

## BURMA COUP WATCH FOR MONTH OF DECEMBER 2021: Junta capitalizes on poor international resolve to step up savagery

- Burma's illegitimate military regime kept trying to grind down a nation that overwhelmingly rejects it. During 1 Feb–10 Dec 2021, there were at least 7,053 attacks on civilians or armed clashes that failed to protect them, a 664% increase from the same period in 2020. As of December, junta forces had killed at least 94 women and 100 children. They also perpetrated systematic sexual and physical violence against women in detention.
- As of 31 Dec, the junta had killed at least 1,384 people and arrested at least 11,289 politicians, activists, journalists, and others. It continued to target relatives of people evading arrest.
- During December, junta forces escalated savage attacks on civilians—they murderously ramméd vehicles into peaceful protesters, and burned civilians alive on multiple occasions.
- The junta continued to shell, conduct air strikes, and raid and torch villages across the country, displacing tens of thousands of civilians. Increased attacks caused 5,000 Karen villagers to flee into Thailand, and pushed Thai villagers on the border to relocate for safety.
- Junta courts handed down first sentences to State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, and charged or sentenced over 30 other politicians. As of 1 Dec, 432 NLD members remained in detention. Junta military tribunals have sentenced at least 92 people to death.
- The junta kept targeting perceived opponents, including CDM members, students, artists, and NUG supporters. Regime forces stepped up their attacks on the press, killing a journalist in custody for the first time since the coup began.
- Junta forces continued to suffer heavy losses, with defections and deaths subtracting hundreds of soldiers per week. The junta tried to shore up its reserves by mandating military training for wives and children of service members, and recalling veterans.
- Gemstone trade continued to provide a lifeline to the regime, helping it secure foreign currency. France and the US delayed sanctions on oil and gas under pressure from Chevron and Total.
- UNDP warned that 46.3% of the population will be living in poverty in 2022. It is estimated that 14.4 million people—including 5 million children—will need humanitarian assistance in 2022. This is a dramatic increase of 1340% over pre-coup estimates of 1 million in 2021.

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## **Junta wraps up 2021 with massive crackdown on political rivals**

### **First sentences against Aung San Suu Kyi, Win Myint**

On 6 Dec, a junta court sentenced State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint to four years in prison for incitement and breaking COVID-19 rules, and ousted Naypyidaw Mayor Myo Aung to two years for incitement.<sup>1</sup> Later in the day, Min Aung Hlaing granted a “partial pardon,” allowing Suu Kyi and Win Myint to serve a reduced two-year sentence under house arrest.<sup>2</sup> On 7 Dec, the junta’s Information Minister said that the sentencing showed no one was above the law, and the commutation was on “grounds of humanity.”<sup>3</sup>

On 14 Dec, it was reported that junta prison authorities continued to bar ousted Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung from travelling to Naypyidaw to testify on behalf of Suu Kyi, who still faced numerous charges.<sup>4</sup> On 17 Dec, Suu Kyi and Myo Aung appeared in court in prison uniforms.<sup>5</sup>

On 20 Dec, a junta judge postponed its verdict, in Suu Kyi’s trial for illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies, until 27 Dec. He provided no explanation for the decision, but members of the raiding party reportedly admitted during cross-examination that they had not had a search warrant.<sup>6</sup> On 27 Dec, the verdict was again postponed until 10 Jan.<sup>7</sup> On 30 Dec, the regime sentenced Cherry Htet, Suu Kyi’s former bodyguard, to three years in prison for allegedly breaching police rules on her social media.<sup>8</sup>

### **Senior National League for Democracy (NLD) officials targeted in judicial blitz**

On 1 Dec, the junta filed corruption charges against five former Rakhine State ministers, including ousted Chief Minister Nyi Pu;<sup>9</sup> and against former Deputy Minister for Construction Kyaw Lin, former Bago Region minister Than Win, and directors-general Ye Min Zaw, Aung Myint Oo, and Nay Aung Ye Myint.<sup>10</sup> The regime also brought corruption charges against former national immunization director Dr. Htar Htar Lin and director-general of public health Dr. Soe Oo, alleging that they defied ministerial orders by returning international grants worth MMK 168 million to UNICEF on 10 Feb.<sup>11</sup> On 21 Dec, it was reported that the junta had charged ousted Magway Region Chief Minister Aung Moe Nyo with undue influence under Penal Code section 171f.<sup>12</sup> On 22 Dec, the regime charged Nyi Pu and former Rakhine State Municipal Affairs Minister Min Aung with violating the 2008 Constitution.<sup>13</sup>

On 8 Dec, junta courts sentenced ousted Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung to four years in prison for incitement and breaching COVID-19 regulations; ousted Mandalay Mayor Ye Lwin to two years for incitement; and local NLD Central Executive Committee Secretary Tin Ko Ko and former regional ministers Zarni Aung (Energy) and Soe Thein (Agriculture) to two years for breaching COVID-19 regulations.<sup>14</sup> On 9 Dec, Kachin State Natural Resources Minister Dar Shi La Sai was sentenced to two years under Penal Code section 505b.<sup>15</sup>

On 21 Dec, the regime sentenced regional Mandalay Region NLD MP Lwin Maung Maung to three years in prison for allegedly violating Article 17(1) of the Unlawful Associations Act. He was initially sentenced to three years for incitement in May, and released in October only to be rearrested at the prison gates.<sup>16</sup> On 22 Dec, the junta sentenced former NLD lower house deputy speaker Tun Tun Hein

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<sup>1</sup> Myanmar Now (6 Dec 2021) Junta sentences Suu Kyi, Win Myint to four years in prison each

<sup>2</sup> Irrawaddy (7 Dec 2021) Ousted Suu Kyi, President to Serve Sentences Under House Arrest: Myanmar Junta

<sup>3</sup> Eleven Media Group (EMG) (7 Dec 2021) No one above the law, Myanmar ruling military minister says of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi verdict

<sup>4</sup> Myanmar Now (14 Dec 2021) Zaw Myint Maung denied permission to testify in person at Suu Kyi’s second Covid-19 trial

<sup>5</sup> EMG (18 Dec 2021) Ex. Yangon Chief Minister and ex. transport minister appeared at court as plaintiff-witnesses against the State Counselor

<sup>6</sup> Bangkok Post (20 Dec 2021) Myanmar junta court postpones Suu Kyi verdict

<sup>7</sup> Reuters (27 Dec 2021) Myanmar court defers verdicts in Suu Kyi trial to Jan. 10 - source

<sup>8</sup> Irrawaddy (3 Jan 2022) Suu Kyi’s Female Bodyguard Sentenced to Jail by Myanmar Junta

<sup>9</sup> Development Media Group (DMG) (1 Dec 2021) Five former Arakan State ministers charged under Anti-Corruption Law

<sup>10</sup> DMG (3 Dec 2021) Graft cases opened against ex-deputy minister, directors-general and former Bago Region minister

<sup>11</sup> Irrawaddy (1 Dec 2021) Myanmar Junta Charges Two Leading Medics With Corruption

<sup>12</sup> Myanmar Now (21 Dec 2021) Chief minister of Magway Region hit with another charge for ‘undue influence’ at election

<sup>13</sup> Myanmar Now (27 Dec 2021) Another charge added to junta’s case against Rakhine State chief minister

<sup>14</sup> Myanmar Now (8 Dec 2021) Ousted Mandalay chief minister Dr Zaw Myint Maung handed 4-year prison sentence

<sup>15</sup> EMG (1 Jan 2022) Kachin special court sentences ex NLD chair and two other regional ministers

<sup>16</sup> Myanmar Now (23 Dec 2021) Meiktila MP sentenced to three-year prison term despite promise of release

to four years in prison with labour for sedition;<sup>17</sup> and ousted Karen State Chief Minister Nan Khin Htwe Myint to three years in prison for violating the 2008 Constitution, increasing her sentence to 80 years.<sup>18</sup>

On 30 Dec, junta courts sentenced Magway Region officials for corruption, including Chief Minister Aung Moe Nyo (18 years), former regional Parliament Speaker U Tar (six years), and at least two other Magway cabinet members (nine and 12 years); NLD Central Committee members Dr. Myo Nyunt, Han Tha Myint, and Thein Oo to two years for incitement; and Mandalay's regional Parliament speaker Aung Kyaw Oo to five years for incitement and violating COVID-19 restrictions.<sup>19</sup>

Also on 30 Dec, a junta-controlled court sentenced former Kachin State NLD Chairman Mya Thein and former Kachin State Minister of Social Affairs Nay Win to one and three years in prison for violating the Natural Disaster Management Law, respectively. Former Kachin State Immigration and Human Resources Minister Zaw Win and ex-MP Tint Soe were handed down two-year sentences.<sup>20</sup>

### **NLD members, opposition activists still under fire**

On 2 Dec, the junta accused NLD lawmaker Kyaw Soe Lin of arranging military training for People's Defense Force (PDF) members and facilitating transportation of weapons for attacks in Mandalay, a claim he denied. He was joined by a senior journalist in saying the claim was meant to paint the NLD as dangerous.<sup>21</sup> On 3 Dec, it was reported that the junta had revoked passports of nearly 70 opponents, including National Unity Government (NUG) ministers and high-profile activists, apparently to stop them from traveling to campaign against the coup.<sup>22</sup> On 22 Dec, the junta-controlled Myanmar Press Council asked local media outlets to stop using the titles and positions of ousted NLD government members, and said it would not help journalists who faced legal consequences for doing so.<sup>23</sup>

As of 1 Dec, the junta had reportedly arrested 573 NLD members, of whom 432 remained in detention.<sup>24</sup> Twelve had died in custody, including seven tortured to death during interrogation.<sup>25</sup> On 8 Dec, a Pyu Saw Htee member shot dead Khin Nay Myo, the vice chair of a local NLD ward office in Yangon.<sup>26</sup> On 13 Dec, junta forces arrested an NLD member and his wife, who they accused of funding the PDF in Mandalay. Two days later, the police notified their family that both had been cremated.<sup>27</sup> On 17 Dec, in Taunggyi (Shan State), regime soldiers arrested Dr Daw Than Ngwe, a regional NLD MP-elect they accused of supporting the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM).<sup>28</sup>

Junta forces also sealed off houses belonging to Mandalay regional MP Thida Nyein (2 Dec),<sup>29</sup> MP Nay Zin Latt (4 Dec),<sup>30</sup> NLD MP-elect Win Naing (14 Dec),<sup>31</sup> NUG Minister Thein Oo (15 Dec),<sup>32</sup> NUG Minister Dr. Hkalein Tu Hkawng (16 Dec),<sup>33</sup> former NLD lawmakers Zaw Zaw Htoo and Dr Khin Saung (22 Dec),<sup>34</sup> and NLD MP and Central Committee member Salai Myo Hteik (26 Dec).<sup>35</sup> On 28 Dec, junta forces seized ten houses of NLD supporters in Natogyi Township (Mandalay Region).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Irrawaddy (22 Dec 2021) Myanmar Junta Jails Ousted NLD Deputy Parliament Speaker

<sup>18</sup> Irrawaddy (23 Dec 2021) New Conviction Pushes Sentence to 80 Years for Jailed Chief Minister of Myanmar's Karen State

<sup>19</sup> Myanmar Now (31 Dec 2021) NLD leaders, student activists receive prison sentences in year-end blitz; Radio Free Asia (30 Dec 21) Dozens of politicians, activists sentenced in secret Myanmar military tribunals

<sup>20</sup> EMG (1 Jan 2022) Kachin special court sentences ex NLD chair and two other regional ministers

<sup>21</sup> Irrawaddy (3 Dec 2021) Ousted Lawmaker Accuses Myanmar Junta of Defaming the NLD

<sup>22</sup> ABC (3 Dec 2021) Myanmar junta cancels passports of high-profile opponents and shadow government figures, documents show

<sup>23</sup> Irrawaddy (25 Dec 2021) Junta Watch: Myanmar Coup Leader Seeks Divine Assistance; Picking a Fight With the UN and More

<sup>24</sup> Irrawaddy (22 Dec 2021) Myanmar Junta Jails Ousted NLD Deputy Parliament Speaker

<sup>25</sup> Irrawaddy (1 Dec 2021) Myanmar's Ousted NLD Says Over 570 Members Arrested by Junta So Far

<sup>26</sup> Myanmar Now (8 Dec 2021) Local NLD official shot dead in the street in Yangon; Mizzima (8 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 8 December 2021

<sup>27</sup> Myanmar Now (23 Dec 2021) Mandalay NLD member and wife killed in junta interrogation center

<sup>28</sup> Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), via Twitter (20 Dec 2021) [https://twitter.com/DVB\\_English/status/1472821746843619329](https://twitter.com/DVB_English/status/1472821746843619329)

<sup>29</sup> Mizzima (6 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 6th December 2021

<sup>30</sup> Mizzima (6 Dec 2021) Member of parliament's house sealed off

<sup>31</sup> Mizzima (15 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 15th December 2021

<sup>32</sup> Myanmar Now (17 Dec 2021) Junta seals off Mandalay home of NUG justice minister

<sup>33</sup> DVB, via Twitter (17 Dec 2021) [https://twitter.com/DVB\\_English/status/1471703225615073287](https://twitter.com/DVB_English/status/1471703225615073287)

<sup>34</sup> EMG (25 Dec 2021) Homes of two former parliamentarians from NLD sealed in Mon State

<sup>35</sup> Khonumthung Media Group (29 Dec 2021) Regime Seizes NLD MP's House In Paletwa

<sup>36</sup> Mizzima (29 Dec 2021) Ten NLD supporters' houses sealed off, one set on fire, in Mandalay's Natogyi Township

## Junta plans for “general election” move forward

On 3 Dec, it was reported that the junta-controlled Union Election Commission (UEC) had instructed its sub-commissioners to file lawsuits against the chairpersons and members of the township-level election sub-commissions that oversaw the 2020 general election.<sup>37</sup>

On 23 Dec, junta leader Min Aung Hlaing confirmed that the junta planned to hold a general election in August 2023 “depending on state stability and peace.” He said that the junta had tried to talk to political parties several times, but that some had not come to meetings with military-appointed officials. He warned that the junta would take action against parties not acting in accordance with the laws.<sup>38</sup>

On 24 Dec, the UEC held a three-day meeting on electoral reform with 115 representatives from 62 minor or military-aligned political parties. Participants reportedly expressed support for a switch to proportional representation and discussed what its modalities should be. UEC Chairman Thein Soe pledged to amend the necessary laws in accordance with the feedback from the meeting.<sup>39</sup>

## Civil disobedience, crackdowns (more details at protests, CDM, and crackdowns [tracker](#))

As of 31 Dec, the junta had killed at least 1,384 civilians and arrested at least 11,289 politicians, activists, journalists, and others.<sup>40</sup> On 8 Dec, Civicus’ People Power Under Attack 2021 report classified Burma as a country of concern and rated it as “repressed.” It noted the rapid decline in freedoms since 1 Feb, citing detention and criminalization of hundreds of activists; excessive force against protestors; persecution of journalists; and torture, ill-treatment, and sexual violence against women in detention.<sup>41</sup>

**The junta continued to undermine the rule of law and to use civil and military courts to crack down on dissent.** On 19 Dec, in Chanmyathazi Township (Mandalay Region), junta forces arrested—and took to an undisclosed location—four lawyers who had been providing legal assistance to defendants in politically motivated cases initiated by the regime.<sup>42</sup> On 20 Dec, junta courts gave prison sentences to at least 62 junta opponents, including politicians, activists, artists and other public figures.<sup>43</sup>

