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Freedom House

Freedom in the World 2022 - Myanmar

Not Free

9

/ 100

[Political Rights](#) 0 / 40[Civil Liberties](#) 9 / 60

Last Year's Score & Status

28 / 100 Not Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. [See the methodology.](#)

Overview

Myanmar's already-stalled democratic transition was completely derailed in February 2021, when the military, known as the Tatmadaw, seized control of the government, arresting dozens of senior government officials and preventing the newly elected parliament from convening. The National League for Democracy (NLD), which won a sweeping victory in the November 2020 elections, led a broad-based opposition to the takeover, organizing a country-wide Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) that continued throughout the year. Protesters were met with indiscriminate violence from military forces, and journalists, activists, and ordinary people risked criminal charges and detention for voicing dissent. Armed conflict between the military and ethnic rebel groups continued, as did the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya, a mostly Muslim ethnic minority.

Key Developments in 2021

- Alleging fraud and irregularities in the November 2020 elections, the military carried out a coup in February, hours before the newly elected parliament was due to be seated. After taking power, the military declared a state of emergency, imposed a broad-based communications shutdown, expanded the range of laws used to punish dissent, and arrested dozens of political and cultural figures—including both President Win Myint and State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi.
- A group of ousted elected lawmakers formed the National Unity Government (NUG) in April as an alternate power base to the military regime. The widely popular NUG operated as a shadow government throughout the year, with its members in hiding or in exile.
- In August, Min Aung Hlaing declared himself prime minister and head of a caretaker government that would enforce military rule until August 2023, when the military has promised to hold new elections.
- The widespread CDM gathered steam in the weeks after the coup and continued throughout the year, involving multiple political parties and civil society groups. By the end of the year, more than 11,000 protesters had been arrested, almost 1,400 had been killed by military forces, and nearly 2,000 faced criminal charges handed down by the junta, while others were subjected to grave abuses, including torture, in overcrowded prisons.
- Fighting between the army and ethnic minority groups in Chin, Kachin, Karen, Rakhine, and Shan States intensified during the year, displacing thousands of civilians and limiting free movement. Ethnic rebel groups provided sanctuary to those seeking to escape the military regime.

Political Rights

A Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections? 0 / 4

Under the 2008 military-drafted constitution, the legislature elects the president, who serves as chief of state and head of government and makes a number of key ministerial appointments. Military members of the legislature have the right to nominate one of the three presidential candidates, and the elected members of each chamber nominate the other two. The candidate with the largest number of votes in a combined parliamentary vote wins the presidency; the other two candidates become vice presidents, ensuring that a military nominee is always either president or vice president. The commander in chief of the armed forces retained broad powers under the 2008 constitution, including control over security-related cabinet ministries (home, defense, and border affairs), and is selected through an opaque process by the military-dominated National Defense and Security Council (NDSC).

A new president was set to be selected in early 2021, following the November 2020 parliamentary elections; this process was disrupted by the February 2021 military coup, which dissolved parliament and installed a military junta led by the unelected Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, head of the armed forces. President Win Myint and State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, de facto leader of the NLD, were both detained in the early hours of the coup, along with over one hundred other political leaders. In early December, the military regime sentenced Win Myint and Suu Kyi to four years’ imprisonment on charges of incitement; soon after, the sentences were reduced to two years. In addition, Suu Kyi has been charged with illegally importing communications equipment, violating pandemic restrictions, corruption, electoral fraud, and breaching the Official Secrets Act. The military retained control of the government throughout 2021.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 0 because the president and reelected civilian government officials were ousted in a military coup.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections? 0 / 4

The bicameral Assembly of the Union consists of the 440-seat lower House of Representatives and the 224-seat upper House of Nationalities. Representatives serve five-year terms. A quarter of the seats in both houses are reserved for the military and are filled through appointment by the commander in chief of the armed forces. The remainder are filled through direct elections in a first-past-the-post system.

The 2020 parliamentary elections featured significant flaws, including the exclusion of many Muslim candidates and the disenfranchisement of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya. The Union Election Commission (UEC) canceled voting in a number of conflict-affected districts, preventing about one million people from electing new representatives. Other electoral flaws included limited access of opposition parties to state-run media during the campaign period and pandemic-related restrictions on in-person campaigning.

