

BURMA COUP WATCH FOR MONTH OF JULY 2021: Junta destroys tools for dealing with COVID-19

- In the sixth month since its forcible and unconstitutional power grab, the junta's oppressive acts to secure political, territorial, or economic control have escalated conflict and the deadliness of a third wave of COVID-19.
- COVID-19 ripped ferociously through Burma, where a weakened health system and junta restrictions on treatment measures contributed to untold deaths. As the junta brought testing closer to pre-coup levels, it saw COVID-19 positivity rates up to 40%.
- The National Unity Government (NUG), ethnic health organizations, civil society, and foreign actors stepped up to fill the junta's COVID-19 response gaps. The NUG created a COVID-19 Commission, issued detailed guidance on preventing transmission, renewed calls for vaccines through the COVAX program, and outlined pathways for international actors to facilitate vaccination.
- The junta continued to bomb and shell innocent civilians and block humanitarian aid. Poor weather decreased the intensity of armed conflict, but over 550,000 people remained displaced, and natural disasters and the pandemic made it both more critical and more difficult for humanitarian aid to reach them.
- During July alone, security forces killed at least 56 civilians. There were 348 violent attacks that either targeted or failed to protect civilians during 1–23 Jul, and a total 3,446 incidents 1 Feb–23 Jul.
- In total, since 1 Feb, the junta has killed over 1,100 civilians, injured thousands more, and detained at least 6,994 politicians, activists, journalists and others, in attacks against the democracy movement.
- The World Bank revised its 2021 projection, predicting an 18% contraction in Burma's economy. Pandemic-driven border closures contributed to commodity price increases of up to 70%. Meanwhile, the junta continued to engage in illicit economic activity and shop for military equipment.
- In order to minimize death and destruction, and create space for dialogue, the movement in Burma and allies urge:
 - The UN Security Council must mandate a humanitarian intervention in Burma to save millions from COVID-19;
 - The UN, foreign states, and international finance institutions (IFIs) must expand sanctions against the junta;
 - These actors must engage with the NUG as the legitimate government of Burma, particularly regarding COVID-19 relief.

CONTENTS

2 COVID-19
2 Deaths soar amid oxygen shortages
3 No respite for healthcare workers
4 Detainees and prison staff riot
5 Junta struggles to respond
6 EAOs take action
6 International community responds
6 NUG and CRPH
7 COVID-19 measures
9 Environmental responsibility
9 Flooding
10 Conflict and displacement
13 Protests and violent crackdowns
15 Civil unrest escalates
16 Pro-junta militias respond
16 Women targeted
16 International responses
19 COVID-19 assistance
19 Business responses, criticisms
20 Economy continues to worsen
21 Electricity sector collapses
21 Junta steps up illicit activities
21 Cozying up to repressive regimes
22 Telenor's departure

Six months into the coup, security forces have killed over 1,100 civilians and detained 6,994.¹ Conflict slowed, but Burma's military (Tatmadaw) did little to assist the at least 555,000 people displaced by conflict nationwide, and often made it more challenging for others to help.²

On 26 July, the junta Union Election Commission (UEC) announced it had cancelled the results of the November 2020 elections, which it said were “not free and fair.”³ On 1 August, coup leader Min Aung Hlaing installed himself as Prime Minister of a “caretaker government” declaring that Burma's state of emergency would be lifted and new elections held in August 2023.⁴

COVID-19: a crisis on top of a crisis (for details, see ALTSEAN's [COVID-19 tracker](#)).

COVID-19 infections and deaths continued to increase dramatically. By 8 July, the Irrawaddy reported that hospitals and COVID-19 centers could not accept more patients, including in Yangon. It said that military hospitals lacked doctors and medicines, and only provided treatment to military personnel and their relatives; and that several towns were experiencing oxygen shortages.⁵ As of 10 July, nearly 90% of the country had been affected by the third wave of COVID-19, in 296 of Burma's 330 townships.⁶

A collapsed healthcare system, junta restrictions, and staff shortages mean the majority of 1,777 government hospitals and the previous quarantine system cannot function properly.⁷ Local charities and community-based groups have stepped up to provide healthcare to COVID-19 patients, often with the help of doctors involved in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM).

Testing had dropped significantly, from an average 17,000/day in January to just thousands/day through June,⁸ but recovered to over 13,000/day by late July.⁹ The percentage of positive tests also jumped sharply, from over 18% on 28 June to over 40% on 23 and 25 July,¹⁰ before stabilizing at around 36%.¹¹ The WHO considers COVID-19 outbreaks as controlled when less than 5% of samples come back positive over a two-week period, assuming that surveillance is comprehensive.¹²

Although the junta received 3 million doses of Chinese vaccines on 22–24 July,¹³ experts pointed out that they probably arrived too late to make a difference.¹⁴ On 29 July, the UK's ambassador to the UN warned that half of Burma's 54 million people could be infected in the following two weeks.¹⁵

Deaths soar amid oxygen shortages

The junta acknowledged that during 1-20 July, there had been 2,223 COVID-19 deaths—widely believed to be an underestimate. At over 40% of Burma's total pandemic death toll, the increase was attributed to overwhelmed hospitals and oxygen shortages,¹⁶ a problem already noted in early July.¹⁷ In

¹ Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) (31 Jul 2021) Daily Briefing in Relation to the Military Coup; Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) (updated 23 Jul 2021) Data Export Tool, available at <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>

² UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (16 Jul 2021) MYANMAR – Humanitarian Snapshot (July 2021)

³ Global New Light of Myanmar (27 Jul 2021) Republic of the Union of Myanmar - Union Election Commission, Notification No (2/2021)

⁴ Guardian (1 Aug 2021) Myanmar military ruler extends coup with promise of elections in 2023

⁵ Irrawaddy (8 Jul 2021) Myanmar Hospitals Run Out of Beds Amid COVID-19 Surge

⁶ Irrawaddy (10 Jul 2021) Myanmar's Third Wave of COVID-19 Spreads to Almost 90% of Townships

⁷ Frontier Myanmar (23 Jun 2021) CDM crunch: Striking doctors struggle to meet healthcare needs; Myanmar Now (19 Jul 2021) With Myanmar's healthcare system decimated, Covid-19 patients die alone in their homes

⁸ Frontier Myanmar (25 Jun 2021) Fighting new COVID-19 variants amid turmoil and resistance

⁹ Eleven Media Group (28 Jul 2021) 4,984 Covid-19 cases, 338 deaths reported on July 27th; Eleven Media Group (29 Jul 2021) 4,980 new Covid-19 cases, 365 deaths reported in Myanmar

¹⁰ Eleven Media Group (24 Jul 2021) Myanmar reports 5,506 new COVID-19 cases with 326 deaths on July 23; Eleven Media Group (26 Jul 2021) 4,998 Covid-19 cases, 355 deaths reported on July 25th

¹¹ Eleven Media Group (28 Jul 2021) 4,964 Covid-19 cases, 338 deaths reported on July 27th; Eleven Media Group (29 Jul 2021) 4,980 new Covid-19 cases, 365 deaths reported in Myanmar

¹² WHO (12 May 2020) Public health criteria to adjust public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19

¹³ Global New Light of Myanmar (23 Jul 2021) 736,000 doses of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines donated by China arrive; Global New Light of Myanmar (24 Jul 2021) Myanmar receives one million COVID-19 vaccines order; China donates over 500,000; Global New Light of Myanmar (25 Jul 2021) Third batch of 2 million COVID-19 vaccines donated by China arrives

¹⁴ BBC News (30 Jul 2021) Covid and a coup: The double crisis pushing Myanmar to the brink

¹⁵ Eleven Media Group (31 Jul 2021) Britain warns Covid-19 could infect half of Myanmar in next two weeks

¹⁶ Irrawaddy (21 Jul 2021) As Myanmar Regime Mishandles COVID-19, More Than 2,000 People Die in Three Weeks

¹⁷ Irrawaddy (8 Jul 2021) Myanmar Hospitals Run Out of Beds Amid COVID-19 Surge; Development Media Group (5 Jul 2021) Virus patients in Maungdaw Twp in need of oxygen and food; Eleven Media Group (7 Jul 2021) Kalay in dire need of oxygen as deaths climb

Kalay Township (Sagaing Region), nearly 600 people were believed to have died by 6 July, mainly due to oxygen shortages.¹⁸

On 10 July, the junta's Investment and Foreign Trade Minister removed all duties and licensing requirements for the import of oxygen concentrators.¹⁹ On 12 July, local sources reported shortages in severely affected areas including Naypyidaw, Yangon, and Mandalay.²⁰

On 12 July, it was reported that security forces had raided oxygen-producing factories in Yangon, at the same time the junta was restricting the sale of oxygen to facilities under its control.²¹ Medical workers said that denying oxygen to private clinics and citizens had caused hundreds to die and put thousands more at risk of dying.²²

On 14 July, it was reported that more people were dying from low oxygen levels in major cities, overwhelming crematoriums. Over 700 bodies were cremated at three major Yangon cemeteries on both 13 and 15 July.²³ On 15 July, it was reported that Ayeyarwady Region cities were also facing record deaths.²⁴

No respite for healthcare workers

On 7 July, the Associated Press concluded that Burma was one of the most dangerous places on earth for medical staff: the junta had arrested at least 157 healthcare workers, wounded 32, killed 12, issued arrest warrants for 400 doctors and 180 nurses, and occupied at least 51 hospitals.²⁵ The WHO recorded 260 attacks on healthcare over Feb–Jul, of 575 documented globally—more than any other country.²⁶

Despite soaring infections, the junta refused to release doctors or guarantee safety for health workers,²⁷ demonstrating that it valued punishing opponents over combating the virus.

On 13 July, junta forces stormed the Maha Aungmyay Township (Mandalay Region) house of a doctor involved in the NUG's medical training program, beat him, and took him to an interrogation center.²⁸

On 16 July, in Chanmyathazi Township (Mandalay Region), junta forces arrested and beat a doctor on

COVID-19, coup threaten a generation of children

On 16 July, the UN Child Rights Committee (CRC) warned that the ongoing situation in Burma "risks leaving an entire generation damaged," due to catastrophic loss of life, arbitrary detention, exposure to indiscriminate violence, disruption of medical care and education, decreased access to food and water. CRC Chair Mikiko Otani said "*If this crisis continues, an entire generation of children is at risk of suffering profound physical, psychological, emotional, educational and economic consequences, depriving them of a healthy and productive future.*" According to the CRC, 75 children in Burma have been killed and around 1,000 arbitrarily detained since 1 Feb; one million children were missing key vaccinations; and 40,000 children were no longer receiving treatment for severe acute malnutrition.

On 30 July, Save the Children voiced concern that countless children were being deprived of essential medical care and education amid the surge in COVID-19 cases; and warned that the economic situation of many families was growing increasingly desperate: "*Not only have children witnessed and experienced violence and horror that no child should ever see, but they are now also losing caregivers and family members due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is rapidly plummeting the country further into chaos.*" The NGO also reported that at least 104 children, some as young as seven, remained in detention; and that the junta had sentenced two boys accused of killing a military informant to death.

On 21 July, it was reported that the vast majority of pregnant women displaced since the coup lacked access to emergency obstetric care. Without urgent action, it is estimated that annually 600,000 newborns will miss out on essential newborn care, creating serious risks for their survival and long-term wellbeing across the country.