On 20 Dec, it was reported that the junta had **sentenced 92 people to death** in the six Yangon townships under martial law, including seven in December. Persons tried by junta tribunals were not granted legal representation and almost always received life or death sentences. A veteran lawyer said that junta forces routinely tortured detainees to force confessions.<sup>44</sup>

**The junta further restricted access to information and the internet.** On 8 Dec, telecom companies almost doubled the price of their data packages to comply with a directive from the junta Ministry of Transport and Communications.<sup>45</sup> On 12 Dec, it was reported that the move was aimed at preventing the population from using the internet to access news and donate money to PDFs.<sup>46</sup>

On 16 Dec, Pen America reported that while Burma’s **artistic community remained determined** to use their voices and creative work to challenge the regime, censorship and physical/economic insecurity had significantly harmed their mental health, leading to anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress. It noted that 59 artists had suffered serious human rights violations by the junta, which had killed five poets, detained 45 creative artists, and sentenced four to prison on baseless charges.<sup>47</sup>

On 10 Dec, rockers Lynn Lynn and R Zar Ni, both in hiding, released [This Must be the Last](#), the latest of over a dozen anti-junta songs. They said that all profits will support the anti-coup movement.<sup>48</sup> The same day, the junta charged Rakhine State-based writer Min Di Par under Section 50(j) of the Counter-

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<sup>37</sup> Irrawaddy (3 Dec 2021) Myanmar Regime to Charge 2020 Election Local Officials

<sup>38</sup> EMG (24 Dec 2021) Myanmar plans to hold fresh election in August 2023, says ruling military chief

<sup>39</sup> Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM) (25 Dec 2021) UEC discusses electoral reform with political parties; GNLM (27 Dec 2021) UEC continues third-day meeting of electoral reforms with political parties

<sup>40</sup> Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (31 Dec 2021) Daily Briefing in Relation to the Military Coup

<sup>41</sup> Civicus (8 Dec 2021) Monitor 2021, Asia & Pacific - Rating Overview

<sup>42</sup> Myanmar Now (24 Dec 2021) Four Mandalay lawyers detained for days in undisclosed location

<sup>43</sup> Myanmar Now (31 Dec 2021) NLD leaders, student activists receive prison sentences in year-end blitz; Radio Free Asia (30 Dec 21) Dozens of politicians, activists sentenced in secret Myanmar military tribunals

<sup>44</sup> Radio Free Asia (20 Dec 2021) More than 90 sentenced to death by military courts in Myanmar

<sup>45</sup> EMG (9 Dec 2021) Myanmar doubles mobile data prices as of Dec 8

<sup>46</sup> Mizzima (12 Dec 2021) Junta chips away at freedom of expression and communication for Myanmar citizens

<sup>47</sup> Pen America (16 Dec 2021) Stolen Freedoms

<sup>48</sup> Irrawaddy (10 Dec 2021) “This Must be the Last”: New Anti-Regime Song From Myanmar’s Revolutionary Rockers

Terrorism Law.<sup>49</sup> On 27 Dec, it sentenced actor Paing Takhon and female philanthropist and writer Than Myint Aung to three years in prison with hard labor for incitement,<sup>50</sup> as it did on 30 Dec to high-profile actor couple Pyay Ti Oo and Eaindra Kyaw Zin, actor-director Lu Min, and actor Ye Dike.<sup>51</sup>

### **Targeting peaceful dissent**

On 5 Dec, junta soldiers in a truck rammed into and opened fire on anti-junta demonstrators in Kyimyindaing Township (Yangon Region), killing at least five. Soldiers reportedly beat the protesters who had fallen to the ground, and aimed their rifles at residents watching from their apartments. They only allowed an ambulance into the area after they had washed the blood off the street.<sup>52</sup> On 6 Dec, the regime said that 11 people were arrested and three others injured, but made no mention of the deaths.<sup>53</sup> The incident led to increased night-time protests in Yangon. On 6 Dec, junta troops arrested a man and his 6-year-old son and 10-year-old daughter for banging pots at their home in Thaketa Township.<sup>54</sup>

On 10 Dec, people nationwide closed their businesses and stayed home 10am–4pm in a silent strike against the regime under the motto “Our city, our rule” to mark Human Rights Day. After 4 pm, videos of residents celebrating the success of the strike circulated on Facebook. Junta media claimed that people had stayed home due to fear of PDFs, and tried to cover up the strike by presenting images of busy markets and streets.<sup>55</sup> In Thaketa (Yangon Region), junta authorities reportedly threatened shop owners, with fines and prison time, to keep their businesses open.<sup>56</sup> In Ayeyarwady Region, the Pathein Myoma Market Development Committee threatened to close any shop with connection to the strike.<sup>57</sup>

On 14 Dec, it was reported that 89 inmates in Insein Prison (Yangon Region) were severely beaten and put in solitary confinement for singing anti-dictatorship songs and refusing to leave their cells in solidarity with the silent strike. At least two were abused to the point of losing consciousness, and one suffered hearing loss.<sup>58</sup> The victims were denied medical treatment, and prison authorities tried to conceal their wounds by making them wear PPE suits during their court appearances. It was also reported that prison authorities had begun indiscriminately beating political prisoners in December.<sup>59</sup>

**The junta continued to torture and kill detainees.** On 1 Dec, junta forces arrested a Mandalay tea shop owner on suspicion of financially supporting the PDF and killed him in custody later that day. Junta police claimed that he died when he tripped and fell during an escape attempt.<sup>60</sup> On 13 Dec, in Madaya Township (Mandalay Region), junta forces arrested the leader of a charity providing free funeral services, and delivered his dead, bruise-covered body to his family the next day.<sup>61</sup> On 14 Dec, an NLD member and his wife died during a junta interrogation in Pyigyitagon Township (Mandalay Region), leaving behind a 10-year-old child.<sup>62</sup> On 21 Dec, a striking school teacher died during junta interrogation just hours after being detained in Lewe Township (Naypyitaw Union Territory).<sup>63</sup> On 25 Dec, in Myingyan Township (Mandalay Region), four alleged Pyu Saw Htee members abducted a local man, and told his family the next day to collect his dead, bruise-covered body.<sup>64</sup>

**The junta continued to target CDM members.** On 1 Dec, regime forces arrested five striking government staff in Chanmyathazi Township (Mandalay Region), including a female CDM school teacher and former journalist.<sup>65</sup> On 3 Dec, junta troops arrested a CDM teacher in Sabei Nanthar village (Sagaing Region), before killing him and cremating his body on 7 Dec, telling his wife he had “died

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<sup>49</sup> DMG (10 Dec 2021) Author Min Di Par charged under Counter-Terrorism Law

<sup>50</sup> Myanmar Now (29 Dec 2021) Junta hits author and model with three-year prison sentences

<sup>51</sup> Guardian (30 Dec 2021) Burmese court jails celebrities who backed anti-coup protests, EMG (30 Dec 2021) Actors Lu Min and Ye Deight sentenced to three years prison terms

<sup>52</sup> Myanmar Now (5 Dec 2021) Regime troops ram into protesters, killing at least five

<sup>53</sup> Irrawaddy (6 Dec 2021) Female Journalist Seriously Injured After Myanmar Regime Forces Drive Truck into Protest

<sup>54</sup> Mizzima (9 Dec 2021) Father and two children arrested by junta troops

<sup>55</sup> Irrawaddy (18 Dec 2021) Junta Watch: Failed Propaganda, Stolen Words From an Ancient King and More

<sup>56</sup> Myanmar Now (10 Dec 2021) Myanmar defies junta rule with nationwide Silent Strike

<sup>57</sup> Mizzima (10 Dec 2021) Pathein Myoma Market Development Committee threatens shopkeepers

<sup>58</sup> Myanmar Now (14 Dec 2021) Dozens of Insein Prison inmates beaten, put in solitary confinement after protest, lawyers say

<sup>59</sup> Myanmar Now (22 Dec 2021) Victims of physical abuse inside Insein Prison denied medical treatment

<sup>60</sup> Myanmar Now (3 Dec 2021) Two Mandalay Region men killed in junta custody in separate incidents

<sup>61</sup> Myanmar Now (15 Dec 2021) Charity worker detained and killed by soldiers in Mandalay Region ‘was not involved in politics’

<sup>62</sup> Irrawaddy (22 Dec 2021) Five Civilians Tortured to Death by Myanmar Regime

<sup>63</sup> Irrawaddy (22 Dec 2021) Five Civilians Tortured to Death by Myanmar Regime

<sup>64</sup> Myanmar Now (28 Dec 2021) Myingyan man dies less than a day after being seized by alleged Pyu Saw Htee members

<sup>65</sup> Irrawaddy (1 Dec 2021) Five Striking Myanmar Government Staff Seized in Mandalay

due to asphyxia.”<sup>66</sup> On 20 Dec, regime forces arrested a Muslim CDM teacher in Lewe Township (Naypyidaw); the next day, his dead body showed signs of torture.<sup>67</sup>

On 13 Dec, it was reported that the junta had ordered that CDM healthcare workers would be fined MMK 5–10 million for not returning to work; and would be prosecuted if they supported the NUG. CDM nurses reported that the junta’s Myanmar Nursing and Midwifery Council (MNMC) had confiscated their licenses. CDM students from nursing and midwifery schools were reportedly forced to attend classes; and final-year students were reportedly offered degrees to replace striking hospital staff.<sup>68</sup> On 23 Dec, Insecurity Insight, Physicians for Human Rights, and the Johns Hopkins University Center for Public Health and Human Rights reported that the junta had arrested at least 284 healthcare workers and killed 31 as of November.<sup>69</sup> On 28 Dec, it was reported that junta forces had been raiding private hospitals in Yangon and Mandalay in search of CDM nurses, prompting some to go into hiding.<sup>70</sup>

**The junta continued to kill and otherwise target student activists.** On 3 Dec, junta forces and Pyu Saw Htee members arrested an All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) activist in Kanbalu Township (Sagaing Region), before taking MMK 10 million and killing him. The junta said on social media that he had been shot and arrested while attacking a checkpoint, a claim refuted by ABFSU members. His family was denied permission to claim his body.<sup>71</sup> On 26 Dec, in Tamwe Township (Yangon Region), junta forces arrested a 20-year-old Yangon university student; soldiers notified his family members of his death on 27 Dec, but cremated the body before they could see it.<sup>72</sup>

On 10 Dec, junta forces arrested a female student from Dawei Technological University (Tanintharyi Region) at her home. They have reportedly arrested 15 students from the school, and charged five under Penal Code Section 505(a).<sup>73</sup> On 19 Dec, regime troops arrested two student activists on their way to a protest in Thingangyun Township (Yangon Region).<sup>74</sup> On 22 Dec, a junta court sentenced a 22-year-old member of the Yangon University Students Union—in custody since 3 Mar—to three years in prison with hard labor for incitement.<sup>75</sup> On 29 Dec, ABFSU activist Wai Yan Phyo Moe was sentenced to two years in prison for allegedly violating the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law. On 30 Dec, former ABFSU member Aye Aung was sentenced to three years for his role in anti-coup protests, while fellow former ABFSU executive Min Thway Thit was given a one-year sentence for driving an unregistered vehicle without a license.<sup>76</sup>

**The junta continued to target journalists;** as of 31 Dec, it had arrested 114 journalists and media staff, 43 of whom remained detained.<sup>77</sup> On 9 Dec, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said that Burma, which jailed no journalists in 2020, was now second only to China in the jailing of journalists.<sup>78</sup>

On 5 Dec, Hmu Yandanar Khet Moh Moh Tun, a female video journalist with the Myanmar Pressphoto Agency, sustained serious head injuries during the crackdown on anti-junta demonstrators in Kyimyindaing Township, and was later taken for surgery at a military hospital. Ko Kaung Sett Lin, a photojournalist from the same outlet, was also injured in the incident and detained by junta forces.<sup>79</sup> On 7 Dec, CPJ called on the junta to immediately free the pair and stop treating journalists like enemies.<sup>80</sup> On 10 Dec, junta forces arrested freelance photojournalists Soe Naing and Zaw Tun as they covered the silent strike in Yangon. On 14 Dec, they informed Soe Naing’s family of his death, making him the first

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<sup>66</sup> Myanmar Now (10 Dec 2021) Sagaing Region teacher who joined CDM killed at interrogation center

<sup>67</sup> Myanmar Now (24 Dec 2021) Naypyitaw teacher dies in junta custody within one day of arrest

<sup>68</sup> DMG (13 Dec 2021) Regime threatens CDM health workers, demanding they return to work

<sup>69</sup> Physicians for Human Rights (23 Dec 2021) Violence Against or Obstruction of Health Care in Myanmar, February–November 2021

<sup>70</sup> DMG (28 Dec 2021) Regime sets sights on private hospitals in search for CDM health workers

<sup>71</sup> Myanmar Now (6 Dec 2021) Captured ABFSU activist reported dead in Sagaing

<sup>72</sup> Myanmar Now (29 Dec 2021) Yangon University student dies in detention within a day of his arrest

<sup>73</sup> DMG (10 Dec 2021) Another Dawei Technological University student arrested

<sup>74</sup> Myanmar Now (20 Dec 2021) Plainclothes officers nab two activists in Yangon

<sup>75</sup> Myanmar Now (24 Dec 2021) Junta hands Yangon University Student Union leader three-year prison sentence

<sup>76</sup> Myanmar Now (31 Dec 2021) NLD leaders, student activists receive prison sentences in year-end blitz; Radio Free Asia (30 Dec 21) Dozens of politicians, activists sentenced in secret Myanmar military tribunals

<sup>77</sup> Reporting ASEAN (accessed 3 Jan 2022) IN NUMBERS: Arrests of Journalists and Media Staff in Myanmar

<sup>78</sup> Irrawaddy (10 Dec 2021) Myanmar Junta Among the World’s Worst Offenders For Jailing Journalists

<sup>79</sup> Irrawaddy (6 Dec 2021) Female Journalist Seriously Injured After Myanmar Regime Forces Drive Truck into Protest

<sup>80</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists (7 Dec 2021) Two Myanmar journalists injured, arrested while covering anti-military protest

journalist killed in custody since 1 Feb. Reporters Without Borders called on the international community to condemn junta's terrorization of reporters and implement sanctions against the junta.<sup>81</sup>

Also on 10 Dec, a junta court sentenced Kanbawza Tai News' female editor Nann Nann Tai, female reporter Nan Win Yi, and male publisher Ko Tin Aung Kyaw to three years in prison for incitement. Nann Nann Tai's brother was handed down the same sentence. He was reportedly taken hostage after junta forces failed to locate Kanbawza Tai's editor-in-chief.<sup>82</sup> On 11 Dec, junta forces arrested Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) reporter Aung San Lin, beat him, and looked through his phone. DVB guessed that he was detained because of his reporting on Pyu Saw Htee activities, including the torching of three NLD supporters' houses on 10 Dec.<sup>83</sup> On 12 Dec, regime troops arrested a Regional News Agency journalist in a raid on a monastery in Monywa Township (Sagaing Region).<sup>84</sup> On 21 Dec, they arrested journalist Than Lwin Thu in Taunggyi (Shan State).<sup>85</sup>

**The junta continued to target the relatives of people evading arrest.** On 1 Dec, in Maungdaw Township (Rakhine State), junta forces arrested the brother of a motorbike taxi driver who unwittingly transported a police defector after they failed to locate the driver.<sup>86</sup> On 3 Dec, it was reported that junta forces had arrested the mother of Ma The Su Naing, the former chair of the Meiktila University (Mandalay Region) Students' Union.<sup>87</sup> On 19 Dec, in Patheingyi (Ayeyarwady Region), junta forces shot dead a 60-year-old woman, and arrested her son-in-law, while trying to find her son.<sup>88</sup>