The NLD won a convincing majority in the overall popular vote, taking 138 of the 168 elected seats in the upper house, 258 of the 330 elected seats in the lower house, and 501 of 660 elected seats across 14 state and regional legislatures. The military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) refused to accept the election results, alleging widespread fraud.

In February 2021, hours before a new session of parliament was set to begin, the military seized control of the government, imposing a state of emergency, dissolving parliament, and preventing elected representatives from taking their seats. Several elected officials were detained, and hundreds more were placed under house arrest.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 0 because the military coup prevented recently elected members of parliament from convening.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies? 0 / 4

Various features of the electoral framework have undermined the democratic nature of recent elections. These include the military’s role in presidential nominations and appointments to both chambers of parliament, as well as rigid citizenship laws and excessive residency requirements that prevent large numbers of people from voting or standing for office.

The UEC, which is responsible for electoral administration, is empowered to adjudicate complaints against itself. Its members are appointed by the president and confirmed by the legislature, which has only limited authority to reject nominees. In 2020, UEC decisions to limit or cancel voting in several dozen townships populated by ethnic minority groups, as well as its rules surrounding access to and censorship of broadcast time allotted to political parties, were criticized as lacking sufficient transparency and disenfranchising voters.

After seizing power in February 2021, military leadership cited the USDP’s fraud allegations, flaws in electoral administration during the 2020 elections, and the NLD’s “failure” to address alleged voter list irregularities to justify rejecting the 2020 election results and deposing the elected government. The military regime also dissolved the UEC before reinstating the body with all new members, later charging a number of former UEC commissioners with electoral fraud. In July, the new UEC officially overturned the results of the November 2020 vote, and the following month, Min Aung Hlaing announced that new elections would be held in August 2023, extending the military’s initial one-year timeline.

Less than a month after taking power, the military regime proposed that the current first-past-the-post system be replaced with a proportional representation system. In October, the reconstituted UEC announced that it plans to introduce the change prior to the country’s next elections despite widespread criticism of the proposed change, which opposition parties claim is an attempt to keep the military in power.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 because the military effectively suspended the constitution and overturned existing electoral laws, rejecting election results that had been confirmed by the Union Election Commission.

B Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0–4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings? 1 / 4

Party competition in the lead-up to the 2020 elections was robust, with 7,000 candidates from more than 90 parties participating, including the NLD, the USDP, and regionally based ethnic parties. Following the February 2021 coup, political parties continued to function, despite facing considerable restrictions and harassment. A number of prominent lawmakers and nonmilitary political leaders have been arrested by the military regime, and some have been charged with criminal offenses and put on trial, including much of the NLD leadership.

Following the 2021 coup, a group of previously elected officials unseated by the military regime formed the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), which claims to represent a legitimate parliament and perform the duties of an elected government. In April, the CRPH established the National Unity Government (NUG), a resistance government largely made up of ousted NLD politicians. Throughout 2021, the NUG operated as an alternate power structure with influence over small pockets of the country, and organized countrywide opposition to the coup. Shortly after the NUG was formed, Myanmar’s military leadership classified the NUG, its armed People’s Defense Force (PDF), and the CRPH as terrorist organizations, which could result in prosecution and detention for anyone who communicates with the groups’ members.

The constitution contains a requirement that political parties be loyal to the state, which carries the potential for abuse. Laws allow penalties, including deregistration, for political parties that accept support from foreign governments or religious bodies, or that are deemed to have abused religion for political purposes or disrespected the constitution. In August 2021, the UEC announced plans to conduct financial audits of political parties, which many opposition leaders fear will be used to justify dissolving certain parties.

Score Change: The score declined from 3 to 1 due to the mass arrest of political party leaders and the suspension of ordinary political activity during the military coup and state of emergency.

B2 0–4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections? 1 / 4

The military’s constitutional prerogatives, as well as its close ties to the USDP, limit the degree to which any other force can secure control over the executive or the legislature through elections. Despite such limitations, the NLD won a convincing majority in the November 2020 elections. Following the coup in February 2021, the military announced that new elections would be held within a year; in August, Min Aung Hlaing announced that the military’s timeline had been extended, and new elections would not be held until August 2023. While there was no immediate electoral opportunity through which the opposition could gain power during 2021, the shadow NUG gained strength as an alternative power base, due in part to its ability to fundraise and form alliances.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because the military’s seizure of power sharply reduced the prospects of a change in government through elections.

