁴⁹ NetBlocks (updated 28 Apr 2021) Internet disrupted in Myanmar amid apparent military uprising

¹⁵⁰ Newsweek (8 Apr 2021) Myanmar Junta Declares Satellite Dishes Illegal, Seizes Them From Homes and Businesses; Radio Free Asia (12 Apr 2021) Tens of Thousands of Residents Flee Bago in Wake of Assault by Myanmar Security Forces

¹⁵¹ NetBlocks (updated 28 Apr 2021) Internet disrupted in Myanmar amid apparent military uprising

¹⁵² AP (18 May 2021) Report says Myanmar internet a ‘virtual battlefield’

¹⁵³ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) (updated 21 May 2021) Data Export Tool, available at <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>

¹⁵⁴ Frontier Myanmar (14 May 2021) Communities defy junta’s attempts to rule wards and villages

¹⁵⁵ Irrawaddy (29 May 2021) Myanmar Junta Forces’ Temporary Base Attacked in Yangon

at least five bombings just in Thaketa Township, Yangon.¹⁵⁶ It was reported on 29 May that the Tatmadaw had confiscated over 2,000 homemade bombs in Yangon over the prior week.¹⁵⁷ In late May, two security force personnel were killed by bombs thrown in broad daylight, and another was shot dead, in Sanchaung Township, Yangon. The following day, another was shot dead at a high school turned into a Tatmadaw base and a bomb exploded in Thingangyun Township, Yangon.¹⁵⁸ Piles of sandbags and layers of fencing now protect military-controlled locations in urban areas.¹⁵⁹

Burma residents are increasingly refusing to pay past and/or forthcoming electricity bills, which they believe would benefit the junta. Furthermore, civil servants from the Ministry of Electricity and Energy have been among the most likely to strike, with up to 80% refusing to work. One consequence is that the Ministry did not have the staff needed to check meters, issue bills, or process payments.¹⁶⁰

This poses a financial problem for the junta, which is locked into paying electricity companies regardless of depressed usage. Even before the Tatmadaw's power grab, the government was at a net loss in power consumption, paying out MMK 1.9 trillion and recovering only MMK 1.2 trillion during the 2017–2018 fiscal year; the 2020 – 2021 national budget called for the Ministry to pay out MMK 9.4 trillion and recoup only MMK 8.9 trillion. Furthermore, the contracts call for the government (or junta) to pay in dollars, but users' bills are still calculated and paid in kyat.¹⁶¹

Protests continue despite dangers

Protesters have adapted to the junta's repression, staging flash protests and people-less protests to avoid violence. On 1 May, in Yangon, protesters held flash marches for democracy, marching rapidly through the streets to avoid confrontation with security forces.¹⁶² On 7 May, at least eight anti-coup protesters were arrested in Yangon when hundreds joined flash-mob protests against military rule.¹⁶³

On 2 May, pro-democracy activists called for a general strike to signify the "Global Myanmar Spring Revolution," and protests were held around the world in solidarity with the movement in Burma.¹⁶⁴ The same day, swimmer Win Htet Oo turned his back on Burma's Olympic team and said will he not compete in Tokyo. He said that taking part in the Olympics would be propaganda for the junta.¹⁶⁵ On 27 May, Burma's goalkeeper—who is boycotting the World Cup qualifiers in Japan—encouraged his teammates to give the three-finger salute in support of the anti-coup movement.¹⁶⁶

It is becoming increasingly clear that education will not be able to proceed under the junta, with both students and teachers protesting the coup and a growing number fired and/or detained for doing so. The junta had ordered all universities to reopen on May 5 and basic education schools on June 1.¹⁶⁷ According to the Myanmar Teachers' Federation, more than half of all teachers are on strike, and since registration opened on 24 May, only 10% of students have signed up to start the school year on 1 June.¹⁶⁸ On 5 May, the reopening of Hakha University was not attended by a single student.¹⁶⁹