**The junta continue to target alleged PDF and NUG supporters.** On 3 Dec, junta forces arrested the head monk of Pope Pa Yone monastery in Myingyan Township (Mandalay Region), reportedly on suspicion of ties to PDF fighters.<sup>89</sup> The same day, regime troops arrested a 21-year-old woman from Kyaukphyu Township (Rakhine State) they accused of financially supporting the PDF. She denied the charges, while her aunt pointed out that she had no money of her own.<sup>90</sup> On 5 Dec, junta forces arrested a doctor at the Ngwe Moe Hospital in Mawlamyine (Mon State) on suspicion that he bought NUG Treasury Bonds.<sup>91</sup> On 17 Dec, he was charged with incitement. His family said there was no evidence that he had bought the bonds.<sup>92</sup> On 14 Dec, in Taungup Township (Rakhine State), junta forces arrested a social worker and charged him under Section 50j of the Counterterrorism Law for allegedly financing the PDF. The father of the victim denied the allegations.<sup>93</sup>

**The junta continued to target Christian leaders.** On 6 Dec, junta forces arrested a Chin pastor travelling from Sidoktaya to Saw Township (Magway Region). His family was notified of his death on 9 Dec, but had been prevented from retrieving his body as of 13 Dec.<sup>94</sup> On 11 Dec, regime troops arrested another Chin pastor at his home in Kanpetlet Township (Chin State); he was reportedly found dead two days later, with bullet wounds to his head and stomach.<sup>95</sup> On 27 Dec, it was reported that junta forces had killed at least five Christian leaders and detained four others, mainly from Chin State.<sup>96</sup>

On 24 Dec, Archbishop of Yangon and Cardinal Charles Maung Bo met with Min Aung Hlaing on Christmas Eve. Independent Catholics for Justice in Myanmar condemned the meeting, saying it ignored the suffering of those oppressed and killed by junta forces, and the forces' church bombings.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Irrawaddy (14 Dec 2021) Photographer Feared Dead After Arrest by Myanmar Troops for Documenting Nationwide Strike; Guardian (14 Dec 2021) Photojournalist in Myanmar dies in military custody a week after arrest; Reporters Without Borders (14 Dec 2021) Reporter dies under interrogation in Myanmar's escalating terror

<sup>82</sup> Irrawaddy (13 Dec 2021) Myanmar Junta Jails Three Ethnic Shan Journalists

<sup>83</sup> Myanmar Now (15 Dec 2021) Military arrests Sagaing-based DVB journalist

<sup>84</sup> Mizzima (14 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 14th December 2021; Reporters Without Borders (14 Dec 2021) Reporter dies under interrogation in Myanmar's escalating terror

<sup>85</sup> Mizzima (23 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 23 December 2021

<sup>86</sup> DMG (4 Dec 2021) Maungdaw Twsp villager arrested after taxi-driving brother transports defecting police officer

<sup>87</sup> Mizzima (3 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 3 December 2021

<sup>88</sup> Mizzima (22 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 22nd December 2021

<sup>89</sup> Mizzima (4 Dec 2021) Myanmar junta forces arrest head monk from Nabu Ai village in Mandalay

<sup>90</sup> Myanmar Now (6 Dec 2021) Kyaukphyu woman arrested on suspicion of funding PDF

<sup>91</sup> Mon News Agency (9 Dec 2021) Mawlamyine doctor arrested for allegedly buying NUG treasury bonds

<sup>92</sup> DMG (18 Dec 2021) Charity doctor arrested in Mon State capital, accused of anti-regime acts

<sup>93</sup> Myanmar Now (16 Dec 2021) Junta arrests Rakhine State social worker over accusations of funding PDF

<sup>94</sup> Myanmar Now (13 Dec 2021) Chin pastor from Magway Region killed during military interrogation

<sup>95</sup> Myanmar Now (15 Dec 2021) Missionary found dead in Kanpetlet two days after arrest

<sup>96</sup> Radio Free Asia (27 Dec 2021) Christian clergymen, places of worship targeted under Myanmar's junta

<sup>97</sup> Mizzima (25 Dec 2021) Catholics upset over Cardinal Bo's meeting with Myanmar junta leader

## **Armed clashes, attacks, and displacement** (more details at conflict & displacement [tracker](#))

During 1 Feb–10 Dec 2021 (the latest date with aggregate data available), there were at least 7,053 armed clashes and attacks on civilians in Burma, a 664% increase from the same period in 2020 (923).<sup>98</sup>

On 10 Dec, 255 Burma-based and allied civil society organizations called on all UN agencies and other international entities to not sign memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the junta.<sup>99</sup>

On 27 Dec, UNHCR reported that 330,600 people had been displaced since 1 Feb and remained so;<sup>100</sup> while this is the best single nationwide estimate available, these numbers are likely to be a gross underestimate, based on more localized reporting, particularly from Karen, Karenni, Chin, Sagaing, and Magway States/Regions. Recent clashes between the Chinland Defense Force and junta forces in Kanpetlet Township (Chin State) displaced 1,600 people, while junta airstrikes in Taze Township (Sagaing Region) displaced over 10,000 people.<sup>101</sup> On 1 Dec, it was reported that there were 30,000 refugees from Chin State in Mizoram (India), and another 40,000 IDPs in Chin State.

On 13 Dec, Human Rights Watch warned that the junta was **blocking humanitarian aid** for people in desperate need, and pressed the international community, UN, and ASEAN to pressure the junta to allow aid delivery or to channel aid through Burma's borders.<sup>102</sup> On 17 Dec, Amnesty International reported—based on field interviews with people affected by the escalating violence, civil society, and humanitarian workers—that the military is unequivocally deploying **systematic efforts to starve people** and prevent them from accessing health care.<sup>103</sup>

### **Atrocity crimes**

On 14 Dec, the Network for Human Rights Documentation Burma (ND-Burma) reported on the junta's grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions in Sagaing Region and Chin and Karenni States, including murder, torture, sexual violence, rape, enforced disappearances, and the destruction of property. ND-Burma documented at least 43 war crimes Sep–Oct in Chin State, and 42 war crimes Aug–Oct in Karenni State and 35 in Sagaing Region.<sup>104</sup>

On 23 Dec, it was reported that militias either for or against the junta had killed over two dozen civilians during 1–17 Dec, the highest number for a single month in 2021. Many were believed to be junta informers, others died during massacres in Sagaing and Mandalay Regions and in Shan State. The tally included eight villagers taken from their homes in Shwebo Township (Sagaing Region) on 9 Dec, who were then handcuffed and hanged outside of their village; locals blamed Pyu Saw Htee members.<sup>105</sup>

In Sagaing and Magway Regions, the junta conducted **indiscriminate air strikes**, killing civilians and displacing thousands more. On 23 Dec, it was reported that these violated Burma's domestic laws, as well international humanitarian law.<sup>106</sup> On 17 Dec, at least 20 people were killed in Hnan Khar village, Gangaw Township (Magway) when the junta used three helicopters to carry out a surprise attack; around 150 junta soldiers and Pyu Saw Htee members then occupied the village.<sup>107</sup>

On 7 Dec, junta forces heavily bombarded several villages in Tabayin Township (Sagaing) with artillery fire and a Russian-made Mi-35 combat helicopter, causing over 2,000 people from 10 villages to flee their homes. Around 30,000 people had already fled the area after a major offensive beginning in November.<sup>108</sup> On 20 Dec, junta forces deployed helicopter gunships against local PDFs in Yay Myat

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<sup>98</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) (updated 12 Dec 2021) Data Export tool, available at <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>. The event sub-types included in this calculation are Abduction/forced disappearance, Air/drone strike, Armed clash, Arrests, Attack, Excessive force against protesters, Grenade, Looting/property destruction, Protest with intervention, Sexual violence, and Shelling/artillery/missile attack.

<sup>99</sup> 255 civil society organizations (10 Dec 2021) UN Agencies Must Comply with their Obligations to Uphold Human Rights and Cease Lending Legitimacy to the Myanmar Military Junta

<sup>100</sup> UNHCR (27 Dec 2021) Myanmar emergency overview map

<sup>101</sup> UNHCR (17 Dec) Myanmar Emergency Update

<sup>102</sup> Human Rights Watch (13 Dec 2021) Myanmar: Junta Blocks Lifesaving Aid

<sup>103</sup> Amnesty International (17 Dec 2021) After coup, Myanmar military puts chokehold on people's basic needs

<sup>104</sup> ND-Burma (14 Dec 2021) Waking to War Crimes

<sup>105</sup> RFA (23 Dec 2021) Killings in Myanmar grow as militias target alleged informers

<sup>106</sup> Irrawaddy (23 Dec 2021) Myanmar Regime Airstrikes Break International Law: NUG

<sup>107</sup> Myanmar Now (19 Dec 2021) At least 20 killed in air raid on Magway village

<sup>108</sup> Myanmar Now (8 Dec 2021) Junta bombards Depayin villages with artillery and airstrikes; Network Media Group (8 Dec 2021) Thousands Displaced From Burma Army Air Strike In Sagaing Region



Village, Ye-U Township, setting houses on fire and forcing around 500 locals to flee.<sup>109</sup> On 27 Dec, it was reported that locals in Yay Myat had found the bodies of seven people killed in the airstrikes, including two women and three men; they said that identification was ongoing as the bodies had been either badly disfigured or burned beyond recognition.<sup>110</sup>

Junta troops upped their brutality in December by **burning people alive**, including in the “Christmas Eve Massacre” in Karenni State (see page 10 below). On 7 Dec, in Salingyi Township (Sagaing Region), junta troops bound 11 civilians and tortured them before burning them alive.<sup>111</sup> The victims included five children aged 14–17.<sup>112</sup> It was later reported that the body of a twelfth victim was found the following day, with a gaping knife wound in her neck, just 50 feet (15 meters) from the site of the others’ bodies.<sup>113</sup> On 12 Dec, in Gaung Kwe, Myaung Township (Sagaing Region), junta soldiers killed and burned five people, including one who reportedly suffered from a cognitive disability.<sup>114</sup>

Junta troops continued to **execute civilians**. On 13 Dec, junta troops shot three men in the head during a raid on Hmanthar village, Tabayin Township (Sagaing Region). The entire population fled the village when around 200 soldiers arrived on 10 Dec, but the three men were caught when they returned to the village later to assess the situation. Their bodies were found in a paddy field outside the village the following day. Nine people have now died in the Township in the past few days.<sup>115</sup> On 24 Dec, in Launglon Township (Tanintharyi Region), junta troops killed a young man, for unknown reasons.<sup>116</sup>

Junta troops and Pyu Saw Htee members **executed motorbike passengers**, in keeping with a November junta directive. They killed at least nine motorbike passengers in December, including in Meiktila and Chanmyathazi Townships (Mandalay Region),<sup>117</sup> Thanbyuzayat Township (Mon State),<sup>118</sup> and Shwebo Township (Sagaing Region).<sup>119</sup> On 11 Dec, it was reported that junta forces had stepped up security checks on buses and other vehicles passing through Waw Township (Bago Region), along the Yangon-Mawlamyine road. They reportedly checked passengers’ phones and opened fire on buses that failed to stop.<sup>120</sup> On 12 Dec, junta forces opened fire on a youth trying to evade control at a checkpoint in Mindat Township (Chin State), instead killing a female public servant in a nearby home.<sup>121</sup>

Civilians continued to suffer from **landmines** laid by junta forces and others. On 2 Dec, a woman was seriously injured after stepping on a landmine on her way to a farm, near a junta military base, in Pekon Township (Shan State).<sup>122</sup> On 5 Dec, a 49-year-old woman was killed by a landmine outside her house in Mindat Township (Chin State); her sister and four-year-old daughter were also injured in the blast. The People’s Administration Committee for Mindat Township said that junta forces planted the mine.<sup>123</sup> On 7 Dec, two farmers died and another was seriously injured in two landmine incidents in Kyaukme Township (Shan State).<sup>124</sup> On 20 Dec, it was reported that a Border Guard Force (BGF) member was injured by a landmine near the Bangladesh border in Maungdaw Township (Rakhine State).<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Irrawaddy (22 Dec 2021) Junta Airstrikes Kill Over Ten People and Displace Hundreds in Upper Myanmar

<sup>110</sup> Myanmar Now (27 Dec 2021) Seven bodies found in Ye-U village following airstrike

<sup>111</sup> Radio Free Asia (7 Dec 2021) Myanmar troops massacre, burn 11 villagers in Sagaing

<sup>112</sup> Myanmar Now (7 Dec 2021) Junta soldiers massacre and burn 11, including teenagers, during raid on village in Sagaing

<sup>113</sup> Myanmar Now (9 Dec 2021) Done Taw villagers find another body after massacre of 11 men and boys

<sup>114</sup> Myanmar Now (14 Dec 2021) Soldiers kill and burn five people in Sagaing Region village after clashes with PDF

<sup>115</sup> Myanmar Now (14 Dec 2021) Junta soldiers murder three more villagers in Depayin

<sup>116</sup> Mizzima (25 Dec 2021) Young man killed by the Myanmar junta soldiers in Launglon township

<sup>117</sup> Mizzima (8 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 8 December 2021; EMG (13 Dec 2021) Couple shot dead in Chanmyathazi Township; Mizzima (14 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 14th December 2021; Mizzima (13 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 13th December 2021

<sup>118</sup> Mizzima (10 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 10 December 2021

<sup>119</sup> Mizzima (13 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 13th December 2021; Mizzima (17 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 17 December 2021

<sup>120</sup> DMG (11 Dec 2021) Junta steps up security checks on buses in Waw Twsp on Yangon-Mawlamyine road

<sup>121</sup> Khonumthung Media Group (14 Dec 2021) Burma Army Kill Mindat Woman

<sup>122</sup> Shan News (6 Dec 2021) Phaikhun woman severely injured from land mine during corn harvest

<sup>123</sup> Khonumthung Media Group (8 Dec 2021) Mindat Woman Killed By Burma Army Landmine

<sup>124</sup> Shan News (7 Dec 2021) Landmine Explosions Kills Civilians In Kyaukme Township

<sup>125</sup> DMG (20 Dec 2021) BGF member injured in landmine encounter near Myanmar-Bangladesh border fence

## **Karen State: junta offensives terrorize civilians, displace a further 10,000**

Clashes continued in Hpapun Township,<sup>126</sup> where it was reported in November that 82,220 people remained displaced by junta forces' ground and air attacks and artillery shelling of villages.<sup>127</sup>

On 14 Dec, junta troops raided Karen National Union (KNU)-controlled Lay Kay Kaw, Myawaddy District, arresting at least 32 people, including NLD MP-elect Wai Lin Aung, striking civil servants, and alleged PDF members.<sup>128</sup> On 15 Dec, junta forces clashed with Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) Brigade 6 in at least three locations around Lay Kay Kaw and fired artillery shells. The raid and clashes reportedly prompted around 200 CDM members and activists to flee to a KNU camp.<sup>129</sup>

On 17 Dec, fighting escalated. The KNLA attacked and occupied a junta outpost in Bilin Township (Mon State), killing at least five BGF members and capturing others. The junta responded by firing artillery shells, killing two villagers and causing over 500 others to flee. Along the Myawaddy-Kawkareik Highway, the KNLA clashed with junta forces, killing at least 18. It was reported that the junta sent over 1,000 reinforcements from Yangon, Bago, Taungoo, Myawaddy, and other areas.<sup>130</sup>

On 20 Dec, it was reported that clashes from 15 Dec between junta forces and two other groups—the Karen National Defence Organization (KNDO) and Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA)—displaced thousands of people into Thailand's Tak Province. Almost 1,000 people sought refuge in schools and monasteries within Myawaddy Township, while others hid in the jungle.<sup>131</sup>