OHCHR (16 Jul 2021) Myanmar crisis risks damaging entire generation of children, UN Child Rights Committee warns; Save the Children (30 Jul 2021) Myanmar: Six months since coup, horror mounts for children amid killings and COVID-19 deaths; Al Jazeera (21 Jul 2021) Myanmar women give birth in jungle as military lies in wait

¹⁸ Irrawaddy (8 Jul 2021) Death Toll Underreported on Myanmar's COVID-19 Frontline: Charities

¹⁹ AP (11 Jul 2021) Myanmar caught off guard as cases surge, oxygen dwindles

²⁰ Irrawaddy (12 Jul 2021) Myanmar Suffering From Severe Shortage of Medical Oxygen as COVID-19 Cases Spike

²¹ Irrawaddy (12 Jul 2021) Myanmar Suffering From Severe Shortage of Medical Oxygen as COVID-19 Cases Spike; Myanmar Now (14 Jul 2021) Social welfare organisations overwhelmed by escalating Covid-19 death toll

²² New York Times (15 Jul 2021) As Covid Rages in Myanmar, Army Hoards Oxygen, Doctors Say

²³ Irrawaddy (14 Jul 2021) Myanmar Junta Accused of Restricting Oxygen Supplies; Irrawaddy (14 Jul 2021) Crematoriums Overflow in Myanmar's Biggest City as COVID Deaths Spike Amid Oxygen Shortage; Irrawaddy (17 Jul 2021) Yangon's Major Cemeteries Report Unprecedented Influx of Bodies Amid COVID Surge

²⁴ Eleven Media Group (15 Jul 2021) Covid-19 caused record high number of deaths in some cities in Ayeyawaddy Region

²⁵ AP (7 Jul 2021) In Myanmar, the military and police declare war on medics

²⁶ WHO (updated 30 Jul 2021) Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care

²⁷ Nikkei Asia (25 Jul 2021) Myanmar's lights go out as bill boycott fuels cash crunch

²⁸ Myanmar Now (21 Jul 2021) Two Mandalay doctors arrested, as junta's assault on medical workers continues

his way home from volunteering at a charity hospital.²⁹ On 19 July, security forces tricked three doctors working for a COVID-19 prevention group in Yangon into responding to a fake emergency call, arrested them, raided their office, arrested two more doctors, and confiscated oxygen, PPE, and medicine.³⁰

The junta also tried to discredit striking doctors. On 21 July, junta mouthpiece Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM) announced that officials found 35 oxygen cylinders and 13 oxygen concentrators hidden in “offices and warehouses” of health workers at Homalin General Hospital (Sagaing Region).³¹ The same day, the junta baselessly accused CDM health workers of overcharging for home treatment of COVID-19, and said they had caused unnecessary deaths by posting treatment advice online.³²

Detainees, prison staff riot over lack of COVID-19 prevention measures

Burma’s prisons are ill-equipped to treat COVID-19 patients and notoriously overcrowded,³³ a potent recipe for deadly mass outbreaks. The junta reported 566 infections and nine deaths among prisoners during the third wave as of 15 July, though the actual figures were likely far higher.³⁴

On 8 July, the junta locked down Insein Prison (Yangon) after 40 prisoners tested positive for COVID-19.³⁵ On 16 July, lawyers reported that 48 prisoners, including top NLD leaders and American journalist Danny Fenster, had COVID-19 and were being denied effective medical treatment.³⁶ On 20 July, U Nyan Win, a detained senior NLD member, died at Yangon General Hospital, where he was transferred (from Insein Prison) on 11 July to receive emergency COVID-19 treatment.³⁷

On 23 July, detainees protested the lack of treatment or proper prevention measures in Insein Prison, reportedly supported by some prison staff. Troops were dispatched to the prison.³⁸ Soldiers reportedly opened fire on the inmates, killing at least 20, including five women, and arrested prison staff.³⁹ Protests erupted in Shwe Bo Prison (Sagaing Region) and Obo Prison (Mandalay Region) on the same day.⁴⁰

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) voiced concern about potential retaliation, and urged the international community to monitor the situation and help prevent human rights abuses.⁴¹ On 24 July, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) expressed deep concern about COVID-19 in Burma, particularly in detention centers.⁴²

In the face of international pressure over the treatment of prisoners, and possibly to prevent further unrest, the junta began vaccinating inmates. On 29 July, GNLM reported that authorities had vaccinated 610 inmates at Insein Prison on 28 July, including detained Australian economist Sean Turnell, and that over 2,500 others had registered for a dose;⁴³ 360 inmates were also vaccinated at a Nay Pyi Taw jail.⁴⁴

On 25 July, junta media reported the release of 4,297 detainees, apparently without assessing whether they had COVID.⁴⁵ AAPP voiced concern that the move was to free up prison space for activists.⁴⁶

²⁹ Myanmar Now (21 Jul 2021) Two Mandalay doctors arrested, as junta's assault on medical workers continues

³⁰ Irrawaddy (20 Jul 2021) Myanmar Junta Arrests Doctors After Luring Them With Fake COVID 'Emergency'

³¹ Global New Light of Myanmar (21 Jul 2021) Hidden 35 oxygen cylinders, 13 oxygen concentrators found at Homalin General Hospital (100-bedded);

³² Global New Light of Myanmar (21 Jul 2021) The Information Team of the State Administration Council replied to the questions raised by the media as follows: -

³³ Irrawaddy (16 Jul 2021) Myanmar Junta Putting Lives of Political Prisoners at Risk in COVID-19 Prison Outbreaks

³⁴ Myanmar Now (27 Jul 2021) More than 4,000 released as Covid-19 cases surge in Myanmar's prisons

³⁵ Reuters (9 Jul 2021) COVID-19 outbreaks in Myanmar jails sow alarm as cases hit record; Irrawaddy (16 Jul 2021) Myanmar Junta Putting Lives of Political Prisoners at Risk in COVID-19 Prison Outbreaks

³⁶ Radio Free Asia (16 Jul 2021) Nearly 50 Held in Myanmar's Insein Prison Now Infected With COVID-19

³⁷ Myanmar Now (20 Jul 2021) Top NLD official dies after contracting Covid-19 in junta custody

³⁸ Reuters (24 Jul 2021) Protest breaks out at prison in Myanmar's biggest city

³⁹ Agencia EFE (25 Jul 2021) At least 20 killed in Yangon prison riot crackdown: local media

⁴⁰ Irrawaddy (23 Jul 2021) Political Detainees Stage Loud Protests at Myanmar Prisons

⁴¹ Myanmar Now (23 Jul 2021) Prisoners stage anti-dictatorship protest inside Insein Prison

⁴² International Committee of the Red Cross (24 Jul 2021) ICRC statement on latest developments in Myanmar — 24 July 2021

⁴³ Global New Light of Myanmar (29 Jul 2021) Inmates vaccinated against COVID-19 in Insein central prison

⁴⁴ Mizzima (30 Jul 2021) Nearly 1,000 prisoners receive COVID-19 jabs – State media

⁴⁵ Myanmar Now (27 Jul 2021) More than 4,000 released as Covid-19 cases surge in Myanmar's prisons

⁴⁶ Myanmar Now (21 Jul 2021) Junta says it will release some detainees in effort to curb spread of Covid-19 in prisons

Junta struggles to respond, as pandemic rips through its ranks

The junta had imposed stay-at-home orders in 108 of Burma's 330 townships as of 30 July.⁴⁷ It also ordered the closure of basic education schools starting on 9 July,⁴⁸ and declared a long public holiday from 17 Jul–1 Aug.⁴⁹ However, on 12 July, junta spokesperson Zaw Min Tun conceded it had lost control: "We admit the current situation. Hospitals and clinics are full. Quarantine centers are full. And they can accept no more patients."⁵⁰

On 21 July, it was reported that junta troops, leadership, and families were severely affected by COVID-19, which spread to regional headquarters, battalions and units in Mandalay, Naypyidaw, Yangon and Mawlamyine (Mon State). A medical officer said that entire military families had died, referring to the situation as "complete chaos."⁵¹ On 27 July, soldiers confirmed that the Yangon Command Headquarters had been locked down. Nationwide, 10,000 police officers were alleged to be infected.⁵²

The junta scrambled to take control of the narrative. On 15 July, GNLM acknowledged severe oxygen shortages in Kalay, but said that the junta had provided an oxygen generator that was expected to start operations soon.⁵³ On 17 July, it reported that the junta had imported 30.869 million liters of liquid oxygen, oxygen gas, and other medical supplies over 12–16 July.⁵⁴ Next editions prominently featured articles on importation and distribution of supplies by the junta, as well as preparations to accommodate more patients.⁵⁵ They highlighted the Tatmadaw's role in COVID-19 response, with several pieces on it delivering and donating medical supplies, and treating patients at its facilities.⁵⁶

It was reported on 19 July that, responding to viral social media footage of rows of bodies in a Yangon crematorium, junta authorities restricted the number of funeral cars allowed there,⁵⁷ illustrating the lengths they had gone to create the illusion of a successful response. On 27 July, the junta announced that ten crematoriums were being built in Yangon, with the capacity to cremate over 3,000 bodies/day.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, military units kept undermining pandemic response. On 24 July, in Myawaddy (Karen State), junta forces seized 100 medical oxygen cylinders imported from Thailand by Yangon charities.⁵⁹ This continued a trend from 2020, when the Tatmadaw destroyed nine ethnic health screening posts, undermined humanitarian aid corridors, and attacked health workers.⁶⁰

⁴⁷ Xinhua (30 Jul) Myanmar further extends restrictions on travelers until end of August amid pandemic

⁴⁸ Global New Light of Myanmar (9 Jul 2021) Request information of Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), 14th Waning of Nayon 1383 ME, 8 July 2021

⁴⁹ Global New Light of Myanmar (15 Jul 2021) Republic of the Union of Myanmar, State Administration Council, Order No 211/2021; Global New Light of Myanmar (24 Jul 2021) Republic of the Union of Myanmar, State Administration Council - Order No 217/2021

⁵⁰ Irrawaddy (14 Jul 2021) Myanmar Junta Says it Can't Cope With Rising COVID-19 Cases

⁵¹ Myanmar Now (21 Jul 2021) Soldiers, officers and their families have been infected nationwide, with generals and commanders included among the sick

⁵² Irrawaddy (27 Jul 2021) COVID-19 Rips Through Myanmar Military: Soldiers

⁵³ Global New Light of Myanmar (15 Jul 2021) Kalay town facing severe oxygen shortage as self-help oxygen plant cannot run at full capacity

⁵⁴ Global New Light of Myanmar (17 Jul 2021) MoC allows smooth and fast importation of COVID-19 protective equipment

⁵⁵ See Global New Light of Myanmar, editions of 18, 19, 20, and 21 Jul 2021.

⁵⁶ See notably Global New Light of Myanmar (17 Jul 2021) Tatmadaw donates medical aids, oxygen tanks to COVID-19 centres; Oxygen cylinders donated by generous donors delivered to Ayeyawady Region by military plane; Global New Light of Myanmar (18 Jul 2021) Tatmadaw provides COVID-19 disease prevention supplies, oxygen tanks; Oxygen cylinders donated to public hospitals, military hospitals, health departments, COVID-19 centres across nation; Global New Light of Myanmar (19 Jul 2021) Oxygen Plant (Oxymet) installed aboard Tatmadaw vessel gives oxygen to public; Tatmadaw provides COVID-19 protective equipment, oxygen tanks; Global New Light of Myanmar (20 Jul 2021) Preparations continue to provide healthcare services to COVID-19 patients; Oxygen cylinders supplied to hospitals, Covid centres in regions/states; Global News Light of Myanmar (21 Jul 2021) Oxygen cylinders supplied to hospitals, Covid centres in regions/states; Oxygen cylinders supplied to hospitals, Covid centres in regions/states

⁵⁷ Myanmar Now (19 Jul 2021) With Myanmar's healthcare system decimated, Covid-19 patients die alone in their homes

⁵⁸ Irrawaddy (28 Jul 2021) Myanmar Junta to Build New Crematoriums as COVID-19 Death Toll Soars

⁵⁹ Irrawaddy (27 Jul 2021) Myanmar Military Seizes Medical Oxygen Imported by Charities

⁶⁰ Karen Peace Support Network (Jun 2020) Virus Warfare: Burma Army destruction of Karen community defences against Covid-19; Kachin News Group (24 Jun 2020) Burma Army Destroys KIO COVID-19 Screening Point; Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (1 May 2020) "Leaving no one behind" amidst genocide: the Myanmar government's response to Covid-19 in Rakhine State; Fortify Rights (30 Aug 2018) They Block Everything: Avoidable Deprivations in Humanitarian Aid to Ethnic Civilians Displaced by War in Kachin State, Myanmar; Myanmar Now (11 Aug 2020) Tatmadaw Detains Healthcare Workers near Rakhine's Ann Township; Irrawaddy (28 Oct 2020) One Killed, Three Hurt as Myanmar Navy Sinks Boat Carrying ICRC Relief Goods in Rakhine State

Armed Organizations (EAOs) take matters into their own hands

The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) closed its territory's entry and exit points from 5 July, and banned rallies of more than 100 people.⁶¹ On 9 July, it was reported that it had locked down Maijyang, and restricted travel between there and Laiza, the KIO capital.⁶² On 13 July, it announced it was testing everyone in Maijyang after over 220 students there tested positive; and that it had already vaccinated over 20,000 people in the two cities.⁶³

On 17 July, it was reported that the New Mon State party would open five temporary medical centers and 18 checkpoints in its areas.⁶⁴

The Arakan Army announced a two-week lockdown (20 Jul–4 Aug) in the State's 17 townships (as the junta had not), and said it would take punitive action against those who failed to comply.⁶⁵

The Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA) said on 22 July that it had acquired vaccines from China, and vaccinated 1,000–2,000 people near its headquarters in Wanhai; it planned to vaccinate 500,000 people; and it was trying to import oxygen concentrators from Thailand.⁶⁶

International community responds

On 14 July, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar Thomas Andrews called for emergency international help to address a “perfect storm” of factors worsening the pandemic, “including the Delta variant, the collapse of Myanmar's health care system, and the deep mistrust of the people of Myanmar of anything connected to the military junta.” He said the junta lacked the capacity to deal with the crisis.⁶⁷ On 28 July, he said that Burma was at risk of becoming a super-spreader state that fuels regional outbreaks.⁶⁸

On 16 July, the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar urgently called on the international community to respond to Burma's COVID-19 crisis and get life-saving assistance into the country—across borders, through the democracy movement's networks, ethnic administrations, civil society organizations, and other service providers. Former UN Special Rapporteur Yanghee Lee accused the junta of weaponizing COVID-19 for political gain by suffocating the democracy movement, and seeking to gain legitimacy by fueling a humanitarian disaster and then co-opting the international response.⁶⁹