As of late May, the junta had suspended more than 125,000 of the 430,000 school teachers in Burma, and arrested more than 11,000 academics and other university staff, due to their involvement in the CDM.¹⁷⁰ On 12 May, Dr. Cho Yu Mon, the Headmistress of Hpa-an Government Technical School, was sentenced to two years imprisonment for taking part in a red ribbon campaign.¹⁷¹

¹⁵⁶ Irrawaddy (29 May 2021) Myanmar Junta Forces' Temporary Base Attacked in Yangon

¹⁵⁷ Irrawaddy (29 May 2021) Myanmar Junta Reports Huge Explosives Haul, Dozens of Arrests in Yangon

¹⁵⁸ Irrawaddy (27 May 2021) For Myanmar's Junta Forces, a New Sense of Vulnerability

¹⁵⁹ Irrawaddy (27 May 2021) For Myanmar's Junta Forces, a New Sense of Vulnerability

¹⁶⁰ Frontier Myanmar (15 May 2021) Unpaid power bills put junta finances on the line

¹⁶¹ Frontier Myanmar (15 May 2021) Unpaid power bills put junta finances on the line

¹⁶² AFP (2 May 2021) Bomb blasts, flash protests as Myanmar enters fourth month under junta

¹⁶³ Myanmar Now (8 May 2021) At least eight anti-coup protesters arrested in Yangon, as hundreds gather to resist military rule

¹⁶⁴ Myanmar Now (2 May 2021) At least six people killed by junta's armed forces as demonstrators return to the streets

¹⁶⁵ AFP (2 May 2021) Myanmar swimmer ditches Olympic dream to protest junta violence

¹⁶⁶ CNA (27 May 2021) Football: Goalkeeper urges Myanmar protest at World Cup qualifiers

¹⁶⁷ Irrawaddy (6 May 2021) Striking Education Staff Fired by Myanmar Junta

¹⁶⁸ Myanmar Now (26 May 2021) Some 90 percent of Myanmar students refuse to attend school under coup regime, teachers say

¹⁶⁹ BNI (10 May 2021) Hakha University students defy the coup

¹⁷⁰ Reuters (23 May 2021) More than 125,000 Myanmar teachers suspended for opposing coup; Reuters (11 May 2021) Thousands suspended at Myanmar universities as junta targets education

¹⁷¹ Irrawaddy (13 May 2021) Myanmar's Junta Sentences Four More to Prison for 'Incitement'

On 4 May, thousands of people protested the coup in Demoso Township (Karenni State), which students said has negatively impacted school and educational institutions.¹⁷² On 6 May, the Arakan Students' Union urged university students to boycott the education system, to show sympathy for the junta's victims and prevent success of the administration.¹⁷³ On 9 May, Chin University Students urged ethnic Chin university students in Rakhine State to boycott the education system under the junta and to join CDM.¹⁷⁴ On 11 May, the Mindat Public Administration Team called on people not to cooperate in the junta's efforts to reopen basic education schools, and not to carry out school enrollment.¹⁷⁵

On 12 May, the junta-controlled Higher Education Department announced job advertisements to replace suspended striking university and college staff. It extended the deadline for job applications, postponed written exams and relaxed age limits for applicants.¹⁷⁶

Women continue to lead and be targeted

Women continued to demonstrate leadership in resistance against the junta. On 5 May, CRPH appointed Hkaung Naw, a Kachin feminist, as deputy minister for International Cooperation.¹⁷⁷ On 16 May, in the US, Myanmar Miss Universe contestant Thuzar Wint Lwin used her platform to speak out against the military, telling people "our people are dying and being shot by the military every day."¹⁷⁸ On 7 May, Karen Peace Support Network director Wah Khu Shee said that the first people to take to the streets and lead the movement in February were women. She expressed worry that when the situation calms down, gender discrimination will likely return.¹⁷⁹

