

COUNTRY CONDITIONS

JANUARY-AUGUST 2024



Myanmar journalist Hmu Yadanar Khet Moh Moh Tun was recently sentenced to an additional 10 years in prison. (Myanmar Pressphoto Agency)

VOICE OF AMERICA January 26, 2024

[Journalists Paying a Heavy Price in Myanmar \(voanews.com\)myanmar-/7459603.html](https://www.voanews.com/myanmar-/7459603.html)

In December 2021, Hmu was covering a protest in Yangon. Junta soldiers ran her over with a truck.

"Her whole body and her legs were completely crushed."

"She ended up disfigured by scars on her face and head."

She was initially sentenced to three years in prison. But in May 2023, she was sentenced to an additional ten years. She is still in prison.

'I don't want to kill': Conscription law sparks fear in war-torn Myanmar

CNN

February 21, 2024



Myanmar's junta chief Sen. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, who ousted the elected government in 2021, presides at an army parade on Armed Forces Day in Naypyidaw on March 27, 2021. Reuters

Anna wakes up about four times a night from dreams in which she is being sent to the front lines of a bloody war and forced to fight.

It's a terrifying prospect that could become a reality for Anna and millions of her peers across Myanmar after the military junta activated a mandatory conscription law for all young men and women.

"We are in panic mode and are considering a way to escape," said Anna, an educator in her 20s from the country's south who requested to use a pseudonym to protect her safety. "I don't think I can keep living in Myanmar."

Three years on from its bloody coup, Myanmar's military junta is facing the biggest challenge to its fragile hold on power as it struggles to fight a nationwide armed resistance on multiple fronts across the Southeast Asian nation.

Source : <https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/22/asia/myanmar-mandatory-conscription-fears-young-people-intl-hnk-dst/index.html>

Myanmar junta kills 12 after firing into crowded market

By RFA Burmese
2024.02.29



Junta shelling of a crowded market in western Myanmar killed 12 people and critically injured 18 more on Thursday morning, rescue workers told Radio Free Asia.

A junta battalion on a nearby road fired indiscriminately into a marketplace in Rakhine state's capital of Sittwe during the busiest time of day, locals said.

Source : <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-shelling-02292024055546.html>

SONG WRITER IMPRISONED FOR COMPLAINING ABOUT POWER OUTAGES

BYUHAR



ရွှေ ဘုံ နိ ဒါန်း

(SBND Family)

[NorthSide]



The 38-year-old rapper livestreamed on Facebook in May 2023, complaining about frequent power outages. He called the electricity minister a “fool.” Arrested hours later, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison in August 2023.

Regime forces also raided the home of Byu Har’s father. Failing to find him, they arrested his wife, and detained her at the local police station.

<https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/rapper-to-be-imprisoned-for-complaining-about-power-cuts/>

Myanmar's junta imposes multiple death sentences on activists

By RFA Burmese
2024.03.07

Meant to terrorize people, the sentences are making the judicial system a joke, rights groups say.



On Feb. 29, the military junta sentenced seven people to death – five of them for the second or third time.

The seven – Thura Phyo, Tun Tun Oo, Kyaw San Oo, Ko Ko Aung, Aung Moe Myint, Win Myat Thein Zaw and Kaung Si Thu – were convicted of murdering two women from the Ayeyarwady region's Pyapon township, who they believed were junta informants, sources familiar with the situation told RFA Burmese.

Five of the seven had already been sentenced to death on Oct. 20, along with two other defendants, San Lin San and Wunna Tun, the latter of whom has been sentenced to death twice himself. That case was over the killing of ward administrators in Maubin, Pyapon and Bogale townships.

But four of those five had been involved in an even earlier case, meaning they have now received the death penalty three times.

In addition, the defendants in all three cases received prison sentences ranging from 15 to 45 years.

Imposing multiple sentences is unprecedented in Myanmar's judicial history, lawyer Kyee Myint told RFA. "Only one [death] sentence must be given," he said. "Sentences should not be imposed again and again. It is against the law."

Source : <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/death-penalty-03072024185517.html>

2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

APRIL 22, 2024

Burma 2023 Human Rights Report 57 pages

Executive Summary Excerpts from page 1:

Aung San Suu Kyi “remained in detention.”

The *junta* engaged in

“transnational repression against individuals in another country;”

“punishment of family members for alleged offenses by a relative”

“enforced disappearances”

“violence against ” and “unjustified arrests of” journalists

Page

Exhibit

4-22-24 short

Burma 2023 Human Rights Report

Executive Summary

The human rights situation in Burma deteriorated during the year as the conflict between the military regime and opposition forces escalated.

Deposed State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint, and other leading members of the deposed civilian government and the National League for Democracy party remained in detention.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: unlawful killings, including extrajudicial killings; enforced disappearance; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by the regime; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest or detention; serious problems with the independence of the judiciary; political prisoners or detainees; [transnational repression against individuals in another country;] arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy; [punishment of family members for alleged offenses by a relative;] serious abuses in a conflict, including reportedly unlawful or widespread civilian harm, [enforced disappearances] or abductions, torture, and physical abuses or punishment; unlawful recruitment or use of children in an armed conflict by the regime as well as some ethnic armed organizations; serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including [violence or threats of violence against journalists;] unjustified arrests or prosecutions of journalists,

2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

April 22, 2024, Burma 2023 Human Rights Report 57 pages Excerpts

Page 3: On January 4, 2023, soldiers arrested nine NLD party members from from Mandalay, including Myo Lin, who was killed during interrogation. “[H]is body was not returned to his family.”

Page 3-4: “The regime encouraged...proxy vigilantes to target prodemocracy groups and their families.”

Page 8: “The law allowed” detention without charge of persons who “might” endanger “public peace and tranquility.”

Page 9: On January 17, 2023, soldiers arrested Win Myint Khine, a member of a regional parliament, along with his son.

lawyers arrested

Page 12: “the regime arrested more than 53 lawyers associated with prodemocracy cases and 29 lawyers remained in detention” as of August 2023

Page 13: Aung San Suu Kyi “remained in solitary confinement.”

Page 14: **Extraterritorial Killing, Kidnapping, Forced Returns, or Other Violence or Threats of Violence:**

“The regime was alleged to have kidnapped persons in other countries for politically motivated reprisal.” On July 4, 2023, “Burmese Muslim activist Thuzar Maung and her family were abducted from their home in Malaysia.”

Page

Exhibit

Page 15: passports of Burmese living in Singapore had their passports cancelled on October 30, 2023.

Page 16: the regime seized approximately 1,100 properties owned by 892 individuals with ties to the prodemocracy movement or who provided donations to the prodemocracy movement via mobile phones.

“According to the AAPP, the regime used its authority to seize property as a weapon to intimidate the public.”

“T]he regime legalized entering properties without a warrant.”

“Unannounced nighttime household checks were common.”

Page 20: soldiers “restricted the passage of relief supplies, including medical supplies” to areas of need.

Page 21: the regime “arrested medical workers and patients, attacked and occupied hospitals, and blocked the delivery of medicines and medical supplies to displaced populations.”

Airstrikes and shelling of “hospitals, schools, and places of worship increased by more than 100 percent.”

Page 22: soldiers reviewed content of cell phones at checkpoints “and during neighborhood raids.”

May 2023: hip-hop singer Byuhar was arrested in May after posting a video criticizing the regime for prolonged electricity shortages in Rangoon.

July 2023: Tik Tok celebrity Zaw Win Maung was arrested after he posted a short comedy video in which he mocked Commander in Chief Min Aung Hlaing.

life in prison for attending the wrong school August 31, 2023: life imprisonment sentence imposed for “terrorism” to a student named Aye Mya Sandar, because she attended an NUG-affiliated school.

Page 24: September 6, 2023: photojournalist Sai Zaw Thaike sentenced to 20 years in prison with hard labor for covering Cyclone Mocha.

The regime also banned the use of certain terminology in reporting, such as “junta,” “coup d’état,”

Page 25: August 8, 2023: Swiss citizen Didier Nusbaumer and 13 Burmese nationals, including a girl, age 12, were arrested on August 8 for their roles in the filming of movie about Buddhist monks

Page 27: posting criticisms on Facebook gets you arrested

Page 30: “Numerous local media reports described regime security force roadblocks and random searches of private cars and taxis. Nightly curfews in Rangoon and several other cities also restricted movement, as did a requirement that all visitors register with the local ward administrator.”

“Local media reported the regime harassed health-care workers and sometimes seized ambulances when medical emergencies occurred after curfew.”

Page 33: On June 8, 2023: Cyclone Mocha: “the regime revoked approval to provide assistance to the cyclone-affected populations”

Page 38: On May 8, 2023, the home of Zaw Myint Maung, NLD vice-chairman, was bombed in Mandalay.

Page 40: On July 30, 2023, soldiers raided Student Union office and killed three members:

Ko Kyaw Win Thant Ko Than Sin Thing and Ko Thu Ta Nay

FARMERS ARRESTED FOR TRESPASSING ON THEIR OWN LAND



Freedom House Annual Report 2024 for Myanmar:

“Court cases are frequently brought against farmers for trespassing on land that was taken from them.”

“The military has also engaged in seizures of property targeting political dissidents, confiscating hundreds of properties during 2023.”

<https://freedomhouse.org/country/myanmar/freedom-world/2024> [last accessed on May 9, 2024]

Since the coup, the military has violently suppressed dissent”

The military employed an increasingly brutal range of tactics to quash resistance activities. By the end of the year, nearly 4,300 people had been killed, more than 25,600 had been arrested, and more than 8,400 had been sentenced by military authorities since the coup, including 162 death sentences.

Since then, the SAC junta has consistently used harsh tactics to suppress civilian opposition in areas under its control, including the arrest and sentencing of political leaders and protesters, excessive violence and mass killings, and custodial abuse.

Defense lawyers who take on politically sensitive cases are also subject to arrest and abuse, according to a June 2023 Human Rights Watch report.

The government used thermobaric bomb killed at least 160 civilians at a gathering in Sagaing Region. The government also used chemical weapons.

The military has erected roadblocks and checkpoints; enforced exit controls, curfews, and residency rules for private dwellings that require reporting overnight guests.

Instances of forced eviction and displacement, confiscation, lack of sufficient compensation, and direct violence against landholders by state security officials abound. Court cases are frequently brought against farmers for trespassing on land that was taken from them.

The military has also engaged in seizures of property targeting political dissidents, confiscating hundreds of properties during 2023.

<https://freedomhouse.org/country/myanmar/freedom-world/2024> [last accessed on May 9, 2024]

What are thermobaric weapons and how do they work?



The 'vacuum bomb', which Ukraine says the Russians have used in the invasion, ignites a fireball that sucks in all surrounding oxygen. The vacuum sucks the air out of the lungs of animals and people.

The first-stage charge distributes an aerosol made up of very fine material – from a carbon-based fuel to tiny metal particles. A second charge ignites that cloud, creating a fireball, a huge shock wave, and a vacuum as it sucks up all surrounding oxygen.

The blast wave can last for significantly longer than a conventional explosive and is capable of vaporising human bodies.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/01/what-are-thermobaric-weapons-and-how-do-they-work>

Freedom House reports that the Burmese government used these bombs against villages in 2023.

<https://freedomhouse.org/country/myanmar/freedom-world/2024> [last accessed on May 9, 2024]

6 June 2024 Peace and Security

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres is deeply concerned about escalating violence in Myanmar.

During the attacks, some members of this community experienced beheadings and burning of their homes. [There were] reported cases of “shooting at unarmed fleeing villagers” and disappearances in Myanmar.

A displaced persons camp in Sittwe, capital of Rakhine State



news.un.org/en/story/2024/06/1150751

Systematic terror, brutal atrocities rife in Myanmar: UN human rights chief

18 June 2024 Human Rights

The UN's top human rights official said on Tuesday that Myanmar is in "agonizing pain", suffocated by an illegitimate military regime which uses "horrific war tactics" and commits brutal atrocity crimes.

"We are hearing stories of horrific war tactics, such as beheadings. Midnight drone attacks. The burning of homes as people sleep. People being shot at as they flee for their lives."

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/06/1151186>

Telecoms blackouts aggravate Myanmar civilians' suffering in horrific war

<https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/telecoms-blackouts-aggravate-myanmar-civilians-suffering-in-horrific-war/>

In parts of Myanmar impacted by conflict, civilians feel forced back to an earlier era without mobile phones or internet, with letters as the only remaining means of reaching loved ones in conflict zones, and some areas cut off from all forms of communication

August 16, 2024

Rakhine child plays near a telecommunications tower in Rakhine State in June 2019