On 19 July, the UN Myanmar Country Team reported it was stepping up efforts to combat the pandemic in Burma. It said it was working to increase access to oxygen and other equipment, and WHO, UNICEF, and others were working to increase vaccine access, including through the COVAX program, which aims to cover 20% of Burma's population.⁷⁰

National Unity Government (NUG) and Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) (for details, see [CRPH/NUG tracker](#))

On 1 July, the NUG formed the Commission for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response.⁷¹

NUG spokesperson Dr. Sasa called on foreign governments to recognize the NUG as the sole legitimate representative of the people of Burma, assist with humanitarian aid, and apply more pressure on the

⁶¹ Mizzima (6 Jul 2021) Restrictions put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic in KIO-controlled area

⁶² Irrawaddy (9 Jul 2021) Myanmar Border Town Locked Down by KIA as New COVID-19 Infections Emerge

⁶³ Irrawaddy (13 Jul 2021) COVID-19 Spreads Among Students in Kachin Independence Army Territory

⁶⁴ Mon News Agency (17 Jul 2021) NMSP to open five medical centers providing COVID-19 treatment in controlled areas

⁶⁵ Irrawaddy (21 Jul 2021) Arakan Army Announces Lockdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State Amid COVID Surge

⁶⁶ Myanmar Now (23 Jul 2021) SSPP launches Covid-19 inoculation effort using Chinese vaccines; Irrawaddy (23 Jul 2021)

Myanmar's Ethnic Shan Rebels Launch COVID-19 Vaccine Program With Chinese Jabs

⁶⁷ OHCHR (14 Jul 2021) Myanmar: UN expert warns of “perfect storm” over COVID, calls for urgent international help

⁶⁸ Guardian (28 Jul 2021) Myanmar could become Covid ‘super-spreader’ state, says UN expert

⁶⁹ Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (16 Jul 2021) The People of Myanmar need urgent assistance as the junta weaponises the COVID-19 crisis

⁷⁰ United Nations Myanmar (19 Jul 2021) UN Country Team in Myanmar Steps up COVID-19 Response Efforts

⁷¹ NUG (1 Jul 2021) Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management: Order 01/2021 Forming of Commission for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/140040278216612>

junta. On 2 July, he addressed EU parliamentarians.⁷² On 12 July, he addressed Japan,⁷³ and he and Burma Representative to the UN Kyaw Moe Tun addressed the EU.⁷⁴

On 9 July, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry announced that the junta had illegally advertised 23 pieces of property in Kachin, Sagaing, Tanintharyi, Bago, Mon, and Shan States/Regions. It advised people not to buy the properties, and warned that the NUG would nationalize them.⁷⁵

On 10 July, the CRPH announced the appointment of U Toe Aung as Union Auditor General.⁷⁶

On 10 July, the Ministry of Electricity and Energy waived all fees on petroleum-related products under Burma's Oil and Petroleum Product Law, in order to safeguard income from natural resources, maintain overseas and local investment, and prevent inflation in gas, transportation, and commodity prices.⁷⁷

On 12 July, NUG ministries met with CSOs in order to get input and advice on the NUG's upcoming report for Burma's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process.⁷⁸

On 27 July, the CRPH responded to the junta's announcement about the 2020 election results. It said the election was free and fair, as determined by domestic and international observers. It added that, as the junta was not given a mandate by the people, it has no power to annul election results.⁷⁹

NUG ministries continued to blacklist employees who had harassed civil servants, pressured them, threatened them, or removed them from government housing. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MoNREC) added the names of 100 people.⁸⁰ The Ministry of Electricity and Energy added the names of 24 people.⁸¹

COVID-19 response

On 8 July, the NUG formed a National-Level Commission on COVID-19 Prevention, Control, and Treatment ("COVID-19 Commission"). It vowed to center its approach on people, to secure essential medical equipment and supplies, and vaccinate without discrimination. It said it would cooperate with governments, UN bodies, international groups, and NGOs; and consult domestically with ethnic health organizations, unions, and CSOs.⁸²

On 12 July, the Ministry of Health (MoH) gave an update on the pandemic in Burma, gave guidance, and provided links to COVID-19-related resources. It asked people to take precautions and help others;

⁷² NUG (2 Jul 2021) H.E. Dr. Sasa's Address to the Parliamentarians of the European Union, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/141715934715713>

⁷³ NUG (12 Jul 2021) H.E. Dr. Sasa's Address to the Japanese Parliamentarians and Professors, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/147074527513187>

⁷⁴ NUG (12 Jul 2021) H.E. Dr. Sasa and former special representative of Myanmar to the UN speech to EU members of parliament, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/147035304183776>

⁷⁵ NUG (9 Jul 2021) Ministry of Planning, Finance, and Industry Statement 5/2021, Warning to those planning to buy 23 state-owned land and building via open tender by Privatization Commission: it is illegal and these properties will be nationalized, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/145212184366088>

⁷⁶ CRPH (10 Jul 2021) Statement 32/2021: Appointment of the Union Auditor General, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/146009604286346>

⁷⁷ NUG (10 Jul 2021) Ministry of Electricity and Energy Statement 5/2021: Making petroleum products tax-free, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/145863500967623>

⁷⁸ NUG (13 Jul 2021) Ministry of Human Rights: NUG discussed with CSOs about the UPR, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/147933740760599>

⁷⁹ CRPH (27 Jul 2021) Statement 35/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/157321056488534>

⁸⁰ NUG (12 Jul 2021) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Statement 4/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/147819244105382>; NUG (13 Jul 2021) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Announcement 3/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/147819244105382>; NUG (14 Jul 2021) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Announcement 6/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/148681640685809>; NUG (15 Jul 2021) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Announcement 8/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/149378983949408>; NUG (15 Jul 2021) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Announcement 7/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/149418967278743>; NUG (16 Jul 2021) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Announcement 10/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/150462770507696>; NUG (19 Jul 2021) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Announcement 11/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/151742507046389>

⁸¹ NUG (14 Jul 2021) Ministry of Electricity and Energy Statement 6/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/148603070693666>; NUG (17 Jul 2021) Ministry of Electricity and Energy Announcement 7/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/150540337166606>

⁸² NUG (8 Jul 2021) President's Office Order 1/2021 on Establishment of National Commission on COVID-19 Prevention, Control, and Treatment, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/144490091104964>

and to wear masks, wash hands, distance, and not go out unless necessary. It said it was coordinating with different townships to provide masks, PPE, oxygen, and vaccines.⁸³

On 13 Jul, the COVID-19 Commission demanded that all political prisoners be released unconditionally, to seek immediate medical assistance, and it threatened legal action against the junta for any harm to political prisoners. It said that COVID-19 rates are particularly high among prisoners, and that this is a deliberate strategy by the junta to facilitate the deaths of political prisoners.⁸⁴

On 13 July, the Ministry of Human Rights explained how the junta's response violated people's right to health with respect to non-discrimination, availability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality. It called on the junta to stop blocking services and open channels to areas where people need assistance.⁸⁵

On 17 Jul, MoH said it had prepared to facilitate vaccinations at state/region, township, and ward levels, and proposed three strategies that the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) could use to vaccinate people inside Burma. It also provided public information on its website and Facebook, including through daily programs; it engaged in regular discussion with ethnic health organization representatives; and on 7 Jul, NUG Ministries sent letters requesting assistance to neighboring countries, international superpowers, and international organizations.⁸⁶

On 17 July, Dr. Sasa accused the junta of allowing the pandemic to "decimate the people of Myanmar." He called on the international community to contribute to a COVID-19 response program, and to implore the junta not to interfere.⁸⁷ On the same day, the COVID-19 Commission stressed that public hospitals do not have enough resources, and called for help.⁸⁸

On 18 July, the Prime Minister's Office called on the UN Secretary General and the international community to help the people of Burma to respond to COVID-19. It warned that Burma may become a nexus for regional spread of COVID-19, and said that the NUG would work with community-based and ethnic health organizations on a people-centered approach.⁸⁹

On 19 July, the COVID-19 Commission encouraged people to be responsible in addressing COVID-19, reminding them that they had successfully done so for over a year. It said if people use basic health safety measures, infections and deaths will decrease, and people will be able to overcome the crisis.⁹⁰

On 20 July, MoH warned that all those who die should be considered potential COVID-19 cases. It issued guidance on: handling bodies respectfully and according to customs while minimizing infection risk; protecting family members of the deceased and those in contact with the body; moving bodies and preparing next steps; and organizing or attending funerals.⁹¹

On 20 July, the COVID-19 Commission denounced the junta's acts undermining health as homicidal, including: unjustly arresting, detaining, and torturing those providing health services; posing as patients in order to arrest doctors; and confiscating oxygen and other medical supplies and equipment.⁹²

⁸³ NUG (12 Jul 2021) COVID-19 pandemic health education, awareness, and activity 12-18 July 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/147299130824060>

⁸⁴ NUG (13 Jul 2021) National Commission for Prevention, Control and Management of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Directive 1/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/147877507432889>

⁸⁵ NUG (13 Jul 2021) Ministry of Human Rights statement on measures responding to the third wave of COVID-19, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/147933740760599>

⁸⁶ NUG (17 Jul 2021) Ministry of Health Reporting to the People about work on COVID-19, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/150790923808214>

⁸⁷ NUG (17 Jul 2021) Ministry of International Cooperation, Announcement Regarding the COVID-19 Situation by H.E. Dr. Sasa, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/151190370434936>

⁸⁸ NUG (17 Jul 2021) National Commission on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) statement for Private hospitals, volunteer hospitals, and clinics, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/150624387158201>

⁸⁹ NUG (18 Jul 2021) Prime Minister's Office: Urgent request for humanitarian assistance for the people of Myanmar during the escalating COVID-19 crisis, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/151229683764338>

⁹⁰ NUG (19 Jul 2021) Request letter to the people from the National Commission on COVID-19 Prevention, Control, and Treatment, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/152013200352653>

⁹¹ NUG (20 Jul 2021) Ministry of Health guidance on how to handle patients suspected of dying from COVID-19, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/152438000310173>

⁹² NUG (20 Jul 2021) National level commission: strongly denouncing the junta's arresting, detaining, and stopping healthcare heroes and confiscating medicines that people need during the COVID-19 third wave, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/152531923634114>

On 22 July, Dr. Sasa wrote to GAVI Director Dr. Seth Berkley to request COVID-19 vaccine assistance, citing the poor state of Burma's healthcare system and 35% testing positivity rate. He renewed Burma's 2020 request for assistance through COVAX, enough to cover up to 20% of Burma's population.⁹³

On 22 July, the NUG announced the formation of a COVID-19 Task Force led by Health Minister Dr. Zaw Wai Soe and Dr. Cynthia Maung, chair of the NUG's Ethnic Health Committee. The Task Force will collaborate with ethnic health providers "to prevent, mitigate and control the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in Myanmar." It will also help coordinate "cooperation with international associations in order to procure, not only COVID-19 vaccines but also prerequisite assistance and equipment needed for vaccination programs."⁹⁴

Environmental responsibility

On 14 July, MoNREC summarized its 12 July report to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat on its climate change reduction program and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). It said that predicted implementation would reduce carbon dioxide output by 224 million tons by 2030; but with international funding and technical assistance, it could reduce CO₂ output by 413 million tons instead. It said that these mitigation measures would also help to build a federal democratic union and create a peaceful, sustainable economy resilient to climate change effects.⁹⁵

On 22 July, MoNREC called on development partners and the international community to conduct all future cooperation on natural resources and the environment with the NUG, and to suspend all communications with the junta. It announced that it was working to create an inclusive space to develop a "resources federalism policy and people-oriented natural resources management system," which it said is key to creating a green natural environment, a prosperous social environment, socio-economic development, and peaceful coexistence for all in Burma.⁹⁶

Flooding and junta leave people vulnerable in Rakhine, Southeast Burma

Heavy rains caused severe flooding in Tanintharyi Region, Karen State, and Mon State from 22 July onwards.⁹⁷ This reportedly left at least hundreds without shelter. According to local charities, rescue efforts were locally organized and supported by volunteers, as the junta failed to arrange relief camps or food aid.⁹⁸ In Ye, Kyaikmaraw, and Chaungzon Townships (Mon State), rising water levels affected the transportation of oxygen and patients, frustrating COVID-19 treatment efforts.

