



BN 2022/2051: 20 Jan 2022

FACT SHEET: Urgent international action needed to address junta's crimes

The UN Security Council must take concrete action to address the junta's widespread and systematic, and increasingly frequent and severe, attacks on civilians in Burma.

- The Security Council called for accountability in its 29 December 2021 press statement.¹ Accountability is precisely what is needed: the Security Council must adopt a resolution referring the junta's crimes to the International Criminal Court; and the Security Council and other UN bodies must act to achieve accountability and urge ASEAN to work with the UN.
- During the first 11 months of the junta's attempted coup (1 February–31 December), there were **7,686 armed clashes and attacks on civilians** (in every administrative area of Burma), a **715% increase from the same period in 2020** (943). The violence was comparable to Syria (7,742), and greater than in Afghanistan (6,481), Yemen (6,270), or Iraq (3,732). In the last four months of 2021, Burma outpaced the other four countries.²

ARMED CLASHES AND ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS, FEB–DEC 2021 (from ACLED)

	Syria	Burma	Afghan.	Yemen	Iraq
Feb	777	210	778	606	212
Mar	716	783	816	742	219
Apr	616	665	981	629	280
May	654	851	1,119	460	465
Jun	817	659	1,136	494	389
Jul	837	507	842	521	362
Aug	725	611	485	501	490
Sep	696	801	64	525	444
Oct	651	784	73	586	373
Nov	631	930	78	612	231
Dec	622	885	109	594	267
Total	7,742	7,686	6,481	6,270	3,732

- The widespread and systematic nature of junta troops' massacres and other atrocity crimes suggest that they are not isolated incidents, but rather reflect orders from the junta's highest levels.
- In ethnic States, the junta increased conflict with ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), and it relied on its Border Guard Forces (BGFs) and other aligned ethnic militias to fight EAOs. In urban and non-EAO-controlled areas, the junta engaged in asymmetrical warfare with civilian resistance groups, applying traditional battlefield tactics to urban environments.
- Junta security forces (military and police) have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, and violated international humanitarian law and numerous Security Council resolutions (e.g., 2601, 2573, 2535, 2475, and 2467).³ They have shelled and torched villages; targeted civilian objects such as churches, schools, and hospitals; attacked health and humanitarian aid workers; used civilians as porters and human shields; tortured and killed detainees; raped women; and committed perfidy. They have killed at least 2,164 civilians,⁴ and arrested over 11,000.⁵

Junta troops have destroyed food stores and blocked humanitarian aid:

- On 10 June, in Moe Bye, Pekon Township (Shan), junta forces burned 80 sacks of rice and medical supplies meant for IDPs.⁶ In July, it was reported that the junta was only allowing around 450kg of rice—not enough to feed residents—to enter Mindat (Chin State) each day, despite the existence

¹ UN (29 Dec 2021) Security Council Press Statement on Situation in Myanmar (SC/14754)

² ACLED Data Export Tool (updated 12 Jan 2022), 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.

³ These resolutions refer to attacks on schools (2601), attacks on civilian infrastructure (2573), protection of youth in conflict (2535), protection of persons with disabilities in conflict (2475), and women, peace and security (2467).

⁴ Media Monitor Collective (10 Jan 2022) SAC Violence During the Coup

⁵ Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (19 Jan 2022) Daily Briefing in Relation to the Military Coup

⁶ Irrawaddy (11 Jun 2021) Regime Destroys Food and Medicine for Refugees in Southeastern Myanmar

of a ceasefire and an agreement allowing vehicles to bring food into Mindat.⁷ In December, Human Rights Watch condemned the junta's recent travel restrictions for humanitarian workers, blocks on access roads and aid convoys, and destruction of non-military supplies.⁸

The junta intentionally deprived people of oxygen, and targeted doctors and health workers:

- At the height of the third wave of COVID-19 in Burma, the junta ordered that oxygen be denied to clinics and ordinary citizens; doctors accused the junta of funneling supplies to military hospitals; and several incidents were reported of soldiers forcibly confiscating oxygen from charities.⁹ By November, junta forces had arrested at least 284 healthcare workers and killed 31; WHO figures show that in 2021 Burma was one of the most dangerous countries in the world for health workers.¹⁰

The junta committed massacres and atrocities, including the following incidents:

- In July, junta troops killed at least 40 people in Kani Township (Sagaing Region), with many of the bodies showing clear signs of torture. Earlier in the month, over 10,000 people had fled Kani because of junta raids in which soldiers robbed villagers, laid landmines, stole and destroyed property, and dumped insecticides into water reservoirs, poisoning water supplies.¹¹
- In early September, the junta terrorized civilians in Thantlang Township (Chin State) by firing guns and heavy artillery, both indiscriminately and aimed at Thantlang town,¹² before stationing 200 soldiers in the town and commencing daily fly-overs.¹³ On 17 September, junta forces killed a Baptist pastor and cut off his finger to take his wedding ring.¹⁴ On 19 September, junta forces opened fire on the town with heavy weapons and artillery, burning down 19 houses and causing 8,000 residents to flee.¹⁵ Thantlang was still a ghost town on 29 October, when junta forces destroyed more than 160 of its 2,000 homes. Two churches and a building attached to a third caught fire, as did several local civil society organization offices and a Save the Children office.¹⁶
- On 7 December, in Salingyi Township (Sagaing Region), junta troops bound 11 civilians, including five children aged 14–17, and tortured them before burning them alive.¹⁷ 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 ashes of those the junta burned.¹⁸
- On 12 December, in Gaung Kwe, Myaung Township (Sagaing Region), junta troops killed and burned five people, including one reported as having a cognitive disability.¹⁹
- On 24 December, junta forces captured at least 37 men, women, and children fleeing conflict in Moso village, Hpruso Township (Karenni State), tied the victims' hands behind their backs, placed them in cars, and then torched the vehicles, burning them to death. The troops also killed four Karenni BGF members who attempted to stop them.²⁰ Save the Children confirmed that two of its staff, traveling home from a humanitarian mission, were among those killed.²¹
- On 7–9 January, a local resistance group found the dead bodies of 10 male civilians, including a 13-year-old child, in Matupi Township (Chin State). The victims were among 11 villagers abducted by junta troops while traveling between villages on 6–7 January, and were used as human shields

⁷ Myanmar Now (10 Jul 2021) Transport of food, medicine restricted despite temporary ceasefire extension in Mindat

⁸ Human Rights Watch (13 Dec 2021) Myanmar: Junta Blocks Lifesaving Aid

⁹ New York Times (15 Jul 2021) As Covid Rages in Myanmar, Army Hoards Oxygen, Doctors Say; Irrawaddy (12 Jul 2021) Myanmar Suffering From Severe Shortage of Medical Oxygen as COVID-19 Cases Spike

¹⁰ Physicians for Human Rights (23 Dec 2021) Violence Against or Obstruction of Health Care in Myanmar, February–November 2021; Associated Press (7 Jul 2021) In Myanmar, the military and police declare war on medics; WHO (updated 30 Jul 2021) Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care

¹¹ Myanmar Now (30 Jul 2021) Junta soldiers massacred at least 28 people in resistance stronghold of Kani this month, say residents; Myanmar Now (13 Jul 2021) Locals find bodies in forest after 15 men 'massacred' in Sagaing Region; Irrawaddy (3 Aug 2021) Junta Massacres 40 People in Myanmar Resistance Stronghold During July; Irrawaddy (19 Aug 2021) Myanmar's Shadow Govt Reports Junta's Massacres of Civilians to UN Security Council

¹² Myanmar Now (8 Sep 2021) Civilian allegedly injured in clash in Chin State capital; Myanmar Now (11 Sep 2021) Two junta soldiers reportedly killed in Chin State battle

¹³ Myanmar Now (16 Sep 2021) Entire population of Chin village sheltering along Indian border, in need of aid

¹⁴ Myanmar Now (20 Sep 2021) Junta soldiers kill pastor and cut off his finger as houses burn in Chin town

¹⁵ Irrawaddy (20 Sep 2021) Residents of Town in Myanmar's Chin State Flee Junta Artillery Barrage

¹⁶ Myanmar Now (30 Oct 2021) More than 160 homes burn down in junta shelling of Chin State town

¹⁷ Radio Free Asia (7 Dec 2021) Myanmar troops massacre, burn 11 villagers in Sagaing; Myanmar Now (7 Dec 2021) Junta soldiers massacre and burn 11, including teenagers, during raid on village in Sagaing

¹⁸ Myanmar Now (9 Dec 2021) Done Taw villagers find another body after massacre of 11 men and boys

¹⁹ Myanmar Now (14 Dec 2021) Soldiers kill and burn five people in Sagaing Region village after clashes with PDF

²⁰ 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

²¹ Al Jazeera (25 Dec 2021) Save the Children says two staff missing after attack in Myanmar

before the troops killed them. The 13-year-old boy was found with his throat slit; others showed injuries from being hit with rifle butts, slashed, cut, and shot. Several bodies had been stripped naked and had their mouths covered. The 11th villager had not been found at the time of reporting.²²

The junta unleashed air strikes on civilian communities across the country:

- In the second half of December, junta forces conducted repeated air strikes around Lay Kay Kaw (Karen State), displacing around 10,000 civilians, around half into Thailand.²³ Air strikes in Karen State on 27 March 2021, coinciding with Burma's Armed Forces Day, marked the military's first air assaults in Karen State in 25 years;²⁴ that offensive in Hpapun left 83,000 people displaced.²⁵
- On 8 January 2022, junta forces began air strikes in Loikaw, the capital of Karenni State, displacing around 40,000 civilians.²⁶ Even before the air strikes began, over half of Karenni State's 300,000 residents were displaced.²⁷ On 16–17 January, junta jets bombed an IDP camp in nearby Hpruso Township, killing a child, three medical workers, and two other civilians.²⁸

Heightened risk of atrocity crimes:

- The junta has armed and relied upon paramilitary *Pyu Saw Htee* groups, which have terrorized and killed civilians, actively distributed misinformation, raided villages, and torched properties.
- Unprecedented casualty rates (over 2,000 just in September–October 2021),²⁹ defections (at least 8,000 as of 1 December),³⁰ and growing internal discontent³¹ have hit the junta hard. In a desperate attempt to maintain troop numbers, the junta has recalled veterans and subjected troops' wives and children to military trainings.³² These moves violate international law, Burma's human rights commitments, and Security Council resolutions.

Nationwide crackdown, crimes against humanity

The junta has committed numerous crimes against humanity, including murder, enforced disappearance, torture, sexual violence, severe deprivation of liberty, and other inhumane acts. Human Rights Watch said that the nature of the junta's broad-based and frequently consistent response reflected regime policy rather than the actions of individual security personnel.

Junta forces used lethal battlefield tactics and weapons against peaceful protesters in several cities. On 9 April, Light Infantry Division (LID) 77 and other junta units killed at least 82 demonstrators in Bago. On 5 December, junta soldiers opened fire on and rammed a truck into anti-junta demonstrators in Yangon Region, killing at least five civilians. Colonel Naing Bo Bo from Infantry Battalion 82, the officer who organized the ramming attack, was later honored for his "brave services and heroism" by junta leader Min Aung Hlaing.

They have also tortured detainees nationwide in a methodical and systemic way, mostly in military compounds. LID 99, which spearheaded the 2017 crackdown on the Rohingya, tortured nine villagers from Kani Township (Sagaing Region) on 19 June. The junta turned Mandalay Palace into a torture center and subjected detainees in Yangon's notorious Insein Prison to physical violence. On 19 December, 89 inmates were severely beaten, put into solitary confinement, and reportedly denied medical treatment. Women in junta custody are frequently subjected to sexual assault and other forms of psychological and physical abuse.

Human Rights Watch (31 Jul 2021) Myanmar: Coup Leads to Crimes Against Humanity; Amnesty International (11 Mar 2021) Myanmar: Vast arsenal and notorious troops deployed during nationwide 'killing spree' protest crackdown – new research; Washington Post (25 Aug 2021) Anatomy of a crackdown; Myanmar Now (5 Dec 2021) Regime troops ram into protesters, killing at least five; Irrawaddy (6 Jan 2022) Yangon Vehicle Ramming Commander Honored by Myanmar Junta Leader; Associated Press (28 Oct 2021) Myanmar military uses systematic torture across country; Myanmar Now (13 Jul 2021) Locals find bodies in forest after 15 men 'massacred' in Sagaing Region; Myanmar Now (3 Jan 2022) Fresh evidence emerges of brutal torture of prisoners inside Mandalay Palace; Myanmar Now (14 Dec 2021) Dozens of Insein Prison inmates beaten, put in solitary confinement after protest, lawyers say; Myanmar Now (14 Dec 2021) Dozens of Insein Prison inmates beaten, put in solitary confinement after protest, lawyers say

²² Myanmar Now (10 Jan 2022) Bodies of 10 civilians used as human shields discovered in Matupi; Irrawaddy (10 Jan 2022) Ten Civilians Murdered by Junta in Western Myanmar

²³ Irrawaddy (27 Dec 2021) Myanmar Regime Continues to Shell Karen State Border Town

²⁴ Karen Peace Support Network (May 2021) Terror from the Skies

²⁵ Irrawaddy (18 Jan 2022) The Worst Myanmar Regime Airstrikes on Civilians

²⁶ Irrawaddy (12 Jan 2022) Myanmar Junta Airstrikes Continue in Kayah State

²⁷ Kantarawaddy Times (15 Dec 2021) Displaced Civilians Still Hungry Despite Aid Reaching Camps In Karenni State

²⁸ Irrawaddy (18 Jan 2022) The Worst Myanmar Regime Airstrikes on Civilians

²⁹ Irrawaddy (11 Nov 2021) Myanmar Junta Loses 1,300 Soldiers Killed Over Last Month: NUG (citing NUG (11 Nov 2021) Myanmar Conflict Summary (Monthly), <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/227353192818653>)

³⁰ Myanmar Now (8 Dec 2021) Police officers who joined Civil Disobedience Movement in Kalay form their own law enforcement service

³¹ Radio Free Asia (6 Dec 2021) Military families increasingly voice dissent over junta leadership

³² Irrawaddy (7 Dec 2021) Myanmar Regime Makes Military Training Compulsory for Soldiers' Children; Mizzima (28 Dec 2021) Myanmar military veterans recalled, armed in Ayeyarwady region

All countries—including Russia, China, India, Ukraine, and Belarus—and businesses must stop providing weapons to the junta.

- On 18 June, the UN General Assembly adopted a non-binding resolution, calling upon “all Member States to prevent the flow of arms into Burma,”³³ with 119 countries supporting the resolution and only one country—Belarus—voting against it. While a Security Council resolution calling for a global arms embargo is still needed to halt the flow of arms to the military, two of the Security Council’s permanent members—China and Russia—are Burma’s top arms suppliers.
- Among those that abstained from the resolution were top arms dealers to Burma:
 - **China** sold USD 1.3 billion worth of military equipment to Burma over 2010–2019, and sales and deliveries appear to have continued since 1 February 2021.³⁴ On 15 December, the Burma Air Force commissioned multiple Chinese-licensed K-8W trainer jets that were manufactured in Burma, and two light transport planes manufactured in China.³⁵ On 24 December, the Burma Navy commissioned a second-hand Ming-class submarine.³⁶
 - **Russia** sold USD 807 million worth of equipment over 2010–2019, and expressed willingness to strengthen cooperation with the junta on several occasions in 2021. Days before the attempted coup began, Russia agreed to supply Burma with surface-to-air missile systems, surveillance drones, and radar equipment.³⁷ On 23 July, the head of Russia’s military cooperation agency stated that the country would supply the regime with SU-30 fighter jets.³⁸ On 15 December, the Burma Air Force commissioned six Russian-made Yak-130 fighter jets.³⁹
 - **India** holds over 51% of arms manufacturer Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL), which sent a remote-controlled weapon station to the junta via Mega Hill General Trading, a private military contractor based in Burma, in July 2021.⁴⁰ This sale followed at least seven shipments of mainly radar technology in February and March 2021.⁴¹ Technology shared by **French** company Thales has likely been transmitted to the regime through BEL, in violation of EU sanctions.⁴²
- **Ukraine** voted in favor of the General Assembly resolution but allowed arms exports and technology transfers to continue after 1 February 2021. In February, Motor Sich, a major manufacturer of engines for aircraft and missiles, shipped mechanical parts to Sky Aviator, a private supplier for the Burma military. In May, state-owned arms manufacturer Ukroboronservice shipped aircraft parts to Yatanarpon Aviation, a company headed by the son of a former junta member. Ukraine state-owned companies and the Burma military reportedly took steps before February 2021 to establish a joint armored personnel carrier and tank factory in Burma; it is unclear whether the factory has begun production.⁴³
- Burma accounted for 13% of **Belarus’** arms exports over 2014–2018. On 10 February 2021, an IL-62 cargo plane belonging to Belarusian cargo carrier Rada Airlines was seen at Yangon Airport, and assumed to be importing weapons into Burma from third countries. Rada was allowed to transport dangerous goods in Serbia, a known supplier of the Burma military,⁴⁴ until March 2021.⁴⁵
- On 15 December, the junta commissioned a **French**-made ATR 72-600 medium transport aircraft and one AS365N2 Dauphin multi-purpose helicopters despite EU sanctions on arms sales.⁴⁶ Given the Burma military’s history of bypassing arms controls through private brokers and crony-run businesses, sanctions related to entities involved in military procurement are crucial to stop the flow of arms to the junta.

³³ UN General Assembly (25 Jun 2021) Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 June 2021, A/RES/75/287

³⁴ Nikkei Asia (9 Feb 2021) Myanmar embraces Russian arms to offset China’s influence

³⁵ Shephard (22 Dec 2021) Myanmar commissions potpourri of aircraft types

³⁶ Irrawaddy (27 Dec 2021) China Provides Submarine to Myanmar Junta

³⁷ Nikkei Asia (9 Feb 2021) Myanmar embraces Russian arms to offset China’s influence

³⁸ Reuters (23 Jul 2021) Russia following through on fighter jet deals with Myanmar - report

³⁹ Shephard (22 Dec 2021) Myanmar commissions potpourri of aircraft types

⁴⁰ Justice for Myanmar (5 Oct 2021) Bharat Electronics Ltd arms sales continue via Myanmar military broker Mega Hill General Trading

⁴¹ Justice for Myanmar (14 Jun 2021) Bharat Electronics Limited supplying technology to Myanmar since attempted military coup

⁴² Reporters without Borders (30 Nov 2021) Civil society calls on French company Thales to put an end to suspected indirect support to the Myanmar Junta

⁴³ Justice for Myanmar (8 Sep 2021) Ukraine is arming the Myanmar military

⁴⁴ Burma Campaign UK (18 Jan 2022) Burma Briefing: Is Serbia still arming the Burmese military?

⁴⁵ Euroradio.fm (24 Jul 2021) Why Belarus opposes ban on arms sales to Myanmar

⁴⁶ Shephard (22 Dec 2021) Myanmar commissions potpourri of aircraft types