

Burma/Myanmar: Sustained nationwide resistance blocks illegal junta from gaining control

- Two years after the junta’s illegal attempt at grabbing power, the population continues its resistance, both armed and unarmed – politically, socially, economically.
- When the ongoing coup began on 1 Feb 2021 the population responded with nationwide protests, with civil servants walking out of their jobs *en masse*. The regime responded to peaceful civilian resistance with disproportionate lethal force. As of 10 Feb 2023, junta forces had killed at least 2,986 civilians and arrested a further 17,725. People sustained their protests by switching from large-scale demonstrations to flash mobs, silent strikes, and online activism.
- The Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and General Strike Committees had leading roles in nationwide protests. The CDM – notably joined by healthcare workers and civil servants – worked with ethnic groups to restart local education systems, set up mobile clinics, and fundraise for displaced people. Other activist organizations also started online and alternative education services.
- Newly formed People’s Defence Forces (PDFs) teamed up with Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs) to defend civilians from the junta’s increasing brutality. There were 9,356 armed clashes and attacks on civilians Feb 2021-Jan 2022; an 820% increase from the preceding year (1,140). Conflict levels further increased by 14.58% during Feb 2022-Jan 2023, with 10,721 clashes and attacks.
- Resistance forces established control over 52% of the territory. As of 30 Jun 2022, the regime only had stable control over 17%. Battlefield losses forced the junta to increase its reliance on artillery and airstrikes. The junta launched 449 airstrikes in 2022, up from 91 airstrikes during Feb-Dec 2021.
- The junta’s destructive efforts to gain territorial and political control have destroyed Burma’s economy, with unemployment, inflation, and poverty spiraling out of control. Despite this, people engaged in widespread boycotts on military products and bills, leading to a 35% decrease in fiscal revenue in 2021. This movement continued in 2022, especially in resistance-held areas.
- Civil society organizations (CSOs), along with ethnic health organizations, foreign actors, and the NUG, have



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been essential in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in Burma, by providing information, medical supplies, food, and financial assistance.

- The people of Burma also rallied around their legitimate leaders. In Mar 2021, MPs-elect formed the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) along with ethnic resistance organizations, the CDM, labor groups, and other resistance stakeholders. The NUCC is a multi-stakeholder platform oriented towards ending the military dictatorship and establishing of a Federal Democratic Union.
- In Apr 2021, MPs-elect formed the National Unity Government (NUG), Burma's most inclusive administration to date. The NUG helped tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and provide humanitarian aid to displaced people. The NUG also worked with PDFs and ethnic resistance organizations on armed resistance. The NUG ambassador remains as Burma's sole representative to the UN in New York despite junta attempts to unseat and assassinate him.
- The junta's escalated persecution of the Rohingya pushed over 3,500 to flee Bangladesh and Burma by sea in 2022; a 360% increase from 2021. At least 348 died or went missing at sea, making it one of the deadliest years since 2014. Despite this, Rohingya continued to express their solidarity with the resistance.

Nationwide protests

The attempted coup immediately sparked widespread non-violent resistance movements across Burma. ACLED reported there were 1,582 peaceful protests in the month of Feb 2021.¹ The junta responded to the uprising with lethal force against unarmed protesters. On 27 Mar 2021 alone, junta forces killed 114 protesters across Burma, including a man they burned alive, and 11 children.²

Activists eventually resorted to flash mobs and "silent strikes", including in rural areas and inside prisons.³ Pro-democracy activists promoted a 1 Feb 2022 silent strike to mark one year of the attempted coup, prompting the regime to threaten those involved with life imprisonment and property confiscation.⁴ This did not deter further silent strikes, including one to mark two years of the coup.⁵ Online resistance helped mainstream silent strikes, and facilitate other resistance such as defections of junta soldiers.⁶

In Feb 2021, 25 political, ethnic, and religious groups formed the General Strike Committee (GSC). Its missions were to form regional GSCs, organize protests and strikes, and represent resistance movements.⁷ The GSC supports the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), which was also formed in Feb. The CDM, notably joined by healthcare workers and civil servants, was prominent in nationwide protests, including those led by diverse ethnic nationalities, LGBTIQ+ people, religious leaders, and labor activists.⁸

The NUG and NUCC: legitimate and relevant

The elected members of Parliament that won the November 2020 general elections quickly reacted to the attempted coup on 1 Feb 2021 despite being prevented from entering the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (National Parliament) building. On 4 Feb, 378 MPs-elect swore themselves in, in compliance with parliamentary

¹ See ACLED's dashboard <https://acleddata.com/dashboard/#/dashboard>

² Myanmar Now (28 Feb 2021) 'Help me, Mother'- Mandalay resident shot and burnt alive by junta's troops; The Irrawaddy (29 Mar 2021) About a Dozen Children Killed by Myanmar Regime Over Bloody Weekend

³ Reuters (24 Jul 2021) Protest breaks out at prison in Myanmar's biggest city; Myanmar Now (14 Dec 2021) Dozens of Insein Prison inmates beaten, put in solitary confinement after protest, lawyers say; Frontier Myanmar (21 Mar 2022) Protests continues despite deadly consequences

⁴ Myanmar Now (26 Jan 2022) Junta threatens 'silent strike' participants with major criminal charges

⁵ BBC (1 Feb 2023) Myanmar coup anniversary: 'Silent strike' marks two years of military rule

⁶ NUG (8 Nov 2021) Ministry of Defence, List of the soldiers and police who came into people's embrace, <https://tinyurl.com/4t7diyxc>

⁷ General Strike Committee (GSC), via Facebook (19 Feb 2021) <https://tinyurl.com/4s75zzat>

⁸ Irrawaddy (2 Feb 2021) Myanmar Medics Prepare Civil Disobedience Against Military Rule

procedure, at the hostel where they were confined.⁹ On 8 Feb, the **Committee Representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw** [National Parliament] (**CRPH**) publicly announced its formation, condemned the coup, recognized the CDM's existence and goal of a federal union, and pledged "its deepest and unwavering commitment to work towards achieving this common goal."¹⁰ The 378 MPs-elect that formed the CRPH represent **76% of the 498 elected MPs**, not counting the 25% non-elected seats reserved for the military.

On 8 Mar 2021, 28 organizations - the CRPH, ethnic resistance organizations, the CDM, labor groups, and other stakeholders of the resistance movement including general strike committees, youth activists and civil society groups - formed the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC). The NUCC later grew to include 33 members.¹¹ Constituted as the single largest and most diverse body focused on democratic transformation, the NUCC guides the policy of the NUG. The NUCC's activities are oriented to ending the military dictatorship and the establishment of a Federal Democratic Union.¹²

On 31 Mar 2021, the CRPH adopted the collectively drafted **Federal Democracy Charter (FDC)**, to abrogate the 2008 military-drafted Constitution¹³. The FDC states that the CRPH shall enact laws to implement policies and strategies stipulated by the NUCC.¹⁴ It was subsequently ratified by the NUCC's first People's Assembly during 27-29 Jan 2022, which reiterated its commitment to a federal democratic union which fully guarantees democracy, national equality, and self-determination.¹⁵

16 Apr 2021 witnessed the establishment of the **National Unity Government (NUG)**, a political coalition of the CRPH and other members of the NUCC. The NUG would serve as the executive branch while the CRPH would serve as the legislative branch.¹⁶ The NUG cabinet has 50% non-Burman ethnic nationality members including the acting President (Kachin) and Prime Minister (Karen), and just over 30% women, thus making it the most inclusive cabinet in Burma to date.¹⁷ The NUG received endorsement from ethnic groups, including the Karen National Union (KNU), Kachin Alliance, Lisu National Organization, Ta'ang Political Consultative Committee, Union Level Committee of CSOs Peace Forum, Mon National Network, and Karenni State Consultative Council.¹⁸

The NUG gained recognition from various parliaments including the European Parliament which passed a resolution on 7 Oct 2021, recognizing the CRPH and the NUG as the only legitimate governing bodies in Burma, and calling on the international community and ASEAN to involve them in efforts to resolve the crisis.¹⁹ On 18 Nov 2022, the NUG opened a diplomatic mission in Washington DC which added to the offices it already had in, Australia, Czech Republic, Japan, South Korea, and the UK.²⁰

The NUG earned widespread support from the people of Burma - three million joined an online campaign to call on the UN General Assembly to recognize the NUG's permanent delegation.²¹ As of Feb 2023, NUG-aligned ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun remained as Burma's sole representative to the UN in New York despite unsuccessful junta attempts to extradite him to Burma,²² unseat him,²³ and kill him.²⁴

⁹ Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) (5 Feb 2021) Over 300 elected representatives convened Emergency Union Parliament Meeting

¹⁰ CRPH (8 Feb 2021) Announcement 1/2021

¹¹ International Idea (24 May 2022) Myanmar's Federal Democracy Charter: Analysis and prospects

¹² NUCC (accessed on 17 Jan 2023) The Road Map

¹³ CRPH (31 Mar 2021) Statement 20/2021: Declaration abolishing the 2008 Constitution

¹⁴ Federal Democracy Charter (FDC) (accessed on 21 Jan 2023) Part II, Section 30 <https://tinyurl.com/y5jxkami>

¹⁵ NUCC (30 Jan 2022) Statement of the First People's Assembly

¹⁶ CRPH (16 Apr 2021) Announcement 23/2021 Formation of the National Unity Government; CRPH (16 Apr 2021) Announcement 24/2021 Formation of the National Unity Government; CRPH (16 Apr 2021) News Statement 11; Myanmar Now (2 Nov 2022) In Myanmar's north, resistance seeks to restore rule of law

¹⁷ Myanmar Now (16 Apr 2021) CRPH announces lineup of interim 'national unity government'

¹⁸ NUG, via Facebook (18 Apr 2021) <https://tinyurl.com/yc7hkxyv>; NUG, via Facebook (19 Apr 2021) <https://tinyurl.com/bdHz9mwb>

¹⁹ European Parliament (7 Oct 2021) Resolution P9_TA (2021)0417

²⁰ DVB (21 Nov 2022) Diaspora communities in Canada and Australia stage anti-military junta rallies

²¹ Radio Free Asia (20 Aug 2021) Facebook Campaign For Myanmar Shadow Government at UN Garner Millions of Supporters

²² Coconuts Yangon (15 Jul 2021) Junta wants US to extradite UN rep for prosecution on treason

²³ VoA (12 Dec 2022) Myanmar's UN Ambassador Reportedly Renewed for Another Year Despite Junta's Opposition

²⁴ New York Times (6 Aug 2021) Myanmar Ambassador, Who Opposed Coup, Is Target of Assassination Plot

Junta strikes back

The junta quickly moved to outlaw the CRPH and NUG, before designating them and PDFs (*see section on armed resistance*) as ‘terrorist organizations’ on 8 May 2021, meaning that anyone arrested on suspicion of engaging with them would face 10 years to life imprisonment.²⁵ In Mar-Apr 2022, the junta illegally terminated the citizenship of 28 high-profile opponents, including Kyaw Moe Tun and eight NUG officials.²⁶ Junta forces have also systematically tracked down perceived supporters of the civilian government to instill fear among the population. As of 10 Feb 2023, the regime had arrested and subsequently charged at least 1,333 people under the Counter-Terrorism Law,²⁷ and sentenced 143 people to death,²⁸ of which four were executed.²⁹ It also arrested 817 people over social media posts supporting the NUG, CRPH, or PDFs during Jan-Nov 22.³⁰ In early 2023, the junta ordered Burma’s three telecom providers (MPT, Ooredoo, and ATOM) to notify their users that they could be prosecuted for engaging with pro-resistance posts on social media.³¹

The regime also stepped up its crackdown on the National League for Democracy (NLD), the party that won the most seats in the Nov 2020 election. As of 29 Jan 2023, junta forces had killed at least 84 party members, including at least two MPs, arrested a further 1,232, and launched 120 attacks against NLD offices.³² They also seized the houses of 371 party members and 206 NLD MPs-elect.³³ In one incident in Jun 2022, regime forces arrested 25 relatives of NLD MP Tun Tun Naing during a botched attempt to arrest him,³⁴ likely to force him to surrender.

People’s Administrations

In response to the NUG, CDM members created local shadow administrations, also known as ‘People’s Administrations’, with the support of People’s Defense Forces (PDFs) and residents to consolidate power in Sagaing, Magway, Chin, and Karenni Regions/States.³⁵ For example, Magway’s Yaw region has a resistance local government, formed when the majority of state employees resigned or defected.³⁶ The People’s Administrations have, in these zones, become the de facto local government aligned with the NUG.

Rebuilding health & education

The junta targeted teachers and health workers for their links to the CDM. It arrested CDM teachers and health workers,³⁷ killing some of them in custody³⁸ and even beheading a NUG teacher before hanging his head by the school’s door on 17 Nov 2022.³⁹

By Feb 2022, attacks on health facilities, and arrests and killings of health workers rendered the country “one of the most dangerous places on Earth to be a health worker”, with Physicians for Human Rights

²⁵ Irrawaddy (10 May 2021) Myanmar Junta Declares National Unity Government, CRPH, Defense Forces as ‘Terrorist’ Groups

²⁶ Radio Free Asia (12 Mar 2022) Myanmar junta revokes citizenship of NUG members, other activists; DMG (2 Apr 2022) Myanmar regime revokes citizenship of more resistance figures

²⁷ AAPP (accessed 13 Feb 2023) Airtable – Total_Arrested

²⁸ AAPP (10 Feb 2023) Daily Briefing in Relation to the Military Coup

²⁹ Myanmar Now (25 Jul 2023) Myanmar junta executes four political prisoners

³⁰ Civicus (31 Jan 2023) Myanmar: Attacks on civic space continue unabated in the second year of the illegal coup

³¹ Myanmar Now (2 Feb 2023) Myanmar junta threatens people with imprisonment for engaging with pro-resistance Facebook posts

³² NLD, Central Work Committee (29 Jan 2023) Proclamation (1/2023)

³³ RFA (31 Jan 2023) Myanmar’s junta views opposition party as existential threat that must be eliminated

³⁴ BNI (23 Jun 2022) Unsuccessful Arrest Attempt on NLD MP, Relatives Taken By the Junta in Pindaya

³⁵ Radio Free Asia (RFA) (15 Feb 2022) ‘People’s Administrations’ supplant junta rule in Myanmar’s remote border regions

³⁶ Myanmar Now (12 Nov 2021) After hobbling junta’s ability to govern in Yaw, anti-coup forces form People’s Administration Team

³⁷ Karen News (9 Mar 2022) Kyarinseikgyi Teacher Opposed to Coup, Sentenced to 17 Years-in Jail with Hard Labor; Irrawaddy (13 May 2021) Myanmar’s Junta Sentences Four More to Prison for ‘Incitement’; RFA (23 Sep 2022) Naypyidaw teacher sentenced to 20 years by Myanmar junta court; Mizzima (23 Aug 2022) CDM teachers at Mandalay’s Yandabon University detained; Chindwin News Agency, via facebook (9 Oct 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/2p86xvst>; DVB (7 Dec 2022) Rohingya stranded at sea, CDM teacher sentenced to 10 years, Dancer and songwriter detained;

RFA (30 Aug 2022) Activist teacher sentenced to seven years in a Myanmar prison

³⁸ Myanmar Now (30 Sep 2022) CDM teacher dies after five days in junta custody

³⁹ Irrawaddy (18 Oct 2022) Myanmar Junta Troops Behead NUG Teacher

reporting hundreds of such attacks.⁴⁰ The violence and persecution of health workers forced about 70% (in some locations) to abandon their jobs, and to establish shadow health systems operating from mobile or underground clinics with other volunteers.⁴¹

The NUG worked with ethnic health organizations, civil society, and foreign actors to tackle the junta's lack of response to the COVID-19 crisis. It created a COVID-19 Commission (National-Level Commission on COVID-19 Prevention, Control, and Treatment)⁴² and a COVID-19 Task Force⁴³, issued detailed guidance on preventing transmission, renewed calls for vaccines through the COVAX program, and outlined pathways for international actors to facilitate vaccination.⁴⁴

CSOs and EROs also organized COVID-19 prevention and reduction activities on their own despite shortages of basic medical supplies and medicines.⁴⁵ CSOs repeatedly called for urgent international action on Myanmar's COVID-19 crisis and cross-border humanitarian assistance,⁴⁶ warning that inaction would undermine regional stability.⁴⁷ The Arakan Army (AA) even imposed a two-week lockdown in Rakhine State's 17 townships to prevent further spreading of COVID-19.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, as of 30 Dec 2022, 219 teachers remained under junta custody, 88 being officially affiliated to the CDM.⁴⁹ The regime also amended the National Education Law on 29 Oct 2022 to forbid teachers' and students' unions and eliminate the use of ethnic languages in basic education schools.⁵⁰

Students boycotted schools after the junta reopened most of them on 1 Nov 2021⁵¹ and staged protests.⁵² In May 2021, the NUG opened its "Spring University Myanmar" to offer alternative and vocational education pathways to Burma's youth, signing memorandums of understanding with foreign universities to diversify its programs.⁵³ The NUG Ministry of Education opened the 'Kachin State Comprehensive University' jointly with the Kachin Independence Organization's (KIO) Education Department on 12 Sep 2022,⁵⁴ and a free online basic education school in cooperation with the Pa'O National Federation Council on 23 Sep 2022.⁵⁵

Economic resistance

Civilians have refused to pay their taxes or electricity bills, and instead donated to the resistance despite the coup-induced economic collapse. As of Jun 2022, the junta's electricity bill collection had reportedly gone down by 30% - 40% in comparison to pre-coup numbers.⁵⁶ Such actions triggered a disproportionate response and the junta reportedly sent military forces with electricity bill collectors to threaten households

⁴⁰ Devex (1 Feb 2022) Myanmar one of 'most dangerous places' for health workers, NGOs warn; Physicians for Human Rights (26 Jan 2022) 415 Attacks on Health Care in Myanmar During One Year of Crackdowns Following Military Coup: Report

⁴¹ BBC (7 Jan 2022) Myanmar coup: The doctors and nurses defying the military

⁴² NUG (8 Jul 2021) President's Office Order 1/2021 on Establishment of National Commission on COVID-19 Prevention, Control, and Treatment,

⁴³ The Diplomat (23 Jul 2021) Myanmar Shadow Government Forms COVID-19 Task Force

⁴⁴ NUG (18 Jul 2021) Prime Minister's Office: Urgent request for humanitarian assistance for the people of Myanmar during the escalating COVID-19 crisis

⁴⁵ Development Media Group (2 Aug 2021) Hazmat suits, other PPE lacking in Ramree Twsp: CSOs

⁴⁶ Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (16 Jul 2021) The People of Myanmar need urgent assistance as the junta weaponises the COVID-19 crisis; Norwegian Refugee Council (1 Aug 2021) Four Warning Signs Myanmar is in Free-fall; Asia News Network (8 Nov 2021) Prayut gov't called on to formalize cross border assistance to Myanmar

⁴⁷ Council on Foreign Relations (16 Sep 2021) Myanmar Is a Failing State—and Could Be a Danger to Its Neighbours

⁴⁸ Irrawaddy (21 Jul 2021) Arakan Army Announces Lockdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State Amid COVID Surge

⁴⁹ Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) (30 Dec 2022) Daily Briefing in Relation to the Military Coup

⁵⁰ Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) (5 Nov 2022) Junta eliminates minority languages from state school curriculum

⁵¹ EMG (29 Oct 2021) Schools in all townships to reopen on Nov 1 except for those in 46 townships; Mizzima (3 Nov 2021) Despite schools opening in Mandalay, little attendance; Mon News Agency (3 Nov 2021) Over 40,000 students resume classes as Mon State schools open; Al Jazeera (17 Nov 2021) Myanmar students boycott classes following school reopening

⁵² RFA (22 Feb 2022) Large 'Six Twos' crowds protest Myanmar junta, marking resistance anniversary; Associated Press (22 Feb 2022) Myanmar opposition protests mark general strike anniversary; Mizzima (23 Feb 2022) Twosday' protests take place in Mandalay despite tight security

⁵³ Spring University Myanmar, via Facebook (9 Aug 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/2p86yxsu>; Spring University Myanmar, via Facebook (18 Dec 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/y54k3htd>

⁵⁴ NUG Ministry of Education, via Facebook (13 Sep 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/5ab2p8ax>

⁵⁵ NUG Ministry of Education, via Facebook (23 Sep 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/2fzvw9x>

⁵⁶ Nikkei Asia (5 Jun 2022) Myanmar energy crisis deepens as power plant investors balk

and businesses into paying their bills.⁵⁷ Activists also mounted comprehensive boycotts of military-linked products. In one instance, a military brewery lost half its sales.⁵⁸

The NUG has led a number of successful fundraising initiatives, such as an online “spring lottery”⁵⁹, selling “Spring Revolution” bonds,⁶⁰ the “Spring Mandalay Investment” drive,⁶¹ or by selling shares in state-owned properties, including junta leader Min Aung Hlaing’s Yangon mansion.⁶² It also launched its NUGPay app on 9 Jul 2022 to enable people to make donations safely.⁶³ The NUG used the collected funds to finance the CDM or for military expenses including weapons production, PDF training, and emergency and management expenses.⁶⁴ Ethnic minority and Burman communities abroad have also possibly raised millions of dollars to fight the junta.⁶⁵

In order to intimidate civilians from funding the resistance, the junta labeled the NUG, CRPH and PDFs as ‘terrorist groups’ in May 2021, and amended the 2014 Counter-Terrorism Law accordingly in August 2021. The amended law imposes jail of three years to a maximum of life in prison and a fine on those who provide financial support to a ‘terrorist organization’.⁶⁶

The junta has weaponized this law against individuals for funding of the resistance, regardless of the amount.⁶⁷ On 22 Nov 2022, a regime court sentenced a 27-year-old woman to 10 years in prison for allegedly giving the equivalent of US\$2.30 to the PDF in Sagaing Region. Earlier, on 28 Mar 2022, a 19-year-old woman was also sentenced to 10 years’ jail for allegedly donating US\$7 to the PDF in Tanintharyi Region.⁶⁸

Armed resistance

Local people in areas without the protection of Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) soon formed militias to defend their communities from junta violence. These eventually evolved into the People’s Defense Force (PDF). The PDF was officially adopted by the NUG as on 5 May 2021 in accordance with defense policies to ‘combat and overthrow the dictatorship’ and ‘collaborate with other allied forces to safeguard the security of the people, prevent community jeopardy and defend the Federal Union of Myanmar’.⁶⁹ This marked the beginning of military cooperation between the newly-formed PDFs and Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EAOs that oppose the coup) that have been engaged in decades-long resistance.⁷⁰ As of October 2022, there were around 300 PDF battalions with 200 to 500 troops each, amounting to roughly 65,000 PDF

⁵⁷ Bangkok Post (31 Jan 2022) Myanmar soldiers collecting bills at gunpoint

⁵⁸ KrASIA (8 Mar 2021) Myanmar protestors use apps to boycott military-linked products and businesses; Myanmar Now (12 May 2021) New evidence of plummeting sales means Myanmar Beer boycott is ‘working’, activists say; Irrawaddy (12 May 2021) Myanmar Military-Owned Brewer’s Sales Halved as Boycott Bites

⁵⁹ Irrawaddy (16 Aug 2021) Myanmar Parallel Govt’s Online Lottery Sells Out in About an Hour; CRPH (6 Aug 2021) Approval of the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Investment’s draft proposal of the gambling law

⁶⁰ Mizzima (28 Oct 2021) NUG will issue Spring Revolution Treasury Bonds

⁶¹ Irrawaddy (3 Oct 2022) NUG Raises Over US\$9 Million Selling Land Illegally Seized by Myanmar Military

⁶² Irrawaddy (9 May 2022) Sale of Myanmar Coup Leader’s Mansion Raises US\$2 Million in Three Days

⁶³ NUGPay, via Facebook (9 Jul 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/5n737ehc>

⁶⁴ NUG’s Ministry of Defence, via Facebook (9 Jul 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/552avd5k>

⁶⁵ Voice of America (VOA) (25 Feb 2022) Myanmar Diaspora Bankrolling Armed Resistance to Junta Back Home

⁶⁶ Irrawaddy (3 Aug 2021) Myanmar Coup Chief Amends Counterterrorism Law

⁶⁷ Than Lwin Times (4 Oct 2022) Belin: NLD supporters, residents subject to wave of arrests; DMG (12 Oct 2022) Junta charges education officer with funding Arakan Army; Than Lwin Times (18 Sep 2022) At least 10 people, including two businessmen, arrested, 2 homes sealed off in Thaton

⁶⁸ RFA (23 Nov 2022) Sagaing region resident sentenced to 10 years for allegedly funding a PDF; Myanmar Now (30 Mar 2022) Teen sentenced to 10 years in Myanmar prison for alleged \$7 donation to resistance group

⁶⁹ See the NUG Ministry of Defense’s webpage <https://mod.nugmyanmar.org/en/peoples-defence-force/>

⁷⁰ ALTSEAN-Burma uses the term ‘Ethnic Resistance Organizations’ (ERO) to refer to armed ethnic organizations that openly oppose the regime; and the term ‘Ethnic Armed Organizations’ (EAO) to refer to armed ethnic organizations that are either neutral, pro-regime, or whose affiliation is uncertain. The following 10 organizations are considered to be EROs: Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Karen National Union (KNU), Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Chin National Front (CNF), All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF), Shan State Army-South (SSA-S), Bamar People’s Liberation Army (BPLA), Arakan Army (AA), Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA).

troops in total.⁷¹ Not all local PDFs or similar militias are aligned with the NUG, several operate independently.⁷²

ACLED recorded 9,356 armed clashes and attacks on civilians Feb 2021-Jan 2022; an 820% increase from the preceding year (1,140). Conflict levels further increased by 14.58% during Feb 2022-Jan 2023, with 10,721 clashes and attacks.⁷³

In an apparent response to losing its grip on the ground, the junta began deploying more air strikes on both armed groups and civilian communities. Junta troops launched 449 airstrikes in 2022, up from 91 in 2021; **a 493% increase**. CSOs regularly called on the international community to impose economic sanctions, and more specifically on the supply of aviation fuel to Burma, in order to prevent a further increase in air strikes.⁷⁴

Resistance forces even started fighting in traditionally pro-military areas like Magway and Sagaing Regions, Burman Buddhist zones that were traditionally military recruitment areas. During 1 Aug 2021-31 Jan 2022 ACLED reported 1,703 armed clashes and attacks on civilians in Sagaing and 672 in Magway, up from 505 in Sagaing and 179 in Magway during 1 Feb-31 Jul 2021.⁷⁵ Over 2022, the numbers of armed clashes and attacks on civilians remained as high.⁷⁶

Despite having more soldiers and weapons, **the junta is losing the fight for territorial control**. As of 30 Jun 2022, the junta only had stable control over 72 townships which amounted to only 17% of the territory whereas resistance forces had gained effective control of 127 of the 330 townships in Burma, amounting to 52% of the territory.⁷⁷

Rohingya and the Resistance

On 1 Apr 2021, the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) condemned the attempted coup⁷⁸ and recognized the legitimacy of the CRPH. Other Rohingya organizations such as the Arakan Rohingya National Alliance (ARNA) which was formed by seven Rohingya organizations on 20 Nov 2022 expressed their support towards the NUG.⁷⁹ Rohingya in Bangladesh camps and elsewhere expressed their solidarity by sharing messages of support and photos of themselves showing the three-finger salute on social media.⁸⁰

The junta continued to persecute Rohingya people,⁸¹ using the pre-existing National Verification Card system to carry out a 'genocide by attrition.'⁸² It repeatedly arrested Rohingya for violating travel restrictions, detaining over 992 Rohingya including children between Dec 2021 and mid-Oct 2022; 223 of them received prison terms for immigration offenses.⁸³

In November 2019, The Gambia filed an application against Burma before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), alleging that Burma's military had perpetrated genocide by systemically destroying Rohingya villages in Rakhine State from August 2017 onwards in breach of the Convention on the Prevention and

⁷¹ Mizzima (27 Dec 2022) LIVE OR DIE - Myanmar resistance intensifies war against illegal junta

⁷² USIP (3 Nov 2022) Understanding the People's Defense Forces in Myanmar

⁷³ See ACLED's dashboard <https://acleddata.com/dashboard/#/dashboard>

⁷⁴ Burma Campaign UK (24 Oct 2022) BURMA MILITARY AIRSTRIKES KILL AT LEAST 80 – AVIATION FUEL SANCTIONS NEEDED NOW; Justice for Myanmar (9 Nov 2022) JFM welcomes EU and US sanctions on the Myanmar military junta & arms brokers; Mizzima (11 Dec 2022) NGO Burma Campaign UK welcomes new UK Burma sanctions

⁷⁵ See ACLED's dashboard <https://acleddata.com/dashboard/#/dashboard>

⁷⁶ In Sagaing Region, ACLED reported 1,944 armed clashes and attacks on civilians from 1 Feb-31 Jul 2022, and 1,496 from 1 Aug -31 Dec 2022. In Magway Region, ACLED reported 683 armed clashes and attacks on civilians from 1 Feb-31 Jul 2022, and 433 from 1 Aug -31 Dec 2022

⁷⁷ Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M) (5 Sep 2022) Briefing Paper: Effective Control in Myanmar

⁷⁸ Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO), via Facebook (3 Apr 2021) Declaration RSO/CONG/2021-01 <https://tinyurl.com/2je5tmkz>

⁷⁹ Irrawaddy (22 Nov 2022) Rohingya Unite to Launch Myanmar Rights Alliance

⁸⁰ Time (6 Feb 2021) Rohingya Activists Are Hoping That the Coup in Myanmar Will Be a Turning Point for Their Struggle; Just Security (10 Jun 2021) Beyond the Coup in Myanmar: The Views of Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

⁸¹ GNLM (9 Jul 2022) Human Rights Council has failed to its own principles

⁸² RFA (7 Jun 2022) Myanmar's junta uses identity documents as tools of genocide against Rohingya: report

⁸³ RFA (16 Nov 2022) Nearly 1.7 million new refugees of conflict in Myanmar since coup

Punishment of the Crime of Genocide which was ratified by both countries.⁸⁴ When the ICJ dismissed the regime's preliminary objections on 22 Jul 2022 and allowed proceedings to move forward, the junta denied the ICJ's jurisdiction. The NUG however welcomed the ruling and reiterated its commitment to share evidence of atrocity crimes with the relevant stakeholders to help advance accountability efforts.⁸⁵

The NUG made unprecedented commitments towards the Rohingya community, aiming to address past wrongs against Rohingya and ethnic groups. These include repealing discriminatory laws, and ensuring the safe, voluntary, and dignified repatriation of Rohingya refugees.⁸⁶ The NUG pledged to replace Burma's 1982 Citizenship Law with a law that would 'base citizenship on birth in Myanmar or birth anywhere as a child of Myanmar Citizens' to address Rohingya statelessness once a new Constitution was drafted.⁸⁷ It also consulted stakeholders in Rakhine State, including Rohingya groups and refugee representatives from IDP camps, and underlined the role of the Federal Democracy Charter (FDC) in addressing discrimination and matters related to the Rohingya.⁸⁸

The NUG also committed to cooperate on international justice efforts and to hold the junta accountable for the crimes it has committed since 1 Feb 2021, revealing it had documented 2,778 regime war crimes between 1 Dec 2021-31 May 2022.⁸⁹ The NUG continuously sought support to grant the International Criminal Court (ICC) jurisdiction over the junta's crimes⁹⁰ and, on 20 Aug 2021, it also accepted its competence over crimes committed in Burma since 1 Jul 2002, including the Rohingya genocide.⁹¹

In the first year of the coup, the CRPH and/or NUG adopted over 300 measures involving inclusion of Rohingya, including nine legal amendments and 34 changes from prior military or NLD government policies.⁹² The NUG drafted more inclusive policies, including its FDC which states that the 'rights of every ethnic nationalities in the State in various sectors namely political, social, economic, culture, tradition and customs etc. shall be protected, maintained and promoted.'⁹³ Additionally, on 18 Jun 2022, it announced it would repeal the 2015 Race and Religion Laws, amend or repeal the 1982 Citizenship Law, work with the international community to share evidence of atrocities, and cooperate on international genocide cases.⁹⁴ The NUG also welcomed discussions on the current and root causes of human rights abuses against Rohingya and other minorities in Burma on national and international levels.⁹⁵

⁸⁴ International Court of Justice (ICJ) (22 Jul 2022) Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar), Judgment on Preliminary Objections

⁸⁵ Mizzima (24 Jul 2022) Myanmar's NUG 'welcomes' ICJ judgment on preliminary objections in Rohingya case

⁸⁶ Irrawaddy (26 Aug 2021) NUG Calls for Justice for Rohingya Persecuted by Myanmar Military

⁸⁷ Myanmar Now (4 Jun 2021) NUG releases statement recognising Rohingyas' right to citizenship

⁸⁸ NUG (3 Jun 2021) Policy Position on the Rohingya in Rakhine State

⁸⁹ Irrawaddy (13 Jun 2022) Myanmar Regime Committed Almost 2,800 War Crimes in Last Six Months: NUG

⁹⁰ NUG (6 May 2021) Dr. Sasa Address to the German Parliamentarians

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/115001484053825>; NUG (19 Sep 2021) Ministry of Human Right, Statement regarding human rights situation in Sagaing and Magway Regions presented to HRC,

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/192972679590038>NUG (6 May 2021) Request from Dr. Sasa to the German Parliament on humanitarian and human rights assistance, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/117184357168871>; NUG (15 May 2021) Letter from Dr. Sasa to the American people and government,

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/117867993767174>; NUG (12-15 May 2021) The Union Minister of the MoI and NUG Spokesperson H.E. Dr. Sasa's Address to the Parliamentarians of the United Kingdom - UK,

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/118628143691159>; NUG (26 May 2021) Joint Statement from the National Unity Government and the Japan Parliamentary Group Supporting Democratization in Myanmar,

<https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/122020846685222>

⁹¹ NUG (20 Aug 2021) Announcement, <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/173294128224560>

⁹² ALTSEAN-Burma (9 Feb 2022) Coup Watch Special Edition: A year of struggle in Burma

⁹³ CRPH (31 Mar 2021) Federal Democracy Charter

⁹⁴ DVB (28 Jun 2022) NUG makes clearest statement yet in support of Rohingya rights and justice

⁹⁵ NUG, via Facebook (18 Jun 2022) <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/336725735297323>; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NUG, via Facebook (17 Nov 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/5db7a6su>