

COUNTRY CONDITIONS

JANUARY-DECEMBER

2024

Pages 1-19



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.

## 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>

## ‘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'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 Kye 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>

April 12, 2024

# Millions in Myanmar face economic 'fr'

BY REBECCA TAN

SINGAPORE — The civil war now engulfing Myanmar is driving the population into an acute economic crisis, with the middle class shrinking dramatically and poverty spreading widely, according to a report issued Thursday by the United Nations Development Program.

U.N. researchers found that the middle class is now half the size it was three years ago and, faced with rising inflation, households are being forced to slash spending on food. Nearly half the population lives under the national poverty line of 76 cents a day.

The report, which entailed more than 12,600 interviews, is one of the largest surveys in Myanmar since the military sparked the civil war by seizing power in 2021, and represents a rare accounting of economic upheaval in what was one of Asia's most promising emerging markets. After decades of isolation, Myanmar began liberalizing and opening up to foreign investment in 2011. In 2016, according to the International Monetary Fund, Myanmar's economy grew faster than any other in the world.

"This was a country that was on a very positive trajectory," UNDP administrator Achim



AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**A woman walks at Myo Ma market in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, on March 26. U.N. researchers found that as inflation in Myanmar has soared, the nation's middle class is half the size it was three years ago,**

Steiner said in an interview from New York. Now, Myanmar's economy is "imploding" and there are no indications this will stop without intervention, he added.

For three years, pro-democracy

insurgents have been fighting against military rule, joining ethnic rebel groups that have been waging war for decades. The junta has carried out what human rights investigators call crimes

against humanity in a brutal campaign to crush the opposition. Even for those not involved in combat, daily life has become unbearable, the UNDP said in its report.



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.”

Page 30:  
Local media reported the regime harassed health-care workers and sometime seized ambulances when medical emergencies occurred after curfew.

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# 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

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## 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 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.”

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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.”

“The 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]

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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](https://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>

EXCERPTS FROM THE 30-page  
BURMA 2023 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Released on June 16, 2024

“During the year, there were reports of threats, detentions, and violence targeting minority religious and ethnoreligious groups.” Page 1

*Burmese airforce drops bombs on churches*

April 15, 2023: “a regime military aircraft dropped bombs on a Catholic church in Tiphul village of Hakha Township in Chin State. Page 10

*Three Bs policy:*

The military is implementing its “Three Bs” policy: one race (Bamar), one religion (Buddhism), and one language (Burmese) Page 14

*Soldiers occupy churches*

February 2, 2023 in Hakha, Chin State: regime troops occupied the Believers’ Church. Troops continued to occupy the adjacent United Pentecostal Church. Page 20

*Chinese are denied education and other services*

According to NGOs, legal restrictions continued to impede the ability of Rohingya and some unrecognized, “unofficial” ethnic minorities, including Chinese Burmese, Anglo-Burmese, and Gurkhas, among others, to pursue livelihoods and education, access markets, hospitals, and other services, and engage other communities. Page 21

*Everyone must carry I.D. cards, that list religion and ethnicity*

Authorities continued to require citizens and permanent residents to carry government-issued identification cards that permitted holders to access services and prove citizenship. The cards indicated religious affiliation and ethnicity. Citizens were also required to indicate their religion on certain applications for official documents such as passports, although passports themselves did not indicate the bearer’s religion. Page 22

## **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





## Fears Grow for Saffron Revolution Monk Detained in Myanmar



by The Irrawaddy November 21, 2024 i

Pinnya Zawta, a Buddhist monk, and U.S. citizen, was arrested in Burma a few days after he arrived. He is the abbot of the Metta Parami Monastery in Buffalo, NY.

U Pinnya Zawta was a leading figure in the 2007 Saffron Revolution and a founder of the Young Monks Union in Myanmar before fleeing the country due to persecution. He later applied for U.S. citizenship.

The junta does not show leniency towards foreigners, ... citing the example of economic advisor Sean Turnell from Australia, and [Nathan Maung](#), a Myanmar journalist with U.S. citizenship.

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/fears-grow-for-saffron-revolution-monk-detained-in-myanmar.html>