The junta continued its sexual and gender-based violence, primarily against women in detention. On 6 May, the Swedish Embassy in Myanmar issued a statement expressing support for women's and girls' rights in Myanmar, voicing concerns about recent reports of sexual and gender-based violence used against detainees.¹⁸⁰ On 19 May, the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar said that the junta continues to use sexual and gender-based (SGBV) violence as a brutal strategy to terrorize and punish the civilian population. Serious allegations have emerged of the use of SGBV in detention centers and in public during protests or in communities.¹⁸¹ On 24 May, Women's League of Burma reported that security forces have been pressuring women for sex in order to have their names removed from warrant lists.¹⁸²

According to Women Peace Network, between 1 February and 10 May, security forces killed 47 women and detained 767.¹⁸³

Thin Thin Aung: a hero confined

Thin Thin Aung is a journalist, and an advocate for democracy, peace, and human rights in Burma for over three decades. She is also the founder of the Women's League of Burma (WLB) and co-founder of Mizzima News Agency.

On 8 April, the junta's security forces arrested and detained her. The following day they raided her home and seized her bank account.

In early May, WLB and the Swedish Embassy in Myanmar called for the release of Thin Thin Aung and all women human rights defenders and activists detained by the junta.

On 19 May, five female Nobel Peace Laureates reiterated their concern for Thin Thin Aung and called on the junta to immediately release her and drop all charges against her.

Women's League of Burma (via Twitter) (6 May 2021) twitter.com/womenofburma/status/1390125920531345412; Mizzima (6 May 2021) Swedish embassy stresses importance of women's rights in crisis hit Myanmar; Nobel Women's Initiative (19 May 2021) Nobel Peace Laureates call for immediate release of Thin Thin Aung and all charges to be dropped

¹⁷² BNI (7 May 2021) Students in Demawso in Kayah pledged to oppose military coup

¹⁷³ BNI (6 May 2021) Arakan Students' Union in Yangon calls for boycott of education under military rule

¹⁷⁴ BNI (12 May 2021) Chin student group in Arakan endorses CDM, urges boycott of junta education system

¹⁷⁵ BNI (11 May 2021) Mindat Public Administration Team urges public to boycott school enrollment

¹⁷⁶ Irrawaddy (12 May 2021) Myanmar Junta Looks to Replace Striking University Staff

¹⁷⁷ CRPH (via Facebook) (3 May 2021)

<https://www.facebook.com/crph.official.mm/photos/pcb.168791508580162/168790535246926>; BNI (5 May 2021) Kachin woman appointed as NUG's new deputy minister

¹⁷⁸ Reuters (17 May 2021) At Miss Universe pageant, Myanmar's contestant pleads "our people are dying"

¹⁷⁹ Equal times (7 May 2021) The women's revolution: what the coup means for gender equality in Myanmar

¹⁸⁰ Mizzima (6 May 2021) Swedish embassy stresses importance of women's rights in crisis hit Myanmar

¹⁸¹ Progressive Voice (19 May 2021) Junta Continues to use Sexual and Gender-Based Violence to Terrorise Civilian Population

¹⁸² Women's League of Burma (via Twitter) (24 May 2021)

<https://twitter.com/womenofburma/status/1396753402370007042/photo/2>

¹⁸³ Women Peace Network (10 May 2021) Coup Tracker: Women & LGBTQ+

International reactions, sanctions

On 10 May, the UN High Commission for Refugees published a document stressing protection messages for people fleeing Burma, stating unequivocally that the men, women, and children fleeing Burma since February are refugees and as such have the right to seek asylum and to be protected from *refoulement*.¹⁸⁴

On 24 May, the World Health Organization's 74th annual assembly began, but rather than decide whether NUG or junta representatives would attend, the WHO excluded Burma from the meeting.¹⁸⁵

ASEAN did little to follow up on its resolution from the 24 April ASEAN Leaders' Meeting, including its "five points of consensus." It did not send an envoy. It was reported on 9 May that the NUG refuses to negotiate with the junta—as ASEAN had called for—against the will of the people of Burma.¹⁸⁶

Members of the bloc continued make inconsistent responses to the situation in Burma:

- 3 May The Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs issued a statement welcoming the UNSC's support for ASEAN in facilitating a peaceful solution in Burma.¹⁸⁷
- 11 May Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said that Myanmar's army needs to cooperate to end the crisis, and that ASEAN countries should keep pressing them to show restraint and start dialogue with all parties.¹⁸⁸
- 11 May EU Parliament and Indonesia delegations jointly condemned the violence, supported the ASEAN plan while encouraging urgent implementation, and asked the UNSC along with the international community to consider all available options to end the crisis immediately.¹⁸⁹
- 19 May Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam proposed changes to a draft a UN General Assembly resolution on Burma; among other things, they wanted **to remove the resolution's call for an arms embargo**.¹⁹⁰
- 20 May Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat said that engagement with Burma would be more effective than isolation.¹⁹¹
- 21 May Malaysia former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad condemned the coup but also said that outside countries had little influence.¹⁹²

On 3 May, China Ambassador to the UN Zhang Jun told a news conference that China is "a friendly neighbour of Myanmar" and is not in favour of imposing sanctions.¹⁹³

States took concrete measures in recognition of the risks facing people in Burma. On 2 May, India granted sanctuary to two Mizzima journalists, along with a colleague and some family members, who had fled to Manipur.¹⁹⁴ On 7 May, Canada said it will allow Burmese nationals whose refugee claims were rejected before 8 May to reapply for a pre-removal risk assessment, waiving the typical 12 month waiting period.¹⁹⁵ On 11 May, the US Embassy in Yangon issued a press release stating that it will interview applicants for student visas later in the month, for the first time since the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020.¹⁹⁶ On 26 May, Japan Immigration Services Agency proposed to lawmakers that

¹⁸⁴ UNHCR (10 May 2021) UNHCR Myanmar refugees: key protection messages and definitions

¹⁸⁵ Barron's (26 May 2021) Myanmar Excluded From WHO Annual Meeting

¹⁸⁶ Irrawaddy (9 May 2021) Myanmar's NUG Snubs ASEAN Talks

¹⁸⁷ Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs (3 May 2021) Statement: On the UN Security Council's Support for ASEAN in Facilitating Peaceful Solution in Myanmar

¹⁸⁸ Free Malaysia Today (11 May 2021) Singapore tells Myanmar's army to cooperate for peace

¹⁸⁹ EU Parliament Delegations (11 May 2021) Joint Statement with the Indonesian Parliament on Myanmar

¹⁹⁰ Reuters (29 May 2021) SE Asia states want to drop proposed U.N. call for Myanmar arms embargo

¹⁹¹ Nikkei Asia (20 May 2021) Cambodia's Hun Sen: 'If I don't rely on China, who will I rely on?'

¹⁹² Nikkei Asia (21 May 2021) Duterte says Philippines won't take sides as US and China tussle

¹⁹³ South China Morning Post (5 May 2021) 'Not another bullet to the junta': arms embargo on Myanmar backed by more than 200 NGOs

¹⁹⁴ Nikkei Asia (2 May 2021) Myanmar journalists granted sanctuary in India

¹⁹⁵ Government of Canada (7 May 2021) Changes to the pre-removal risk assessment for Myanmar

¹⁹⁶ U.S. Embassy in Burma (11 May 2021) Press Release: U.S. Embassy Resumes Student Visa Appointments

Burmese nationals on expiring visas be allowed to stay in the country for an additional 6-12 months, in response to the deteriorating political condition in Burma.¹⁹⁷

Other foreign states and entities continued to condemn the junta and **widen sanctions**:

- 3 May Diplomatic missions to Burma from the EU, Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and US issued a joint statement calling for the immediate release of all media workers, the establishment of the freedom of information and communication, and the end of all internet restrictions in Myanmar.¹⁹⁸
- 5 May G7 Foreign Ministers and the High Representative of the EU signed a joint statement condemning the coup; echoing calls for an end to violence, the release of detainees, and restoration of democracy; and reiterating their readiness to take further action if necessary. They specifically called for humanitarian access to Rohingya and ethnic minorities, and for the safety of medical personnel. They committed to conducting due diligence in all business, and ensuring development aid benefits the people of Burma rather than the junta.¹⁹⁹ Their commitment to “prevent the supply, sale or transfer of all weapons, munitions, and other military-related equipment to Myanmar” made this Japan’s first public statement that it will not supply weapons to Burma security forces.²⁰⁰
- 6 May The US-ASEAN Business Council called for decisive US leadership by appointing a Special Envoy, as the coup threatens to undo the political and economic progress made in Burma as well as upend its future.²⁰¹
- 12 May The Council of the European Union announced that all EEA, EFTA, Candidate Countries, and Potential Candidate Countries, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, must align themselves with Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/6391 concerning restrictive measures against Burma, and their national policies must conform to this Council Decision. The Council also added sanctions against ten individuals and two entities.²⁰²
- 13 May The US and Korea expressed support for ASEAN’s vital role in returning Burma to the path of democracy, called on Burma’s military to immediately end violence and release detainees, and emphasized the need for ASEAN to hold Burma’s military accountable for implementing the five-point consensus endorsed by ASEAN leaders on 24 Apr.²⁰³
- 13 May US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Australia Foreign Minister Marise Payne gave a joint press briefing, at which they condemned the military’s violence against peaceful protesters and civil society, and called for the restoration of the civilian government.²⁰⁴
- 17 May The UK sanctioned Myanmar Gems Enterprise and called for all companies to cut ties with military-linked businesses.²⁰⁵
- 17 May Canada announced additional sanctions against 16 individuals and 10 entities targeting the Tatmadaw.²⁰⁶ Minister of Foreign Affairs Marc Garneau said that the sanctions were in

¹⁹⁷ Nikkei Asia (27 May 2021) Japan to let Myanmar students, interns stay even after visas expire

¹⁹⁸ U.S. Embassy in Burma (3 May 2021) Statement from Diplomatic Missions to Myanmar on World Press Freedom Day; U.S. Embassy in Burma (via Twitter) (3 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/USEmbassyBurma/status/1389085108116807681>

¹⁹⁹ European Union External Action Service (5 May 2021) G7 Foreign and Development Ministers’ Meeting: Communiqué

²⁰⁰ European Union External Action Service (5 May 2021) G7 Foreign and Development Ministers’ Meeting: Communiqué; Burma Campaign UK (6 May 2021) Burma Campaign UK welcomes Japan arms embargo on Burma

²⁰¹ US-ASEAN Business Council (6 May 2021) US-ASEAN Business Council Calls for Biden-Harris Administration to Appoint Special Envoy for Myanmar

²⁰² Council of the European Union (12 May 2021) Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain countries concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Myanmar/Burma

²⁰³ U.S. Department of State (13 May 2021) U.S.-ROK Pledge To Increase Cooperation on ASEAN and Southeast Asia

²⁰⁴ U.S. Department of State (13 May 2021) Secretary Antony J. Blinken And Australian Foreign Minister and Minister for Women Marise Payne At a Joint Press Availability

²⁰⁵ UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (17 May 2021) UK announces sanctions on gemstone company linked to the military regime in Myanmar

²⁰⁶ Global Affairs Canada (17 May 2021) Additional Myanmar sanctions

coordination with the US and UK, and demonstrate unwavering determination to hold the Tatmadaw accountable and help restore democracy as demanded by the people of Burma.²⁰⁷

- 17 May The US added sanctions against the SAC and 16 individuals, the SAC foreign minister and other SAC members.²⁰⁸ Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the new US sanctions were coordinated with the UK and Canada, and were in response to the junta's continued violence and repression against the people of Burma, most recently in Mindat.²⁰⁹
- 21 May Japan Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said that, if the situation does not improve, Japan may cut off all official development assistance to Myanmar, even for ongoing projects.²¹⁰ On 14 May Japan donated USD\$4 million to the World Food Programme (WFP), to help it deliver food rations directly to vulnerable families in the poorest townships of Yangon Region.²¹¹