Local organizations were too busy—responding to the pandemic—to provide their usual level of flood support. Local relief groups said that seasonal flooding is normal and can usually be mitigated with proper precautions, but the junta failed to act as necessary.⁹⁹ According to the junta, 42,513 persons were evacuated or otherwise affected in Karen State and Mon State.¹⁰⁰

Floods also hit Rakhine State, where 25,799 persons were evacuated or otherwise affected.¹⁰¹ Thandwe Township lost electricity on 26 July, and most areas were flooded on 27 July; COVID-19 patients and oxygen had to be evacuated from Thandwe Hospital. Flood waters started to ebb the next day, but houses remained uninhabitable and residents sheltered at relief camps. Relief workers reported that the junta cleaned the flooded hospital, but did nothing to help flood victims. A local CSO distributed meals to over 1,000 victims, but emphasized that more relief supplies were urgently needed.¹⁰²

⁹³ NUG (22 Jul 2021) Ministry of International Cooperation letter to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/154023753484931>

⁹⁴ The Diplomat (23 Jul 2021) Myanmar Shadow Government Forms COVID-19 Task Force

⁹⁵ NUG (14 Jul 2021) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation report submitted on National-Level Climate Change implementation program (Nationally Determined Contributions-NDC), <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/148482904039016>

⁹⁶ NUG (22 Jul 2021) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Announcement for International Cooperation in the Fields of Natural Resources and Environment, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/153956040158369>

⁹⁷ RFA (26 Jul 2021) Floods Add to Misery as Myanmar Struggles to Control Third Wave of COVID-19; AHA Centre (28 Jul 2021) Flash Update: No. 01 – Monsoonal Flooding, Myanmar – 28 July 2021

⁹⁸ Myanmar Now (28 Jul 2021) No help from junta as floods sweep southeastern Myanmar

⁹⁹ RFA (26 Jul 2021) Floods Add to Misery as Myanmar Struggles to Control Third Wave of COVID-19

¹⁰⁰ AHA Centre (28 Jul 2021) Flash Update: No. 01 – Monsoonal Flooding, Myanmar – 28 July 2021

¹⁰¹ AHA Centre (28 Jul 2021) Flash Update: No. 01 – Monsoonal Flooding, Myanmar – 28 July 2021

¹⁰² Irrawaddy (28 Jul 2021) Floods Compound COVID-19 Crisis in Western Myanmar

In Eastern Bangladesh, at least six Rohingya refugees drowned or were killed in landslides after rain inundated their camps, making at least 5,000 people homeless and forcing 14,000 others to live in waterlogged shelters. Rohingya refugees continue to live in cramped conditions without protection from the weather or access to storm shelters. No measures seem to have been taken to mitigate flood risks despite warnings every year that seasonal rains pose a major threat.¹⁰³

Conflict and displacement (for details, see [conflict/displacement tracker](#))

Six months after seizing power, the Tatmadaw remained in active conflict across Burma, fighting against long-standing EAOs and newly-formed local People's Defense Forces (PDFs). On 16 July, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that there were 336,000 IDPs in Burma at the start of 2021, 220,000 more since 1 Feb, 470,000 non-displaced stateless persons in Rakhine State, and 1,700,000 other vulnerable people, mostly in urban and peri-urban areas.¹⁰⁴

In the first 23 days of July, there were over 348 violent attacks on civilians or armed clashes, bringing the total number of incidents between 1 February and 25 June to 3,446.¹⁰⁵

On 7 July, the Peace Process Steering Team, which coordinates negotiations between parties to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), formally announced a temporary halt to negotiations.¹⁰⁶

Conflict persisted in **Chin State and nearby Sagaing Region**, blocking essential aid for IDPs.

On 1 July, Tatmadaw troops and Phyu Saw Htee village militias jointly raided and destroyed people's property in Phat Khat village, Mingin Township (Sagaing), forcing villagers to flee into the jungle.¹⁰⁷

On 4 July, local people in Lumte village, Falam Township (Chin) said that since 1 July the military had begun stationing troops in the village, making entry difficult for local people.¹⁰⁸

On 15 July, in southern Kalay Township (Sagaing), the Kalay PDF killed 17 junta soldiers in a firefight; two civilians and two PDF fighters also died.¹⁰⁹

On 21 July, three Tatmadaw planes landed in Kalay with supplies, which were loaded onto military trucks.¹¹⁰ The Tatmadaw and Kalay PDF clashed in Tahan ward that night, before the PDF withdrew.¹¹¹

On 10 July, the Mindat People's Administration said that the junta was only allowing ten bags of rice—around 450kg total, and not enough to feed residents—to enter **Mindat** town (Chin State) each day, despite the existence of a ceasefire and an agreement allowing vehicles to bring food into Mindat. The junta had also declared medicine a “banned item,” and was preventing its importation.¹¹²

On 20 July, people in Mindat Township said that little of the recent UNHCR aid reached those who needed it, because junta forces only permitted distribution to junta-controlled IDP camps, which are mostly empty. Soldiers also confiscated medicine. Locals estimated that around 9,000 people in Mindat Township still urgently required humanitarian aid, and many were living in the jungle.¹¹³

On 21 July, the junta launched a fresh offensive on Chin Defense Force (CDF) fighters in Mindat Township, after declining to extend the ceasefire from 14 Jul. It was reported that junta reinforcements were dispatched from Matupi (Chin State),¹¹⁴ as well as Pakokku (Magway Region).¹¹⁵

¹⁰³ Guardian (29 Jul 2021) At least six Rohingya refugees killed as floods hit camps in Bangladesh

¹⁰⁴ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (16 Jul 2021) MYANMAR – Humanitarian Snapshot (July 2021)

¹⁰⁵ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) (updated 25 Jun 2021) Data Export Tool, available at <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>

¹⁰⁶ Network Media Group (9 Jul 2021) PPST Formally Ends Peace Talks With Burma Army

¹⁰⁷ Ro Nay San Lwin, via Twitter (2 Jul 2021) <https://twitter.com/nslwin/status/1410886266263162882>

¹⁰⁸ Chin World Media, via Twitter (4 Jul 2021) https://twitter.com/media_chin/status/1411595060047605764

¹⁰⁹ Chin World Medi, via Twitter (16 Jul 2021) https://twitter.com/media_chin/status/1415878514029449217

¹¹⁰ The Chindwin, via Twitter (21 Jul 2021) <https://twitter.com/ChindwinNews/status/1417829422162456582>

¹¹¹ The Chindwin, via Twitter (21 Jul 2021) <https://twitter.com/ChindwinNews/status/1417864236055805952>

¹¹² Myanmar Now (10 Jul 2021) Transport of food, medicine restricted despite temporary ceasefire extension in Mindat

¹¹³ Myanmar Now (20 Jul 2021) Many in Mindat still in need as junta imposes restrictions on distribution of UNHCR aid

¹¹⁴ Myanmar Now (22 Jul 2021) Fresh fighting breaks out in Mindat as temporary ceasefire expires

¹¹⁵ The Chindwin, via Twitter (21 Jul 2021) <https://twitter.com/ChindwinNews/status/1417751244555395074>

On 26 July, the CDF confirmed that seven police officers from a joint military-police checkpoint In Ma Kwe Im Nu, Mindat Township, including a Captain, had defected with their weapons and ammunition. The CDF captured the outpost along with supplies and around 20 guns.¹¹⁶

Conflict persisted in **Kachin State and nearby areas of Sagaing Region**. On 9 July, IDPs in camps inside Kachin Independence Army (KIA)-controlled territory said that their World Food Programme (WFP) food rations and stipends did not arrive for June or July, and they could not buy cheaper goods from China, all due to the pandemic.¹¹⁷

On 2 July, a joint force of KIA Brigade 8 and PDF ambushed a Tatmadaw convoy with a landmine near Thist Seimt Kon village, Kawlin Township (Sagaing). The convoy returned fire with RPGs, damaging a house and injuring two civilians. The joint force ambushed two other convoys on 2 and 4 July.¹¹⁸

On 3 July, a joint force of KIA Battalion 5 and PDF clashed with Tatmadaw soldiers for several hours in Katha Township (Sagaing).¹¹⁹ The following day, a joint force of PDF and KIA Battalion 12 attacked the Shwegu town (Kachin) police station and an LID 88 base in Ngabat Gyi, Shwegu Township.¹²⁰

On 8 July, locals observed surveillance drones above Prang Ngawn village, Bhamo Township (Kachin). Tatmadaw jets also flew over eight different villages and locations on two occasions that evening.¹²¹ The following day, the Tatmadaw carried out three air strikes on joint KIA-PDF positions in and around Myo Hla, Bu Wa and Zut Awng villages in eastern Katha Township and western Shwegu Township.¹²²

On 18 July, the Tatmadaw raided three villages in Shwebo Township (Sagaing), prompting clashes with the local PDF. It used artillery support in the attack, forcing PDF fighters and around 5,000 civilians—almost the villages' entire populations—to flee. It also burned down the home and farming equipment of an NLD supporter in one village, and looted the home of a former NLD chairman in another.¹²³

Fighting also ensued in **Hpakant Township** (Kachin). On 2 July, the junta's LIR 12 (based at Nam Ya) fired mortars on Gawlu Yang village;¹²⁴ on 3 July, it fired mortars on Kum Tsai village.¹²⁵

On 15 July, the Nam Ya-based LIR 12 shelled two villages during clashes with the KIA in Kapmaw village tract. The shelling injured six people, including an eight-year-old, and hit near the village church.¹²⁶ On 19 July, there were no clashes, but LIR 12 shelled Hkum Tsai Zup and Gaw Lu Yang villages, displacing around 200 people—the second forced displacement in Gaw Lu Yang in a week.¹²⁷

Along the Kachin-Chinese border, on 8 July, locals in Waingmaw town said that the Tatmadaw set up a checkpoint with wi-fi at Shwe Nyaung Pin, and used the checkpoint to search people travelling on the Bhamo-Myitkyina road. If soldiers found material related to the KIA on people's phones, they would beat the phones' owners.¹²⁸ On the same day, KIA Battalion 3 attacked the nearby Tatmadaw base.¹²⁹

On 20 July, soldiers from LIR 320 turned a village church in Momauk Township into a garrison. Earlier in July, troops had occupied monasteries in Hpakant Township and one in Muse Township (Shan).¹³⁰

On 5 July, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and Tatmadaw LIB clashed near Near Mong Ko, Muse Township (Shan State), the first clash in the area since 1 Feb.¹³¹ On 10–11 July, they clashed in Panghseng, Muse Township, which the Tatmadaw shelled indiscriminately.¹³²

¹¹⁶ Chin World Media, via Twitter (26 Jul 2021) https://twitter.com/media_chin/status/1419650178475200517

¹¹⁷ Network Media Group (9 Jul 2021) Banking Restrictions Cause Food Shortages For IDPs in Kachin State

¹¹⁸ Kachin News (4 Jul 2021) KIA And PDF Attack Tatmadaw At Multiple Locations in Sagaing Region; Kachinland News (5 Jul 2021) KIA/PDF forces battle SAC troops at Ngabat Gyi and Kukku Kone

¹¹⁹ Kachinland News (5 Jul 2021) KIA and Katha PDF attack SAC troops, fighting rages in Sumpra Bum and Nampaka

¹²⁰ Kachinland News (5 Jul 2021) KIA/PDF forces battle SAC troops at Ngabat Gyi and Kukku Kone

¹²¹ Kachinland News (9 Jul 2021) Two Chinese drones hover above Prang Ngawn village

¹²² Kachinland News (10 Jul 2021) SAC's fighter jets bomb Myo Hla, Bu Wa and Zut Awng

¹²³ Irrawaddy (19 Jul 2021) Around 5,000 Sagaing Villagers Flee Myanmar Junta Raid

¹²⁴ Kachinland News (3 Jul 2021) KIA attacks SAC troops as artillery shelling continues

¹²⁵ Kachinland News (5 Jul 2021) KIA and Katha PDF attack SAC troops, fighting rages in Sumpra Bum and Nampaka

¹²⁶ Kachin News (15 Jul 2021) Tatmadaw Shelling Injures Civilians in Hpakant Township

¹²⁷ Myanmar Now (20 Jul 2021) Junta shells villages in Hpakant

¹²⁸ Kachin News (8 Jul 2021) Military Beefs Up Security Following KIA Attacks in Northern Burma

¹²⁹ Kachinland News (10 Jul 2021) KIA's 3rd and 39th Battalions battle SAC troops

¹³⁰ Kachinland News (21 Jul 2021) SAC soldiers quartered in religious compounds

¹³¹ Matt Walsh, via Twitter (5 Jul 2021) <https://twitter.com/mattywalsh/status/1411983043951136771>

¹³² Kachinland News (12 Jul 2021) Battles rage in Myo Hla

On 12 July, the RCSS called for dialogue to end fighting between Shan-based EAOs.¹³³ On 14 July, the Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF) called for a UN Security Council arms embargo, and for the UN and international community to designate the Tatmadaw as a terrorist organization.¹³⁴

On 15 July, it was reported that 2,000 people from 15 villages had fled clashes between Shan EAOs in Mong Kung Township (**southern Shan State**) since 11 July. Aid volunteers said it was difficult to assess displaced peoples' needs because more people kept arriving.¹³⁵

In **Karenni State**, conflict continued and aid groups struggled to reach displaced populations. On 14 July, the South East MYANMAR Working Group, composed of humanitarian aid organizations, reported that during 3–22 June it could only reach 75 of 120 IDP sites across Karenni and southern Shan States for a rapid needs assessment, due to the poor security environment and lack of access. Of the 73,000 IDPs it assessed, 100% had been displaced within the prior 40 days.¹³⁶