B3 0–4 pts

Are the people’s political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means? 0 / 4

After the NLD came to power in 2015, the military’s ability to influence electoral outcomes lessened, though it maintained considerable power over political affairs. The November 2020 elections, however, resulted in the defeat of the military’s civilian proxy party, which was widely viewed as an endorsement of Aung San Suu Kyi’s civilian government. The military refused to accept the election results, and in February 2021, seized control of the government. Following the coup, the military used force to contain the widespread protests against military rule that continued throughout the year—including the arrest of political leaders and civilian protestors, excessive violence and custodial abuse, and mass killings—in an attempt to secure its takeover.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 0 due to the military leadership’s consistent and widespread use of armed force to secure its rule and control political outcomes during and after the coup.

B4 0–4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities? 1 / 4

Members of Myanmar’s Buddhist and ethnic Bamar majority hold most senior leadership positions in the country, including in major national political parties, the pre-2021 civilian government, and the military. Members of ethnic and religious minority groups face restrictions on their political rights and electoral opportunities, including through discriminatory citizenship, residency, and party registration laws.

The 1982 Citizenship Law does not allow for anyone who entered the country or is descended from someone who entered the country after 1948 to become a full citizen with political rights. Naturalization of spouses is only allowed if the spouse holds a Foreigner’s Registration Certificate from before the law’s enactment. The majority of the mainly Muslim Rohingya were rendered stateless by the 1982 Citizenship Law, which also dictates that only those who are descended from ethnic groups deemed to be native to the country prior to 1823 are considered full citizens. A 2015 presidential decree revoked the temporary identification cards that had allowed Rohingya to vote, and most of the 600,000 Rohingya remaining in Myanmar were unable to vote in the 2020 elections.

Women remain underrepresented in the government and civil service, due largely to societal biases that discourage their political participation. Notwithstanding the prominence of Aung San Suu Kyi, whose father led Myanmar’s independence struggle, few women have achieved ministerial-level appointments.

Following the February 2021 coup, the General Strike Committee of Nationalities (GSCN) was formed by members of 29 ethnic groups. The GSCN was established to support antimilitary protests and present the coordinated demands of Myanmar’s minority groups, which include an end to military rule and the creation of a federal democratic union. The NUG and CRPH have also made a concerted effort to include members of Myanmar’s ethnic groups, and have formed alliances with many of the country’s Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) in opposition to Tatmadaw rule.

C Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government? 0 / 4

In February 2021, the military deposed the sitting government, prevented newly elected representatives from taking office, and assumed full control over all areas of government policy. The 2008 constitution allows the military to dissolve the civilian government and the parliament and rule directly if the president declares a state of emergency. The military used this provision to execute the 2021 coup; after arresting senior government leaders, military forces declared a state of emergency and assumed control of the government.

Effective governance and control over territory in some regions remains contested between the armed forces and ethnic minority rebel groups. Following the 2021 coup, many of these groups offered protection for those fleeing from military violence.

Since May 2021, the NUG, composed of previously elected representatives, has operated as a shadow government with considerable popularity and legitimacy, although it does not exercise control over state institutions or decision-making.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 0 because the military coup prevented duly elected executive and legislative representatives from taking office and determining government policy.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 1 / 4

Despite government initiatives aimed at curbing official corruption, it remains rampant at both the national and local levels. An Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), established in 2014, had brought a number of cases against high-ranking officials. Following the 2021 coup, the military brought multiple corruption charges against Aung San Suu Kyi, including bribery; she has denied the charges, and no evidence was produced in trial hearings apart from witness statements. In December, the military regime brought a corruption charge against Win Myint.

Privatization of state-owned companies and other economic reforms in recent years have allegedly benefited family members and associates of military and government officials. After the February 2021 coup, the children of high-ranking military leaders allegedly attempted to use their connections to secure lucrative supply contracts and other kickbacks.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 0 / 4

After the Tatmadaw took power in 2021, the already limited transparency mechanisms of the previous government were dismantled; oversight by civil society groups and the media has been completely suppressed under military rule.

The military also owns an extensive network of “crony companies” whose revenues enable it to avoid accountability and public oversight and engage in human rights violations with impunity, according to a UN report released in 2019.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 because the military leadership further suppressed state and nonstate transparency mechanisms following the coup, including oversight by legislators, independent media, and civil society groups.

