



Students for Free Burma

OFFICIAL MEMO

SITUATION UPDATE: December 23, 2021

- As of December 23, 2021, the [Assistance Association for Political Prisoners \(AAPP\)](#), a Burmese human rights advocacy organization, [reported](#) that 1,365 individuals have been killed, 11,148 individuals arrested, and that 8,200 individuals are still detained by the Burmese military since the coup.
- **Political Developments**
 - On December 20, the junta announced that they are [postponing the verdicts](#) on State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for possession of walkie-talkies and a set of signal jammers until December 27. If found guilty, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi could face a total of four years in prison on the two charges. Her court hearings remained behind closed doors throughout this time.
 - Last week, Dr. Aung Moe Nyo, chief minister of Magway Region, was [charged with alleged abuse of authority](#) during the 2020 general elections. He already faced six other corruption charges by the junta prior to this latest charge.
 - On December 20, the junta's Ministry of Foreign Affairs [shut down](#) the office of the Special Envoy of the UN General Secretary on Myanmar. The junta's foreign ministry [cited](#) that the closure is due to the conclusion of Christine Schraner Burgener's mission in October and the appointment of Noeleen Heyzer as the new UN Special Envoy. This announcement came after the UN [delayed the decision](#) to determine who will represent Burma at the UN as well as the [adoption of a UN Resolution](#) on the "Situation of Human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar" at the 76th Session of the UNGA.
- **Ground Situation**
 - After the junta forces raided the city of Lay Kay Kaw in Karen State on December 14, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) [clashed](#) with the junta forces that raided the city on December 15. The city is under the control of the KNLA, the armed wing of the Karen National Union (KNU). Skirmishes and fighting continued throughout last week between the junta forces and the combined forces of KNLA and local PDF groups. As of December 21, the NUG had [reported](#) that the combined forces of KNLA and PDFs have killed at least 68 junta soldiers and captured eight since the clashes began.
 - The recent clashes in Karen State have forced thousands of civilians to flee. As of December 20, about [3,900 Burmese civilians](#) have sought refuge in Thailand according to the Thai authorities. 10,000 others are estimated to be internally displaced due to these clashes. In response, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and NGOs have [requested urgent access](#) to support the ongoing humanitarian assistance in the Thai-Burma border areas and to deliver emergency aid to those fleeing the fighting.

- o On December 20, the occupying junta forces in Kunnar Village in Kayah State's Loikaw Township [torched 19 houses](#) as they were retreating. It was reported that junta forces have been burning down houses in the village over the weekend.
 - o On December 20, at least a dozen junta troops were killed and five wounded in a landmine attack by local resistance groups in Pinyinana Township in [Naypyidaw](#).
 - o [Two student activists](#) in Yangon were arrested by plainclothes military officers on December 19. So far, there has been no additional information on the detainees. In Mandalay, the junta had arrested nearly [a hundred civilian resistance fighters](#) in November and December in an effort to eradicate opposition in the city.
 - o On December 19, the junta forces suffered almost [a hundred casualties](#) in a clash with the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) in Mongkoe District in Northern Shan State. The junta forces with 500 troops attempted to take an MNDAA military base only to retreat after heavy losses.
 - o On December 17, the junta forces [conducted air attacks](#) using helicopters on Hnan Khar Village in Magway Region's Gangnaw Township. The attack claimed the lives of at least 20 civilians according to a local PDF group. Nine more bodies were [discovered](#) after the 150 occupying junta soldiers left the village on December 19. The nine victims were believed to be executed by the junta soldiers according to the local search and rescue team.
 - o On December 14, a motorcade carrying junta-appointed Yangon Region Economic Minister U Aung Than Oo and Resource Minister U Zaw Win was [attacked](#) in Hmabi Township in Yangon. After the local resistance groups learned of the ministers' plan to visit the area where military bases and sites are located, they attacked using remotely-detonated mines. At this moment, no casualties were confirmed. Landmines were widely used by the resistance fighters across the country in Sagaing Region and Mon State as well. These ambushes [killed around 60 junta troops](#) last week.
 - o On December 11 (the same weekend when [a photojournalist](#) was tortured and killed under junta's custody), the junta [arrested](#) a Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) reporter in Sagaing Region. His news agency says that he may have been arrested for exposing the recent activities of the pro-junta Pyu Saw Htee group in the area.
- **International Responses**
 - o The Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M), an independent group of former UN human rights observers, called on foreign governments and members of the UN Security Council to designate the junta as a [terrorist organization](#). In a briefing paper published on December 14, SAC-M justified the need for this designation under international and domestic terrorism laws. You can read the briefing paper [here](#).
 - o According to ASEAN sources, the US is planning [a special US-ASEAN Summit](#) in January 2022. President Biden will meet with ASEAN leaders. It is unlikely that Min Aung Hlaing will be invited. During a press briefing in Malaysia, Secretary Blinken said that [Burma will be on the agenda](#) during the summit. He also indicated that the US is actively looking at a genocide determination for the actions taken by the junta.
 - o Hun Sen, Cambodia's President and Chair of ASEAN, [dismissed criticisms](#) for his plan to meet with the Burmese junta leader without preconditions in January 2022. He also [named Prak Sokhonn](#), Cambodia's foreign minister, as ASEAN Special Envoy to Myanmar on December 15.

- o On December 15, China facilitated [talks](#) between the junta's peace negotiation committee and six ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) operating in Northern Myanmar. The six EAOs are United Wa State Army (UWSA), Mong La's National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), Arakan Army (AA), Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), Kokang's Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and Shan State Progressive Party/Shan State Army-North (SSPP/SSA-N). In recent times, junta forces and some of these EAOs have been fighting.
- o On December 20, Human Rights Watch called on Japan [to suspend military exchanges](#) with the junta. The National Defense Academy of Japan was still hosting eight junta cadets as of December 10.
- **Business and Economy**
 - o [Leaked documents](#) obtained by Justice for Myanmar indicated that Min Aung Hlaing, the junta leader, expressed concerns over payments and revenues from the oil and gas sector. The Burmese public, CSOs, and human rights groups have been [calling for sanctions on MOGE](#) to stop a major source of funding for the junta. You can read WSJ's coverage of the story [here](#).
 - o On December 20, Coastal Capital, a shareholder of TotalEnergies, called on TotalEnergies [to pull out of the partnership](#) with the MOGE.
 - o Reuters published [a detailed account](#) of how Hideo Watanabe, a Japanese former cabinet minister and current chairman of the Japan-Myanmar Association (JMA) is pushing to bring back investments to Burma.
 - o This month, the Action Collaboration Transformation (ACT), an agreement between global brands, retailers, and trade unions, [announced](#) that they have ceased operations in Burma as a result of the withdrawal of the Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar from its operations.
 - o In November, executives of South Korean companies [met](#) with junta officials despite opposition from the people and calls for the international businesses to cease working with the junta.
- **Others**
 - o According to Justice for Myanmar findings, some members of the UN Security Council are found complicit in supplying arms of the junta. You can read the JFM report [here](#).
 - o A recent BBC report [revealed](#) a series of mass killings and torture by the military junta in July.