On 12 July, the Karenni Army (KA) and Tatmadaw clashed in several locations in Loikaw Township after the latter deployed additional soldiers to Tee Lon village. Junta forces shelled villages with artillery, displacing roughly 1,000 people into forests on the Shan-Karenni border.¹³⁷ The same day, it was reported that as of 4 July the junta had killed 76 civilians, arrested 134, and wounded 102 in Karenni State while fighting against resistance groups and the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP).¹³⁸

On 18 July, the Tatmadaw clashed with the Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF) in two locations in Bawlakhe Township.¹³⁹ On 21 July, seven villages in Balawke and Hpruso Townships fled after hearing that two Tatmadaw columns were advancing towards KNPP-controlled territory in Hpruso Township, and fighting would be “unavoidable” if they entered the EAO’s territory.¹⁴⁰

Fighting and displacement continued in **Karen State**. On 2 July, civil society workers said that the current level of humanitarian aid would not support the 50,000+ people displaced in Karen State since the beginning of the year; aid workers needed medical supplies, warm clothes, and materials for shelters; and people faced increased risk of respiratory diseases with the onset of the rainy season.¹⁴¹

On 6 July, aid workers said that around 1,000 displaced families in Myaing Gyi Ngu and Kamaung villages, Hpapun Township still needed aid, particularly food and shelter.¹⁴²

On 9 July, Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) Brigade 5 spokesperson Saw Kler Doh said that fighting was taking place in Brigade 1, 3 and 5 areas, and intensifying in the first two.¹⁴³

On 9 July, the Karen National Union (KNU) announced that it had suspended Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) head General Ner Dah Bo Mya from his position, following the KNDO’s mass killing of 25 people in May, which the KNU said violated the Geneva Conventions.¹⁴⁴ On 11 July, Ner Dah Bo Mya said that he did not accept the suspension.¹⁴⁵ On 14 July, Ner Dah Bo Mya signed a KNDO statement denying rumors that the group was planning to assassinate senior KNU leaders. The statement said that the rumors were a disinformation campaign run by the military to divide Karen people.¹⁴⁶

Other incidents

1 Jul: It was reported that soldiers from IB 402, based in Shwe Kyin Township (**Bago Region**), kidnapped 13 Wah Mee Kho villagers and forced them to act as human shields during an

¹³³ Shan Herald (12 Jul 2021) RCSS Calls For Dialogue To End Conflict in Shan State

¹³⁴ New Mandala (14 Jul 2021) A View from the Borderlands: An Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Tar Parn La

¹³⁵ Shan Herald (15 Jul 2021) Violence Between EAOs Affects Thousands in Shan State

¹³⁶ South East MYANMAR Working Group (SEWG) (14 Jul 2021) Kayah/Shan (South) States Rapid Needs Assessment

¹³⁷ Irrawaddy (13 Jul 2021) Myanmar Junta Troops Die in Kayah State Clashes

¹³⁸ Network Media Group (12 Jul 2021) Military Killed 76 Civilians in Karenni State Since Coup

¹³⁹ Mizzima News (20 Jul 2021) The KNDF reports fighting is continuing in Balakhe

¹⁴⁰ Kantarawaddy Times (22 Jul 2021) Thousands Flee Advancing Tatmadaw Troops in Karenni State

¹⁴¹ Karen News (2 Jul 2021) The World Turns a Blind Eye to Burmese Military Attacks on Ethnic Villages – more than 50,000 Karen Displaced

¹⁴² Mizzima News (6 Jul 2021) Refugees in Myaing Gyi Ngu and Kamaung in need of aid

¹⁴³ Karen News (9 Jul 2021) Burma Army Losses Climb as it Intensifies its Attacks in Karen Areas – 284 Dead Soldiers, and 297 Wounded

¹⁴⁴ Channel News Asia (10 Jul 2021) Myanmar rebel group suspends key leader in massacre investigation

¹⁴⁵ Salween Press, via Facebook (12 Jul 2021) <https://www.facebook.com/Salween-Press-422055381238801/>

¹⁴⁶ Mizzima News (15 Jul 2021) KNDO accuses junta of hatching divisive scheme to disunite Karen people

offensive on 24-25 Jun. The soldiers later released 11 of them, but kept two prisoners. The kidnapping caused 300 people to flee rather than be conscripted by the Tatmadaw.¹⁴⁷

2 Jul: In Satpyarkyin village, Depayin Township (**Sagaing Region**), around 150 Tatmadaw soldiers carried out a dawn raid, and fired artillery at those who fled. They clashed with local PDF fighters for several hours. Six PDF members' bodies were reportedly found piled in a monastery compound, and they appeared to have been executed after being injured.¹⁴⁸ On 5 Jul, the civilian and PDF death toll was raised to 41 people, including six schoolchildren and five university students. Around 6,000 people fled their homes from due to clashes.¹⁴⁹

Min Aung Hlaing's birthday

3 July 2021 marked the 65th birthday of coup leader Min Aung Hlaing. The day was significant because, under Tatmadaw rules, this is the day he is required to retire from his position as Commander-in-Chief.

The Tatmadaw is tightly wound up in Burma's most lucrative businesses, from oil and gas production, to jade and ruby mining, to manufacturing and sales of most products in Burma's economy. This provides Min Aung Hlaing, as leader of the Tatmadaw, with vast wealth through a network of conglomerates, crony companies, and investments. He stood to lose all of this on 3 July if he had not staged a coup.

7 Jul: Two PDF fighters were killed in a shootout with junta forces and a group of civilians—claimed to be part of a pro-regime Pyu Saw Htee militia—guarding a school in Yaungmaw Village, Dawei Township (**Tanintharyi Region**). After the clash, junta forces arrested five residents.¹⁵⁰

8 Jul: In Kyaikhto Town (**Mon State**), a bomb exploded near the Military Security Affairs Force office. There have reportedly been around 10 bomb blasts in Kyaikhto Township since 1 Feb.¹⁵¹

13 Jul: In Bago (**Bago Region**), the Bago PDF claimed responsibility for two explosions at the Mazin ward administration office, and another targeting a military patrol station in Kalya Ni ward.¹⁵²

30 Jul: In Kani Township (**Sagaing Region**), a resistance stronghold, junta soldiers killed at least 28 people in July. Many of the bodies showed clear signs of torture, and soldiers have captured dozens of civilians and resistance fighters in recent weeks. Earlier in July, over 10,000 people fled because of Tatmadaw raids, in which they robbed villagers, laid landmines, stole and destroyed property, and poisoned water supplies.¹⁵³

Protests and violent crackdowns (for details, see [protests/crackdowns tracker](#))

During 1-23 July, there were at least 177 peaceful protests against the coup, against the junta education system, in support of the CDM, in support of the NUG, or demanding the release of political prisoners. These took place in at least 46 townships across 11 of 15 states/regions/Union Territory.¹⁵⁴

On 1 July, hundreds of anti-junta protestors took to Yangon streets on the five-month anniversary of the coup. They chanted pro-democracy slogans and set an army uniform ablaze before dispersing.¹⁵⁵

On 3 July, pro-democracy protestors took to the streets throughout Burma to mark Min Aung Hlaing's birthday. Demonstrators burned his portrait and organized mock funerals.¹⁵⁶

On 7 July, pro-democracy protestors staged flash protests across Burma to mark the anniversary of the 1962 student protests against the first military government.¹⁵⁷ Around 100 protestors moved through

¹⁴⁷ Network Media Group (1 Jul 2021) Tatmadaw Uses Civilians As Human Shields During Offensive in Bago Region

¹⁴⁸ Myanmar Now (4 Jul 2021) At least 30 killed in Depayin following junta raid on local village

¹⁴⁹ The Irrawaddy (5 Jul 2021) Myanmar Civilian Death Toll Rises From Sagaing Fighting

¹⁵⁰ Irrawaddy (8 Jul 2021) Two Civilian Fighters Killed in Shootout With Myanmar Junta Troops in Dawei

¹⁵¹ Mon News Agency (10 Jul 2021) Bomb blast near Kyaikhto MSAF office

¹⁵² Myanmar Now (14 Jul 2021) Bago PDF claims responsibility for bombing of admin office, military checkpoint

¹⁵³ Myanmar Now (30 Jul 2021) Junta soldiers massacred at least 28 people in resistance stronghold of Kani this month, say residents; Myanmar Now (13 Jul 2021) Locals find bodies in forest after 15 men 'massacred' in Sagaing Region

¹⁵⁴ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLEDD) (updated 23 Jul 2021) Data Export Tool, available at <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>

¹⁵⁵ Reuters (1 Jul 2021) Myanmar protesters burn army uniform five months after coup

¹⁵⁶ Myanmar Now (3 Jul 2021) Myanmar people wish junta chief 'death and hell' on his birthday

¹⁵⁷ AP (7 Jul 2021) Myanmar protesters commemorate 1962 student resistance

Yangon, flashing three-finger salutes and setting off colorful smoke bombs. Dozens also gathered and held signs in Mandalay. In Sagaing Region, protesters burned an army flag.¹⁵⁸

The junta continued to arbitrarily arrest people it perceived as opposing it. On 4 July, troops arrested a woman at home in Pyi Township (Bago Region) for participating in a protest, along with two other women and three men.¹⁵⁹ On 6 July, junta forces arrested at least 10 people in Hlegu Township (Yangon) that it thought were connected to the shooting of a local USDP member, a traffic police assistant, and an administrator between 3 and 5 July.¹⁶⁰ On 26 July, junta forces arrested and beat protest leader Aung Chit Ko and three other people in Meiktila (Mandalay Region). Aung Chit Ko had been on the run for over a month; and he is believed to be detained at the base of the notorious LID 99.¹⁶¹

On 8 July, it was reported that junta soldiers and police were **extorting money** from the families of political prisoners in exchange for their release, with the prices ranging from 0.5 to 3 million kyat.¹⁶²

On 2 July, it was reported that the junta **tortured** and **killed** at least four civilians, including an NLD member, during the week of 28 June, from Bago, Mandalay, and Sagaing Regions.¹⁶³

On 6 July, it was reported that junta troops had killed 81 Chin people since 1 Feb, across Chin, Sagaing, Magway, Kachin, Yangon, and Mandalay States/Regions.¹⁶⁴

On 9 July, it was reported that the junta tortured detained protest leader Man Zar Myay Mon from Chaung-U (Sagaing Region); he had not yet recovered from being shot during his arrest on 8 June.¹⁶⁵

On 10 July, junta forces shot dead two Kuki teenagers and injured three others in Tamu Township (Sagaing Region), two of whom later died in custody. The location of their bodies is unknown.¹⁶⁶

On 27 July, junta forces fired on pro-democracy protesters in Chanmyathazi Township (Mandalay Region), killing two of them, and injuring another who they subsequently arrested. Junta forces reportedly dragged the bodies away and covered the bloodstained street with sand.¹⁶⁷

The junta continued to target the media. On 5 July, the Irrawaddy published testimonies of five journalists released by the junta on 30 June, two of whom reported being beaten by junta forces. Another reported that he was pressured to confess that he had violated journalist ethics by protesting the coup.

On 27 July, Human Rights Watch (HRW) called on the junta to end its assault on the media, which it said was part of the junta's effort to suppress independent coverage of Burma and deny the serious rights violations it was committing across the country. It also said that since 1 Feb, the junta had arrested 98 journalists, 46 of whom remained in detention, and convicted six of them.¹⁶⁸

The junta continued to target politicians and their families. On 6 July, in Pyay Township (Bago Region), junta troops broke into and looted the house of a Regional NLD MP family.¹⁶⁹ On 10 July, junta forces arrested former NLD MP U Aung Kyaw Kyaw Oo and his wife in Yangon.¹⁷⁰ On 18 July, junta forces arrested Lin Htin Soe, the brother of a former NLD MP, and one of his neighbors. They confiscated Lin Htin Soe's money and threatened to arrest his family if he did not give them his car.¹⁷¹ On 20 July, junta forces detained the wife and two children of NLD regional MP Kyaw Soe Naing.¹⁷²

On 7 July, the junta filed corruption charges—threatening up to 15 years in prison—against two detained Mandalay NLD members: Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung, and Minister for Electricity,

¹⁵⁸ Eleven Media Group (7 Jul 2021) Myanmar protesters mark 1962 rallies against first military government; AP (7 Jul 2021) Myanmar protesters commemorate 1962 student resistance

¹⁵⁹ Mizzima (5 Jul 2021) Woman arrested for allegedly taking part in funeral-style protest against junta leader

¹⁶⁰ Myanmar Now (8 Jul 2021) Junta troops arrest 10 locals in Hlegu following shooting of accused military collaborators

¹⁶¹ Myanmar Now (28 Jul 2021) Junta's troops break into Meiktila home, arrest four people including protest leader

¹⁶² Irrawaddy (8 Jul 2021) Myanmar Junta Extorting Money From Anti-Coup Detainees

¹⁶³ Irrawaddy (2 Jul 2021) Four Myanmar Civilians Tortured to Death in Junta Custody

