Myanmar Situation Update
(15 to 21 February 2021)

Daily mass protests and strikes against the coup are still ongoing across Myanmar over the last week. Security forces continued to forcefully disperse the crowds using water cannons, tear gas, slingshots, as well as rubber bullets, air guns and live ammunition. Four civilians have been killed by security forces since the coup, hundreds were injured and nearly a hundred were detained in the series of crackdowns.

More and more civil servants from healthcare, education and transportation sectors and private bank staff have been joining the nationwide strikes known as the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). As the movement gains momentum, the military junta is intensifying the crackdown against those who take part in the strikes. Many dissenting civil servants were taken into custody in late-night raids by security forces and/or charged in court.

The military junta shut down internet access every night from 1 AM to 9 AM in the past week, and continued the nightly 8 PM to 4 AM curfew in major cities. It also rushed through several legal amendments, apparently targeted at the anti-coup movement.

As of 21 February, a total of 640 people have been detained or issued arrest warrants in relation to the military coup, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners[1]. Of them, four were sentenced to jail, 32 have been issued an arrest warrant but are evading arrest, three have been charged but not detained, and 47 were released. A total of 593 are still under detention, including those sentenced.

Timeline of events

Date	Developments
15 Feb	The internet was shut down nationwide from 1 AM to 9 AM every day this week following the junta's directives. The military junta extended the remand for State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to 17 February, which initially expired on 15 February.

[1] https://aappb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Recent-Arrests-List-Last-Updated-on-21-Feb-21-Final.pdf

	The people of Myanmar continued to hold daily nationwide protests against the coup despite growing threats from the junta. Civil servants' participation in the civil disobedience movement by holding civil service strikes is also increasing. In Mandalay, security forces used air guns, slingshots and batons against the protesters. By-standers who were watching from their homes and shops were also shot, and a journalist was beaten and briefly detained. The military junta amended the Electronic Transactions Law, for instance making spreading "fake news or disinformation" online a crime.
16 Feb	Police filed a new charge against Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for violating Article 25 of the Natural Disaster Management Law, which has been used to prosecute people who have broken COVID-19 restrictions. The court hearing of Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint, which was initially postponed to 17 February, started on 16 February afternoon via video conferencing without the knowledge of Suu Kyi's lawyer. Their next hearing is scheduled for 1 March. The military junta promised in a press conference that there would be an election and it would hand over power to the winning party, but no election date has been given.
17 Feb	Seventeen lawmakers who formed the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), the self-declared legitimate parliament were issued arrest warrants to be charged under section 505(b) of the Penal Code, which carries a maximum sentence of two-year imprisonment. In Yangon, a coordinated civil disobedience campaign of blocking major roads in the city was staged to prevent people from going to work. Eleven members of the Myanmar Press Council resigned as the military junta restricts media freedom. Over ten journalists from the Myanmar Times also resigned as the newspaper's management insisted on sending its journalist to attend the military junta's press conference the day before. Mandalay Region Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Myo Thit was charged under section 505(b) of the Penal Code with the next hearing on 22 February. He previously declared an indefinite period of holidays until the elected government assumes power. In Mandalay, as railway staff were blocking the train tracks in support of the civil disobedience movement, security forces used rubber bullets, tear gas and stones against them at night to make way for a train, causing at least nine injuries including a pregnant woman.
18 Feb	Rakhine and Mandalay chief ministers U Nyi Pu and Dr Zaw Myint Maung were also charged under section 505(b) of the Penal Code with the next hearing on 22 February.

	The United Kingdom and Canada imposed sanctions on the military junta's generals.
19 Feb	The group known as the "Quad" Alliance (Japan, the United States, India, and Australia) called for the return of democracy in Myanmar[2]. 19-year-old Mya Thwate Thwate Khaing who was shot in the head on 9 February in Nay Pyi Taw passed away. She is the first protest fatality since the coup. The military junta later denied its involvement in the killing. In Myitkyina, Kachin State, security forces violently cracked down on anti-coup protesters, including civil servants and young students. Thirteen protesters were detained then released in the evening.
20 Feb	Ten ethnic armed groups who have signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) announced that they will no longer negotiate with the military junta and will stand together with the civilians. In Mandalay, two civilians, including a 16-year-old teenager, were shot dead and another 30 were wounded when police opened fire with live and rubber bullets in a protest. At night, a civilian who was keeping night watch in Yangon was shot dead by police. In response to the deadly crackdown, Singapore said the use of lethal force against unarmed protesters is "inexcusable". UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also condemned the use of deadly force. The U.K. said it will consider further action against those involved in violence. EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said it would "take appropriate decisions" at a meeting of EU foreign ministers. U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said the U.S. is "deeply concerned" by reports that Myanmar security forces have fired on protesters and continue to detain and harass demonstrators. Norway freezed its state-to-state knowledge development programmes in Myanmar, but will continue the support via the UN and civil society to promote peace and democracy.
21 Feb	Facebook removed the Myanmar military Facebook page, *Tatmadaw True News Information Team* for "incitement of violence". Activists called for a major nationwide protest against the coup on 22 February, calling it the 22222 uprising based on the date (22.2.2021). Many businesses have announced that they will halt operations on the day as people join the protests. The military junta blocked almost all embassies' roads in Yangon the night before the planned protests and will shut down internet access in Yangon from 1 AM to 12 noon on 22 February.

Prepared by,

[2] https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-blinken-quad-myanmar-idUSKBN2AI20K

Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)
22 February 2021, 10.30 AM (Bangkok time)