On 20 Dec, around 50 junta soldiers were killed in fighting with the KNLA in Myawaddy,<sup>132</sup> and it was reported that KNLA brigades had been instructed to fire on any junta troops crossing into KNU/KNLA territory.<sup>133</sup> On 21 Dec, junta troops clashed with the KNLA and PDFs for the sixth straight day in the Township, and the KNLA ordered all seven of its brigades to form an "ultimate defense" force.<sup>134</sup>

On 23 Dec, junta forces carried out airstrikes around Lay Kay Kaw. Local sources reported that a junta jet bombed near Lay Kay Kaw right before nearby ground troops began firing heavy artillery towards Mae Htaw Tha Lay village and a convoy of around 40 military personnel moved towards Lay Kay Kaw on the Asia Highway.<sup>135</sup> On 25 Dec, the junta used heavy artillery and a fighter jet, killing two civilians in Htee Mei Wah Khee, Myawaddy Township, which had been sheltering around 400 IDPs.<sup>136</sup>

On 24 Dec, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha vowed to take care of every refugee fleeing from Burma into Tak province because of the fighting. He reportedly instructed local authorities to prepare to provide medications and food rations.<sup>137</sup> However, the Thai government had already returned 600 recently-arrived refugees;<sup>138</sup> some reportedly reentered Thailand amid intensifying clashes.<sup>139</sup> On 26 Dec, Thai authorities said 5,358 people had recently sought refuge in Tak Province.<sup>140</sup>

On 27 Dec, junta forces launched fresh artillery attacks in Lay Kay Kaw, as more junta troops advanced to nearby Mae Htaw Talay. In Palu and Mae Htaw Talay villages, IDPs said they heard at least 40 rounds of artillery shelling during the night. As of 27 Dec, the junta offensives had displaced over 10,000 villagers, over half into Thailand, and reports of stray bullets and grenades from across the

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<sup>126</sup> Mizzima (22 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 22nd December 2021

<sup>127</sup> Karen News (14 Dec 2021) First the Rain and Now the Cold: Displaced Karen Villagers in Urgent Need of Warm Clothing and Medicine

<sup>128</sup> Irrawaddy (14 Dec 2021) Myanmar Junta Forces Raid KNU-Controlled Town; Democracy Activists Feared Arrested

<sup>129</sup> Myanmar Now (15 Dec 2021) Fighting erupts in rebel-controlled town where anti-coup activists fled to avoid arrest

<sup>130</sup> DMG (18 Dec 2021) Myanmar military conducts airstrikes on KNU territory as fighting spills over into Mon State and Thailand

<sup>131</sup> UNHCR (20 Dec) MYANMAR EMERGENCY OVERVIEW MAP

<sup>132</sup> Mizzima (20 Dec 2021) NUG says about 50 Tatmadaw killed in clashes in Karen State

<sup>133</sup> DMG (20 Dec 2021) KNU instructs brigades to fire on encroaching junta troops in eastern Myanmar

<sup>134</sup> Myanmar Now (21 Dec) Junta suffers heavy casualties and thousands remain displaced as military offensive in Karen State intensifies

<sup>135</sup> Myanmar Now (24 Dec 2021) Junta carries out airstrikes on KNU-controlled Lay Kay Kaw

<sup>136</sup> Myanmar Now (27 Dec 2021) Two civilians killed as junta offensive on Thai-Myanmar border continues

<sup>137</sup> Bangkok Post (25 Dec 2021) Prayut vows aid for Myanmar refugees

<sup>138</sup> Reuters (19 Dec 2021) Thailand sends refugees back to Myanmar as clashes continue

<sup>139</sup> Myanmar Now (21 Dec) Junta suffers heavy casualties and thousands remain displaced as military offensive in Karen State intensifies

<sup>140</sup> Bangkok Post (26 Dec 2021) Over 5,000 flee clashes along Thai-Myanmar border to Tak

border had increased in Thailand, particularly in Mae Sot and Phop Phra districts, Tak Province.<sup>141</sup> Even within Thailand, villagers living near the border fled inland from the shelling and conflict.<sup>142</sup>

### **Karenni State: “Christmas Eve Massacre” and continued hardship**

On 15 Dec, it was reported that civilians were ailing from economic deprivation and limited support in Karenni State, where 156,935 people—over half the State’s population—had been displaced. Of those displaced, 68,265 were from Demawso Township. During 22 Nov–5 Dec, 1,486 people fled fighting.<sup>143</sup>

On 25 Dec, in Moso village, Hpruso Township, Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF) members found the remains of at least 35 charred bodies and 13 vehicles. Supplies near the scene suggested that the victims were fleeing clashes. By 27 Dec, a fuller picture of a massacre had emerged, and at least 37 people were confirmed to have been killed by junta forces, possibly including ten children. These men, women, and children had been captured by junta Light Infantry Division 109, which tied the victims’ hands behind their backs, placed them in cars, and then torched the vehicles, burning them to death. Junta troops also killed four Karenni BGF members who attempted to stop them. On 27 Dec, it was reported that junta forces were trying to destroy the bodies of those they had murdered.<sup>144</sup>

On 25 Dec, it was reported that two Save the Children staff were amongst those killed. Save the Children said that the staff had been travelling home from humanitarian mission, and it confirmed that “their private vehicle was attacked and burned out”; it has since suspended work in several regions.<sup>145</sup>

### **Sagaing Region: brutality drags on**

On 3 Dec, a bomb exploded in front of a high school in Kawlin Township, injuring two junta troops and a school janitor.<sup>146</sup> On 12 Dec, it was reported that junta forces had raided Sin, Kyar Min and Omyae Htoo villages, Kale Township, killing two men, burning at least eight houses, and forcing many residents to flee.<sup>147</sup> On 13 Dec, they reportedly burned down over 100 houses in Ayadaw Township.<sup>148</sup>

On 15 Dec, it was reported that resistance groups had killed dozens of junta soldiers in Kani, Mingin, Sagaing, Taze, and Wetlet Townships in the past three days. After PDF members ambushed junta troops in Mingin Township, allegedly killing ten, junta forces entered Peikkayar village and burned down the house of ousted NLD lawmaker Aung Tun Lwin. A day earlier, junta forces reportedly torched houses during raids on Htongyi, Thitkhaungtee and Winwa villages, Mingin Township; they killed a married couple during the raids, and junta landmines injured two civilians who returned home to put out fires.<sup>149</sup>

On 23 Dec, local coalition forces attacked more than 30 soldiers stationed at a monastery between Kan Pauk and Pho Kone villages, Pale Township, reportedly killing four. A military helicopter reportedly arrived to support the junta troops and carried out airstrikes, firing rockets and machine guns.<sup>150</sup>

On 28 Dec, it was reported that junta troops had continued to torch houses in Natchaung village, Kale Township, where its air strikes and land assault had killed around 20 civilians, displaced thousands, and reduced houses to rubble. Junta troops originally raided the village on 22 Dec, fired machine guns on the village from helicopter gunships, and landed three helicopters’ load of reinforcements to occupy the village. PDF members said that collecting the bodies of the dead was a challenge because junta troops were using them as bait for snipers.<sup>151</sup>

### **Shan State: complex dynamics between armed groups cause more civilian misery**

On 16 Dec, it was reported that China had facilitated peace talks among the six EAO members of the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee (FPNCC) in Burma’s North, including Mong

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<sup>141</sup> Irrawaddy (27 Dec 2021) Myanmar Regime Continues to Shell Karen State Border Town

<sup>142</sup> Thai PBS World (17 Dec 2021) Myanmar warned as mortar shell lands in Thailand’s Mae Sot, where Karen people seek shelter

<sup>143</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (15 Dec 2021) Displaced Civilians Still Hungry Despite Aid Reaching Camps In Karenni State

<sup>144</sup> Myanmar Now (25 Dec 2021) At least 35 charred bodies found in Karenni State village on Christmas; Mizzima (27 Dec 2021) Myanmar army accused of trying to destroy evidence of Kayah State fiery massacre

<sup>145</sup> Aljazeera (25 Dec 2021) Save the Children says two staff missing after attack in Myanmar

<sup>146</sup> EMG (5 Dec 2021) Time bomb goes off near high school in Kawlin Township, 3 wounded

<sup>147</sup> KMG (12 Dec 2021) Army Burns Civilians Alive and Homes During Chin State/Sagaing Region Offensive

<sup>148</sup> Mizzima (14 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 14th December 2021

<sup>149</sup> Irrawaddy (15 Dec 2021) Myanmar Civilian Forces Claim Dozens of Junta Troops Killed in Mine Attacks, Ambushes

<sup>150</sup> Mizzima (25 Dec 2021) Local guerrilla group says 4 soldiers killed in clashes in Pale township

<sup>151</sup> Irrawaddy (28 Dec 2021) Myanmar Regime Forces Continue Assault on Sagaing Village; Myanmar Now (29 Dec 2021) More houses torched as military reinforcements arrive in Natchaung

La's National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), the United Wa State Army (UWSA), Arakan Army (AA), Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), Kokang's Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and Shan State Army-North (SSA-N). A junta delegation said its intention was to listen to Northern EAOs and reduce tensions in the region, as well as offer COVID-19 aid and vaccination programs. Meanwhile, armed violence escalated in the region.<sup>152</sup>

On 4 Dec, it was reported that junta forces raided two PDF camps in Hsenwi Township, arresting two resistance fighters and prompting a fire. On 7 Dec, it was reported that the MNDAA attacked a village where junta soldiers were camped, causing villagers to flee to a Buddhist monastery in nearby Lashio.<sup>154</sup> On 31 Dec, it was reported that junta forces had fired hundreds of artillery shells over the previous six days at the MNDAA's Mang Yang base. Two weeks earlier, junta troops reportedly launched airstrikes against the MNDAA, which claimed it killed or injured 100 junta soldiers. A Mongko resident said that a stray artillery shell killed a 60-year-old man in Pan May village.<sup>155</sup>

On 10 Dec, over 1,000 villagers fled intense fighting and shelling between the SSA-N and Shan State Army-South (SSA-S) in Mong Kung Township;<sup>156</sup> over 700 were still unable to return as of 22 Dec.<sup>157</sup>

On 21 Dec, two villagers who had been detained in October and used as human shields were tortured to death in Pekon Township (Shan State). The KNDF said that junta troops were continuing human rights violations in Pekon Township, including killing, raping and arbitrary arrests.<sup>158</sup>

### Other conflict hot spots

On 5 Dec, after junta troops murdered peaceful protesters in Yangon, resistance forces responded with nationwide attacks the same day. In Yangon, this included attacks on junta troops at a Sanchaung police station, killing three; at a junta-owned garment factory in Hlaing Tharyar; and at a junta-linked transport service at Yangon's bus terminal. In Pauk Township (Magway Region), the PDF said a combined force killed at least three troops and injured many more. The Chin Defense Force claimed to have killed one junta soldier in Kanpetlet Township (Chin State), and another group reportedly killed a soldier during a raid on troops based at the Myanmar Economic Bank in Monywa Township (Sagaing Region).<sup>159</sup>

In **Chin State**, fighting persisted between the junta and armed groups. On 5 Dec, members of the Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA), based on the India border, allegedly killed the leader of the Zoland PDF in Tedim Township, before carrying out multiple attacks on anti-regime troops.<sup>160</sup> On 21 Dec, 20–30 Chin National Front members attacked a meeting of ZRA and junta members in Tedim Township.<sup>161</sup>

On 28 Dec, locals in Shet village, near Mindat, found two burned bodies. The Chinland Defense Force (CDF) confirmed that one of the dead was a CDF member, and speculated that the other was a civilian. Junta troops also reportedly arrested at least four locals from Shet and two other villages, who remained missing. Junta troops in nearby Vawmm'tu village also hit a rural hospital with heavy artillery shells and light weapons, destroying its roof, walls, beds and some of its rooms.<sup>162</sup>

In **Kachin State**, heavy fighting persisted between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the junta. On 1 Dec, the junta and KIA clashed in Hpakant and Mohnyin Townships, a little under a week after junta airstrikes against the KIA in Mohnyin. A junta artillery unit from Hpakant fired around 30 shells at a KIA unit based in Wailon village. On 24 Dec, junta forces and the KIA clashed repeatedly on the border of Magaung and Hpakant Townships, resulting in heavy losses for both sides. The junta later

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<sup>152</sup> Irrawaddy (17 Dec 2021) China Facilitates Myanmar Junta and Ethnic Armies' Talks

<sup>153</sup> Shan News (4 Dec 2021) Military Raids People's Defence Force Camps In Northern Shan State

<sup>154</sup> Shan News (7 Dec 2021) MNDAA Attack Army In Northern Shan State Village

<sup>155</sup> Myanmar Now (31 Dec 2021) Resumed clashes near Mongko leave at least a dozen junta soldiers dead

<sup>156</sup> Shan News (10 Dec 2021) Hundreds Of Families Flee Southern Shan State Conflict

<sup>157</sup> Mizzima (22 Dec 2021) More than 700 refugees from Mong Kung township unable to return home.

<sup>158</sup> Irrawaddy (22 Dec 2021) Five Civilians Tortured to Death by Myanmar Regime; Myanmar Now (23 Dec 2021) Two villagers abducted by the military from Pekhon die in junta custody

<sup>159</sup> Irrawaddy (6 Dec 2021) Resistance Groups Attack Myanmar Junta After Yangon Protest Killings

<sup>160</sup> Myanmar Now (8 Dec 2021) Chin PDF group accuses Zomi Revolutionary Army of killing leader

<sup>161</sup> Myanmar now (21 Dec 2021) ZRA attacked in Tedim after alleged meeting with junta officials

<sup>162</sup> Myanmar Now (30 Dec 2021) Two burned bodies found near Chin State village in western Myanmar

carried out an airstrike on a KIA base.<sup>163</sup> On 26 Dec, it was reported that the KIA had taken over a base camp previously held by junta forces in Moenyin District, killing at least 76 junta soldiers.<sup>164</sup>

On 15 Dec, Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT) reported on junta forces' crimes in Kachin State and nearby Muse District (Shan State) during June–October 2021. They highlighted that junta troops deliberately shelled civilian areas in six townships, including close to urban centers; killed six civilians with indiscriminate gunfire; raped two women; and arbitrarily arrested 77 people some of whom they tortured while they were handcuffed, forced to kneel in the hot sun, or had their heads covered with plastic bags. They used some as human shields and minesweepers, including two farmers injured by a landmine while forced to walk in front of troops. Conflict and targeting of civilians displaced over 7,700 people June–October, bringing the number of new IDPs since the coup to over 14,000 in Kachin State and Muse District, along with 100,000 IDPs sheltering in camps.<sup>165</sup>

On 20 Dec, junta forces arrived in San Myo village, north of Gangaw (**Magway Region**). Around 3,000 residents of San Myo and two other villages fled in anticipation of the troops' arrival, and watched from afar as their village was burned.<sup>166</sup> Those who returned on 23 Dec said at least 32 buildings—a large section of the village—had been burned to the ground, and many others ransacked. Around 13,000 civilians have been displaced by airstrikes and army raids in Gangaw Township, according to locals.<sup>167</sup>

### **Rohingya: slow justice and continued hardship**

On 6 Dec, Rohingya refugees sued Facebook for USD 150 billion over the company's alleged failure to prevent its platform from being used to incite violence against the minority group. The class-action lawsuit was filed in the US, but British lawyers also submitted a letter of notice to Facebook in London. Social media companies are not legally liable for content posted by third parties under US law, but complainants will seek to apply Burma law to counter this defense. Sixteen Rohingya youth representatives also planned to file a complaint against Facebook with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) under the latter's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The complainants opted to file an official complaint after Facebook refused to fund educational programs in refugee camps after more than a year of discussions.<sup>168</sup>

