



Students for Free Burma

OFFICIAL MEMO

BURMA SITUATION UPDATE: September 20, 2022

Political Crisis

- Since the coup on February 01, 2021, the Burmese military junta had detained and charged members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) including State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Members of the NLD and the pro-democracy forces as well as their families have been subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, intimidation, and persecution by the military junta.
- State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and members of her democratically-elected civilian government are charged with election fraud and corruption by the junta.
- Anti-junta forces including students, activists, medical professionals, journalists, etc. are subjected to similar oppression and persecution by the military junta.

Situation on the Ground

- As of September 20, 2022, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), a Burmese human rights advocacy organization, reported that 2,299 individuals have been killed. AAPP also reported that 15,580 individuals have been arrested and 12,444 individuals are still detained by the Burmese military since the coup.¹
- In its latest report on September 12, 2022, UNHCR reported that nearly 986,500 people have been displaced by the violence and conflict since the coup. In total, more than 1.3 million people are internally displaced in Burma. The agency also estimated that 47,200 people have fled to neighboring countries since the coup.²
- Burmese citizens are subjected to arbitrary arrests, detentions, prosecution, and execution by the military junta. Detailed accounts of torture during detention reveal severe human rights abuses by the junta.³ Massacres of civilians are not uncommon.⁴
- Since the coup, people in both urban and rural areas across the country are exposed to armed conflicts between junta forces and pro-democracy resistance forces. Additionally, armed conflicts between the junta forces and anti-junta Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) are flaring up across the country causing loss of lives, displacement, destruction of property, etc.
- There have been intense fightings across Burma's northwest regions in Sagaing, Chin,

¹ Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), "Daily Briefing in Relation to Military Coup", AAPP(B), September 20, 2022. <https://aappb.org/?p=23013>

² UNHCR, "Myanmar UNHCR displacement overview 12 September 2022", UNHCR, September 14, 2022. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/95624>

³ Manny Maung, "New Reports of Torture in Myanmar", Human Rights Watch, October 28, 2021. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/28/new-reports-torture-myanmar>

⁴ The Irrawaddy, "Forensic Evidence Confirms Myanmar Junta's Atrocities on Massacre Victims", The Irrawaddy, January 05, 2022. <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/forensic-evidence-confirms-myanmar-juntas-atrocities-on-massacre-victims.html>

and Magway regions, as well as in the east in Karen and Karenni states.⁵ Clashes between the Arakan Army and the junta forces have renewed conflict in Rakhine in recent weeks.⁶

- The Burmese junta regularly conducts airstrikes and indiscriminate bombing against civilians, EAOs, and pro-democracy resistance forces often resulting in indiscriminate killing including children, and mass displacement of people. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) found more than 450 reported attacks on education and the military use of schools and educational facilities by the junta forces in 2020 and 2021.⁷ Additionally, the junta forces also employ the scorch earth policy by burning down homes and villages in their attempt to combat the resistance forces.⁸

International Response

- The Burmese military and Russian government have been strengthening their ties since the coup. Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing had visited Russia three times since the coup and recently met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in September 2022. The junta and Russia have agreed to deepen their collaboration on weapons provisions, energy cooperation (nuclear power and diesel), and political support.⁹

Economy

- World Bank's report in July 2022 projected a three percent economic growth for Burma in the fiscal year ending in September 2022. Weak economic activity, challenges due to policy shifts, spikes in inflation, rising global oil prices, and the currency crisis are major barriers to a substantial economic rebound after an 18% contraction last year. Currently, about 40 percent of the population is living in poverty, a double rate increase since March of 2020.¹⁰
- The country is facing its highest level of inflation in a decade with prices of essential commodities rising at unprecedented rates.¹¹
- The state-run Global New Light of Myanmar claimed that the military junta earned more than \$800 million in natural gas exports from April to July, mostly to Thailand and China.¹²

⁵ UNOCHA, "Myanmar Flash Update: Escalation of Conflict in the Northwest (As of 3 November 2021)", UNOCHA, November 03, 2022. <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-flash-update-escalation-conflict-northwest-3-november-2021> and Nora Aung, "Karen Resistance Group Claims Another Victory Over Myanmar Junta", The Irrawaddy, July 15, 2022. <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/karen-resistance-group-claims-another-victory-over-myanmar-junta-troops.html> and Nora Aung, "Myanmar Junta Troops Burn Down Catholic Church in Kayah", The Irrawaddy, June 16, 2022. <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-troops-burn-down-catholic-church-in-kayah.html>

⁶ UNOCHA, "Myanmar: Escalation of Conflict in Rakhine and Southern China Flash update (as of 5 September 2022)", UNOCHA, September 05, 2022. <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-escalation-conflict-rakhine-and-southern-chin-flash-update-5-september-2022>

⁷ GCPEA, September 05, 2022 "The impacts of attacks on education and military use in Myanmar", GCPEA.

<https://protectingeducation.org/publication/the-impacts-of-attacks-on-education-and-military-use-in-myanmar/>

⁸ NPR, "The Myanmar military is employing a familiar strategy of massacres and burnings", NPR, December 30, 2021.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/12/30/1069012597/the-myanmar-military-is-employing-a-familiar-strategy-of-massacres-and-burnings>

⁹ Ian Storey, "Myanmar's arms trade, defence drills and energy deals with Russia show steady pace of ties", South China Morning Post, September 18, 2022.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/opinion/article/3192700/myanmars-arms-trade-defence-drills-and-energy-deals-russia-show>

¹⁰ World Bank, "Myanmar Economic Monitor July 2022: Reforms Reversed", World Bank, July 21, 2022.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/myanmar/publication/myanmar-economic-monitor-july-2022-reforms-reversed>

¹¹ RFA, "Post-coup instability drives inflation to record levels in Myanmar", RFA, August 29, 2022.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/record-inflation-08292022180455.html>

¹² Sebastian Strangio, "Myanmar Junta Trumpets continuing Flow of Natural Gas Revenues", The Diplomat, August 26, 2022.

<https://thediplomat.com/2022/08/myanmar-junta-trumpets-continuing-flow-of-natural-gas-revenues/>