Add Q

Is the government or occupying power deliberately changing the ethnic composition of a country or territory so as to destroy a culture or tip the political balance in favor of another group? -4

The central authorities have long used violence, displacement, and other tactics to alter the demographics of states with ethnic unrest or insurgencies. The Rohingya in Rakhine State have faced particularly harsh restrictions for decades, including limits on family size and the ability and right to marry, the denial of legal status and social services, and disenfranchisement and loss of citizenship. Human rights experts and the United Nations have labeled the abuses against the Rohingya as crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, and many have argued that they constitute either genocide or a precursor to genocide.

In 2017, repression against the Rohingya escalated; military operations across the northern part of the state led to reports of torture, rape, indiscriminate killings, and the burning of villages, worsening already dire humanitarian conditions and causing 740,000 Rohingya refugees to join the 200,000 others already in Bangladesh. Aung San Suu Kyi, then head of state, did not explicitly acknowledge or condemn such organized official violence against Rohingya civilians; there has been little meaningful accountability for the atrocities. In 2020, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that mass human rights violations had been committed against the Rohingya and ordered the government to implement emergency measures to protect the group; proceedings at the ICJ continued in 2021.

Though the UN’s Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) continued to collect evidence and interview witnesses in 2021, the February 2021 coup and subsequent closure of the country limited international observers’ access to Myanmar, further frustrating efforts to hold perpetrators accountable.

Civil Liberties

D Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media? 1 / 4

Following the coup in 2021, the military seized control of state-owned broadcast media, took private broadcasters off the air, and severely restricted internet access, including access to social media platforms and news outlets. Licenses for several independent media organizations were rescinded in March. However, a number of independent media outlets continued to provide news coverage, operating in hiding and in exile.

In February, the military amended sections of the criminal code and the Electronic Transactions Law to include provisions criminalizing antiregime statements. Human rights groups have warned that the amendments disproportionately affect independent media outlets, and enable the regime to easily detain and prosecute journalists. Dozens of journalists have been forced to flee following the military’s crackdown on press freedoms; according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), more than 100 journalists were arrested in 2021. Though the regime released several journalists throughout the year, many of those jailed face criminal charges.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? 1 / 4

The constitution provides for freedom of religion. It distinguishes Buddhism as the majority religion, but also recognizes Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and animism. The government occasionally interferes with religious assemblies and attempts to control the Buddhist clergy. Authorities discriminate against minority religious groups—particularly Muslims—in practice, refusing them permission to hold gatherings and restricting educational activities, proselytization, and construction and repair of houses of worship.

Anti-Muslim hate speech and discrimination have been amplified by social media, and by some state institutions and mainstream news websites. The officially illegal Buddha Dhamma Parahita Foundation, formerly known as Ma Ba Tha, agitates for the protection of Buddhist privileges, urges boycotts against Muslim-run businesses, and disseminates anti-Muslim propaganda. Muslims face systematic discrimination in obtaining identity cards, and “Muslim-free” villages have been established with the complicity of officials.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination? 0 / 4

Political activity on university campuses is generally restricted, and universities are not autonomous. Student unions—which have historically been important advocates for human rights—are discouraged, have no formal registration mechanisms, and are viewed with suspicion by authorities. A 2018 directive from the Ministry of Education required students to submit detailed information in order to get permission to hold events on campus.

University students and staff played a key role in antimilitary protests and strikes following the February 2021 coup; in March, the military stormed dozens of universities, seizing control of the campuses and arresting hundreds of students and faculty members. In May, more than 11,000 university staff were suspended for striking in protest against the military coup, and those who were not suspended were pressured into declaring allegiance to the ruling junta.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 because universities were subjected to military raids and mass staff suspensions after students and faculty expressed opposition to the coup.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of 1 / surveillance or retribution? 4

Private discussion and personal expression—already constrained by state surveillance and laws inhibiting online speech—became more difficult following the 2021 coup. Upon taking power, the regime enacted sweeping revisions of existing legal code, removing several key human rights protections, including those against arbitrary surveillance. The legal reforms also included amendments to the penal code that severely curtailed freedom of expression. In March, the military banned the use of circumvention tools such as virtual private networks (VPNs) and other communications technology in an attempt to keep people from evading surveillance.

