WEEKLY UPDATE: 27 June – 3 July 2022

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NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION - BURMA

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Myanmar Resistance Movement Must be Supported

It has now been 16 months since the military junta attempted their coup on 1 February 2021. A day that is forever embedded into the minds of the people in Myanmar must also remain at the forefront of the international community. The resistance of the people in Myanmar, and their ongoing commitment to toppling the military junta has exceeded all expectations. The most significant gains have happened on the ground, and have been led and supported by local communities, human rights defenders, ethnic revolution organizations (EROs), People’s Defense Forces (PDFs) and those rallying behind pro-democracy efforts.

Nonetheless, against the backdrop of the fierce and unrelenting opposition has been a tide of human rights violations committed by the junta who have gone to egregious lengths to stifle and terminate the Spring Revolution. The horrifying acts being perpetrated are what the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, believes to be ‘repeated attacks on civilians which amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes’. His statement echoed a briefing paper came from the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar, published in December 2021, which found that the junta meets the legal criteria of what a terrorist organization is defined as under international and domestic Myanmar law.

The military junta is becoming weaker. Defectors have spoken out and claimed that the junta has resorted to recruiting people who are young, unemployed and without opportunities otherwise. Morale is low, and civilians have overwhelmingly rejected the junta. Those who are still in the military are unhappy, according to former soldiers who have left the regime following the coup. There is a shared sentiment of feeling trapped in the regime. The junta has a proven track record of being not trustworthy through a series of broken ceasefire agreements. However, their desperation is evident through calls for ‘peace’ and loudspeakers with messages of calls for PDFs to surrender.

And yet hostilities continue which have killed and brutalized innocent people. A cell phone found with evidence of the soldiers bragging about their killing totals, is evidence of the darkness that still embodies the junta and the drastic action which must be taken.

The resistance is thriving but they need more support. Upon the rise of pro-junta militias is a greater threat to civilian safety and security which must be met with urgency. The National Unity Government must be supported with funds which would ensure PDFs and EROs are well equipped as they defend their communities and fight the illegal, illegitimate and immoral junta.
Chat village, Mindat Township, Chin State: Up to four civilians were killed on 2 July by the military junta’s ongoing airstrikes, which according to the Chin Human Rights Organization, primarily targeted a church and school compound where scores of IPDs were sheltering. Many people sustained injuries.

Launglon township, Dawei district, Tanintharyi region: A married couple was abducted by the military junta, tied up and shot at close-range by the military junta. They were brutally murdered with bullets fired into their heads, eyes, stomachs and backs.

Mindat Township, Chin State: A teenager was killed by the military junta as they fired mortar shells amid clashes with the Mindat Chin Defense Force.

Salingyi Township, Sagaing region: At least nine civilians were killed following weeks of military raids. Seven residents of Done Taw, Moe Gyoe Pyin (North), Ton, and Hpaung Ka Tar villages were killed, and three others reported missing following junta troops raids from June 15–25.

Ywa Nyan township, southern Shan State: Seven civilians were detained by the junta who they suspected were being affiliated with the People’s Defense Forces.
**Conflict in Myanmar**

For the first time, the number of displaced men, women and children in Myanmar has exceeded one million.

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**KAREN STATE**

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**KARENNI STATE**

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**RAKHINE STATE**

Offensives in Rakhine State have worsened. Tensions between the Arakan Army (AA) and the Myanmar Army include junta soldiers disappearing and the regime responding by taking civilians hostage.

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Karen State

The military junta deployed a series of unrelenting airstrikes in civilian areas in Karen State. On 27 June, the junta launched attacks against armed opposition groups in the south of Myawaddy, Karen State for approximately one hour, according to local Karen human rights groups. Footage showed Karen civilians running for their lives. Again on 1 July, more airstrikes were launched in Thay Baw Boe village, Dooplaya district. At least 15 people, including two children, were killed in the increasing military junta offensives. The International Karen Organization called on the international community to act swiftly and intentionally on the worsening crisis in Myanmar as civilian lives are at risk on a daily basis.

ND-Burma member, the Human Rights Foundation of Mainland (HURFOM), reported that junta forces in southeastern Dooplaya targeted seven villages and fired at least 50 mortars. The shelling took place on 29 June 2022 and in the morning of 30 June 2022, HURFOM said that details of the damage and injuries were not immediately available as medics responded to those on the ground. At least 500 people were forced to flee their homes with the Karen National Union stating that the following weekend an additional 10,000 people had to leave their villages after fighting in eastern Bago Region’s Kyaukkyi Township.

Villagers who fled the fighting reported almost a dozen attacks across the days of aerial assaults. The junta has reportedly sought reinforcements as the battles between the Karen armed groups intensifies with civilians caught in the crossfire. Heavy artillery strikes as well as chemical weapons were used in the attacks as Karen rights groups appealed once again for international action and condemnation.
KARENNI STATE

Armed conflict in Karenni State has traumatized civilians. Innocent people have been plagued by violence. Many have been displaced multiple times and even been attacked at the temporary shelters and displacement camps that they were seeking refuge at. Organizations who have attempted to meet the needs of those who have lost their livelihoods and seen loved ones killed, have struggled to provide counsel amidst so much loss. As a result of what villagers have experienced, they are depressed and struggling to survive. Khoon Philip, director of the Civil Health and Development Network, told local Karenni media outlet, the Kantawaddy Times, “They’re used to seeing dead bodies and bullet wounds, gunshot injuries...hearing gunfire and shells exploding around them.”

According to the Karenni Civil Society Network, more than 200,000 people have been displaced by the fighting in Karenni State, 60% of them women and children. The Karenni Human Rights reported more destruction of civilian homes and places of worship between 13 and 14 June 2022.
RAKHINE STATE

Offensives in Rakhine State have worsened. Tensions between the Arakan Army (AA) and the Myanmar Army include junta soldiers disappearing and the regime responding by taking civilians hostage. In Sitwe, more than a dozen locals were taken away after military junta soldiers including a captain were captured by the AA.

Indiscriminate arrests also took place including a man who was abducted without reason from his village. More than two dozen people in Mrauk-U were detained after three military intelligence officers could not be found. Internally Displaced People (IDPs) sheltering in temporary areas are risking their lives to find food in the forests due to shortages. In doing so, there has been an increase in people killed or injured by landmines. On 14 June, a man was killed by a landmine while trying to find bamboo shoots. As a result of fighting between the Arakan Army and the junta, over 200,000 people have been displaced during two years of clashes.
**Timeline of Events**

**LAST WEEK OF JUNE**

27 JUNE - 3 JULY 2022

**June**

27

The Laung Lone Township People’s Administration claimed that arson attacks by the military junta were responsible for 647 Myanmar Lakh (USD 35,000) in damages to homes across the region between 16 and 25 June 2022.

28

The military junta deployed airstrikes and targeted civilian areas in Doo Playa District, Karen State.

29

The Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn urged the military junta to release detained State Counselor, Aung San Suu Kyi. The criticism comes as Cambodia, and ASEAN overall, has shown significant weakness in responding with urgency to the situation in Myanmar.

30

Detained Aung San Suu Kyi and Dr. Myo Aung, as well as cabinet minister, Min Thu, had additional charges levied against them at a facility in Naypyidaw.

**July**

1

The International Karen Organization released a statement calling for urgent international action on the worsening situation in Karen State.

2

ASEAN Civil Society released a statement on Myanmar junta fighter jets entering Thai airspace, which led to students in Tak province being forced to shelter in bunkers at their schools.

3

China’s Foreign Minister called upon the junta to seek reconciliation with opposition forces.