¹⁶⁴ Chin World Media, via Twitter (6 Jul 2021) https://twitter.com/media_chin/status/1412293999126224900

¹⁶⁵ Myanmar Now (9 Jul 2021) Multiple charges brought against imprisoned, tortured protest leader

¹⁶⁶ Chin World Media, via Twitter (11 Jul 2021) https://twitter.com/media_chin/status/1414207778399260682

¹⁶⁷ Irrawaddy (28 Jul 2021) Two Killed as Myanmar Junta Forces Open Fire on Mandalay Protest Column

¹⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch (27 Jul 2021) Myanmar: Junta Escalates Media Crackdown

¹⁶⁹ Mizzima (8 Jul 2021) Regional Hluttaw MP's house ransacked by military

¹⁷⁰ Irrawaddy (16 Jul 2021) Myanmar Junta Arrests NLD Lawmaker and His Wife in Yangon

¹⁷¹ Myanmar Now (20 Jul 2021) Military arrests brother of NLD MP, confiscates money and car

¹⁷² Myanmar Now (22 Jul 2021) Junta detains wife and children of Mandalay MP wanted for incitement

Energy and Construction Zarni Aung.¹⁷³ On 9 July, the junta charged former NLD Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu under Penal Code 505(b) for incitement.¹⁷⁴ On 16 July, the regime indicted senior NLD patron Win Htein on a sedition charge (Penal Code 124a), threatening 20 years in prison.¹⁷⁵

The junta stepped up its attacks on the rule of law, targeting lawyers and sentencing civilians to death in sham trials. On 2 July, Human Rights Watch reported that security forces had arbitrarily arrested at least six lawyers defending political prisoners over 1 May–10 Jun, three while in court.¹⁷⁶ On the same day, AAPP reported that 17 lawyers had been detained since 1 Feb, in home raids, for attending protests, or for assisting clients arbitrarily detained or subject to unfair trials. It said threats against lawyers were so intense that in some areas lawyers were not able to represent any detainees.¹⁷⁷

On 21 July, HRW reported that junta military tribunals had sentenced 65 people to death in areas under martial law, with 39 convicted in absentia. It called on the UN, EU, US, and other governments to demand the release of all those wrongfully imprisoned and ramp up pressure on the junta.¹⁷⁸

Civil unrest escalates

Anti-regime groups continued to kill administrators, junta-appointed officials, alleged junta informants, and members of the military-backed USDP. As of 20 July, they had reportedly killed at least 49 ward/village administrators and 15 local administrative staff members nationwide.¹⁷⁹ On 25 July, a local 100-household administrator was shot dead in front of his office in Yangon.¹⁸⁰ On 27 July, a junta-appointed ward administrator was killed by an unidentified gunman at his home in Aung Myay Thazan Township (Mandalay Region), where he was working because his office had been burned down.¹⁸¹

On 14 July, a former USDP MP and a man with him were shot and stabbed to death in Myaung Township (Sagaing Region).¹⁸² On 18 July, two motorcyclists shot dead the local USDP Chairman in Kyar Inn Seik Gyi Township (Karen State), and injured two men accompanying him.¹⁸³ On 22 July, a USDP village organizer was shot dead in Wetlet Township (Sagaing Region).¹⁸⁴

On 2 July, in Singu Township (Mandalay Region), attackers shot and killed a man whose name was reportedly on a list of alleged informants circulated on social media.¹⁸⁵ The same day, the Bago Defence Forces shot dead another suspected informant.¹⁸⁶ On 4 July, two local PDF members shot and killed a man accused of helping the junta in Bago.¹⁸⁷ On 5 July, in Thantlang Township (Chin State), the CDF killed a police officer they claimed was a junta informant who used to intimidate CDM civil servants.¹⁸⁸

On 22 July, gunmen injured a non-striking health ministry employee and killed his son after breaking into their house in Mindat Township (Chin State); they set the house on fire before leaving.¹⁸⁹

Meanwhile, bomb attacks continued to target public buildings, police posts, pro-junta militias, and businesses belonging to the military or junta officials. During 1-23 July, at least 66 bomb attacks were documented in 45 townships across 13 of 15 states/regions/Union Territory.¹⁹⁰ On 4 July, a bomb exploded at the No.12 ward administrative office in Mawlamyinegyun Township (Ayeyarwady Region) during a military training attended by a junta-affiliated militia, injuring one person.¹⁹¹ On 8 July, a bomb

¹⁷³ Myanmar Now (9 Jul 2021) Detained Mandalay ministers charged with corruption

¹⁷⁴ Development Media Group (9 Jul 2021) Former Arakan State chief minister indicted on incitement charge

¹⁷⁵ Myanmar Now (16 Jul 2021) Win Htein indicted on sedition charge

¹⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch (2 Jul 2021) Myanmar: Security Forces Arrest Defense Lawyers

¹⁷⁷ Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (2 Jul 2021) Threats and Intimidation Towards Lawyers

¹⁷⁸ Human Rights Watch (21 Jul 2021) Myanmar: Junta Tribunals Impose 65 Death Sentences

¹⁷⁹ Myanmar Now (22 Jul 2021) Local administrator stabbed and killed in Monywa

¹⁸⁰ Eleven Media Group (26 July 2021) 100-Household Administrator in Mayangone Township Shot and Killed

¹⁸¹ Myanmar Now (28 Jul 2021) Junta-appointed ward administrator killed by unidentified gunman in Mandalay

¹⁸² Eleven Media Group (15 Jul 2021) Two men including ex-MP from USDP shot dead in Myaung

¹⁸³ Eleven Media Group (19 Jul 2021) USDP Chairman shot dead in Phaya Thonzu

¹⁸⁴ BNI (23 Jul 2021) USDP organizer shot dead

¹⁸⁵ Myanmar Now (2 Jul 2021) Alleged military informant shot dead in early morning attack at betel stall

¹⁸⁶ Mizzima (2 Jul 2021) Suspected informant killed in Paungte Township, Bago

¹⁸⁷ Myanmar Now (5 Jul 2021) Resistance fighters in Bago kill man accused of helping military crush protest stronghold

¹⁸⁸ Chin World Media, via Twitter (5 Jul 2021) https://twitter.com/media_chin/status/1412054676481077256

¹⁸⁹ Mizzima (24 Jul 2021) Health ministry employee injured, son killed, in home attack in Mindat

¹⁹⁰ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLEDD) (updated 23 Jul 2021) Data Export Tool, available at <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>

¹⁹¹ Mizzima (5 Jul 2021) Bomb blasts inside ward administrative office in Mawlamyinegyun Township, Ayeyarwady

exploded at a jewelry store in Lanmadaw Township (Yangon) owned by Thet Thet Khine, the junta Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, injuring one employee.¹⁹²

Pro-junta militias respond

On 12 July, junta spokesperson Zaw Min Tun admitted that the regime could not protect administrators and informants from being targeted. He said that the junta was forming “non-armed groups” in wards and villages to “facilitate security,” by then present in 45% of the country.¹⁹³ This seemed to contradict earlier reports that security forces were arming pro-junta civilian groups.¹⁹⁴

Pro-junta militias targeted anti-coup activists and members of the NLD. On 2 July, unidentified gunmen shot and killed a married couple who were members of the NLD at their home in Myingyan Township (Mandalay Region), after a pro-junta Pyu Saw Htee group published a hit list of 38 people in Myingyan.¹⁹⁵ On 27 July, another husband and wife were shot dead by unidentified gunmen while riding on a motorcycle in Myingyan. Locals suspected the local pro-junta Pyu Saw Htee group.¹⁹⁶

On 18 July, three unidentified men shot and killed a female anti-coup activist and seriously injured her daughter—a grade 7 student—after breaking into their home in Htantabin Township (Bago Region).¹⁹⁷

Women targeted (for details, see [women tracker](#))

According to AAPP, the junta has killed at least 65 women since the coup: three in February; 34 in March; nine in April; seven in May; four in June; and eight in July.¹⁹⁸

On 1 July, it was reported that the number of rape cases was on the rise in Rakhine State due to military conflicts, political instability, and insecurity in IDP camps housing over 40,000 displaced women. Other factors included a lack of law enforcement in some areas and a climate of widespread impunity. Displaced children were particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. Six child rape cases were reported in 2018, five in 2019, 20 in 2020, and five in the first half of 2021.¹⁹⁹

On 2 July, it was reported that sexual violence against women increased after the coup. The Women’s League of Burma said it had evidence that junta guards had committed sexual abuse against women in custody. It added that the military used sexual violence as a weapon of war against ethnic minorities in the past, and that the same was happening to women everywhere since 1 February.²⁰⁰

On 14 July, a 51-year-old woman was raped and killed in Num Lang, Momauk Township (Kachin State). Three Tatmadaw soldiers from LID 88 were later arrested in possession of the victim’s cell phone.²⁰¹ Military representatives offered 2.1 million MMK as compensation, and promised to deal with the case “according to the law,” although they called it a murder case.²⁰² According to a local source, the military did not allow the police and village authorities to question the suspects, nor did it release their names and service numbers. The Kachin Women Association – Thailand (KWAT) said that there will be no truth and justice for the victim as long as the military dictatorship continues.²⁰³

International responses to the coup (for details, see [international responses tracker](#))

On 2 July, reacting to the freeing of over 2,000 detainees in Burma, UN Secretary-General António Guterres repeated his call for “the immediate release of all of those who were arbitrarily detained.”²⁰⁴

On 2 July, UN Human Rights Council members voted to maintain the scheduled interactive dialogues on Myanmar with 26 in favor, 14 abstaining and 7 against—Bahamas, China, Cuba, Eritrea, Fiji, Russian Federation and Venezuela.²⁰⁵ On 6 July, High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle

¹⁹² Myanmar Now (9 Jul 2021) Jewellery store owned by junta minister bombed in Yangon

¹⁹³ Irrawaddy (14 Jul 2021) Myanmar Junta Says it Can’t Cope With Rising COVID-19 Cases

¹⁹⁴ Irrawaddy (8 Jul 2021) Two Civilian Fighters Killed in Shootout With Myanmar Junta Troops in Dawei

¹⁹⁵ Irrawaddy (3 Jul 2021) Married Couple Belonging to Myanmar’s NLD Slain in Their Home

¹⁹⁶ Myanmar Now (28 Jul 2021) Couple who owned Myingyan restaurant shot and killed by unidentified gunmen

¹⁹⁷ Myanmar Now (21 Jul 2021) Woman known for anti-dictatorship activism shot dead in Htantabin, Bago

¹⁹⁸ Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) (31 Jul 2021) Daily Briefing in Relation to the Military Coup

¹⁹⁹ Radio Free Asia (1 Jul 2021) Rakhine NGOs Raise Concern Over Rising Number of Child Rape Cases in Western Myanmar

²⁰⁰ Network Media Group (2 Jul 2021) Sexual Violence Against Women Rises After Burma’s Coup

²⁰¹ Kachinland News (15 Jul 2021) Body of 51-year-old Num Lang villager found near a rice field

²⁰² Kachin News (21 Jul 2021) Burma Army Pays Compensation To Family Of Murder Victim in Kachin State

²⁰³ Network Media Group (22 Jul 2021) Compensation Is Not Justice For Murder Of Woman in Kachin State, KWAT Says

²⁰⁴ Nikkei Asia (5 Jul 2021) Myanmar coup latest: Telenor ‘evaluating’ presence in country

²⁰⁵ UN Human Rights Council, via Twitter (2 Jul 2021) https://twitter.com/UN_HRC/status/1410644470626848769/photo/1

Bachelet said “the situation in Myanmar has evolved from a political crisis to a multi-dimensional human rights catastrophe,” citing the junta’s human rights violations and threats to health and food security, among other things. She called on the international community to stand united in pressuring the junta, and called on the UN Security Council to act.²⁰⁶

On 7 July, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar Thomas Andrews made a statement before the UN Human Rights Council, reiterating his call for an international Emergency Coalition for the People of Myanmar, and listing five strategies for the coalition: (1) reduce revenue the junta needs to continue its reign of terror, including through sanctions on oil and gas; (2) ban arms exports to the Tatmadaw; (3) coordinate investigations of ongoing crimes and prepare to file charges in countries with universal jurisdiction laws; (4) increase humanitarian aid, working through non-junta channels to assure aid is not disrupted; (5) coordinate to deny the junta legitimacy.²⁰⁷

On 12 July, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution condemning the ongoing human rights violations in Burma, and calling for an immediate halt to all violence and human rights violations, constructive and peaceful dialogue and reconciliation, repeal or reform of all discriminatory legislation, repatriation of those displaced, justice for victims, and full accountability and an end to impunity. It called on Burma to implement ASEAN’s five-point consensus, and called on businesses to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.²⁰⁸

ASEAN continued to drag its heels, despite global calls for it to act. On 6 July, Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said ASEAN was working to implement its five-point consensus from April, and acknowledged that implementation “has been slow and a little disappointing.”²⁰⁹ The same day, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said during a visit to Jakarta that the ASEAN five-point consensus should be the basis by which the situation in Burma can be resolved.²¹⁰ On 7 July, UN High Commissioner Bachelet urged ASEAN, for the second time in a month, to appoint a special envoy, and to engage with both the NUG and junta to expedite dialogue and a resolution to the crisis in Burma.²¹¹