More corporations depart

On 12 May, the UN Working Group on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises stated that foreign businesses must uphold their human rights responsibilities, and put pressure on the military junta to halt human rights violations. Vice-Chair Surya Deva said “Because the risk of gross human rights violations has greatly increased in Myanmar, action by States and human rights due diligence by business, and investors, should be rapidly and proportionately heightened.”²¹²

- 4 May Indian developer Adani declared it may abandon its container terminal and port projects in Burma if they are found to be violating US-imposed sanctions.²¹³ In April, US finance company S&P Dow Jones Indices announced the removal of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd from its sustainability index due to its USD 290 million port development project in Yangon on land leased from military-linked Myanmar Economic Corporation.²¹⁴
- 5 May It was reported that Chinese energy companies that were contracted to build power plants in Burma, such as Hong Kong-listed VPower, have put their projects on hold, and some are considering exiting the market altogether.²¹⁵
- 6 May Unidentified assailants killed several guards at a Chinese pipeline station in Yangon.²¹⁶
- 11 May Reuters reported that companies such as Coca-Cola and McKinsey have left their high-end office space in Yangon, or are in the process of reviewing their leases. This followed an April report that tenants of the Sule Square offices are indirectly supporting the military.²¹⁷
- 12 May Japanese company Kirin Holdings announced that its subsidiary Myanmar Brewery saw revenue plunge 46.7% in the first quarter of 2021. The company is looking to exit the joint venture with military conglomerate Myanma Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL). Activists in Burma have led the boycott of military goods such as beer.²¹⁸
- 12 May Hundreds of UK academics with pensions managed through the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) signed a letter in support of USS divesting funding from 19 companies they argue have now become “de-facto” military supporters through business ties.²¹⁹

²⁰⁷ Global Affairs Canada (17 May 2021) Canada imposes additional sanctions on individuals and entities affiliated with Armed Forces of Myanmar

²⁰⁸ U.S. Department of the Treasury (17 May 2021) Treasury Sanctions Governing Body, Officials, and Family Members Connected to Burma's Military

²⁰⁹ U.S. Department of State (17 May 2021) Designating One Entity and 16 Individuals Connected to Burma's Military Regime

²¹⁰ Nikkei Asia (21 May 2021) Japan ready to freeze all Myanmar development aid: Motegi

²¹¹ United Nations Myanmar (14 May 2021) New contribution from Japan helps WFP fight hunger in Myanmar's impoverished urban townships

²¹² OHCHR (12 May 2021) Myanmar: Time for business to take a stand against human rights violations - UN experts

²¹³ Reuters (4 May 2021) Adani Ports could abandon Myanmar project if found to violate U.S. sanctions

Phil Robertson (via Twitter) (5 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/Reaproy/status/1389766641655828480>

²¹⁴ Reuters (13 Apr 2021) Adani Ports to be removed from S&P index due to business links with Myanmar military

²¹⁵ Nikkei Asia (5 May 2021) Myanmar coup threatens Chinese power projects

²¹⁶ Irrawaddy (6 May 2021) Deadly Attack on Pipeline Station Spotlights China's High Stakes in Myanmar

²¹⁷ Reuters (11 May 2021) Global firms leave Myanmar office block with military ties

²¹⁸ Justice For Myanmar (13 May 2021) Justice For Myanmar responds to Kirin's 1Q 2021 results

²¹⁹ Erasmus Magazine (12 May 2021) Academics send open letter to pension fund: stop investing in Myanmar junta