Hundreds of people were arrested and prosecuted under the revised legal code, usually for comments made online; hundreds of others have been forced into hiding or exile to avoid arrest, and a smaller number were killed in protests or targeted for attack.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 due to mass arrests of social media users and new restrictions on communications technology in the wake of the coup.

E Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? 0 / 4

Freedom of assembly has been increasingly restricted in recent years. A blanket ban on protests in 11 townships of central Yangon has been in place since 2017, and in 2020, an extended internet shutdown in parts of Rakhine and Chin states severely impeded activists’ ability to organize protests. Unauthorized demonstrations are punishable with up to six months in prison under the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law; a variety of other vaguely defined violations can draw lesser penalties.

After the 2021 coup, freedom of assembly was violently curtailed in response to widespread antimilitary protests. Within a week of taking power, the military banned all gatherings of more than five people, imposed a strict curfew, and began using lethal and indiscriminate force against peaceful protesters. Widespread internet restrictions were also deployed to hinder the organization of protests. Military violence in response to protests continued throughout the year, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of protesters and the arrest of thousands more.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 due to the military’s crackdown on protests following the coup, which included curfews, mass arrests, internet shutdowns, and the extensive use of lethal force.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human 1 / rights– and governance-related work? 4

The ability of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to engage in human rights– and governance-related work significantly decreased after the 2021 military coup. Activists face arrest and prosecution, and many prominent activists have been forced to go into hiding or exile; in some cases, family members of activists have been arrested as a pressure tactic. In March, the regime introduced new restrictions on NGO activity, including pausing all NGO registration and renewal processes, and began to heavily monitor NGO bank activity. NGOs were increasingly subject to harassment and interference by authorities throughout the year, and a large number of NGOs effectively shut down or disbanded. Despite such limitations, a number continue to quietly monitor human rights abuses and engage in advocacy with international stakeholders.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because the military increased pressure on human rights activists following the coup, in part by detaining their family members, and the broader crisis obstructed the work of humanitarian organizations.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? 1 / 4

Union activity took root in Myanmar following the lifting of the ban on trade unions in 2011, despite weak legal protections for workers against abuse by employers. In 2021, unions played a leading role in organizing antimilitary protests and strikes immediately following the coup. In response, military authorities declared most unions illegal, and conducted violent raids and mass arrests in areas populated by striking union workers; the regime also threatened dozens of key leaders with arrest, causing many to flee. By June, thousands of civil servants and private sector employees had been fired for their participation in the widespread CDM.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 due to a wave of reprisals against unions that participated in civil disobedience actions, including bans, raids, dismissals, arrests, and extrajudicial killings.

F Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary? 0 / 4

The judiciary is not independent. Judges are nominated by the president, and lawmakers can reject the choice only if it is clearly proven that the nominee does not meet the legal qualifications for the post. The courts generally adjudicate cases in accordance with the government’s interests, particularly in major cases with political implications.

Following the February 2021 coup, the military regime took control of Myanmar’s judicial system.

F2 0-4 pts**Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters? 0 / 4**

Following the 2021 military coup, revisions to the criminal code and the imposition of an indefinite state of emergency allowed the regime to remove existing safeguards against arbitrary arrest and detention. In March, the Tatmadaw declared martial law in 11 townships of Yangon and Mandalay, enabling military tribunals to impose death sentences on civilians; by the end of 2021, military tribunals had sentenced more than 90 civilians to death.

The number of political prisoners rose dramatically in 2021; most were arrested while protesting, although dozens of prominent political leaders and several cultural figures were specifically targeted. According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), as of December 2021, 11,296 individuals had been arrested; an additional 1,964 arrest warrants remained open.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 due to the suspension of existing safeguards against abuse of power by security forces and the widespread use of arbitrary arrest and detention during the military coup and state of emergency.

F3 0-4 pts**Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies? 0 / 4**

The February 2021 military coup resulted in a sharp increase in civilian exposure to violence, armed conflict, and the illegitimate use of physical force. Indiscriminate shelling and aerial attacks, the destruction of villages, extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, torture, rape, and other abuses by the military escalated during 2021. In December, 40 civilians were burned alive by military forces in Kayah State.

