

# ASSESSING DETENTIONS OF JOURNALISTS IN MYANMAR

## Assessment from February 2021-2024

The Myanmar military launched a crackdown on media freedom as part of a *coup d'état* on 1 February 2021, persecuting journalists and rolling back a decade of legal reforms. ICNL has built a large case database of detained journalists, cross-corroborating multiple civil society monitoring efforts, and complementing them with an analysis of the legal status of cases.

Over the past three years, the military has detained over **200 journalists from almost 100 media outlets, charging 160 with a crime** under nine separate laws, mainly incitement, “false news”, and weaponized counter-terrorism provisions.

The military’s sham courts have ignored domestic and international law and disregarded due process, sentencing **76 journalists so far to a combined total of 335 years imprisonment**, with individual terms up to 20 years long. At least 59 journalists were languishing in prison by February 2024, causing a chilling effect across the media and presenting severe challenges to media outlets’ resources, capacity, and morale.

Despite all of this, Myanmar’s journalists and media outlets remain bravely committed to building a robust information ecosystem for a public desperately seeking to know the truth about military oppression.

**Stakeholders, including the United Nations internationally and within Myanmar, should strengthen the support for detained journalists and the media**, ensuring it adequately reflects their role as the oxygen of the ongoing movement for a return to democratization. Now is also the time for the development of reform proposals for a legitimate government to roll back the military’s attacks on the rights to freedom of expression and association.

**206**

Journalists detained



**59**

Still imprisoned by February 2024

**76**

Journalists sentenced to a combined **335 years in prison**



**19%**

Of convicted journalists given extreme sentences of **10 to 20 years in prison**



**147**

Journalists released so far, after an **average of 6 months** in prison each



**90**

Media outlets had journalists detained; **39 of them had journalists sentenced**



**Women**

Faced higher charge and conviction rates