- 12 May Moattama Gas Transportation Company Limited (MGTC) announced it would suspend cash distributions to its shareholders—notably Total, Chevron, Thailand’s majority state-owned PTT Exploration and Production Public Company Limited, and Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE)—effective retroactively from 1 April. Total will continue to “maintain the production of gas” in accordance with international laws, so as not to disrupt the electricity supply’ to Burma and Thailand.²²⁰ However, Human Rights Watch pointed out the decision affected less than 5% of the natural gas revenue the Myanmar junta would receive.²²¹ On 25 May, it was reported that PTT will partner with junta-linked companies to expand its engagement in Burma, adding to the half billion USD that PTT already pays to junta-controlled energy enterprises.²²²
- 17 May Swedish clothes retailer H&M announced that it is gradually beginning to place new orders with its suppliers in Burma, after a temporary pause following the military coup. H&M said its due diligence had reported no direct links with the military, and that it is “now looking for legal guidance on how to handle any potential indirect links.”²²³
- 19 May Japanese retailer Aeon Co has paused development of a Yangon shopping center, it was reported. While Aeon is not considering withdrawing from the project, it will need to revise its plans “to adapt to consumer trends and economic conditions in the country.”²²⁴

Economy continues to sink

Between 1 February and 10 May, the value of the Myanmar Kyat fell 20%.²²⁵ Facing a weakened kyat, the Central Bank of Myanmar sold USD 18 million in May (as of 19 May), up from USD 6.8 million sold in February.²²⁶ From January 2020 to January 2021, the Bank had only *bought* dollars to stabilize its currency.²²⁷

A bank employee explained that, in response, citizens are “taking out deposits and replacing them with dollars and gold in order to try and protect their assets.”²²⁸ On 14 May, locals reported issues with withdrawing money from banks in Mawlamyine (Mon State), saying banks had not refilled ATMs since the water festival period. In response, people have resorted to withdrawing money at shops, paying 3% service fees.²²⁹

The Central Bank of Myanmar has refused to return private banks’ reserves, leaving them short of cash. People are refusing to accept bank transfers, insisting on cash instead.²³⁰

The falling value of the kyat and reduced imports have driven up prices. It was reported on 4 May that in Hpakant Township (Kachin State), fuel stations have been selling gas under a quota system since April. Since an import ban was imposed, the price of fuel has increased from MMK4,500/gallon to MMK15,000/gallon.²³¹ Commodity prices have also shot up, particularly in rural areas. In Kachin State, for example, rice became 50% more expensive.²³²

It was reported on 6 May that the coup has caused 13% of businesses to completely cease operations. Company responses to an online survey showed that the ongoing coup attempt’s negative impacts on business operations are worse than an entire year of pandemic-related issues.²³³

²²⁰ Yahoo Finance (26 May 2021) Myanmar: TOTAL: Shareholders of Moattama Gas Transportation Company Limited Vote to Suspend All Cash Distributions; Total (26 May 2021) Myanmar Shareholders of Moattama Gas Transportation Company Limited Vote To Suspend All Cash Distributions

²²¹ Energy Voice (31 May 2021) TotalEnergies hindered by legal framework on more Myanmar action

²²² Human Rights watch (25 May 2021) Myanmar: Thai State-Owned Company Funds Junta

²²³ Reuters (17 May 2021) H&M begins placing orders in Myanmar again after pause in wake of coup

²²⁴ Bangkok Post (19 May 2021) Aeon postpones Yangon shopping mall construction after coup

²²⁵ Nikkei Asia (10 May 2021) Myanmar currency hits record low as economy fails to normalize

²²⁶ Eleven Myanmar (19 May 2021) CBM sells US\$18 M during May

²²⁷ Eleven Myanmar (19 May 2021) CBM sells US\$18 M during May

²²⁸ Nikkei Asia (10 May 2021) Myanmar currency hits record low as economy fails to normalize

²²⁹ BNI Multimedia Group (14 May 2021) ATMs fall short of cash in Mawlamyine

²³⁰ Reuters (13 May 2021) Lines, tokens and money brokers: Myanmar’s crumbling economy runs low on cash

²³¹ BNI Multimedia Group (4 May 2021) Fuel prices skyrocket in Hpakant after import ban

²³² AFP (28 May 2021) Millions in Myanmar struggle to buy food as coup price hike bites

²³³ Thompon Chau (via Twitter) (6 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/tchau01/status/1390187348168744962>; Nikkei Asia (7 May 2021) Myanmar coup forces 13% of companies to halt business: poll

It was reported on 28 May that Burma's GDP had contracted by 2.5% in the first quarter on 2021, compared to 6.4% growth in the first quarter on 2020; and that new foreign direct investment was expected to drop by up to 85% in 2021.²³⁴

As a result, at the sub-national level, authorities are suffering from decreased revenue. On 19 May, local authorities ordered shop owners at Zegyo market in Mandalay to reopen their shops by May 24, threatening to confiscate them if they remained closed.²³⁵

Junta focuses on extractives for personal enrichment

While crippling the domestic economy with violent and oppressive crackdowns, the junta's leadership relies on revenues from extractive industries and natural resource sales, to keep itself funded.

On 21 May, the Environmental Investigation Agency released a report saying that the junta is seeking to gain hard and fast cash by selling off thousands of tons of illegal timber to international markets.²³⁶

It was reported on 7 May that the junta approved a \$2.8 billion investment via the Myanmar Investment Commission: 15 projects have been approved, including a liquefied natural gas power plant that will cost \$2.5 billion. Investors' names have not been released.²³⁷

It was reported on 18 May that the junta had reorganized three infrastructure and investment committees key to implementing China's Belt and Road Initiative. The junta replaced all civilian government members of the China Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) Joint Committee, restructured the central committee for the implementation of the Myanmar-China Cross-Border Economic Cooperation Zones (CBECZ), and replaced all civilian members of the CBECZ working group committee.²³⁸

During an interview with Hong Kong-based Phoenix Television on 24 May, coup leader Min Aung Hlaing tried to lessen fears of anti-Chinese sentiments in Burma. He said, "[...] we will protect all foreign-funded enterprises [in the country]." He also reportedly said that China has invested more than USD 20 billion in 500 projects in Burma. According to Chinese media, 32 Chinese-backed factories in Burma have been attacked since 1 February, causing around USD 37 million in damage.²³⁹

On 4 May, activist group Justice for Myanmar exposed leaked financial records for the Yadana gas project that may have been rigged to allow foreign energy giants to gain excessive profits at Burma's expense. The leaked statements show that from 2017 to 2019, the pipeline company made a USD 1.23 billion in profits before tax. Extractive industry analysts have estimated that Tatmadaw generals gave away hundreds of millions of dollars a year in tax breaks to foreign oil companies, while hiding billions of dollars in opaque "other accounts" at state banks, much of which has been hidden from public view.²⁴⁰

It was also reported in May that Min Aung Hlaing, after taking power in February, removed the previous retirement age of 65 for Tatmadaw leaders.²⁴¹ It is widely believed that Min Aung Hlaing seized power in February to avoid his mandatory removal as military commander-in-chief when he turned 65 in July 2021. Removal would have deprived him of the economic benefits he reaps as leader of the Tatmadaw.

²³⁴ Bangkok Post (28 May 2021) Exports to Myanmar expected to drop by up to B96.5bn

²³⁵ Ro Nay San Lwin (via Twitter) (19 May 2021) <https://twitter.com/nslwin/status/139494880003940354>

²³⁶ Environmental Investigation Agency (21 May 2021) Myanmar junta looks to line its pockets and fund the coup with massive auction of illegal timber

²³⁷ Reuters (9 May 2021) Myanmar's junta approves \$2.8 bln investment, including gas power plant

²³⁸ Irrawaddy (18 May 2021) Myanmar Regime Reorganizes Committees to Press Ahead With BRI Projects

²³⁹ Irrawaddy (24 May 2021) Myanmar Coup Leader Vows to Protect China-Backed Enterprises

²⁴⁰ Justice For Myanmar (4 May 2021) Is Total Profiteering In Myanmar

²⁴¹ Irrawaddy (20 May 2021) Myanmar Junta Scraps Retirement Age for Its Leaders