On 7 Dec, Facebook announced that it would remove all pages, groups, and accounts representing junta-controlled businesses from its platforms “based on extensive documentation [...] of these businesses' direct role in funding the Tatmadaw's ongoing violence and human rights abuses in Myanmar.”<sup>169</sup> Justice for Myanmar urged Facebook to ensure that it proactively enforced the policy and applied it to all of the junta's joint ventures with international and domestic companies. Burma Campaign UK said that Facebook has known for years that these companies were financing human rights violations, noting that it only took action after being sued over its role in the Rohingya genocide.<sup>170</sup>

On 13 Dec, Bangladesh's Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner decided to close thousands of home-based and community-led schools for Rohingya refugee students. Roughly 22,000 Rohingya children are currently enrolled in home-based schools, while 92,000 students attend approved non-formal lessons at small “learning centers” outside people's homes. Humanitarian workers said that home-based schools were “essential” to access learning and psychosocial support, and that around 84% of the students were girls. Community-led schools teaching the formal Burma curriculum have also enrolled about 10,000 children.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Myanmar Now (28 Dec 2021) Heavy casualties reported in clashes near Indawgyi

<sup>164</sup> Mizzima (26 December 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 26 December 2021

<sup>165</sup> Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT) (16 Dec 2021) Justice held hostage: Human rights violations by regime forces in Kachin State and Muse District, June–October 2021

<sup>166</sup> Myanmar Now (23 Dec 2021) Entire village feared burnt to the ground as army rampage in Gangaw continues

<sup>167</sup> Myanmar Now (25 Dec 2021) Gangaw Township villagers return to find homes torched by junta troops

<sup>168</sup> Myanmar Now (7 Dec 2021) Rohingya refugees sue Facebook for \$150bn over failures that led to 'real-world violence'

<sup>169</sup> Facebook/Meta (7 Dec 2021) Expanding Our Ban of Tatmadaw-linked Businesses

<sup>170</sup> Myanmar Now (8 Dec 2021) Facebook finally bans Myanmar military-linked companies from its platform

<sup>171</sup> Human Rights Watch (18 Dec 2021) Bangladesh: Rohingya Refugee Schools Face Closure

On 14 Dec, a junta court sentenced 199 people, mostly Rohingya Muslims from Maungdaw, to five years in prison for “illegally trying to migrate” to Malaysia by boat. They were among 234 people arrested by Burma’s Navy off Sittwe, Rakhine’s capital. A day later, 90 children were released.<sup>172</sup>

On 16 Dec, the president of Burma Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK) testified before an Argentinian Federal Court, which had opened a case against regime leaders under the principle of universal jurisdiction.<sup>173</sup> On 27 Dec, the junta ordered all members of the judiciary to ignore any warrant or summons sent by the ICC or the Argentinian judicial authorities.<sup>174</sup>

On 27 Dec, local civil society organizations reported that a boat carrying 120 Rohingya—51 children, nine men, and 60 women—was stranded off the coast of Aceh province (Indonesia), as security forces prevented locals from helping the refugees come ashore.<sup>175</sup> On 28 Dec, the UNHCR urged Indonesia to let the boat come ashore in light of its unseaworthiness, and Amnesty International pointed out that sending the refugees back to sea would be a violation of Indonesia’s international obligations.<sup>176</sup> On 29 Dec, Indonesian authorities finally allowed the boat to land and UNHCR to provide assistance.<sup>177</sup>

### Resistance action

Resistance groups tried to establish administrative control. On 4 Dec, the Civilian’s Defense and Security Organization of Myaung (CDSOM, Sagaing Region) announced that it would control ships entering and leaving Myaung town through five ports on the Chindwin River. It seized two junta ships and detained 15 crew members on 3 Dec, and said that it would confiscate military products and take action against uncooperative crews in the future.<sup>178</sup> On 6 Dec, the CDSOM claimed to have strengthened control over the area.<sup>179</sup> On 6 Dec, CDM police officers in Kale (Sagaing Region) announced the creation of the Kale Police Service, which they said would provide training for local youths “with the aim of creating police officers who value human rights.” On the same day, CDM police officers formed a similar group in Gangaw Township (Magway Region), where PDFs had also secured partial control.<sup>180</sup>

On 8 Dec, it was reported that, from 15 Jan 2022, the Sagaing PDF will request proof of tax payment to the NUG from all logistic firms transporting goods manufactured by major companies. The PDF warned that failure to present the documents would result in appropriate punishments.<sup>181</sup>

They also tried to cut junta income. On 1 Dec, in Ngaputaw Township (Ayeyarwady Region), the Annihilation of Informant Delta Force (MHDF) warned Electric Power Corporation staff to stop collecting electricity bills in Haigy Island, and pledged to take “strong action” against those who failed to comply.<sup>182</sup> On 3 Dec, junta media sources reported that 409 telecommunication towers had been destroyed by opponents since 1 Feb, 88% of which were owned by military-controlled Mytel.<sup>183</sup> On 26 Dec, in Htee Chaik Township (Sagaing Region), the Htee Phyu PDF destroyed seven vehicles belonging to a company involved in illegal logging; and confiscated staff phones. The leader of the group said that the NLD had banned logging in the area but operations had resumed since 1 Feb.<sup>184</sup>

Unknown attackers also injured or killed at least seven junta-appointed administrators, in Thaketa Township (Yangon Region),<sup>185</sup> Maha Aungmyay Township (Mandalay Region),<sup>186</sup> Payathonzu (Karen State),<sup>187</sup> Dagon Seikkan Township (Yangon),<sup>188</sup> Hpakant Township (Kachin State),<sup>189</sup> North Dagon

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<sup>172</sup> Myanmar Now (16 Dec 2021) More than 100 Rohingya fleeing persecution in Rakhine State sentenced to five years in prison

<sup>173</sup> La Prensa Latina (16 Dec 2021) Rohingya leader testifies in Argentina against Myanmar ‘genocide’

<sup>174</sup> Myanmar Now (30 Dec 2021) Junta issues order to ignore notifications from international courts

<sup>175</sup> Radio Free Asia (27 Dec 2021) Boat with 120 Rohingya refugees stranded off of Indonesia’s Aceh province

<sup>176</sup> Radio Free Asia (28 Dec 2021) UNHCR pleads to Indonesia to take in Rohingya stranded at sea

<sup>177</sup> Radio Free Asia (29 Dec 2021) Indonesia changes course, will allow stranded Rohingya to come ashore

<sup>178</sup> Mizzima (4 Dec 2021) Anti-junta group plans to control ships at five ports at Myaung on Chindwin River

<sup>179</sup> Myanmar Now (6 Dec 2021) Resistance fighters strengthen hold over Myaung Township in Sagaing

<sup>180</sup> Myanmar Now (8 Dec 2021) Police officers who joined Civil Disobedience Movement in Kalay form their own law enforcement service

<sup>181</sup> DVB, via Twitter (8 Dec 2021) [https://twitter.com/DVB\\_English/status/1468533229330132992](https://twitter.com/DVB_English/status/1468533229330132992)

<sup>182</sup> Mizzima (2 Dec 2021) MHDF issued warnings to EPC staff on Haigy Island

<sup>183</sup> Reuters (3 Dec 2021) Hundreds of telecoms towers downed in Myanmar coup resistance

<sup>184</sup> Mizzima (27 Dec 2021) PDF destroys machinery of illegal logging company in Sagaing’s Htee Chaik township

<sup>185</sup> Mizzima (2 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 2 December 2021

<sup>186</sup> Myanmar Now (2 Dec 2021) Two members of military-backed USDP shot dead in Mandalay

<sup>187</sup> EMG (8 Dec 2021) Village administrator in Phayathonesu shot dead

<sup>188</sup> Mizzima (10 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 10 December 2021

<sup>189</sup> Mizzima (13 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 13th December 2021

Myothit Township (Yangon Region),<sup>190</sup> and Kale Township (Sagaing Region).<sup>191</sup> On 5 Dec, a bomb explosion targeted the office of a village administrator in Thaton Township (Mon State), two days after another bomb went off in front of the township's immigration department.<sup>192</sup> On 7 Dec, junta troops fired randomly after a bomb attack on the Aung Tharyar ward administration office.<sup>193</sup>

On 14 Dec, in Hmawbi Township (Yangon Region), two local PDFs attacked a motorcade carrying two junta-appointed Yangon Region ministers.<sup>194</sup> On 14 Dec, in Falam Township (Chin State), two gunmen shot and injured an irrigation officer; the CDF allegedly attacked the ambulance carrying him to Kale People's Hospital (Sagaing), arresting him and injuring the driver and a volunteer.<sup>195</sup> On 23 Dec, in Maungdaw Township (Rakhine State), a General Administration Department clerk was found dead. Junta forces arrested a 14-year-old Muslim suspect in connection with the murder.<sup>196</sup>

During December, unknown attackers killed at least three Pyu Saw Htee leaders (as well as one's son and one's older brother) in Yesagyo Township (Magway Region),<sup>197</sup> and Hlegu and Kayan Townships (Yangon Region);<sup>198</sup> at least four members of the military-affiliated Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), in Maha Aungmyay Township (Mandalay Region),<sup>199</sup> Htantabin Township (Yangon Region),<sup>200</sup> and Tada-U Township (Mandalay Region);<sup>201</sup> and at least seven alleged junta informants, in Maha Aungmyay Township (Mandalay Region),<sup>202</sup> the Sim Min Ward of Yangon,<sup>203</sup> Kale Township (Sagaing Region),<sup>204</sup> Thayet Chaung Township (Tanintharyi Division),<sup>205</sup> and Bamaw (Kachin State).<sup>206</sup>

Attacks on school staff continued. On 6 Dec, in Myaing Township (Sagaing Region), attackers killed a school principal, his wife, and their daughter.<sup>207</sup> During 9–20 Dec, teachers were killed in South Dagon and North Okkalapa Townships (Yangon Region),<sup>208</sup> and Pinlebu Township (Sagaing Region).<sup>209</sup>

### **Junta struggles for military personnel**

On 1 Dec, it was reported that over 2,000 soldiers and 6,000 police officers—from an estimated 90,000 police personnel before the coup began<sup>210</sup>—had joined the CDM, including at least 10 army majors and hundreds of lieutenants and captains. People's Embrace (PE), a group helping defectors, said that this number would continue to grow in the coming months; defections were putting a strain on the junta; some defectors planned to take up arms against the junta; and over 100 soldiers were assisting the CDM from inside by sending military intelligence.<sup>211</sup>

On 6 Dec, it was reported that growing resentment over the junta's repression was causing an increasing number of military family members to speak out against the junta despite the threat of reprisals. On 27 Nov, a group called the People's Army Supporters Network posted photos on social media of military wives, their identities obscured, holding signs critical of the junta's crackdown. Soldiers' relatives said that the rising death toll from PDF attacks had also added to anti-coup sentiment, as families believed

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<sup>190</sup> Mizzima (14 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 14th December 2021

<sup>191</sup> Myanmar Now (22 Dec 2021) Two killed in attack on family of village administrator; Myanmar Now (25 Dec 2021) Military arrests dozens of villagers after junta-appointed administrator's family killed

<sup>192</sup> EMG (5 Dec 2021) Bomb explodes at village administration office in Thaton Township

<sup>193</sup> Irrawaddy (7 Dec 2021) Five-year-old Girl Killed by Myanmar Junta Forces

<sup>194</sup> Irrawaddy (15 Dec 2021) Myanmar Junta-Appointed Ministers' Motorcade Attacked in Yangon

<sup>195</sup> EMG (17 Dec 2021) School teacher shot dead in Pinlebu Township

<sup>196</sup> DMG (24 Dec 2021) Teen suspect arrested, three men at large over murder of GAD staffer in Maungdaw: police

<sup>197</sup> Mizzima (5 Dec) Spring Revolution Daily News for 5 December 2021

<sup>198</sup> Mizzima (23 Dec 2021) Two alleged members of Pyu Saw Htee group shot dead in Hlegu; Mizzima (28 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 28 December 2021

<sup>199</sup> Myanmar Now (2 Dec 2021) Two members of military-backed USDP shot dead in Mandalay

<sup>200</sup> Mizzima (6 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 6th December 2021

<sup>201</sup> EMG (11 Dec 2021) Female USDP member shot dead in Tada-U Township

<sup>202</sup> Myanmar Now (2 Dec 2021) Two members of military-backed USDP shot dead in Mandalay

<sup>203</sup> Mizzima (6 Dec 2021) Alleged informant in protest incident shot dead

<sup>204</sup> Myanmar Now (22 Dec 2021) Two killed in attack on family of village administrator; Myanmar Now (25 Dec 2021) Military arrests dozens of villagers after junta-appointed administrator's family killed

<sup>205</sup> Mizzima (22 Dec 2021) An alleged informer was killed in Thayet Chaung

<sup>206</sup> Mizzima (24 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 24 December 2021

<sup>207</sup> EMG (11 Dec 2021) Clerical staff and her faculty family members stabbed to death in Myaing Township

<sup>208</sup> EMG (10 Dec 2021) Primary school teacher shot on Chindwin Road in South Dagon; EMG (20 Dec 2021) Retired teacher shot dead in North Okkalapa Township, explosion reported in East Dagon Township

<sup>209</sup> EMG (17 Dec 2021) School teacher shot dead in Pinlebu Township

<sup>210</sup> Myanmar Now (8 Dec 2021) Police officers who joined Civil Disobedience Movement in Kalay form their own law enforcement service

<sup>211</sup> Myanmar Now (1 Dec 2020) 'Over 8,000' soldiers and police officers have joined the Civil Disobedience Movement, says defector group

the deaths served no purpose other than keeping the junta in power. A CDM captain said that over 85% of military personnel believed the coup was wrong but feared the consequences of defecting. Junta spokesperson Zaw Min Tun denied reports of discontent within the ranks, claiming that “the families of the soldiers are all living in unity.”<sup>212</sup> On 7 Dec, the junta barred family members of cadets from the Defense Services Academy from attending their graduation ceremony over security concerns.<sup>213</sup>

On 7 Dec, it was reported that the junta had made military training mandatory for children of military personnel, as it sought to bolster reserve forces, in violation of Burma’s Child Rights Law and the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Since April, boys and girls over 15 have been forcibly trained in handling firearms. The junta also forced military wives to do guard duty in Shan, Kachin, Sagaing, and Magway States/Regions and pressured them to attend military training.<sup>214</sup> On 28 Dec, it was reported that the junta had recalled and armed over 60 veterans in Ayeyarwady Region, promising them salaries, rations, and even apartments or land plots. Recruits were reportedly assigned to security duties. A veteran interviewed said that he had re-enlisted out of fear of “problems” otherwise.<sup>215</sup>

On 6 Dec, it was reported that Infantry Battalion 289 had ordered village leaders of nine villages in Paletwa Township (Chin State) to contribute up to 30 villagers each by 3 Dec to form People’s Militia Forces to support the junta.<sup>216</sup> Days earlier, it was reported that junta forces were **forcibly recruiting** people, including youth, from a local IDP camp for hard labor and military service.<sup>217</sup> On 16 Dec, it was reported that the junta’s BGF had threatened to forcibly draft 15 men/ward in Shwe Kokko, Myawaddy Township (Karen State); the BGF reportedly extorted up to THB 2,000 (~USD 60) from households not complying; and that at least 15 men were forcibly recruited to serve as security guards.<sup>218</sup>