On 13 July, **Thailand** Foreign Ministry spokesman Tanee Sangrat said Thailand had given THB 5 million (~USD 15,184) to the Myanmar Red Cross, and hoped to see ASEAN’s Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Management (AHA Centre) begin operations soon in Burma. He also said “Thailand wants to see the appointment of ASEAN special envoy as soon as possible.”²¹²

China continued to discourage countries from imposing sanctions on Burma. On 3 July, during his address to the opening ceremony of the 9th World Peace Forum in Beijing, China foreign minister Wang Yi said “the central task is to promote internal dialogue [...] The twists and turns in Myanmar’s democratic transition process [...] should be settled by political means as soon as possible through dialogue and consultation within the framework of its constitution and laws.”²¹³ The same day, China Ambassador to Burma Chen Hai held his first official meeting with Min Aung Hlaing, who the Chinese government—reporting on the meeting—referred to as “the leader of Myanmar” for the first time.²¹⁴

On 5 July, **Japan** lodged a protest with the junta after security forces forcibly entered the homes of Japanese embassy and aid staff in Yangon in April.²¹⁵ On 13 July, Japan provided an Emergency Grant Aid of USD 5.8 million in humanitarian assistance to people in southeast Burma, to be distributed through UNHCR, WFP, and UNICEF. Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained that the aid was in response to the sharp deterioration of the humanitarian situation, and a surge in the number of IDPs. It said that the aid would be delivered to approximately 136,000 people.²¹⁶

²⁰⁶ UN Human Rights Council (6 Jul 2021) Oral update on Myanmar: Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

²⁰⁷ OHCHR (7 Jul 2021) Statement by Thomas H. Andrews UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar: United Nations Human Rights Council

²⁰⁸ UN Human Rights Council (12 Jul 2021) Human Rights Council Adopts 13 Resolutions: Renews Mandate on Eritrea and Calls for the Removal of Unjustified Obstacles Restricting the Export of COVID-19 Vaccines

²⁰⁹ Reuters (6 Jul 2021) Singapore says ASEAN aims to speed up plan to end Myanmar crisis

²¹⁰ Reuters (6 Jul 2021) Russia backs ASEAN plan on tackling Myanmar crisis

²¹¹ Radio Free Asia (7 Jul 2021) UN Human Rights Chief Presses ASEAN to Appoint Special Envoy to Myanmar

²¹² Star (13 Jul 2021) Thailand hopes Asean centre will start humanitarian assistance in Myanmar soon

²¹³ Irrawaddy (6 Jul 2021) Myanmar Junta Sanctions ‘Inappropriate’ Says China

²¹⁴ Diplomat (7 Jul 2021) China Steps Toward De Facto Recognition of Myanmar’s Junta

²¹⁵ Eleven Media Group (5 Jul 2021) Japan urges Myanmar to prevent repeat of raids on embassy and aid staff

²¹⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (13 Jul 2021) Emergency Grant Aid for humanitarian assistance to the populations affected by the coup in the south east area of Myanmar

On 2 July, the **US** Office of Foreign Assets Control sanctioned another seven military members and 15 spouses or adult children of key junta members. The 22 came under the same sanctions regime as other junta members, which blocks all assets and interests in the US from being paid or transferred. In addition, the US Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) sanctioned four commercial entities that provide support to the Tatmadaw, under the same terms as individual sanctions: King Royal Technologies Co., a telecommunications company providing satellite communications equipment to the Tatmadaw; and Wanbao Mining Company, Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper Ltd., and Myanmar Yang Tse Copper Ltd., all three of which shared revenue with MEHL.²¹⁷ Wanbao Mining and its subsidiaries operate the Letpadaung Copper Mine in Salingyi Township (Sagaing Region).²¹⁸

On 12 July, the US State Department's annual report to Congress on genocide and atrocities prevention said that Burma remained at particular risk for genocide.²¹⁹ On 14 July, Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged ASEAN to end the violence and restore democracy in Burma, and to take immediate action on ASEAN's five-point consensus, including the appointment of a special envoy to Burma.²²⁰

On 16 July, the **UK** Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee published "the UK Government's Response to the Myanmar Crisis," with recommendations to the UK Government including:

- Treat the NUG as a "government-in-waiting," and working with its representatives.
- Avoid legitimizing the junta in any way, limiting engagement only to increasing diplomatic and economic pressure on the military.
- Draft a UNSC Resolution with explicit calls for an arms embargo on the country, with the aim of securing a binding UNSC resolution. Alternatively, work bilaterally with international partners to secure arms embargoes while building support.
- Work with ASEAN on the implementation of the five-point consensus with strict deadlines.
- Explore the feasibility of a "Unite for Peace" Resolution at the UN General Assembly, if there is no consensus at the UN Security Council within three months.
- Raise Myanmar issues at UN Treaty Bodies such as CEDAW, CRC, CAT, and others.
- Implement sanctions on key industries at a faster pace, and pressure other countries to do so.
- Ensure that third-party financial institutions and regulators support the sanctions implementation.
- Build consensus via UN resolutions for humanitarian aid, encouraging Burma's neighbors to accept more displaced people, abide by the principle of non-refoulement, and support cross-border aid.
- Explore methods of channeling funds to civil society organizations.
- Support referral of SAC leaders to the ICC, and joining the Gambia's suit at the ICJ.
- Provide financial support to ethnic media and other local news agencies.
- Provide secure data storage and communication devices to CSOs documenting on the ground.
- Introduce "protected status" for Burmese nationals in the UK who cannot renew visas at the junta-controlled embassy.²²¹

On 23 July, diplomats from 14 countries and the EU responded to the Insein Prison protest, calling for the responsible handling of COVID-19, and basic healthcare rights, for those in the prison. The Statement was signed by Ambassadors, Chargés D'Affaires, and Heads of Mission from Australia, Canada, the Delegation of the EU, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Norway, the UK, and the US.²²²

Also on 23 July, foreign embassies in Yangon, including those of the US and Thailand, suspended visa services in light of rising COVID-19 infections in Burma.²²³ Meanwhile, the junta appointed a former Tatmadaw fighter pilot as the new "chargé d'affaires ad interim" to Burma's embassy in London.²²⁴

²¹⁷ US Treasury Department (2 Jul 2021) Press Release Treasury Sanctions Senior Officials and Family Members Connected to Burma's Military

²¹⁸ Democratic Voice of Burma (22 Dec 2014) Riot police open fire on Latpadaung protestors

²¹⁹ Associated Press (12 Jul 2021) US cites China, Myanmar, Ethiopia in genocide report

²²⁰ Nikkei Asia (14 Jul 2021) US prods ASEAN on Myanmar, rejects China's 'unlawful' sea claims

²²¹ Foreign Affairs Committee (16 Jul 2021) The UK Government's Response to the Myanmar Crisis

²²² U.S. Embassy Burma (via Twitter) (23 Jul 2021), <https://twitter.com/USEmbassyBurma/status/1418503284357156864?s=19>

²²³ May Wong (via Twitter) (23 Jul 2021), <https://twitter.com/MayWongCNA/status/1418453290522529793>

²²⁴ Reuters (24 Jul 2021) Myanmar junta replaces envoy to Britain who broke ranks

On 5 July, Myanmar Witness, a UK-funded task force, was launched to investigate human rights violations in Burma. The task force will take submissions from civilians, independently verify incidents on social media, and share information with the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.²²⁵

COVID-19 assistance

Several countries responded to Burma's COVID-19 crisis and inability to handle it. On 21 July, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced it would provide up to 700 oxygen concentrators and 14 ambulances to Burma, in cooperation with the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS).²²⁶ On 26 July, the European Commission announced that it had mobilized EUR 2 million in emergency assistance to address the pandemic in Burma, on top of EUR 20.5 million in humanitarian aid the EU had already allocated in 2021 to address the needs of displaced and conflict-affected communities in Burma.²²⁷

Nearby, on 16 July, Bangladesh's Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission chief Shah Rezwan Hayat said Bangladesh will start vaccinating Rohingya refugees against COVID-19 in August, starting with 50,000 people over age 55. COVID-19 cases have reportedly been rising in the refugee camps. Bangladesh received 4.5 million doses of Moderna and Sinopharm earlier in July, and expects to receive another 5.9 doses shortly under the COVAX global vaccine-sharing initiative.²²⁸

Business responses and criticism (for details, see [business/economic responses tracker](#))

On 1 July, US-based pretzel retailer Auntie Annie's announced it would close its three branches in Burma due to the "changing operating environment."²²⁹

On 14 July, the junta's public relations firm, Dickens & Mason Canada, announced it had stopped working with the junta because international sanctions prevented the payment of its USD 2 million fee. The firm's founder, Ari Ben-Menashe, said that he was still "on good terms" with junta leaders.²³⁰

On 15 July, human rights groups urged Japanese companies to halt their involvement in Yangon's Y-Complex development, a large mixed-use retail and commercial development under construction on land owned by the junta Quartermaster General. The contract stipulates the transfer of anything built on the land back to the QG, even if the project is cancelled, and rents are paid to the Ministry of Defense. One company suspended its involvement, but others—including the publicly-funded Japan Bank for International Cooperation—have not stated length of suspension or conditions for re-engagement.²³¹

On 22 July, Justice for Myanmar (JFM) expressed deep concern that three companies linked to the development were sponsoring the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. JFM called on Tokyo's Olympic Committee to withdraw its partnership with the three companies.²³²

On 19 July, it was reported that Chinese-language websites were continuing to hire hotel managers and other hospitality workers for the Shwe Kokko project (Karen State), despite COVID-19 worsening.²³³

On 21 July, Australia-based Myanmar Metals (MYL) publicized its decision to sell its 51% stake in the Bawdwin silver, lead, and zinc mine in Namtu (Shan State), saying the "political situation in Myanmar" had "undermined the confidence of markets which MYL has identified to access the capital required for development of the project," and that raising the USD 300 million pre-production investment would not be possible. It said Yintai Gold Co. had proposed to acquire its stake for AUD 66.5 million (USD 49 million), and it was working with Yintai to "facilitate their due diligence process."²³⁴

²²⁵ Al Jazeera (5 Jul 2021) British-funded task force to investigate Myanmar military abuses

²²⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (21 Jul 2021) Provision of oxygen concentrators for the treatment of COVID-19 patients in Myanmar

²²⁷ European Commission (26 Jul 2021) COVID-19: The EU mobilises additional financial support to help the population in Myanmar

²²⁸ Al Jazeera (16 Jul 2021) Bangladesh plans to vaccinate Rohingya against COVID: Official

²²⁹ Irrawaddy (1 Jul 2021) US Pretzel Retailer Auntie Anne's to Leave Myanmar

²³⁰ Reuters (15 Jul 2021) Myanmar army rulers' lobbyist in U.S. ceases efforts for lack of pay

²³¹ Justice for Myanmar (15 Jul 2021) Japan: Stop Real Estate Project in Myanmar

²³² Justice for Myanmar (22 Jul 2021) Tokyo Olympics tainted by sponsorship from companies financing the Myanmar military's terror

²³³ Irrawaddy (19 Jul 2021) Chinese Casino City in Myanmar Recruiting Despite COVID-19 Crisis

²³⁴ Myanmar Metals Ltd (21 Jul 2021) JUNE 2021 QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES REPORT

Economy continues to worsen amid coup, fighting, and COVID-19 pandemic

On 2 July, the junta Ministry of Commerce reported that Burma's total external trade value during 1 October 2020–18 June 2021 was 20.4% lower than the same period a year earlier. The decrease was led by a 25% decline in Burma's maritime trade, in which exports slumped 18% (USD 12.8 billion to USD 10.6 billion) and imports 30% (USD 14.36 billion to USD 10.8 billion). The total lost value of external trade compared to the previous year was listed as \$5.69 billion USD.²³⁵

On 8 July, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said it expected millions in Burma to go hungry over the next six months, as a result of political and financial instability, continued job losses, food price increases, and currency depreciation; and because June is the start of the “lean” season.²³⁶

On 19 July, the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated that Burma's economy had lost 1.6 million jobs since 1 Feb—a 6% contraction from Q4 2020 to Q2 2021; that in the first half of 2021, the economy lost 14% of total working hours; and that women were disproportionately affected.²³⁷

On 26 July, the World Bank forecasted that Burma's economy would contract by 18% in 2021, and said people's lives and livelihoods in Burma could continue to be threatened “well into 2022.” The Bank also noted serious risk of inflation over the second half of 2021—possibly hitting double digits—judging by the Central Bank of Myanmar's accelerated printing of banknotes, fuel costs up 50% since Jan, and the kyat's 23% depreciation against the dollar.²³⁸

On 27 July, South Korea's trade ministry said it had launched talks with ASEAN to update their free trade agreement (FTA) and further lower trade barriers.²³⁹

