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# Dozens of officials carrying out Myanmar's draft have been killed

**Rebel forces are targeting them for helping the ruling junta.**



*Soldiers attend the opening ceremony of a training course at the Yangon Regional Training School in Myanmar, May 14, 2024. (Myanmar Digital News)*

More than 80 junta-appointed administrators across Myanmar have been assassinated for aiding or participating in the military conscription of civilians since the draft was announced in February, according to an RFA tally.

In all, 82 village and ward administrators, clerks and others have been killed in the past four months, according to statements from the People's Defense Force militias, largely made up of ordinary citizens who have taken up arms against the military rulers.

Myanmar's ruling junta activated the mandatory conscription law, dormant since 2010, as it lost ground — and troops — to ethnic armies and PDF guerilla fighters.

The law allows formen ages 18 to 45 and women ages 18 to 35 to be drafted into the armed forces for two years. Medical doctors and other specialists up to age 45 must serve for three years.

Evading conscription is punishable by three to five years in prison and a fine.

Rebel groups have sought to undermine the draft, and killing those ordered to carry it out has been one way.

“In the past, administrators were well-regarded by the people,” said a relative of an administrator killed in Yangon. “Now, they are becoming widely disliked by the public. Even after his death, his

remaining family members face ostracism.”

### **‘Only one fitting punishment’**

In Yangon, administrators in Kungyangon, Insein and North Dagon townships were killed after resistance forces warned them to resign, to stop supporting the junta, and to stop conscripting civilians.

“If they continue these actions without compliance, then there is only one fitting punishment during the revolution,” said an official from the People's Defense Force of Shwebo township in northwestern Myanmar’s Sagaing region.

In the central Mandalay region, two dozen administrators have been killed during the past four months — the highest number of fatalities in a single region or state — followed by Magway region with 18 fatalities.

Nearly 40 administrators have resigned, other officials said.



*People attend a lecture on the administrative rules of village administration law at the General Administration Department in Mahlaing township, Mandalay region, Myanmar, Feb. 1, 2024. (RFA)*

Residents say that some administrators are extorting amounts equivalent to hundreds of U.S. dollars from civilians who refuse to perform military service.

An administrator in Ayeyarwady region, who wished to remain anonymous for safety reasons, said he is waiting for the junta to approve his resignation.

“I won’t continue because my family’s lives are in danger,” he said. “Although I have resigned, the head [of the township’s General Administration Department] will not accept it. As a result, our lives are now filled with chaos and uncertainty.”

The military council has not issued any statements about the administrators’ deaths.

### **‘Alternative strategies’**

A former military officer, who also requested anonymity for safety reasons, said civilian conscription efforts have not slowed down despite the number of administrators who have been killed.

“If one administrator dies, the next assigned administrator will continue the task,” he said. “Killing individuals will not stop the process. If this method fails, the military will pursue alternative strategies.”

The junta’s Central Body for Summoning People’s Military Servants based in Myanmar’s capital of Naypyitaw said it would work with security forces in relevant states and regions to step up protection for administrators.

Political analyst Than Soe Naing said administrators are arbitrarily mistreating civilians under the pretext of the law.

“There is no police department to lodge complaints about these cases, nor a court to file a lawsuit,” he said.

“When the public protests, they are met with gunfire, torture and imprisonment,” he said. “These actions have persisted, leading the public to resist this unjust law in acts of civil disobedience.”

***Translated by Kalyar Lwin for RFA Burmese. Edited by Roseanne Gerin and Malcolm Foster.***