### **Women’s leadership despite victimization** (more details at women [tracker](#))

**Junta forces continued to kill, torture and otherwise target women and girls.** On 28 Dec, it was reported that junta forces had killed 94 women since 1 Feb, mostly during anti-junta protests, interrogations, and troop offensives.<sup>219</sup> On the same day, it was reported, based on accounts of women released from detention, that prison staff and junta officers who carry out interrogations routinely abused female prisoners, both physically and sexually.<sup>220</sup>

On 5 Dec, Women’s League of Burma (WLB) affirmed that there has been a significant increase in the number of cases of sexual violence against women perpetrated by junta forces, including in urban areas and in broad daylight. Since 1 Feb, WLB documented nine cases: the sexual assault of an activist at a Yangon interrogation center; the rape and murder of a woman in Momauk (Kachin State); two rape cases in Kutkai (Shan State); four rape cases in Sagaing Region; and two rape cases in Chin State.<sup>221</sup> On 14 Dec, women’s groups called for systemic reforms to stop junta forces from committing sexual violence against women and other human rights abuses, after the junta gave a nominal punishment to a soldier who committed a rape in November.<sup>222</sup> On 20 Dec, 618 Myanmar and international human rights and women’s rights organizations endorsed a joint letter calling on the UN Security Council to hold junta forces accountable for their grave human rights violations, including violence against women.<sup>223</sup>

**Women continued to lead rallies and protests.** On 2 Dec, women led several anti-junta rallies across the country: one at Mingala Taungnyunt Township (Yangon Region) to mark ten months of the coup,<sup>224</sup> another in Yinmabin Township (Sagaing Region), to mark 106 years since the birth of dissident writer

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<sup>212</sup> Radio Free Asia (6 Dec 2021) Military families increasingly voice dissent over junta leadership

<sup>213</sup> Irrawaddy (8 Dec 2021) Myanmar Military Bars Families From Defense Academy Graduation Amid Tight Security

<sup>214</sup> Irrawaddy (7 Dec 2021) Myanmar Regime Makes Military Training Compulsory for Soldiers’ Children

<sup>215</sup> Mizzima (28 Dec 2021) Myanmar military veterans recalled, armed in Ayeyarwady region

<sup>216</sup> Khonumthung Media Group (6 Dec 2021) Burma Army Makes Paletwa Villages Form People’s Militia Forces

<sup>217</sup> Mizzima (3 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 3 December 2021

<sup>218</sup> Mizzima (16 Dec 2021) BGF threatens to draft 15 men per ward for Myanmar’s Shwe Kokko border area

<sup>219</sup> Radio Free Asia (28 Dec 2021) Nearly 100 women killed by security forces since Myanmar coup

<sup>220</sup> Radio Free Asia (28 Dec 2021) Nearly 100 women killed by security forces since Myanmar coup

<sup>221</sup> Radio Free Asia (5 Dec 2021) Coup brings uptick in old scourge: sexual violence by Myanmar troops

<sup>222</sup> Network Media Group (14 Dec 2021) Women’s Groups Want Burma Army Reformed To End Sexual Violence

<sup>223</sup> Women’s Peace Network, Women’s League of Burma, and Women Alliance Burma (20 Dec 2021) Hold the Myanmar military and security forces accountable for their grave human rights violations, including violence against women

<sup>224</sup> Mizzima (2 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 2 December 2021



and journalist Ludu Daw Amar, and one in Monywa-Amyint village (Sagaing Region).<sup>225</sup> On 3 Dec, women led a combined rally in Salingyi North and Yinmabin East (Sagaing Region), to end the junta.<sup>226</sup>

### **Children face humanitarian disaster, forced recruitment, and regime bullets**

On 3 Dec, it was reported, that the junta had killed 98 children, including 29 in Mandalay Region and over 12 in Yangon and Sagaing Regions; most of them were killed by random junta fire in residential areas, while playing near their homes or sheltering inside.<sup>227</sup> On 7 Dec, this number hit 100 after junta troops fatally shot a 5-year-old girl in Chanmyathazi Township (Mandalay Region).<sup>228</sup>

On 7 Dec, UNICEF reported that multiple challenges, including the political crisis, escalating conflict and violence, COVID-19, climate-related disasters, rising poverty, and a collapse in public services had left 5 million children in need of humanitarian assistance. Notably, one million children have not been immunized against communicable diseases, three million lack access to a safe water supply since early 2021, and 12 million have no access to organized education services.<sup>229</sup>

On 5 Dec, it was reported that the SSPP had forcibly recruited two children aged 16–17 in Tang Yang Township (Shan State). An SSPP spokesperson said he was not aware of the case, pointed out that the group's new policy forbids child recruitment, and promised to send the children back to their families.<sup>230</sup>

### **COVID-19 (more details at COVID-19 [tracker](#))**

The number of recorded COVID-19 infections kept decreasing, from 423 on 1 Dec to 276 on 29 Dec, while daily deaths fell from seven to two over the same period.<sup>231</sup> On 28 Dec, the junta Ministry of Health (MoHS) reported that it had detected four cases of the highly contagious Omicron variant among returnees from Dubai. All were monitored at a treatment center and eventually discharged.<sup>232</sup> On 30 Dec, the MoHS authorized gatherings of 200 people from 1 Jan, up from 100 since 29 Oct.<sup>233</sup>

On 2 Dec, UNOCHA warned that, although the devastating third wave of COVID-19 appeared to be breaking, low vaccination rates could lead to a damaging fourth wave in 2022.<sup>234</sup> The MoHS reported that 13.45 million adults had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and a further 5.54 million had received their first shot as of 27 Dec. The junta claimed it had reached its objective of vaccinating 50% of the target population in 2021.<sup>235</sup> However, according to data compiled by Reuters, around 32 million doses had been administered as of 11 Dec, enough to fully vaccinate just 29.5% of the population. Burma had reportedly administered an average 281,334 doses per day over the prior week. At that rate, it would take around 39 days to vaccinate another 10% of the population.<sup>236</sup>

On 13 Dec, Min Aung Hlaing announced plans to start domestic vaccine production in January 2022, intended to produce 5 million doses/month.<sup>237</sup> On 22 Dec, the junta Ministry of Industry signed a deal to purchase semi-finished vaccine products from China National Biotec Group, in a bid to produce ten million doses of the Sinopharm vaccine in Burma. In December, the junta took delivery of 1 million doses of Sinovac vaccines donated by China,<sup>238</sup> and 6.7 million doses of Covishield from India.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Mizzima (3 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 3 December 2021

<sup>226</sup> Mizzima (4 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 4 December 2021

<sup>227</sup> Irrawaddy (3 Dec 2021) Myanmar Junta Killed Around 100 Children Since Coup: NUG

<sup>228</sup> Irrawaddy (7 Dec 2021) Five-year-old Girl Killed by Myanmar Junta Forces

<sup>229</sup> UNICEF, via Relief Web (7 Dec 2021) Humanitarian Action for Children 2022 - Myanmar

<sup>230</sup> Shan News (15 Dec 2021) SSPP Forcibly Recruits Teenagers In Northern Shan State

<sup>231</sup> EMG (2 Dec 2021) Myanmar reports 423 new patients and 7 deaths on Dec 1; EMG (30 Dec 2021) Myanmar reports 276 new patients and 2 deaths on Dec 29

<sup>232</sup> Irrawaddy (29 Dec 2021) Myanmar Records First Cases of Omicron COVID-19 Variant

<sup>233</sup> EMG (31 Dec 2021) Myanmar increases from a gathering of 100 to 200: MOH

<sup>234</sup> UNOCHA (2 Dec 2021) Global Humanitarian Overview 2022

<sup>235</sup> GNLM (28 Dec 2021) Of 13.4 mln doses of Covishield vaccine purchased from India, 6.7 mln arrive in Yangon

<sup>236</sup> Reuters (accessed 3 Jan 2022) COVID-19 tracker - Myanmar

<sup>237</sup> GNLM (22 Dec 2021) To produce the COVID-19 vaccine

<sup>238</sup> Xinhua (23 Dec 2021) Myanmar, China sign semi-finished vaccines supply agreement; EMG (24 Dec 2021) Myanmar signs an agreement to produce Sinopharm vaccine

<sup>239</sup> GNLM (28 Dec 2021) Of 13.4 mln doses of Covishield vaccine purchased from India, 6.7 mln arrive in Yangon

## **Business and economics** (more details at business and economic response [tracker](#))

### **Junta minimizes economic damage despite record poverty levels**

On 1 Dec, UNDP stated that 46.3% of the population would be living below the poverty line by early 2022 (from 24.8% in 2017) due to the economic impact of COVID-19 and political turmoil triggered by the attempted coup. Poverty levels are expected to reach 37.2% in urban areas, from 11.3% in 2017. The UNDP said that a slide into poverty of this scale could mean the disappearance of the middle class, which typically powers growth in an economy.<sup>240</sup> On 2 Dec, UNOCHA projected that 14.4 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2022, up from 1 million in 2021. The significant increase in the prices of commodities and agricultural inputs in 2021 made food unaffordable for many, and the general trend of price hikes is expected to continue in 2022.<sup>241</sup>

On 7 Dec, the junta's investment and foreign economic relations minister said international institutions' projections of Burma's 18% economic contraction were "based on some unreliable sources," mainly in "opposition" to the regime. He said the contraction was "around 8% to 9%" according to junta figures, and predicted that post-pandemic GDP growth would exceed the IMF projection of around 2.5%.<sup>242</sup>

On 16 Dec, it was reported that hundreds of Yangon residents were lining up each day for passport applications at the city's immigration office, in the hope of finding work abroad. Applicants were quoted saying that junta crackdowns, the loss of jobs caused by the withdrawal of foreign companies, and the economic impact of COVID-19 and the coup gave them no choice but to seek employment abroad. One said that the vast majority of those queuing were brokers.<sup>243</sup> On 18 Dec, it was reported that passports could only be obtained through brokers at a price of MMK 75,000—up from MMK 35,000 in the past.<sup>244</sup>

### **Regime runs the printing press, cozies up to China as foreign reserves dry up**

The increased military expenditure and decline in tax revenue since the coup reportedly prompted the regime to print new money to fund expenses, with fresh banknotes entering circulation in August. On 7 Dec, an Uzbekistan Airways plane carrying 35 tons of banknote paper landed in Yangon. German banknote manufacturer Giesecke and Devrient had previously suspended deliveries to Burma in March in response to junta violence. The MMK has officially depreciated by around 24% since 1 Feb, with the World Bank and independent experts predicting continued inflationary pressure.<sup>245</sup> The junta-controlled Central Bank of Myanmar sold USD 88 million in December, reportedly to stabilize exchange rates.<sup>246</sup>

On 22 Dec, the junta announced that it would accept the RMB as an official settlement currency for trade with China in 2022. Chinese outlet Global Times reported that the move aimed to address Burma's shortage of USD and other foreign currencies. The regime also identified infrastructure projects with China that it said were a "major priority" for economic revival, including planned railways and ports.<sup>247</sup>

On 23 Dec, it was reported that the junta was pushing China to restart stalled infrastructure projects and to accelerate bilateral cooperation as a way to counteract the record drop in foreign direct investment since 1 Feb. However, it noted that Beijing remained wary about resuming full cooperation after the widespread anti-China protests and attacks on Chinese-owned factories since 1 Feb.<sup>248</sup>

### **Unregulated mining destroys environment, puts workers at risk**

On 1 Dec, it was reported that Burma was at risk of a serious environmental crisis, as the junta stepped up devastating policies of exploiting the country's vast natural wealth. Tentative efforts to pursue more renewable energy projects and develop climate resilience have been derailed since the coup, leading to departure of private investors and suspension of aid programs. Environmental activists and analysts fear that the junta will scale up logging, teak trade, palm oil plantations, and exploitation of other resources,

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<sup>240</sup> Nikkei Asia (1 Dec 2021) Half of Myanmar will live on less than a dollar a day, says UNDP

<sup>241</sup> UNOCHA (2 Dec 2021) Global Humanitarian Overview 2022

<sup>242</sup> Nikkei Asia (10 Dec 2021) Myanmar to end Kirin row based on law: investment minister

<sup>243</sup> Radio Free Asia (16 Dec 2021) Myanmar's economic turmoil is driving thousands to seek work abroad

<sup>244</sup> Mizzima (18 Dec 2021) Passport Office busy as Myanmar people seek escape

<sup>245</sup> Irrawaddy (9 Dec 2021) Uzbek Plane Supplies Myanmar Junta with Banknote Paper. NOTE: The MMK has in fact depreciated by more than 50% at market rates. Pls see October update: Burma/Myanmar's military junta cripples economy at <https://tinyurl.com/247j5s97>

<sup>246</sup> GNLM (25 Dec 2021) CBM sells US\$15 mln for sixth time this month

<sup>247</sup> Reuters (22 Dec 2021) Myanmar seeks closer China ties with Renminbi trade project

<sup>248</sup> Irrawaddy (23 Dec 2021) Myanmar Junta Pushing China to Restart Stalled Infrastructure Projects

such as jade, which supported the long-term survival of previous military regimes despite international sanctions.<sup>249</sup> On 15 Dec, Global Witness stated that illegal gemstone mining had boomed since 1 Feb.<sup>250</sup>

On 4 Dec, it was reported that there had been a significant increase in unregulated mining operations in Shwegu, Mohnyin, Chibwe, Sunprabon, Myitkyina, Hpakant, Tanaing, and Waingmaw Townships (Kachin State). Local sources said that gold miners were dredging the Irrawaddy River to collect mineral from the riverbed, dumping the silt and wastewater back into the waterway and causing serious pollution.<sup>251</sup> On 7 Dec, youths from Yangon and Lazia (Kachin State) launched a photo campaign to protest the exploitation of natural resources along the Irrawaddy River by the regime and its cronies.<sup>252</sup>

On 19 Dec, at least 10 people died in a landslide at a jade mine in Hpakant (Kachin State).<sup>253</sup> Although jade mining operations were banned by the NLD government in 2019, they resumed after 1 Feb. Hpakant NLD MP-elect Aung Hein Min said that the miners were “working with an ‘understanding’ with the authorities concerned.” Operations have reportedly grown beyond private individuals to groups using heavy machinery.<sup>254</sup> Burma’s jade mines are notoriously dangerous, especially for the low-paid migrant workers they employ, with frequent equipment failures and other accidents.<sup>255</sup> On 22 Dec, at least six people died and up to 50 others went missing after another landslide at a Hpakant jade mine.<sup>256</sup> Global Witness said that “a toxic combination of lawlessness, conflict and corruption ha[d] set the stage for yet another preventable tragedy,” stating that the coup had “torpedoed hopes for urgently-needed reforms for Myanmar’s jade sector.”<sup>257</sup>

### **International companies, China help junta cash in on mining profits**

On 2 Dec, it was reported that Burma had resumed exporting rare earths to China after reopening border gates in November,<sup>258</sup> which was likely to generate profits for junta-aligned armed groups controlling Kachin State areas where rare earths are mined.<sup>259</sup> On 15 Dec, Global Witness reported that junta soldiers and non-state armed groups were making money by systematically extorting payments for the right to dig rubies and other gemstones; and that the junta was profiting by holding gemstone fairs for unscrupulous buyers. Conservative estimates value Burma’s colored gemstone industry at an average USD 346-415 million/year, while other sources suggest it could be worth as much as five times more.<sup>260</sup>

