



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)
နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း

Enforced Disappearances by the Military Junta

30 August 2021

On this International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, AAPP calls on international actors to recognize the enforced disappearances perpetrated by the military in its terror campaign against the entire population in Burma since the military coup.

As of AAPP's most recent database, the current condition of 82% of people on the under-detention lists are detained in an unknown location. The international community must demand the junta reveals the location to civil society of all of those arbitrarily detained. In the junta's efforts to shield itself from accountability, the location of these detainees is withheld from civil society and independent media. In fact, intelligence on the fate or whereabouts of any of the total 7627 people detained since the coup has not been disclosed by the junta.

“**The current condition of 82% of people on the under-detention lists are detained in an unknown location.**”



Total detained - 7627

“AAPP Secretary **U Tate Naing** said “in Burma's previous dictatorship, families of the detained were never notified of their loved ones transfer to prisons or the event that led to arrest. Families must spend time going to police stations or prisons to inquire about their relatives as well as asking other inmates' families, often using bribes. Sometimes, information is revealed through media outlets instead. Even the whereabouts of the democratically elected leaders, President U Win Myint and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, have not been disclosed and access to lawyers restricted. Such intentional disappearances pose a serious threat to public security and basic international law”.”

According to the 2002 Rome Statute, enforced disappearances occur when a detention of an individual is “followed by a refusal to acknowledge that deprivation of freedom or to give information on the fate or whereabouts of those persons, with the intention of removing them from the protection of the law for a prolonged period of time”.

Even children are being enforced disappeared as hostage by the junta. In night-time raids or at peaceful protests everyone is at risk of being detained in secret locations by the junta. If one is taken to an interrogation center or military barracks, they could be tortured to death in Burma without anyone knowing where one was.

“

AAPP Joint-Secretary **U Bo Kyi** said, “enforced disappearances are an attempt to create a climate of fear across Burma, to stop anti-coup protests, and begin dictatorial rule. The result of enforced disappearances is not only to bully the detainees, but forces families and friends to suffer. Not knowing the fate or whereabouts of a loved one, this is a kind of physiological torture as well as physical abuse of one’s human rights. For this reason, it is one of the worse kinds of crimes against humanity”.”

Article 7 (i) of the Rome Statute declares that enforced disappearances constitute crimes against humanity, when it is committed as part of a widespread and/or systematic attack, which it most certainly is in Burma.

On 20 August, the National Unity Government released a statement accepting jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court with respect to crimes committed in Burma since July 1, 2002. Enforced disappearance falls within the jurisdiction created by the Rome Statute, accountability for these crimes against humanity must be ensured.

Recognizing the political legitimacy of the National Unity Government at the United Nations General Assembly will strengthen these international accountability mechanisms, including to end the Burma junta’s use of enforced disappearances with impunity.

On 28 May AAPP released a report and database^[1] on missing persons since the military coup, these were split into different categories including missing in detention and disappeared on the streets. AAPP released this report to report on the repression and chaos created by the military coup, but firmly stipulated the fate of all those missing as of 28 May has not been verified to junta involvement, but rather strong suspicion.