



MYANMAR

Weekly Updates on Current Situation in Myanmar (29-8-2021)

After 200 days have passed since the coup, the Myanmar military group is still ignoring the will of the people, putting the country into turmoil with disproportionate actions when the people are facing the nationwide health crisis under the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Deaths and Arbitrary Arrests

As of 28 August 2021, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), a total of 7,627 people have been arrested, 6,005 people have still been detained, whereas 1,984 people have been issued with warrants and 1,026 people were ruthlessly murdered by the military since 1 February 2021 when the military unleashed systematic and targeted attacks and violence against innocent civilians.

Irrational Arrests and Unprovoked Shootings

On 20 August 2021 in Sagaing, the security forces in plainclothes reportedly arrested the parents of Mr. Zaw Min Win, a police sergeant who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). According to the news received, Mr. Zaw Min Win left his wife and two daughters at the police housing complex, and he took the weapons with him. On the same day, he left the house; about two dozen of security forces went to the house of Mr. Zaw Min Win's parents, destroyed the properties, and arrested his parents.

On 21 August 2021, around 8 pm, Mr. Maung Aye and his wife, Ms. Nweat Nweat Aye, from Kan Thit Village in Khin-u Township in Sagaing Region, returned home by motorbike, were reportedly shot to death by the patrolling military forces. It is reported that Mr. Maung Aye was shot in the head, and Ms. Nweat Nweat was shot in the stomach.

On 22 August 2021 in Hinthla village in Yesagyo Township of Magwe, the police forces reportedly raided a house in an ambulance. According to the residents, the forces surrounded the house and opened fire. Due to the incident, a 21-year-old man was killed, and four others were arrested. The owner of the house is believed to have participated in anti-coup movements.

In accordance with the information received, a 10 year-old-child, Ven Bway Htan, was shot dead in the neck on the evening of 25 August 2021 in Htantalang Township of Chin State due to an unprovoked shooting by the military forces. Children are not safe, and the Myanmar military has no regard for the safety of children. It has no intention to abide by international laws protecting children in an armed conflict.

According to the credible report, on 26 August 2021, in Mingalar Taung Nyunt Township in Yangon, Mr. Thein Min Oo was shot dead by the military forces on 121st street. His body was found between two buildings on 121st after the military forces reportedly opened fire at a drunken man shouting on the street. Neighbors believe that a stray bullet hit Mr. Thein Min Oo while the military forces chased and shot the drunk man. It is also reported that there were some injured civilians during the shootings.

Taking Hostages

On 24 August 2021, in Taw Kyaung Lay Village, in Khin-u Township of Sagaing Region, it is reported that the military forces arrested Ms. Ei Thandar Phyo, the younger sister of an alleged PDF. The forces took Ms. Ei Thandar Phyo as a hostage since they could not find her brother.

On 27 August 2021, in South Dagon Township in Yangon, the husband and daughter of Political Activist Ms. Su Mar and a guest who were with them at home were reportedly arrested as the security forces could not find Ms. Su Mar at home.

Deaths from Torture

Mr. Soe Paing, a.k.a. Mr. Kyaw Khaing Win, a physics teacher from Tharkayta Township in Yangon Region, was reportedly arrested on 22 August 2021. He later died on the night of 23 August due to torture in interrogation.

Similarly, on 24 August 2021, at night in Khayan Township of Yangon, Mr. Min Aung was shot and arrested by the security forces while passing by Khayan Police Station by a motorbike. He was then reportedly beaten during detention and died from the torture.

In Monywa Township in Sagaing Region, Mr. Thet Paing Soe was reportedly arrested on 24 August 2021 and later died on 25 August. The security forces informed his family that he died due to COVID-19. However, his body was found with serious injuries due to constant torture.

On 26 August 2021, Mr. Yan Aung Soe from Gonetan Village, in Shwebo Township of Sagaing Region, was reportedly arrested and taken to Gonetan Village

Cemetery. The security forces then shot dead, who questioned him for allegedly possessing weapons in his house.

Raiding in Rural Areas

Myanmar military forces have reportedly been raiding in rural areas in Chaung-U Township in Sagaing Region. They raided Nwe Khwe village on 23 August 2021, Taw Kyaung Lay village on 24 August 2021, and Taw Kyaung Gyi and Thone Pan Hla villages on 26 August 2021.

According to the residents, the forces invaded the villages where there were no anti-coup activities. They took even small things, and they did not leave behind a tiny amount of money. They searched the houses of youths who have been volunteering the charity work during the Covid-19 period. According to credible news, during the raid in Taw Kyaung Lay village, they destroyed some houses and took 9 million kyats, six motorcycles, jewelry, and clothes. Five youths who were taking care of Covid patients were reportedly arrested.