Global Witness also pointed out that multinational jewelry companies Graff, Van Cleef & Arpels, and Pragnell, high-end auctions houses Sotheby’s and Christie’s, and mass market retailers Walmart and Intercolor were hiding behind the complexity of gemstone supply chains to sell Burmese rubies. Of over 30 international jewelers, auction houses and mass-market retailers, only four—Tiffany & Co., Signet Jewelers, Boodles, and Harry Winston—declared publicly that they had stopped sourcing gemstones from Burma. Global Witness urged States and international bodies to place bans on the import of all jade and gemstones from Burma.<sup>261</sup>

On 17 Dec, it was reported that a large group of Chinese visitors had arrived in Naypyidaw to attend a junta Gem Emporium 17–22 Dec, where around 780 raw jade lots and 330 pearl lots would likely be

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<sup>249</sup> Al Jazeera (1 Dec 2021) Climate danger grows in ‘vulnerable’ Myanmar after military coup

<sup>250</sup> Global Witness (15 Dec 2021) International ruby sales funding Myanmar military, armed groups and human rights abuses – buyers include top jewellery brands; Global Witness (15 Dec 2021) Conflict Rubies: How luxury jewellers risk funding military abuses in Myanmar

<sup>251</sup> Radio Free Asia (4 Dec 2021) Illegal gold mines operate unchecked in Myanmar’s Kachin state since coup

<sup>252</sup> EMG (8 Dec 2021) Kachin youths campaign against extraction of natural resources in Myitsone

<sup>253</sup> Mizzima (20 Dec 2021) At least 10 missing in jade mining landslide in Hpakant; Radio Free Asia (21 Dec 2021) One dead, dozens missing after landslide at jade mine in Myanmar’s Hpakant township

<sup>254</sup> Radio Free Asia (21 Dec 2021) One dead, dozens missing after landslide at jade mine in Myanmar’s Hpakant township

<sup>255</sup> Guardian (22 Dec 2021) Myanmar: dozens feared missing after landslide at jade mine

<sup>256</sup> EMG (27 Dec 2021) Search for missing people in old jade mine landslide in Hpakant stopped; Mizzima (25 Dec 2021) Myanmar rescuers call off jade mine landslide recovery operation

<sup>257</sup> Global Witness (22 Dec 2021) Myanmar jade mining disaster highlights coup’s deadly toll on Hpakant

<sup>258</sup> Global Times (2 Dec 2021) China, Myanmar resume rare-earth trade after border reopening, to ease prices shortly

<sup>259</sup> Myanmar Now (10 Dec 2021) Myanmar resumes trade of rare earth minerals with China

<sup>260</sup> Global Witness (15 Dec 2021) International ruby sales funding Myanmar military, armed groups and human rights abuses – buyers include top jewellery brands; Global Witness (15 Dec 2021) Conflict Rubies: How luxury jewellers risk funding military abuses in Myanmar

<sup>261</sup> Global Witness (15 Dec 2021) International ruby sales funding Myanmar military, armed groups and human rights abuses – buyers include top jewellery brands; Global Witness (15 Dec 2021) Conflict Rubies: How luxury jewellers risk funding military abuses in Myanmar

displayed and sold under a tender system.<sup>262</sup> Also on 17 Dec, Global Witness called the emporium the junta's latest attempt to raise revenue by looting the country's natural resources, showing its desperation to secure internationally-traded currency. Sales of jade and pearls were reportedly made in EUR and USD, respectively, and the regime was expected to earn 40-50% of total sales from taxes and through lots sold by its companies and crony networks. Global Witness said there needed to be much stronger international action to ensure that the junta cannot use the natural resource sector as a lifeline.<sup>263</sup>

### **Junta cements control over jade transactions as resistance bites**

On 20 Dec, junta forces raided two Mandalay-based gemstone companies allegedly engaged in illegal transactions. They arrested more than 400 jade traders and brokers, including 30 Chinese nationals, and charged at least 200 under the Myanmar Gemstone Law. The raids prompted dealers and customers to return to the junta-controlled Maha Aungmyay gemstone center, a major source of tax revenue. On 29 Dec, anti-junta armed group "Black Image" detonated two bombs at the center, calling it a "warning" to dealers who had resumed operations there. Gem dealers said they had no choice but to go back to work after being out of business for nearly two years. Many felt cornered between a junta that wants them to make money and resistance groups determined to deprive the regime of revenue.<sup>264</sup>

Local PDFs in Kani Township (Sagaing Region) carried out a series of attacks against military boats transporting jade on the Chindwin river during 12–18 Dec, killing at least 90 junta soldiers and sinking one ship.<sup>265</sup> On 24 Dec, it was reported that PDFs had confiscated jade that was being illegally transported on the Chindwin River and handed it over to the NUG.<sup>266</sup>

### **Oil and gas revenue keeps the junta afloat as France, US drag their feet over sanctions**

On 16 Dec, it was reported that junta-controlled Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) was expected to earn USD 1.5 billion from offshore and pipeline projects in 2021–2022. Despite growing calls for action against TotalEnergies and Chevron, neither Macron nor Biden have publicly moved to cut oil and gas revenue. Lobbying from Chevron and objections from Singapore and Thailand reportedly played a role in Biden's hesitation. Chevron spent USD 3.7 million on federal lobbying in the first half of 2021, with Burma listed as an area of focus. French authorities stated that they wanted to avoid adding to the burdens of Burma civilians through sanctions, while at the same time dangling the possibility of future EU sanctions on Burma's energy sector to activists.<sup>267</sup>

On 16 Dec, Justice for Myanmar (JfM) reported, citing leaked documents, that Min Aung Hlaing had personally given instructions about the Yetagun gas project, which was reportedly shut for most of 2021 due to technical problems and COVID-19. His check on Yetagun showed how vital oil and gas revenues are to the regime. MOGE reported that Yetagun was expected to generate around USD 22.37 million during Oct 2021–Mar 2022. The leaked documents also showed that state revenue for Yetagun was paid in USD into an account at a Singapore branch of Malaysian bank CIMB. JfM pointed out that this could potentially violate US sanctions, and urged the US Treasury to investigate.<sup>268</sup>

On 20 Dec, US-based Coast Capital, one of TotalEnergies' shareholders, called on the French firm to immediately discontinue its partnership with MOGE. Coast Capital said that it believed TotalEnergies was indirectly helping finance crimes against humanity in Myanmar, calling it one of "the most serious and egregious situations" it had ever encountered with a portfolio company. It also threatened to try and take action against the members of TotalEnergies' board.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> DVB, via Twitter (17 Dec 2021) [https://twitter.com/DVB\\_English/status/1471726532888457219](https://twitter.com/DVB_English/status/1471726532888457219); [https://twitter.com/DVB\\_English/status/1471726535010775041](https://twitter.com/DVB_English/status/1471726535010775041)

<sup>263</sup> Global Witness (17 Dec 2021) Myanmar junta's latest cash grab highlights need for stronger international response

<sup>264</sup> Myanmar Now (29 Dec 2021) Mandalay gemstone center bombed as 'warning' to dealers; DVB (23 Dec 2021) Over 200 Chinese and Burmese traders face prison for evading junta's jade tax

<sup>265</sup> Mizzima (21 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 21st December 2021

<sup>266</sup> Mizzima (24 Dec 2021) Spring Revolution Daily News for 24 December 2021

<sup>267</sup> AP (16 Dec 2021) Myanmar public urges gas sanctions to stop military funding

<sup>268</sup> JfM (16 Dec 2021) Leaked documents show Min Aung Hlaing personally concerned over oil and gas payments

<sup>269</sup> Business Wire (20 Dec 2021) Coast Capital Demands TotalEnergies Pull Out of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise

## Justice for Myanmar calls for action against companies working with the junta

On 20 Dec, Justice for Myanmar reported that POSCO International, LOTTE, Shangri-La Asia, Daiwa House Industry, Tokyo Tatemono, Okura Hotels & Resorts, Emerging Towns and Cities Singapore, and Hilton Worldwide were still in business with the junta's Quartermaster General (QMG) despite knowing that junta forces were committing atrocity crimes. JfM warned that continuing to make USD payments to the QMG was in violation of US sanctions, and urged the US Treasury to investigate.<sup>270</sup>

On 21 Dec, BankTrack and JfM revealed that major Japanese banks Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG), and Mizuho Financial Group had provided considerable loans and financial services to companies with ties to the junta, as well as loans to and investment to junta-linked projects. JfM said that, by doing so, the banks were contributing to the regime's atrocity crimes, and it urged them to immediately disengage.<sup>271</sup>

On 25 Dec, JfM reported that businesses belonging to KT Group and Ky-Tha Group, two conglomerates operated by the Kyaw Thaug family, were helping the junta generate revenue by leasing land from the Myanmar military and its conglomerates. They also brokered the sale of arms and related materiel for the junta, making them complicit in the regime's atrocities. JfM called for targeted sanctions against the two conglomerates and its directors and shareholders.<sup>272</sup>

## ACT withdraws from Burma as calls for boycott continue

On 13 Dec, it was reported that 97% of 400 workers surveyed by the Workers' Solidarity League of Burma did not support a current campaign by more than 180 Burma unions and civil society groups for foreign governments and companies to cut all economic ties with Burma—mostly out of fear they would lose their jobs. The president of the Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar said the potential for massive job losses was outweighed by the millions of people already starving from the coup's economic impact. She outlined plans to collect donations for those put out of work by the potential sanctions.<sup>273</sup>

On 15 Dec, Action, Collaboration, Transformation (ACT), an agreement between IndustriALL Global Union (IGU) and 20 international clothing brands to achieve living wages for garment workers through collective bargaining, announced the cessation of its operations in Burma. The decision followed the withdrawal of the Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar (IWMF) from its operations because it was no longer able to operate freely. Burma was designated an ACT priority country in 2018. In 2019–2020, the IWMF and an Employer Working group of ACT brand suppliers negotiated and agreed on a Freedom of Association Guideline and a corresponding Framework Dispute Resolution Mechanism.<sup>274</sup>

## Kirin resorts to international arbitration against military conglomerate

On 6 Dec, Japanese brewer Kirin Holdings filed for arbitration with the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) to resolve its dispute with military conglomerate Myanma Economic

## EU urged to strengthen sanctions as junta parades new equipment

On 15 Dec, the Myanmar Air Force marked its 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary by commissioning six Russian-made Yak-130 fighter jets, six Chinese-made K-8W trainer jets, a single French-made ATR 72-600 medium transport aircraft, two Chinese-made Y-12 light transports, and two French-made AS365N2 Dauphin multipurpose helicopters. On 24 Dec, the Navy commissioned a Ming-class submarine from China at a ceremony presided over by Min Aung Hlaing to mark its 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The junta is reportedly in negotiations with Russia to acquire another submarine.

On 17 Dec, Justice for Myanmar said the fact that Russia and China were arming the regime explained why the UNSC had utterly failed to take meaningful action on Myanmar. It urged France to investigate how the junta had acquired French-made aircrafts despite the EU's arms embargo; noting that the military had a history of bypassing arms controls through private brokers and crony-run airlines. JfM also called out the EU for not targeting entities related to military procurement, in contrast with the US, UK and Canada.

Justice for Myanmar (17 Dec 2021) UN Security Council members complicit in arms sales to terrorist Myanmar military junta; Shephard (22 Dec 2021) Myanmar commissions potpourri of aircraft types; Irrawaddy (27 Dec 2021) China Provides Submarine to Myanmar Junta

<sup>270</sup> Justice for Myanmar (20 Dec 2021) International Businesses Linked to the Quartermaster General

<sup>271</sup> Justice for Myanmar (21 Dec 2021) Major Japanese Banks Linked to Myanmar Military Cartel

<sup>272</sup> Justice for Myanmar (25 Dec 2021) The Kyaw Thaug family's business with the Myanmar military

<sup>273</sup> Reuters (13 Dec 2021) As Myanmar unions demand sanctions, garment workers fear for their jobs

<sup>274</sup> ACT (15 Dec 2021) ACT ceases engagement in Myanmar

Holdings Limited (MEHL) over ending their joint venture. Kirin also announced it had obtained a provisional injunction from Singapore's high court, ordering MEHL to suspend proceedings to end their partnership, on 2 Dec.<sup>275</sup> A Japanese lawyer pointed out that, even if the SIAC rules in favor of Kirin, junta-controlled courts in Burma could still bypass the decision. Although Burma ratified the UN Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards in 2013, domestic legislation allows courts to refuse enforcement in cases that hurt the national interest.<sup>276</sup>

On 15 Dec, Kirin's CEO stated that continuing business in Burma remained a top priority, arguing that a possible departure would open the door to replacement companies that do not respect human rights. Kirin plans to establish a new joint venture with a "completely local independent company" with no military links; and has reportedly already selected a prospective partner.<sup>277</sup>

### **National Unity Government** (more details at CRPH & NUG [tracker](#))

In December, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Electricity and Energy blacklisted 322 civil servants working for the junta, for threatening or otherwise harassing civil servants who joined the CDM.<sup>278</sup> On 22 Dec, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Investment wrote to private bank owners, again urging them not to discriminate against or oppress employees participating in the CDM.<sup>279</sup>

On 1 Dec, the NUG issued an ordinance revoking the power of representation by the Managing Director of MOGE vis-à-vis local and international investors, business organizations, and any other entities. It promised to honor all agreements made by legitimate governments, and conferred power of representation (of MOGE) to the NUG Deputy Minister of Electricity and Energy.<sup>280</sup>

On 7 Dec, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Investment announced a 10,000,000 MMK special prize in the Spring Revolution lottery, from December. It noted that 70% of monthly lottery revenue would be rewarded to CDM civil servants, and that its lottery had already knocked out the junta's.<sup>281</sup>

On 13 Dec, it was reported that the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Investment had announced that USD Tether (USDT)—called a stablecoin because a single coin's value is designed to stay at a value of USD 1—would replace MMK as Burma's official currency. The Boston (US) Federal Reserve president once called USDT a potential financial stability risk.<sup>282</sup> On 28 Dec, the Ministry announced that people could purchase NUG bonds with USDT or with cash through global NUG bond representatives.<sup>283</sup>

The NUG and individual ministries made several statements in December acknowledging horrific junta atrocity crimes, expressing condolences to the families of victims, and calling for accountability. Permanent Burma Ambassador to the UN Kyaw Moe Tun continued to represent Burma's legitimate government from New York. On 10 Dec, he gave a message at the UN General Assembly, calling for greater humanitarian assistance for over half a million displacement persons and three million people in need of aid, and criticizing the junta for continuing to create humanitarian need while simultaneously blocking humanitarian aid.<sup>284</sup> On 27 Dec, he wrote to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, calling

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<sup>275</sup> Nikkei Asia (6 Dec 2021) Kirin seeks arbitration to end venture with Myanmar military

<sup>276</sup> Nikkei Asia (7 Dec 2021) Kirin says leaving Myanmar is 'last resort' as it tries arbitration

<sup>277</sup> Nikkei Asia (15 Dec 2021) Kirin CEO: top priority is to continue brewing in Myanmar

<sup>278</sup> NUG (12 Dec 2021) Announcement 5/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/246701247550514>; NUG (18 Dec 2021) Prime Minister's Office Statement 6/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/250442160509756>; NUG (22 Dec 2021) Statement 7/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/252618763625429>; NUG (27 Dec 2021) Office of the Prime Minister, Statement 8/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/255740086646630>; NUG (28 Dec 2021) Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Statement 20/2021, <https://web.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/256350999918872>; NUG (29 Dec 2021) Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Statement 21/2021, <https://web.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/257134923173813>

<sup>279</sup> NUG (22 Dec) Ministry of Planning, Finance and Investment letter to bank employers, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/252646263622679>

<sup>280</sup> NUG (1 Dec 2021) Ordinance 1/2021, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/240135204873785>