Pandemic-driven border closures drove down trade and drove up local prices. On 13 July, the junta Ministry of Commerce reported that border trade between China and Burma for 1 October 2020–2 July 2021 had dropped 17% to USD 3.85 billion, compared to USD 4.63 billion a year earlier.²⁴⁰

On 1 July, the chairperson of Muse Rice Wholesale Center said that border trade between Muse (Shan State) and Ruili (China) had halved compared to the previous year. The border gate at Man Wein—normally Burma's busiest and most lucrative crossing—closed after COVID-19 cases were detected nearby.²⁴¹ On 8 July, China closed the Muse-Wanding-Qing Xian Jiao and Wanding-Pansaithe crossings in Shan State, the last two of its 10 border posts with Burma, due to COVID-19. The Muse trade zone accounts for around 70% of Myanmar's total trade revenue.²⁴²

On 4 July, junta authorities Rakhine State proposed the closure of border trade centers to curb the spread of COVID-19.²⁴³ On 11 July, it was reported that these authorities had ordered the closure of border trade camps from 15–31 July to curb the spread of COVID-19.²⁴⁴ The next day, it was reported that commodity prices in Rakhine State had risen 30–70% since the start of the third wave of COVID-19.²⁴⁵

On 15 July, junta media sources reported a dramatic increase in the prices of poultry meat and eggs (+69%).²⁴⁶ On 19 July, it was reported that demand had risen sharply, driven by online rumors alleging that eggs could help prevent COVID-19. The sector was already experiencing difficulties in 2020 due to the disruptions in the flow of goods caused by the pandemic, with an estimated 10% of egg farms closed and 42% of chicken and egg farm workers out of work as of June 2020. Since 1 Feb, operating costs have further increased due to political turmoil, cash flow shortages and rising fuel costs; and depreciation of the kyat led to a substantial increase in the price of imported chicken feed.²⁴⁷

²³⁵ Global New Light of Myanmar (2 Jul 2021) External trade drastically drops by \$5.69 bln as of 18 June; Nikkei Asia (5 Jul 2021) Myanmar coup latest: Telenor 'evaluating' presence in country

²³⁶ UN Food and Agriculture Organization (8 Jul 2021) Myanmar: A race to avoid increasing food insecurity

²³⁷ ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (19 Jul 2021) Employment in Myanmar since the military takeover: A rapid impact assessment

²³⁸ Nikkei Asia (26 Jul 2021) World Bank forecasts 18% annual decline for Myanmar's economy

²³⁹ Korea Herald (27 Jul 2021) S. Korea, ASEAN to upgrade their FTA

²⁴⁰ Global New Light of Myanmar (13 Jul 2021) Sino-Myanmar border trade down by 17% amid COVID surge: MOC reports

²⁴¹ SAC Ministry of Information (1 Jul 2021) Global New Light of Myanmar Vol. VIII, Issue 73

²⁴² Radio Free Asia (8 Jul 2021) China Closes Border With Myanmar Amid COVID-19 Surge

²⁴³ Development Media Group (5 Jul 2021) Arakan State military council plans to temporarily close border trade centres

²⁴⁴ Development Media Group (13 Jul 2021) Amid virus spike, border trade camps expected to close from July 15-31

²⁴⁵ Development Media Group (12 Jul 2021) Pandemic's third wave blamed as commodity prices in Arakan rise sharply

²⁴⁶ Global New Light of Myanmar (15 Jul 2021) Egg, poultry prices surge on rising demand in COVID-19 crisis

²⁴⁷ Vice (19 Jul 2021) Egg Crisis Adds to Coronavirus Misery in Myanmar

Electricity sector collapses as junta takes over

It was reported in July that junta mismanagement, CDM, and a boycott campaign caused junta's Ministry of Electricity and Energy revenues to drop by 90%. As a result, it struggled to operate infrastructure, and pay private producers. Losses could reach MMK 2-2.5 trillion in 2021—about 10% of fiscal revenue.²⁴⁸

On 9 July, the Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation announced that the supply of electricity would be affected if the boycott continues.²⁴⁹ Local sources reported that the junta was cutting off power to the households that refused to pay.²⁵⁰ People across the country have reportedly experienced frequent blackouts since late June, some for up to 16 hours in Yangon areas where people refused to pay.²⁵¹

In response, anti-coup groups have targeted Electricity Power Corporation (EPC) facilities and personnel. Over 2–16 July, at least 20 bomb attacks targeted EPC facilities, injuring at least 14 civilians and staff members. On 9 July, an unknown group abducted two Shan State EPC staff for two days. On July 11, unknown attackers shot two Mandalay Region EPC workers, killing one.²⁵²

On 25 July, Nikkei Asia reported that the crisis threatened the already degraded public health system, with public hospitals forced to use expensive generators during power outages.²⁵³ Electricity supply is set to decline further, as major foreign investors like Électricité de France and Woodside suspended their activities in the country, and the World Bank also cut funding for electrification projects.²⁵⁴

Junta steps up illicit economic activities and tools of repression

On 2 July, it was reported that illegal logging operations—apparently involving the junta and members of pro-junta Pyu Saw Htee groups—had increased in Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park (Sagaing).²⁵⁵

On 8 July, Myanmar Now reported on a 30 June secret meeting between the junta's Myanmar Gems Enterprise (MGE) and around 20 gem industry leaders, to discuss attracting new foreign investment. Sources in the gems industry said that some exporters were planning to falsify documents and certificates of origin and sell stones in Thailand, as MGE falls under UK and US sanctions.²⁵⁶

Weapons purchases and cozying up to repressive regimes

On 6 July, it was reported that a 20-member Russian delegation made a secret trip to Burma on 13-19 Jun, led by the Russian Navy Commander-in-Chief and including at least one representative of Russian state-owned arms exporter Rosoboronexport. Rosoboronexport has a branch office in Burma, and deals in “the entire range of military and double-purpose products, technologies and services.”²⁵⁷

On 7 July, it was reported that on 10 Feb, an IL-62 cargo plane belonging to Belarusian cargo carrier Rada Airlines was spotted at Yangon Airport, and assumed to be carrying weapons to Burma.²⁵⁸

12 July, junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun said an agreement had been reached to manufacture Russian-made COVID-19 vaccines in Burma, with the aim of producing five million doses a year.²⁵⁹

On 13 July, it was reported that Russia had increased its role as a partner with Burma since 1 Feb. Min Aung Hlaing said in July that 2 million doses of the Sputnik coronavirus vaccine would arrive that month. In March, Russia's Deputy Defense Minister visited Burma; in May, Burma Air Force general

²⁴⁸ Irrawaddy (15 Jul 2021) Myanmar's Electricity Sector Crippled Since Military Coup; Nikkei Asia (25 Jul 2021) Myanmar's lights go out as bill boycott fuels cash crunch; Irrawaddy (15 Jul 2021) Myanmar's Electricity Sector Crippled Since Military Coup

²⁴⁹ Mizzima News (10 Jul 2021) Myanmar electricity grid losing spark as people power bites

²⁵⁰ Myanmar Now (9 Jul 2021) Three Yangon electricity offices bombed in one morning

²⁵¹ Irrawaddy (15 Jul 2021) Myanmar's Electricity Sector Crippled Since Military Coup

²⁵² Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) (updated 23 July 2021) Data Export Tool, available at <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>; Myanmar Now (12 Jul 2021) One electricity officer shot dead and another injured in Mandalay attack

²⁵³ Nikkei Asia (25 Jul 2021) Myanmar's lights go out as bill boycott fuels cash crunch

²⁵⁴ Irrawaddy (15 Jul 2021) Myanmar's Electricity Sector Crippled Since Military Coup

²⁵⁵ Myanmar Now (2 Jul 2021) Four alleged informants killed in Yinmabin, Sagaing Region

²⁵⁶ Myanmar Now (8 Jul 2021) Gem industry leaders attend meeting with junta officials

²⁵⁷ Myanmar Now (6 Jul 2021) Russian delegation made secret visit to Myanmar ahead of Min Aung Hlaing's Moscow trip

²⁵⁸ Irrawaddy (7 Jul 2021) UN Vote Puts Spotlight on Myanmar-Belarus Connection

²⁵⁹ Eleven Media Group (12 Jul 2021) Myanmar claims fraud in nearly one-third of 2020 election votes

Maung Maung Kyaw attended a helicopter expo in Moscow, where his delegation discussed “20 megaprojects including procurement of arms and military hardware”;²⁶⁰ in mid-June, Russia’s ambassador to Burma and Burma’s Minister of Industry agreed to resume development of a long-dormant 200,000-ton iron-smelting mine and plant in Shan state, funded by Russia.²⁶¹

On 21 July, at the MAKS Airshow, Rosoboronexport head Aleksandr Mikheev described Burma as one of the company’s main export clients in the Asia Pacific region, and said Moscow was “cooperating closely” with the junta to supply it with military equipment, including aircrafts.²⁶² On 22 July, Mikheev said the company signed 13 contracts worth approximately EUR 1 billion during the airshow, including for supply of fighter jets, helicopters, surface-to-air missile launchers, and radar equipment. Mikheev said buyers were from the Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Africa and CIS states.²⁶³

On 26 July, Asia News reported that Russia had delivered “a consignment” of Su-30SME fighter jets to Burma “in recent days,” though it did not specify the number jets transferred to the regime.²⁶⁴

Telenor’s departure: putting millions at risk

On 5 July, Reuters reported on a mid-June confidential order from the junta, to prevent telecommunications firms’ executives from leaving the country. The order came amid intensified pressure on mobile service providers to install, by 5 July, intercept technology that would allow the junta to spy on the population.²⁶⁵ On 2 July, Norway’s Telenor, the second-largest mobile provider in Burma, announced that it was reevaluating its presence in Burma.²⁶⁶

On 8 July, Telenor announced that it had sold 100% of its Burma business to the Lebanon-based “M1 Group” for USD 105 million.²⁶⁷ M1 Group has been on Burma Campaign UK’s “Dirty List” of companies in business with the military since August 2019, due to its status as a major shareholder in the mobile phone tower company “Irrawaddy Green Towers,” which supplies MyTel.²⁶⁸

On 9 July, JFM reported that M1 Group’s owners had a long history of corruption and experience operating mobile networks under dictatorships that commit grave and systemic human rights violations. It said Telenor’s sale was a deplorable failure of the company’s human rights responsibilities.²⁶⁹ On 12 July, 464 Burma civil society organizations addressed an open letter to the Telenor Group CEO and the King and Prime Minister of Norway, urging cancellation of the sale.²⁷⁰

On 26 July, it was reported that Telenor will transfer the call data records of its 18 million Burma subscribers to the M1 group as part of the sale. Such a transfer could breach the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which also applies to Norway. Privacy International noted that it will make users particularly vulnerable, as ID cards and addresses are required to obtain a SIM card.²⁷¹

On 27 July, the Netherlands-based Center for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO), on behalf of 474 Burma organizations, filed a complaint under the framework of the OECD guidelines against Telenor ASA with the Norwegian OECD National Contact Point. The complaint alleged that Telenor’s sale breached the OECD guidelines insofar as: (1) Telenor failed to conduct appropriate risk-based due diligence, and failed to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts potentially arising from the sale; (2) Telenor failed to meaningfully engage with relevant stakeholders in relation to the sale; and (3) Telenor has not been transparent regarding its decision to disengage from its Burma operations.²⁷² The complaint illustrates the importance that companies operating in Burma must place on proper due diligence.

²⁶⁰ Nikkei Asia (13 Jul 2021) Guns and jabs: Russia courts ASEAN caught between US and China

²⁶¹ Wall Street Journal (16 Jul 2021) Russia Emerges as Key Backer of Myanmar’s Military Post-Coup

²⁶² Reuters (21 Jul 2021) Russia working closely with post-coup Myanmar on military supplies - exporter

²⁶³ Interfax (22 Jul 2021) Rosoboronexport signs 13 export contracts worth over 1 bln euros at MAKS 2021 - General Director Mikheyev

²⁶⁴ Asia News (26 Jul 2021) Moscow sells warplanes to Burmese generals

²⁶⁵ Reuters (5 Jul) Exclusive: After pressuring telecom firms, Myanmar’s junta bans executives from leaving

²⁶⁶ Myanmar Now (2 Jul) Observers fear major blow to online privacy as Telenor considers pulling out of Myanmar

²⁶⁷ Telenor Group (8 Jul 2021) Telenor Group sells Telenor Myanmar to M1 Group

²⁶⁸ BCUK (20 Aug 2019) The Dirty List - M1 Group

²⁶⁹ Justice for Myanmar (9 Jul 2021) Telenor Myanmar’s buyers have financed atrocities and cosied up to dictators

²⁷⁰ Myanmar Now (19 Jul 2021) Telenor’s irresponsible Myanmar sale puts us all at risk

²⁷¹ Myanmar Now (26 Jul 2021) Telenor will transfer call data records for 18m subscribers to junta-linked company

²⁷² OECD Watch Complaints Database (27 Jul 2021) SOMO representing 474 Myanmar CSOs vs. Telenor ASA