Seizing Kar Paung Kya Village

Military forces have seized Kar Paung Kya Village in Taze Township of the Sagaing Region since 26 August 2021. According to the residents, nearly a hundred soldiers in six trucks stormed the village at around 2 am on 26 August 2021. Troops started shooting a man who came out of the house to see what was happening. It is reported that several houses were torched and destroyed. More than a thousand of the 800-household inhabitants fled to a nearby forest. And the military troops even fired light weapons and heavy artillery into areas where villagers were hiding. On 27 August 2021, about 50 troops went into the forests to look for the fleeing villagers. People reportedly lost contact with each other, families have been separated, and many others have gone missing.

During the raid, Mr. Moe Swe Oo and his younger sister were reportedly shot when they were hiding in a small hut three miles away from the village. According to a resident, Mr. Moe Swe Oo and his sister were shot while running away from soldiers. Mr. Moe Swe Oo reportedly died from his injuries, and his sister was severely wounded.

According to the villagers, Kar Paung Kya village has been targeted repeatedly by the military troops. They keep coming into the village, destroying and looting things.

Using Civilians as Human Shields

It is reported that 30 civilians were detained by divisions 66 and 55 of the Myanmar military between 13 and 18 August 2021 from Demoso, Hpruso, and Bawlakhe in Kayah State and Pekon township in Shan State during tensions between military forces and resistance fighters. The military has reportedly released 15 detainees; 10 from Pekon, three from Demoso, and two from Hpruso. However, 15 others are still being detained. According to credible news, six people taken from Demoso and Hpruso are in Loikaw after being used as human shields in different places. They will be interrogated in Loikaw. Those six people were detained on 14 August when they returned to their villages for food. One of the six is a 15-year-old with a health problem. A woman and seven men are reportedly being held by Light Infantry Battalion 531 based in Hpruso, and they have been seriously tortured. Generals, officers, and infantry soldiers have no regard for human life. They show no intention to abide by international humanitarian laws that protects civilians during the war.

Mobilizing Military Troops in Karen State

In accordance with the credible report, the Myanmar military has mobilized its troops in villages of the south of Kawkaik Township in Karen State. On 24 August 2021, Myanmar military forces and forces of the Karen National Union (KNU) clashed twice in Kawkaik Township after Myanmar military forces trespassed into KNU-controlled territory. It is reported that the military forces fired around 30 rounds of artillery, and there were casualties and deaths on both sides. Following the clashes, about 200 residents from Kawthanaw village fled their homes. According to the news, a jet fighter was seen on 25 August 2021 and was likely engaged in aerial reconnaissance. It is expected that a major invasion from the Myanmar military is coming soon.

Targeting the members of the NLD

On 21 August 2021, Mr. Kyaw Soe Win, a.k.a Kay Kay, NLD executive member in Aung Lan Township of Magway Region, was reportedly arrested in Shwe Pan Taw Village in Aung Lan Township.

On 22 August 2021, it is reported that Ms. Khin Myat Thu, a Pyithu Hluttaw MP and NLD member of Mingaladon Township of Yangon Region, was arrested with her husband.

Moreover, on 22 August 2021, Mr. Htay Win, MP of Htilin Township of Magway Region and executive member of the NLD of Magway Region, was also reportedly arrested in Sar Kyin Village in Pakokku Township of Magway Region.

On 22 August 2021, Mr. Kyaw San Htoo, Magway Region NLD executive member, was reportedly arrested in Panmata Village at the Aung Lan Township of Magway Region.

On 27 August 2021, in Kyaikhto Township of Mon State, Mr. Zaw Moe Htet, a.k.a. Gwen Gyi, NLD secretary of Theinzayat Town, who was issued a warrant under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code, was reportedly arrested by the security forces who were wearing plain clothes.

Soldiers and Police joining the CDM

It is reported that around 2,000 soldiers and police have joined the Civil Disobedient Movement (CDM) since the coup on 1 February 2021. Most of the soldiers who have joined the CDM are privates and sergeants. There are also around 100 officers ranking from lieutenants to majors. Most of them have reportedly fled to areas controlled by Ethnic Arms Organizations (EAOs), or some are hiding among civilians. These striking soldiers expect more military officers to join the CDM as the military regime continues to use violence against civilians.

Humanitarian Situation

The humanitarian update for Myanmar, issued by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on 27 August 2021, highlighted the situations of people displacement and conditions of food insecurity in Myanmar.

It is underlined that due to clashes and insecurity, thousands have been displaced in Sagaing Region and Chin State, particularly in and around Mindat Township. Also, in the south-eastern parts of the country, an estimated 141,200 people remain displaced, mainly in Kayah and Kayin States since the military coup. In the Shan States, more than 26,300 people have been displaced across the State since the beginning of 2021, of which about 6,400 of them remain displaced to date.

It is also stated that food insecurity, particularly food shortage, is increasing in the displacement sites and communities in northern Shan and Rakhine states.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) also announced monthly food and cash assistance for vulnerable families in Rakhine State resumed during the fourth week of August. With monthly life-saving support, World Food Programme has provided

food, and cash aids to nearly 360,000 food-insecure people in Chin, Kachin, Rakhine, and the Shan States, including women, children, and persons with disabilities and families displaced conflict.

Activities of the National Unity Government

On 24 August 2021, the National Unity Government released a Statement regarding the 4th anniversary of the atrocity crimes committed against the Rohingya people in 2017.

In the statement, the NUG has stated how it was saddened by the horrendous violence, gross human rights violations, and massive displacement that the Rohingya people suffered four years ago. The statement further explained that the same military responsible for all those atrocities has also perpetrated crimes against humanity and war crimes against the people of Myanmar over the decades. The NUG also expressed its endeavor in seeking justice and accountability for all crimes committed by the military against the Rohingya and all other people of Myanmar across the country throughout history.

The NUG also informed its concerns regarding the situation of the Rohingya people in refugee camps of neighbouring countries and within Myanmar. It stated that voluntary and safe repatriation of the Rohingya people in a dignified manner is their utmost priority. Finally, the NUG also expressed its commitment to the fundamental principles enshrined in the Federal Democratic Charter, including fundamental human rights, human dignity, individual rights, collective rights, and establishing a Federal Democratic Union.

The Radio NUG started its programme on 26 August 2021 at 8 am and 8 pm at SW 16, MHz 17.71.

On 27 August 2021, the Ministry of Planning, Finance, and Investment released an Announcement on the Illicit Printing of Banknotes. In the announcement, the Ministry informed that they had received credible information that the illegitimate military council has made approaches to foreign banknotes and security printing times to seek assistance in printing new Myanmar Kyat banknotes.

The Ministry also stated in the announcement that according to Section 16 of the Unlawful Associations Act 1908, the National Unity Government has determined the illegitimate military council to be an unlawful association, and thus, any issuance of currency effected by the military council, its successor entities, and any of its subordinate or subsidiary associations, including the so-called “caretaker government,” shall be deemed to lack legitimacy.

The NUG called upon the military council to desist from the act of economic sabotage. It implored the foreign banknote and security printing approached the military council to refrain from printing Myanmar kyat Banknotes and providing any raw materials, supplies, etc., that could be used in their production. The NUG further called upon all responsible firms to follow the example set by Giesecke Devrient GmbH in March 2021.

On 28 August 2021, the Ministry of Defence of the National Unity Government released Directive No. 2/2021 to Tatmadaw and Police Forces members. In the Directive, the Ministry referred to the policy of the NUG released under statement No. 8/2021 on 23 August 2021. According to that policy, the NUG also extended a special welcome to members of Tatmadaw and police forces who defected the State Administration Council to stand with the people. The NUG further instructed them not to obey the SAC's orders and directives, to not obstruct, hinder, or attack People's Defence Forces (PDF) and allied forces, and to not arrest, torture, or kill civilians and not plunder public and private properties.

International Action and Pressure

On 22 August 2021, Japan has reportedly refused to issue visas for two Myanmar military-appointed diplomats to the Embassy of Myanmar in Tokyo. However, the military has requested Japan to grant visas to them for the replacement in the Embassy. These two diplomats will be transferred to replace the two Myanmar diplomats who have joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) in early March 2021 and were dismissed by the military-controlled Ministry.

During the 42nd ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) General Assembly held on 23 August 2021, Speaker of the parliament of Singapore Tan Chuan-Jin remarked that platforms, particularly AIPA, are crucial for supporting a more integrated, digital, and forward-looking ASEAN community. He highlighted that the world is closely watching the response of ASEAN in resolving the crisis in Myanmar.

Speaker of the parliament of Singapore stressed that Singapore welcomed the appointment of Brunei's Foreign Minister as Special Envoy of the ASEAN to Myanmar, hoping that the special envoy will be allowed to have discussions and to facilitate meaningful dialogue with all stakeholders in Myanmar to facilitate the meaningful dialogue among all stakeholders in Myanmar for a peaceful political solution. He also affirmed that "the Myanmar people must determine the solution to the situation in Myanmar."

In the speech by U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris on the Indo-Pacific Region on 24 August 2021, it is highlighted that the U.S. is committed to supporting the people of Myanmar and restoring the democracy in the country and called for Indo-Pacific nations to join in that effort.

In response to the reports of a journalist charged for doing their job, the U.S. embassy in Yangon issued an announcement on 26 August 2021 that the people in Myanmar and abroad should be free to express their beliefs and seek, receive, and share information and ideas.

Following the public petition being signed by 268,428 people, which called on Seoul to render formal support to the National Unity Government (NUG) and to reject the military, the Office of the President of South Korea announced on 26 August 2021 that they will continue to engage with the NUG and continue to support the restoration of democracy in Myanmar through close cooperation with the international community.

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Permanent Mission of Myanmar to the United Nations, New York