<sup>281</sup> NUG (7 Dec 2021) Ministry of Planning, Finance and Investment, Statement 14/2021: Announcement of a special prize for the Spring Revolution lottery, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/243622534525052>

<sup>282</sup> Mizzima (13 Dec 2021) NUG to replace Kyat with cryptocurrency

<sup>283</sup> NUG (28 Dec 2021) Ministry of Planning, Finance and Investment, Announcement that NUG bonds can be purchased with USDT Stablecoin, <https://web.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/256546096566029>

<sup>284</sup> Kyaw Moe Tun (10 Dec 2021) Statement by Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the 50th Plenary Meeting of the 76th United Nations General Assembly under Agenda Item 75 (a) to (c): "Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance of the United Nations, including Special Assistance", <https://www.facebook.com/NUGMyanmar/posts/245942694293036>

for greater UN action, including an independent and impartial investigation into the junta's actions, including the Christmas Eve Massacre.<sup>285</sup>

Likewise, NUG ministers continued to push for greater international action to recognize the NUG, sanction the junta, foster accountability, and deliver humanitarian aid. On 15 Dec, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management responded to the 10 Dec civil society statement calling on international groups not to sign MOUs with the junta, saying the call was in line with the Ministry's own position and UN guidelines. It reiterated that all cooperation should be conducted through NUG channels, based on international regulations and basic international humanitarian aid principles.<sup>286</sup>

On 16 Dec, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appealed to the government of Thailand to allow IDPs to seek refuge in Thailand, and to the international community to give urgent humanitarian and emergency response to these people, following attacks in Lay Kay Kaw.<sup>287</sup> On 20 Dec, the Ministry of Human Rights called on the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to protect and assist those unjustly arrested by the junta, and called for an independent investigation into human rights violations and other violence inside prisons, as well as hold perpetrators accountable.<sup>288</sup>

On 28 Dec, the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) called on the UN Security Council and the international community to designate the junta a terrorist organization, prosecute the junta and end the culture of impunity, impose a No Fly Zone, and deliver humanitarian assistance.<sup>289</sup>

### **International responses** (more details at international response [tracker](#))

On 1 Dec, the UN credentials committee decided to postpone the decision on Burma's credentials once again. NUG ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun was allowed to continue representing Burma at the General Assembly temporarily.<sup>290</sup> On 20 Dec, the junta shut down the office of the UN Special Envoy for Myanmar Christine Burgener,<sup>291</sup> reportedly in retaliation for UN sanctions and condemnation of the junta's illegal power grab.<sup>292</sup> On 19 Dec, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burma Tom Andrews said the international community should stop engaging with the junta and impose targeted, coordinated sanctions.<sup>293</sup> On 27 Dec, UN Special Envoy to the Secretary General for Burma Noleen Heyzer announced she was consulting with stakeholders with the hope of facilitating a Burma-led peace process. Heyzer vowed to mobilize coherent international action.<sup>294</sup>

On 28 Dec, Heyzer met with Cambodian Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to discuss collaborating to distribute humanitarian aid. On 30 Dec, they announced that they would work closely to deliver humanitarian aid and COVID-19 vaccines to Burma.<sup>295</sup>

Junta-appointed ministers participated in four ASEAN events in December, including the 1–2 Dec 18th annual meeting of the Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF),<sup>296</sup> the ASEAN-Russia Naval Exercise,<sup>297</sup> and the 14 Dec Thailand Ministerial Special Meeting on ASEAN-China Science, Technology, and Innovation, marking 30 years of ASEAN-China dialogue relations.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Kyaw Moe Tun (27 Dec 2021) Letter from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations, New York, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/256271053260200>

<sup>286</sup> NUG (15 Dec 2021) Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management Statement on the civil society statement on humanitarian assistance and MOUs, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/249813930572579>

<sup>287</sup> NUG (16 Dec 2021) Minister Urgent appeal for safe passage of refugees in Thailand – Myanmar border and immediate emergency and humanitarian response to those affected by caused by the junta's offensive attacks in Lay Kay Kaw, Karen State, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/249521297268509>

<sup>288</sup> NUG (20 Dec 2021) Ministry of Human Rights Statement on the violent tortures inside prisons, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/251951303692175>

<sup>289</sup> National Unity Consultative Council (28 Dec 2021) Statement 2/2021, <https://web.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/256457719908200>

<sup>290</sup> AP (1 Dec 2021) Action delayed on Myanmar and Afghan requests for UN seats

<sup>291</sup> Irrawaddy (21 Dec 2021) Myanmar Junta Shatters UN Special Envoy's Office

<sup>292</sup> Irrawaddy (20 Dec 2021) Junta Watch: Myanmar Coup Leader Seeks Divine Assistance; Picking a Fight With the UN and More

<sup>293</sup> AP (20 Dec 2021) UN rapporteur: Do more to resolve Rohingya crisis

<sup>294</sup> UN Myanmar (27 Dec 2021) Statement Attributable to the United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar Ms. Noleen Heyzer

<sup>295</sup> Phnom Penh Post (31 Dec 2021) Sokhonn and UN's envoy on Myanmar urge humanitarian relief

<sup>296</sup> GNLM (4 Dec 2021) Myanmar National Human Rights Commission joins Regional Conference on Prison Reform, 18th annual meeting of Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF)

<sup>297</sup> GNLM (7 Dec 2021) Naval vessel (Kyansittha) returns from ASEAN-Russia Naval Exercise

<sup>298</sup> GNLM (15 Dec 2021) MoST Union minister joins Ministerial Special Meeting on ASEAN-China Science, Technology and Innovation

On 14 Dec, the junta Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a coordination meeting with the Management Task Force of ASEAN's Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management.<sup>299</sup>

On 2 Dec, it was reported that junta-appointed ministers would visit **Cambodia**. Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen said that he would step up efforts to engage with the junta and resolve the crisis,<sup>300</sup> and that the junta had a right to participate in ASEAN meetings.<sup>301</sup> Critics saw Hun Sen's statements and official visits as de facto recognition of the illegitimate regime.<sup>302</sup> On 23 Dec, Hun Sen defended his position and said ASEAN would crumble without active participation of all members.<sup>303</sup> On 15 Dec, he said that Cambodia foreign minister Prak Sokhonn would take the role of ASEAN envoy to Burma.<sup>304</sup>

On 7 Dec, the Myanmar-**China** Bilateral Cooperation group met to discuss major projects to reduce poverty, develop infrastructure, human resources, and promote cross-border trade.<sup>305</sup> On 23 Dec, the junta reported that Chinese officials remained wary of restarting infrastructure projects amidst a volatile situation, and encouraged China to resume these projects.<sup>306</sup>

On 1 Dec, **Russia** President Vladimir Putin said the situation in Burma should be resolved without external interference and through political dialogue. Putin hoped the friendly relations between Russia and Burma would continue along military, technical, educational, and economic tracks.<sup>307</sup>

On 7 Dec, it was reported that the NUG had sent a request to establish an embassy in Tokyo, to which Japan's foreign ministry made no reply.<sup>308</sup> On 20 Dec, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that the National Defense Academy of Japan was hosting eight junta military cadets as part of a military cooperation program. It called on the Japanese government to immediately suspend the program and to cut ties with the junta.<sup>309</sup>

On 30 Dec, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (EU HR/VP) Josep Borrell called the junta's recent attacks "appalling," and said the EU stood ready to impose further sanctions on the regime, as well as support the UN Special Envoy on Myanmar and the implementation of ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus.<sup>310</sup>

On 10 Dec, the **US** imposed new sanctions against people and entities linked to Burma. These sanctions were imposed in collaboration with **Canada** and the **UK**.<sup>311</sup> On 15 Dec, the US Senate passed a bipartisan amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), requiring the US administration to present to Congress within sixty days a strategy to impose costs on the junta, legitimize representative organizations like the NUG, restore democratic governance, and foster national reconciliation.<sup>312</sup> President Biden signed the NDAA into law on 27 Dec.<sup>313</sup> On 24 Dec, The US Embassy in Burma made a joint statement with heads of state from **Australia**, the **EU**, **Canada**, **Czech Republic**, **Denmark**, **Finland**, **France**, **Germany**, **Italy**, **Netherlands**, **Spain**, **Sweden**, **New Zealand**, **Norway**, **Switzerland**, and the **UK**, condemning the violations of international humanitarian law and escalating violent military offensive in Karen state.<sup>314</sup>

On 16 Dec, junta leader Min Aung Hlaing welcomed **India**'s Ambassador to Burma to discuss cooperation measures, COVID-19 aid, and bilateral trade and economic cooperation.<sup>315</sup> On 23 Dec, India's Ministry of External Affairs reported that Foreign Minister Shringla was denied the right to see

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<sup>299</sup> GNLM (15 Dec 2021) Myanmar to distribute second phase of ASEAN humanitarian assistance

<sup>300</sup> NHK Japan (2 Dec 2021) Cambodia to invite Myanmar foreign minister

<sup>301</sup> Reuters (6 Dec 2021) Cambodian PM says Myanmar junta has right to attend ASEAN

<sup>302</sup> Bangkok Post (13 Dec 2021) Hun Sen's diplomatic test in Myanmar

<sup>303</sup> Radio Free Asia (23 Dec 2021) Cambodia's Hun Sen rejects criticism over Myanmar trip

<sup>304</sup> AP (15 Dec 2021) Cambodia's foreign minister set to be ASEAN envoy to Myanmar

<sup>305</sup> GNLM (8 Dec 2021) Meeting on Myanmar-China Bilateral Cooperation held

<sup>306</sup> Irrawaddy (23 Dec 2021) Myanmar Junta Pushing China to Restart Stalled Infrastructure Projects

<sup>307</sup> TASS (1 Dec 2021) Domestic situation in Myanmar should be settled without external meddling, Putin says

<sup>308</sup> Japan Times (7 Dec 2021) Myanmar's shadow government asks Japan to recognize its legitimacy

<sup>309</sup> Human Rights Watch (20 Dec 2021) Japan: Cut Defense Ties with Myanmar Military

<sup>310</sup> EU External Action Service (30 Dec 2021) Myanmar: Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell on the recent escalation of violence

<sup>311</sup> Reuters (13 Dec 2021) U.S. imposes sweeping human rights sanctions on China, Myanmar and North Korea

<sup>312</sup> Office of Mitch McConnell (15 Dec 2021) Senate Passes McConnell's NDAA Amendment to Support Democracy in Burma

<sup>313</sup> Reuters (27 Dec 2021) U.S. President Biden signs \$770 billion defense bill

<sup>314</sup> US Embassy in Burma (24 Dec 2021) Joint Statement on Attacks on Civilians in Karen State

<sup>315</sup> GNLM (17 Dec 2021) State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Indian Ambassador to Myanmar



Aung San Suu Kyi during an official visit.<sup>316</sup> Shringla made a statement encouraging a prompt return to democracy, the release of political prisoners, and the cessation of violence through dialogue.<sup>317</sup>

### Responses to specific issues/incidents

On 10 Dec, OHCHR said that evidence reported daily showed that the junta was responsible for serious offenses, including violating rights to life, fair trial, freedom of expression, and freedom from torture.<sup>318</sup> Junta soldiers have fired against unarmed civilians, shelled and burned residential areas, and committed widespread sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>319</sup> On 10 Dec, the Myanmar Accountability Project lodged a complaint against junta leader Min Aung Hlaing at the ICC for crimes against humanity.<sup>320</sup> Save the Children called the Christmas Eve Massacre in Karenni State a violation of international humanitarian law On 25 Dec; as did UN Aid Chief Martin Griffiths on 26 Dec,<sup>321</sup> UNICEF and the US similarly condemned the attacks.<sup>322</sup>

On 15 Dec, the US announced plans to confirm its stance on whether the 2017 clearance operations against the Rohingya constituted genocide.<sup>323</sup> On 16 Dec, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution, “Situation of Human Rights of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar,” vowing to support the Rohingya and find a permanent solution to their enduring plight.<sup>324</sup> On 18 Dec, Human Rights Watch (HRW) urged Bangladesh to reverse the decision to close thousands of home-based and community-led schools for Rohingya refugees, which it said was a violation of the right to education on a massive scale.<sup>325</sup> On 13-19 Dec, UN Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews visited Cox’s Bazar and expressed concerns over the safety and services provided for the refugees. Andrews also backed reports that ARSA criminals were terrorizing refugees, a claim that Bangladesh has denied.<sup>326</sup>

On 6 Dec, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet called the sentencing of Aung San Suu Kyi a politically-motivated sham trial. The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar called the trial a theatre of the absurd and a gross human rights violation, and urged the international community to take more decisive action.<sup>327</sup> Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International condemned the rulings,<sup>328</sup> and ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights called them a “travesty of justice.”<sup>329</sup> The EU HR/VP said the trials and verdicts were a step towards the full dismantling of the rule of law in Burma.<sup>330</sup> The British foreign ministry called the trial an appalling attempt by the military regime to stifle opposition and suppress freedom and democracy. The Chinese Foreign ministry responded by stating its hopes that all parties in Burma could advance the hard-earned democratic transition under a constitutional and legal framework. Japanese officials called the verdict an unfavorable development.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Times of India (24 Dec 2021) Foreign Secretary request to meet Suu Kyi turned down

<sup>317</sup> Irrawaddy (23 Dec 2021) Will India Serve as a Catalyst to Solve Myanmar Crisis?

<sup>318</sup> Reuters (10 Dec 2021) U.N. decries 'escalation of grave human rights abuses' in Myanmar; UN News (10 Dec 2021) Rights abuses in Myanmar 'deepening on an unprecedented scale'

<sup>319</sup> Irrawaddy (23 Dec 2021) Myanmar Regime Airstrikes Break International Law :NUG

<sup>320</sup> Jurist (13 Dec 2021) Myanmar military leader Min Aung Hlaing accused of crimes against humanity

<sup>321</sup> CNN (26 Dec 2021) More than 30 reported killed, Save the Children staff missing, in Myanmar attack; UN News (26 Dec 2021) Myanmar :UN humanitarian chief calls for probe into 'grievous' attack on civilians

<sup>322</sup> UNICEF (28 Dec 2021) UNICEF condemns reported killing of at least 35 people, including four children and two humanitarian workers, in Kayah State, Myanmar; US Embassy in Burma (28 Dec 2021) On the Attacks in Kayah State and Throughout Burma

<sup>323</sup> Reuters (15 Dec 2021) Blinken says U.S. to look at more Myanmar measures, plans ASEAN summit

<sup>324</sup> GNLM (18 Dec 2021) Myanmar reiterates its objection against the country-specific resolution on Myanmar

<sup>325</sup> Human Rights Watch (18 Dec 2021) Bangladesh: Rohingya Refugee Schools Face Closure

<sup>326</sup> Radio Free Asia (20 Dec 2021) UN rapporteur: Rohingya militants kill, abuse refugees in Bangladesh camps

<sup>327</sup> UN News (6 Nov 2021) Myanmar: UN deplors conviction and sentencing of Aung San Suu Kyi

<sup>328</sup> Human Rights Watch (6 Dec 2021) Myanmar: Aung San Suu Kyi Sentenced; Amnesty International (6 Dec 2021) Myanmar: Unbridled destruction of freedoms as Aung San Suu Kyi sentenced

<sup>329</sup> Myanmar Now (6 Dec 2021) Junta sentences Suu Kyi, Win Myint to four years in prison each

<sup>330</sup> Council of the European Union (6 Dec 2021) Myanmar/Burma: Declaration by the High Representative Josep Borrell on behalf of the European Union on the situation

<sup>331</sup> Reuters (6 Nov 2021) Reactions to conviction, sentencing of Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi