



JOURNALISM AND MEDIA SAFETY IN MYANMAR

(OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2024 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2024)

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Summary and Trends

This annual report for 2024 covers developments, trends and highlights relating to the safety of Myanmar journalists, as well as the news and media environment under the military regime and in the context of the armed conflict in Myanmar. The first part of the report discusses events and issues in the fourth quarter of 2024, followed by a wider review of the entire year.

Four years after the 1 February 2021 military coup in Myanmar, independent journalism in the country remains an unsafe and life-threatening profession.

Weeks after the coup d' etat that ousted the country's elected government, the military regime, called the State Administration Council (SAC), began arresting journalists and news workers, and banning independent news outlets.

After amending a number of laws to widen its powers and use as tools to go after its opponents, the SAC began prosecuting journalists on security-related laws, mainly Section 505A of the Penal Code, which punishes incitement against government officials and the military. Many journalists have since been sentenced to jail terms, with the life sentences thus far given to three journalists who were convicted under various provisions of the Counter-Terrorism Law. These are documentary filmmaker Shin Daewe, Dawei Watch journalist Myo Myint Oo and Mrat Hein Tun, a former journalist from Narinjara and Border News Agency. Today, the SAC continues to use 'legal' weapons to suppress journalism and free speech, instill fear in journalists, their families and the public. Since the coup, it has set up a system of accrediting news organisations and individuals that are its mouthpieces or report favourably on the junta and the military.

While the number of journalists' arrests has dropped in the last two years, these arrests continue, along with the prosecution and jailing of news professionals for doing their work. In 2024, five journalists were arrested in different parts of the country (compared to 13 in 2023). Two of these five were arrested in the fourth quarter of the year. Ten journalists were convicted in 2024, including one who was convicted in the fourth quarter of the year under the Counter-terrorism Law. In terms of number of convictions, 11 of the 15 convictions through the year were done under this law. A total of three releases in the fourth quarter of 2024 brought to 13 the number of journalists released during the year.

As of end-December 2024, 53 journalists and news professionals remained behind bars. Majority of them are male, and are reporters or photojournalists. Since the coup, 217 journalists and news workers have been arrested, 79 convicted, and 164 released by the junta, according to media monitoring data since the Myanmar coup. Men make up about nine out of 10 arrested journalists and those still in detention.

A total of 11 journalists have died since the 2021 coup, in varying circumstances. One died while in military custody and others while in conflict areas, or were killed during raids on their homes. Five died in 2024, including two whose physical health deteriorated in prison and whose conditions were made worse by lack of adequate care.

Apart from using the ‘law’ and other forms of harassment, SAC troops have also taken to seizing the homes of journalists and editors and their families. Two such incidents occurred in 2024. Myanmar’s digital environment, where online threats such as doxing continues on platforms like Telegram, also make for a risky setting for journalists. There, pro-military personalities and groups circulate personal information about journalists as well as activists - actions that have escalated into targeted violence against them, arrests of their family members and direct threats against news organisations.

Among the laws that put journalists inside Myanmar at even more risk in 2024 was the SAC’s decision to implement the country’s old [conscription law](#) in February – as part of its efforts to increase the troop numbers. While this law that requires at least two years of mandatory military service covers all men aged 18-35 and women from 18 to 27 years of age, journalists are worried not only about being conscripted but being found to be journalists and forced to work for the military regime.

The spread of the armed conflict between the Myanmar military and resistance groups, comprising varied groups of People’s Defence Forces and ethnic armed organisations, has been a major factor affecting news work in Myanmar.

Since late 2023, when the [Three Brotherhood Alliance](#) (composed of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, the Arakan Army, and the Ta’ang National Liberation Army) launched its Operation 1027 in October 2023, more regions in Myanmar have come under the control of anti-junta forces.

This development has been bringing in new conditions that affect the news environment. As ethnic armed organisations take more territory, they have also been moving to exercise control over how journalists operate in their areas, including through registration. In 2024, the news community expressed concern over these, saying that these requirements could undermine press freedom and restrict journalists’ ability to report independently.

Concerns continue about the safety of journalists working inside different regions of the country, those controlled both by the military and ethnic armed groups, as well as restrictions on information access. The year 2024 saw the first incident of an ethnic armed organisation, the Kachin Independence Army in northern Myanmar, detaining two journalists for nearly a month.

As the fourth anniversary of the coup came around, all of Myanmar’s independent news organisations, along with many independent journalists, are in exile. Most newsrooms in exile are located in northern Thailand, though some are based in border towns of other neighbouring countries like India and Bangladesh.

While exile has brought a degree of physical safety and allows Myanmar media to continue to cover the country, it has brought its own challenges.

Among these are the long-term sustainability of news outlets that depend heavily on foreign grant and development funding and have little market revenue, and journalists’ worries about their ability to rely on news for their livelihoods – all in an uncertain international and donor environment. Journalists in exile face challenges in finding proper documentation to stay on in Thailand.

In exile, Myanmar's media have also discussed issues like policies within newsrooms in relation to exploitation of journalists and staffers as well as gender-based harassment, which disproportionately affect female media professionals.

In 2024, one more new group, the Myanmar Journalists Club, was formed within the media community. It advocates for better rights for those working in news organisations and for protection against harassment.

Fourth quarter of 2024

Arrested Arrests and detention

Two journalists were arrested during October to December 2024.

Eleven Media journalist **Pyae Sone** was arrested during an inspection of household guest lists in Mandalay on 20 September. He was released on bail a few days later.

A photojournalist who contributes to the British Broadcasting Corp was arrested during this quarter, although when he was detained could not as yet be confirmed. He was held for three or four days and then released, but was charged with violating Section 505A of the Penal Code, which punishes incitement, for writing news and taking photos that appeared on the BBC news and showed few cars on Yangon's streets due to the country's fuel shortage amid its economic crisis.

Conviction

Mrat Hein Tun, a former journalist from Narinjara and Border News Agency, was given a life sentence in October 2024 under his conviction under the Counter-terrorism Law. He was charged with violating the law's Section 50(j) on financing terrorism. [Arrested](#) in Hlaing township in Yangon on 31 May, he was tried under a military tribunal because this area remains under martial law.

Releases

Kyaw Swar Tun, a photojournalist, was [released](#) from Insein Prison on 14 November 2024 after completing his three-year jail sentence for Section 505A of the Penal Code.

Also released were the two other journalists detained for a few days in the fourth quarter of 2024 - Eleven Media's Pyae Sona and the photojournalist-contributor to the BBC.

Other incidents

Two freelance journalists in Hpakant in Kachin State – Tar Lin Maung and Naung Yoe – were arrested by the Kachin Independence Army, the armed wing of the Kachin Independence Organisation, and detained for a month.

The pair was arrested on 29 September after Tar Lin Maung wrote on his social media account about an incident whose publication the Kachin Independence Organisation was unhappy about, according to Radio Free Asia Burmese. Its report described the incident as one where a local KIA commander called ‘Lion’ had secretly evacuated local staff of a local restaurant, located between Hpakant and Sain Taung towns, without notifying the local PDF that controls the area.

Naung Yoe, worried about Tar Lin Maung’s arrest, accompanied him but was also detained by the KIA. The two journalists were [released](#) on 27 October 2024.

This appears to be the first reported instance of an ethnic armed group detaining journalists.

Naung Yoe had been arrested by the military junta in March 2021 and charged with violating Section 505A of the Penal Code, and then released in October 2022. Tar Lin Maung was a reporter at the information and public relations department of the Ministry of Information who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement after the 2021 coup.

In December 2024, a journalist was among two women who were physically assaulted by a man during a verbal altercation in an internet cafe in Arautaw village, Sagaing region.

Nyien Chan Suu Kyi, a journalist with Myae Latt Athan, was with Thaw Thaw, a representative from the human rights department of the National Unity Government. The two were working online when the incident occurred, [Mizzima News reported](#). The attacker, identified as Win Kyaw, grabbed Thaw Thaw, who is a transgender woman, by the hair and struck her face, the news report said, adding that Nyien Chan Suu Kyi suffered a knee injury. Thaw Thaw later coughed up some blood due to the assault. Both have filed charges of harassment and causing harm under sections 294 and 3223 of the Penal Code with the local People’s Defence Forces. The attacker has since been released on bail.

After this incident went viral on social media, some netizens revealed that the attacker had previously committed similar offenses, including violence against women and other genders. Organizations like the Gender Equality Network and LGBT Alliance – Myanmar have also called for action in this case, not least in conflict zones.

Seizure of journalists’ homes and property

During October to December 2024, military forces in Mon state seized an editor’s house as well as the home of the grandfather of a freelance journalist whom soldiers had shot to death there in August.

In the first case, the regime [seized the family home](#) of Ko Ko Zaw, chief editor of Than Lwin Times, in Mawlamyine, Mon state on 26 October. Ko Ko Zaw, who left Myanmar after the coup, faces arrest warrants under two unspecified charges filed by the ministry of information and public relations in Mon state. On 25 June 2021, junta soldiers raided the Than Lwin Times newsroom.

After staying in Thailand after the coup, Ko Ko Zaw and family have relocated to the United States.

On 22 November, soldiers [sealed off](#) the house in Kyaikto town where Htet Myat Thu, along with another journalist, were shot to death by troops who had raided it on 21 August. The house is owned by Htet Myat Thu's grandfather.

In addition to sealing off the house in November, the military regime filed multiple terrorism charges against the journalist's mother, Daw Soe Soe Khaing. These charges included violations of sections 49(a), 52(a), and 54 of the Counter-Terrorism Law, which cover offenses from involvement with terrorist groups to acts of terrorism to funding terrorism.

The August 2024 raid took place after an informer reported Htet Myat Thu to the authorities and said that PDF members had visited his home, according to [Radio Free Asia Burmese](#).

The SAC's practice of confiscating the properties of journalists and their relatives, along with their legal harassment, highlights the precarious situation for news professionals, their families and communities in Myanmar as well another violation of their rights. By targeting their homes and livelihoods, the regime seeks to dissuade journalists from engaging in independent reporting and journalistic activities.

Transfer of imprisoned Rakhine journalists

Two journalists serving prison sentences were among the 366 prisoners who were [transferred](#) by the Myanmar military from Sittwe Prison in Rakhine state, to other jails such as Insein Prison in Yangon, Thayarwaddy Prison in Bago region and Patheingyi Prison in Ayeyarwaddy on the night of 8 October 2024.

Amongst the transferred prisoners were Htet Aung, a journalist from the Rakhine-based DMG media outlet, and Soe Win Aung, a DMG office staffer. Both were serving sentences for terrorism in Sittwe since October 2023.

Analysts and local sources speculate that the transfer was tied to security concerns, given the Arakan Army's expanding control of more territory in Rakhine and the fact that Sittwe township, the capital of Rakhine state, has been the site of clashes between the Arakan Army (AA) and the junta military. As of late 2024, AA has [taken control](#) of 10 of Rakhine's 17 townships and many expect an assault on junta-held Sittwe in the near future.

Many relatives have told the media that they do not know where their relatives have been moved to. The transfer of prisoners, which may reflect the military's prioritization of its strategic interests in its battle with AA, disrupts prisoners' familial and legal support networks.

Revocation of publishing licenses

In November and December 2024, the SAC revoked the licences of four publishing houses, which were deemed to distribute books and material that violated obscenity laws, registration rules and copyright regulations. These reflect the junta's continued clampdown on the publishing sector in the country's restricted space for public discussion.

The publishing outfits that were closed down are [The Destiny Book House](#), [Right](#) and [Maple](#), as well as [Shwe Naing Ngan](#), which is both a publishing house and a poster distribution business.

The banned books, including '1500 Miles to You' and other boy love fiction (published by Destiny Book House and printed by Right printing press) were described by the junta administration as containing obscene content. LGBTQ+ themed literature has been a primary target of the SAC, whose agencies have confiscated at least 10 books in the past.

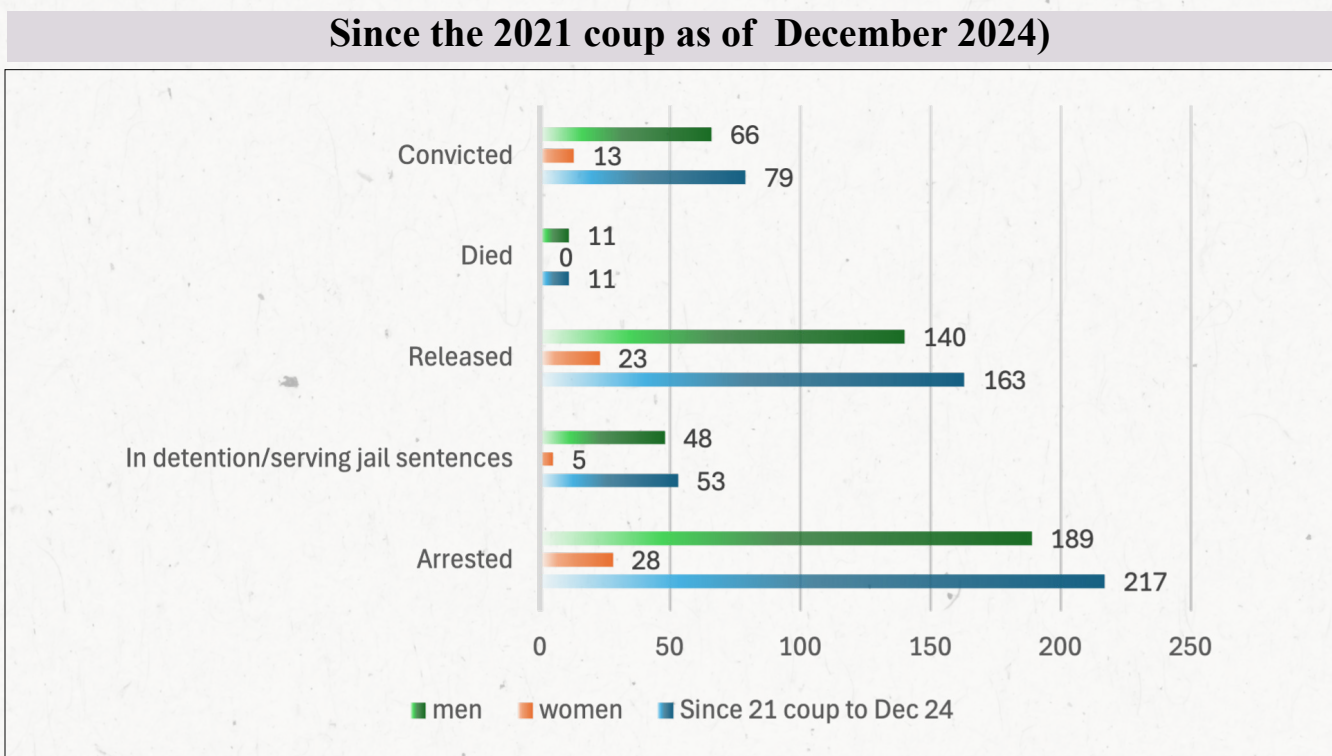
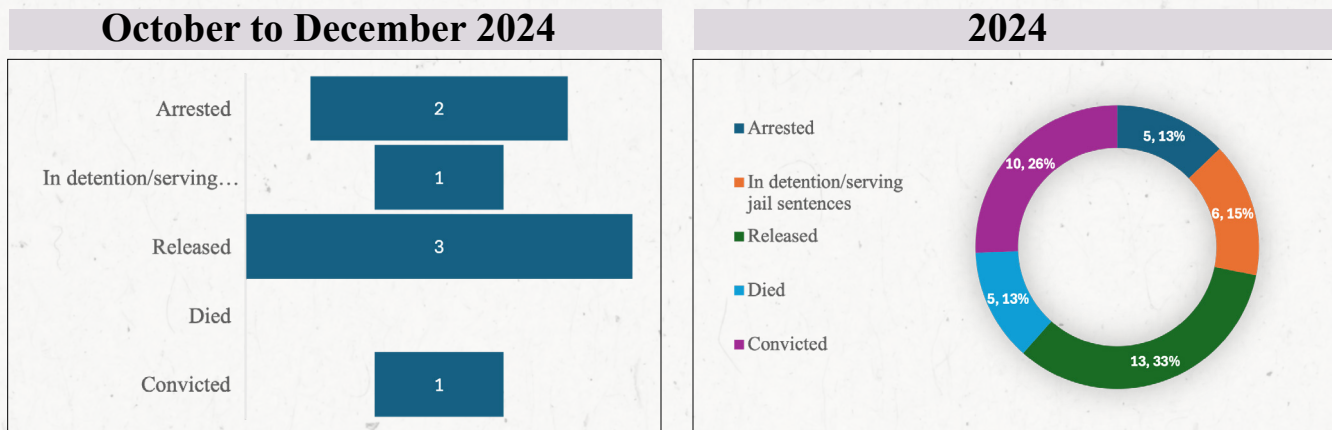
Perspective: 2024

Five journalists and news workers, all of whom were men, were arrested in Myanmar in 2024.

Thirteen journalists were released during the year, including as part of amnesties announced by the SAC on Myanmar and/or Buddhist holidays and festivals.

As of December 2024, the longest detained journalist since the coup is [Han Thar Nyein](#), editor and co-founder of Kamayut Media, who has been behind bars for nearly four years (1,393 days as of yearend.) since his arrest on 9 March 2021. He is serving a total sentence of seven years, after his conviction under for Section 505A of the Penal Code and Section 33 (a) of Electronic Transactions Law, which criminalizes the receiving, sending or distributing of electronic information that harms national security, community peace, solidarity, the economy or culture.

Table 1. Number in Monitoring Media Repression



News and other licences	Oct to Dec 2024	2024	Since the coup 21 to Dec 24
News licences cancelled	0	0	15
Printing/publishing permits revoked	4	6	12

Arrested*: U Tun Win was arrested in July 2023 under section 505A, but released in January 2025.

Breakdown of Convictions of Journalists by Law, 2024

Laws used in convictions	Number of convictions
Counter-terrorism Law - Section 50(j)	4
Counter-terrorism Law - Section 50(a)	2
Counter-terrorism Law - Section 52(a)	4
Counter-terrorism Law - Section 52(b)	1
Counter-terrorism Law - Section 54(d)	1
Penal Code-Section 505A (incitement)	1
Penal Code-Section 505 (b)	1
Unconfirmed law	1
Total	15

In 2024, 15 convictions under various security-related laws were handed down to 10 journalists. Eleven of these were handed down under the [Counter-terrorism Law](#), reflecting the SAC's heavy use of this law against journalists and news workers. Penalties under the anti-terrorism law can include up to life imprisonment or death.

Among the law's provisions that were used against journalists are Section 50(a), which imposes prison sentences from 10 years to life imprisonment for actions that "cause fear among the public" or "damage the security of the public", Section 50(j) that punishes those who finance terrorism with life imprisonment to death, and Section 52(a) that prescribes three to seven years in prison for "knowingly being involved in a terrorist group."

Combined prison sentences of journalists, 2024

Length of sentences	Number of convicted journalists
0-3 years	2
4-10 years	3
15-20 years	1
27 years	1
Life Sentence	3

*Si Thu was sentenced to a combined 27 years in prison after being convicted under the Explosive Substances Act and other laws.

Poor healthcare in prison

In 2024, the death of two journalists while in prison or soon after being released highlighted the very poor conditions and health care, amounting to systemic neglect, in Myanmar's prison system.

These two journalists were documentary maker Phay Maung Sein, who died in Yangon's Sakura hospital on 19 August from [bone tuberculosis and lung cancer](#), and Democratic Voice of Burma journalist Nay Lin Htike, who had oral cancer and died in Insein prison on 29 July.

Phay Maung Sein was already in very poor health, and had broken ribs during interrogation when he was arrested in 2022. He had been transferred from Loikaw prison in Kayah state to Insein as his health deteriorated, and died three days after his release.

Nay Lin Htike had been transferred from Daik-U prison to Insein in July 2022, when his cancer had progressed to stage four.

Twelve political prisoners, including the two journalists above, died in Myanmar prisons from January to September 2024, largely due to inadequate healthcare, according to the Political Prisoners Network-Myanmar. These prisoners, which included activists, political dissidents and a policeman who had joined the Civil Disobedience Movement, were from regions such as Kyaikmayaw, Magway, Kalay, Mandalay and Insein.

Doxing and a dangerous online environment

Apart from threats to their physical safety, Myanmar’s journalists continue to face a toxic and dangerous environment online in the years since the 2021 coup.

Pro-military and pro-SAC figures are active on platforms like [Telegram](#), where doxing - the malicious sharing and revelation of an individual’s private or identifying information such as addresses, phone numbers and other personal details - thrives. Telegram channels are a tool that the military and its supporters, like Han Nyein Oo, regularly use to harass the opponents of the SAC.

But apart from bring a tool to instill fear, this form of digital harassment brings very real threats to life not only to journalists but to their families and friends.

In an interview for this report, an editor, now living in exile in Thailand, recalls how a doxing incident against him in 2022 led to the harassment of his relatives and the arrest and two-year imprisonment of his father-in-law. He recalled: “Doxing has significantly disrupted my ability to report freely. Following the first incident, I temporarily halted reporting.” After his father-in-law’s arrest, he avoided covering stories from his base in Pyay and kept a lower profile. “This shift has diluted the impact of my reporting, but it was necessary to ensure safety,” the editor explained.

Lessons from this first episode led him to relocate his entire family, in-laws included, to Thailand, immediately after a second “more severe” round of doxing started in 2024. (*Read the full story in the ‘Voices’ section below.*)

There are many examples of digital threats, and violence, by the SAC and its supporters against journalists and newsrooms. In the past, for instance, pro-military groups on Telegram targeted Shwe Phee Myay news agency and encouraged the bombing of its office in Northern Shan state.

Conscription worries among journalists

Journalists are among the many young people in Myanmar who are fleeing or finding ways to evade conscription, since the SAC announced that it was implementing the country’s old law requiring military service from eligible individuals. The military regime turned to the draft in order to boost the ranks of its soldiers, while fighting various anti-resistance groups in the battlefield.

Within weeks of the SAC’s announcement on 10 February 2024, many persons of conscription age (men aged 18 to 35 and women aged 18 to 27) were trying to leave the country. Young people found themselves having to make [difficult choices](#) - risking forced military service, [fleeing the country](#) or joining underground resistance efforts.

Attempts by journalists to evade conscription have fractured families in Myanmar, as many are forced to choose between their own safety and that of their loved ones, or parents tell their children to leave for neighbouring countries.

In its '[Stories of Conscription](#)' feature, Radio Free Asia discusses three journalists' harrowing encounters with the conscription law and how the military uses oppressive tactics to get civilians into the armed forces.

The first journalist, who does his news work secretly, refused to comply with the draft. Saying that giving his life to the military was unimaginable, he decided to flee the country after the conscription was announced. Summoned by local authorities in his community, the second journalist-interviewee was pressured into completing the forms for enlistment. He recalled fearing that his anti-coup activities, including his participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement, would be exposed, and his work as a journalist revealed, and thus jeopardize both his safety and that of his colleagues. The third journalist said he was targeted for recruitment in Yangon, as officials prioritized him for conscription due to his age and rural background.

All three interviewees escaped conscription by fleeing to neighbouring countries.

Mix of challenges for independent media in exile

Four years after the coup, Myanmar's independent media are based outside the country, many of them in northern Thailand although some are in border towns in Bangladesh and India.

Living and working in exile has given them more physical safety. Thailand, which has a 2,400-kilometre border with Myanmar, has for decades been a refuge for those fleeing conflicts there. But finding ways to stay on in Thailand with adequate documentation is a continuing challenge for many in the news community.

Thailand is not a signatory to the [1951 Refugee Convention](#) and does not provide [legal status](#) to refugees. It has its own processes for those who apply for asylum or vulnerable people who need protection. At the same time, many Myanmar nationals who left after the coup are not necessarily interested in applying for asylum or moving to countries far from home.

This leaves them - including many journalists in exile - looking for documentation that allows them to stay or work in Thailand in the meantime, have identity papers they can use for everyday activities and have a degree of stability while in the country. A September 2023 report estimates that there are some [300 Myanmar journalists in exile](#).

For many, having the 'Certificate of Alien Registration' that is Thai government-issued identification - more popularly known as the [Pink ID Card](#) - provides a degree of legal recognition and protection from harassment, as well as access to some essential services in Thailand. This card has usually also been used as a form of identification for various types of persons who do not have full legal documentation for staying in the country.

For Myanmar nationals living in exile, navigating the bureaucracy to get documents like the Pink ID card, as well as the papers they need to apply for one in the first place, can be complicated and expensive. Delays in processing pink IDs are also a concern. In 2024, for instance, the issuance of these IDs in some places took place in December, or months later than the usual period in March or April.

Other exiles also try to get district and village-level documents to use for daily activities, and still others try to obtain other types of valid visas, such as education ones, for staying in Thailand.

Without some type of recognized documentation, exiled journalists and other Myanmar nationals can be at [risk of arrest](#), detention, and deportation. In border areas like Mae Sot, arrests of Myanmar nationals have occurred frequently, and even when journalists have some locally issued paperwork.

More media groups formed

Through 2024, Myanmar’s news community in exile discussed concerns around its workplaces, such as sexual harassment violations of journalists and staffers’ labour rights.

“The findings suggest women media professionals face significant gender-based discrimination, gender-based violence and sexual harassment on a regular basis,” according to the ‘[Crisis under the Coup](#)’ report, which was published in March.

Produced under the Knowledge for Democracy Myanmar initiative, the report documented its findings from interviews and discussions held with 56 journalists and news workers (36 women, 230 men) in Mae Sot and Chiang Mai, the two Thai cities that host most of the Myanmar journalists who fled after the coup.

According to the report, the major concern by many women in media was “identity theft and identity fraud”- usually in instances where “women journalists had their names or their reputations used without consent by media houses and those seeking grant funding”. The women interviewees also described discrimination in the workplace, sexual harassment and “unsafe interactions with men” at work and “unwanted staring at their bodies, unwanted touching, requests for sex and unsafe travel such as shared sleeping arrangements or inappropriate sexual conversations while riding to field sites with men”.

This highlights the urgent need for robust mechanisms to safeguard media workers’ rights.

The Myanmar Journalists Club was created in August 2024 with the aim of advocating for better protection of labour and other rights of professionals in Myanmar’s news sector, whether inside the country or in exile.

Exiled journalists have been “facing difficulties such as stable employment, legal status and livelihood in foreign countries”, the club’s secretary said in an interview published in [the third quarter media update](#). “Taking advantage of these difficulties, some media industry leaders have widely committed wage exploitation, [disproportionate] workload, unfair pay rate, violations of human rights, violent communication and sexual assault. However, journalists stay silent about these abuses,” he said. As of September 2024, the MJC secretary said, the club had more than 150 members.

The club addressed three cases in 2024, including one involving [allegations](#) against a senior Voice of America Burmese journalist for cutting wages that he had agreed with a freelance journalist, lack of the use of safety gear and mistreatment.

The Myanmar Journalists Club is the fourth group of Myanmar journalists and news organisations formed after the 2021 coup. The others are the Independent Myanmar Journalists Association and the Burma Media Consortium, which were created in June 2023, and the Independent Press Council of Myanmar that was founded in December 2023.

Voices

o ‘Doxing has significantly disrupted my ability to report freely’

i Below is a conversation with an editor who shares how doxing endangered not just his life, but that of his family members too.

C An editor with Myay Latt Athan in 2019-2020, he had been shot with rubber bullets while covering a protest in front of the Pyay University in the Bago region, in March 2021 – one hit his cheek, and another his neck. A bullet remained lodged in his cheek for nine days. Following this incident, the authorities began searching for him as well other persons injured in the protests.

Can you share your experiences related to doxing?

In June 2022, after Myay Latt Athan published a report on a student conflict in Pyay, someone doxed me on Telegram, posting my name, my wife’s photo (at the time she was my girlfriend) and our supposed residential addresses (including those of my parents-in-law). Although the address for my house was incorrect, the one for my in-laws was correct. So, police raided their home, confiscated phone, and arrested my father-in-law for having political content on his phone. He was sentenced to two years in prison under Section 505A. Then, ten months before he finished serving his sentences, he was released under an amnesty.

In 2024, similar doxing incidents resurfaced, but this time more severe, escalating to death threats from groups like ‘Black Death Messengers’. This time, learning lessons from the previous one and to protect my in-laws, we quickly relocated them overnight and brought them to Thailand.

I sought refuge in Karen State and then crossed into Thailand. My partner, who worked at a clinic, was pressured by authorities after I sought medical treatment for the rubber bullet I was shot at during a protest in March 2021. To protect her, I brought her along with me. My younger brother also joined

us since he was living with me. In November, the two crossed into Thailand together [after the editor fled to Thailand].

What challenges have you faced since relocating to Thailand?

While safety from the military junta is no longer a concern after we got here, some of my family members are now undocumented in Thailand. My family consists of my parents, two younger brothers, a step-sibling (himself a refugee), and my wife’s relatives, totaling 10 members.

However, the most significant challenge in Thailand has been documentation issues, including interactions with local police. For instance, my wife required medical treatment for kidney stones. When my mother accompanied her to the hospital, she [mother] was arrested on the way back for lacking proper documentation as she only holds a temporary restricted identification card that only allows movement within a quarter [specified part of town]. So, we had to pay 3,000 baht for her release. Legal residency remains a major challenge. Weekly trips to Mae Sot and Myawaddy were required to maintain status, but these became financially unsustainable. Over time, my family had to accept their undocumented status, which has posed ongoing risks.

Have you observed doxing incidents affecting other journalists?

In our department, I seem to be the only one target of doxing. Information about me is frequently posted on Telegram channels based in Pyay. I heard that I was posted in Telegram very often, but these two mentioned above are severe ones.

What support have you got for your relocation?

Relocation came with significant legal and financial hurdles. Initially, my organisation provided some support from their funding, but resources were limited. Emergency funding was obtained once, but I did not receive any external support for other financial needs. [Note: external support for journalists seeking safety from military harassment and arrest is often limited to immediate family members.]

How has doxing affected your work as a journalist?

Doxing has significantly disrupted my ability to report freely. Following the first incident, I temporarily halted reporting. Also, my organisation shifted to posting under a new page after a family member of another journalist from our outlet was arrested. Following my father-in-law's arrest, I avoided covering stories from Pyay and instead provided critical updates to other outlets. This shift diluted the impact of my reporting, but it was necessary to ensure safety.

How do you and your family cope psychologically?

The trauma is undeniable. As the family leader, I feel the pressure to stay resilient despite frequent nightmares and anxiety. My parents also likely suffer but avoid expressing their feelings to prevent additional stress. They struggled initially to understand the risks we faced. Over time, they grew more aware but remained deeply concerned about the safety of our relatives left in Myanmar.

What challenges do you currently face?

The cost of renewing documentation in Thailand is a persistent financial burden. For example, a two-year visa extension can cost upwards of 15,000 to 20,000 Thai baht, with additional expenses for medical tests and other requirements. As I work multiple jobs to make ends meet, including as a photo editor and journalist, my wife has also begun assisting to supplement our income.

About this brief

This is an update on the challenges and threats to press freedom and media independence in Myanmar, safety issues around journalists and individuals in the news profession, and relevant events and issues in the country's news and information environment since the military coup of 1 February 2021. This brief is produced using verified information, including the tracking of incidents and discussions with journalists and media professionals, to document and provide context for a better understanding of the country's news and information situation.

Some definitions

In the monitoring work for this series of updates, an incident is a verified event that involves action against a journalist due to his or her journalistic activities or background, such as arrest, detention, prosecution, death, torture and acts of violence, surveillance, harassment and/or threats.

Incidents include similar actions against other individuals working in independent newsrooms and news-related operations, such as news management and other administrative, creative and support personnel who are part of the production and distribution of journalistic products. They are called “media workers” in these monitoring updates.

Also included in incidents are actions taken against newsrooms, news organisations and their websites and online spaces, independent associations of professional journalists and press clubs. These include the cancellation of publishing licences, raids on news outlets' premises and their prosecution and the blocking of websites.

In this series of updates, a journalist is an individual who is engaged in gathering and reporting, taking photographs or video footage, editing or publishing and presenting news that has been produced using professional and independent journalistic standards and methods.

A journalist may be in news work as a livelihood, whether paid or not, in different types of media and platforms, and have different types of professional arrangements, such as being full-time staff, freelance, a stringer or occasional contributor.

Included in the journalists covered by the monitoring work are individuals who have been described as being former journalists or who have left their news organisations. This is for two reasons: first, being or having been a journalist in Myanmar by itself is a risk, and persons have been targeted or arrested because of a past affiliation with a news outlet; second, safety considerations can require an individual's description as a former journalist.

“Journalists” in this monitoring work likewise include citizen journalists, given that many news organisations in Myanmar work with them on a regular basis. In the Myanmar context, the term “citizen journalist” typically refers to a person who contributes news – whether in the form of raw content, including photographs or video, or full stories. He or she may or may not be paid for contributions and may or may not have had some news training.

After the 2021 coup, news outlets began using material sent voluntarily by citizen journalists after restrictions and arrests made news-related activities dangerous for professional journalists.

Journalism and Media Safety in Myanmar

October-December 2024 and Annual Report 2024



January - 2025
www.athanmyanmar.org