



Students for Free Burma

OFFICIAL MEMO

SITUATION UPDATE: December 15, 2021

- As of December 15, 2021, the [Assistance Association for Political Prisoners \(AAPP\)](#), a Burmese human rights advocacy organization, [reported](#) that 1,343 individuals have been killed, 10,971 individuals arrested, and that over 8,000 individuals are still detained by the Burmese military since the coup.
- On December 10, Burma staged the “[Silent Strike](#)” where people shut down the entire country. Businesses closed their doors and people stayed at home in defiance of the junta. There were [reports](#) of the junta threatening to take action against businesses participating in the strike.
- Political Persecution
 - Dr. Zaw Myint Maung, the ousted chief minister of Mandalay Region, was [denied](#) permission to testify in person for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The ousted chief minister (also the vice-chair of the NLD) was called as a witness in Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s COVID-19 violation trial. Just last week, he was handed [a four-year prison sentence](#) for alleged violation of COVID-19 restrictions and for incitement.
 - On December 10, a junta court in Shan State [sentenced](#) three journalists and a family member to three years. The four were charged with allegedly spreading fake news. In a tragic development, Soe Naing, a freelance photojournalist in Yangon, [died](#) in junta’s custody after being arrested for documenting the nationwide “Silent Strike” on December 10. According to the rankings of the Committee to Protect Journalists’ annual census of jailed journalists, Burma had become [the world’s second-worst jailer](#) of journalists after the February 1 coup.
 - The two lawyers who visited the Insein Prison on December 13 said that nearly 90 inmates were [beaten and put in solitary confinement](#) for participating in the prison’s “Silent Strike” on December 10. Reports of abuse and torture of those in detention are uncommon. Additionally, accounts of people being killed in detention are reported as well. Last week, a [Chin Christian pastor](#) died during a brutal interrogation in Magway Region.
- International Responses
 - From December 13 to 15, U.S. Secretary of State Blinken [visited Indonesia and Malaysia](#) last week signaling Washington’s interest in engaging with the Southeast Asia region. In each of his stops, he [reiterated](#) US’s support for ASEAN’s effort in pressing the Burmese junta to implement the ASEAN’s Five Point Consensus. To read additional statements and briefers from his trip, click [here](#).
 - From December 8 to 13, Counselor Derek Chollet, the U.S. State Department’s Counselor, traveled to Cambodia and Indonesia reaffirming the US support for ASEAN centrality and US-ASEAN cooperation on resolving the crisis in Burma. In Cambodia,

Counselor Chollet stressed [the importance of ASEAN's role](#) in pressing the Burmese junta to implement the ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus in his meetings with Cambodian officials including the [Deputy Minister and Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn](#) and [Delegate Minister Kao Kim Hourn](#). Counselor Chollet [reiterated](#) these messages when meeting with officials in Indonesia.

- o UN Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews is [visiting Bangladesh](#) from December 13 to 19. During his trip, he will be visiting [the Rohingya refugee camps](#) in Cox's Bazar and meeting with the Rohingya refugees, Bangladeshi officials, UN staff, and civil society organizations.
- o On December 10, the US, UK, and Canada imposed [new targeted sanctions](#) on the junta for their human rights violations and abuses. The [coordinated sanctions](#) by the three countries target the junta's Quarter Master General's Office, the Directorate for Defence Industries (state-owned enterprise), the Directorate for Defence Procurement, and the Myanmar War Veterans Organization. Additionally, [four junta-appointed chief ministers](#) for Mandalay Region, Bago Region, Kachin State, and Kayin State were added to US's Treasury's Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list.
- Situation on the Ground
 - o On December 14, 200 junta forces conducted [a military raid](#) on Lay Kay Kaw New City in Karen State. The city, under the control of the Karen National Union (KNU), had been a safe haven for a number of striking civil servants and pro-democracy activists. During the raid, the junta forces arrested over 30 people including U Wai Lin Aung, an NLD MP-elect.
 - o On December 13, junta forces [torched](#) over a hundred homes in Ke Bar Village in Sagaing Region. Junta's raid was preceded by the firing of artillery on the village. The 150-armed attacking party [consisted](#) of junta soldiers and members of the pro-military Pyu Saw Htee according to witness accounts.
 - o Just as conflict and violence are escalating in the rural areas, it is also picking up pace in the urban areas. Over the weekend, the NUG Yangon Division Command reported that the local PDF [conducted attacks](#) on the junta's Tactical Operation Command in Hlaing Tharyar and on the military convoy at the Thamagone traffic junction. The attacks destroyed military targets and killed and injured several junta soldiers. In Mandalay, four people were [killed in three separate shootings](#) over the weekend. The victims include a youth returning from a restaurant, a junta-appointed ward administrator, and a couple (the wife was pregnant).
- On December 7, Meta (formerly Facebook) [expanded](#) its ban of junta from its platforms to the junta affiliates. The new ban includes military-linked businesses such as Mytel who play a direct role in the violence and human rights abuses by the junta. Meta said that the new ban is guided by the [UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar's 2019 report](#) on the economic interests of the Tatmadaw.