Long-standing armed conflicts between ethnic rebel groups and the central government continued in 2021 in Shan, Kachin, Kayin, Chin, and Rakhine States. Even ethnically Bamar areas, particularly Sagaing Region and major urban centers including Yangon and Mandalay, experienced high levels of violent conflict between Tatmadaw forces and antimilitary protesters. Military attacks on peaceful protesters, including the use of lethal force, took place across the country; in response, civilian youth across the country formed armed people’s defense forces (PDFs) that carried out guerilla attacks against military targets. After the NUG declared a “people’s war” against the military in September, it engaged in efforts to coordinate among the shadow government, the PDFs, and ethnic rebel groups.

The number of displaced civilians increased throughout the year, with those displaced by earlier rounds of fighting in ethnic areas joined by those fleeing the newly installed military regime; between February and December, more than 400,000 civilians were displaced.

Prisons in Myanmar are severely overcrowded, and conditions for inmates are sometimes life-threatening. Following the coup, prison conditions further deteriorated, as numbers of detainees rapidly increased and grave abuses that had been prevalent during previous periods of military rule resurfaced. Sanitary conditions in prisons are extremely poor, and authorities have reportedly taken few measures to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus within the prison system; in 2021, at least 12 inmates died after contracting COVID-19, and hundreds more tested positive for the virus.

F4 0-4 pts**Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population? 0 / 4**

Some of the country’s worst human rights abuses, commonly committed by federal military troops, are against ethnic and religious minority populations. The government’s failure to protect victims, conduct investigations, and punish perpetrators is well documented. The post-coup period in 2021 was characterized by further deterioration in the country’s human rights situation and a lack of accountability for offenders.

Ethnic minority groups such as the Shan, Mon, Chin, Karen, and Kachin, as well as non-Rohingya Muslims, also face some societal discrimination, while the ethnic Bamar, Buddhist majority retains a privileged position.

In addition to conflict-related violence, women are subject to discrimination in employment, against which there are no explicit legal protections. A number of laws create a hostile environment for LGBT+ residents. Same-sex sexual activity is criminalized, and police reportedly harass, extort, and physically and sexually abuse LGBT+ people.

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights**G1 0-4 pts****Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, 1 / employment, or education? 4**

Prior to 2021, freedom of internal travel for Myanmar citizens was generally respected outside of conflict zones. However, after the coup in February 2021, movement was increasingly restricted across the country. The military erected road blocks and checkpoints; enforced exit controls, curfews, and residency rules for private dwellings that require reporting overnight guests; engaged in violent raids of neighborhoods and villages; and regularly responded with disproportionate force to ongoing civic action. Some high-profile dissidents were arrested as they attempted to leave Myanmar by air, while thousands more have fled to neighboring countries by land despite the dangers posed by military forces.

Additionally, Myanmar’s large population of stateless residents remain subject to significant restrictions on their movement, particularly the 600,000 Rohingya who remain in Rakhine State and are confined to designated camps and villages; those who attempt to travel outside these areas are regularly arrested and detained.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without 1 / undue interference from state or nonstate actors? 4

Disputes over land grabbing and business projects that violate human rights are common. Myanmar’s property-transfer laws prohibit transfers to or from a foreigner except in certain state-approved cases of inheritance, and require registration of foreign-owned property. Stateless residents, including the Rohingya, cannot legally buy or sell property or set up a business.

Instances of forced eviction and displacement, confiscation, lack of sufficient compensation, and direct violence against landholders by state security officials abound. Court cases are frequently brought against farmers for trespassing on land that was taken from them. The resumption of armed hostilities following the coup led to military attacks and arbitrary destruction of property—including entire villages—in 2021.

Multiple sources continued to report that Rohingya land and property have been razed, confiscated, appropriated, or built on, often with the direct involvement of the military, and sometimes under the guise of development assistance.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, 1 / protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance? 4

Men and women formally enjoy equal rights on personal status issues, though there are restrictions on marriages of Buddhist women to non-Buddhist men. Laws that might protect women from domestic abuse and rape are weak and poorly enforced, and such violence is an acute and persistent problem. The army has a record of using rape as a weapon of war against ethnic minority women, and security personnel typically enjoy impunity for sexual violence. Following the 2021 coup, numerous instances of gender-based violence were reported by detainees.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation? 1 / 4

Human trafficking, forced labor, child labor, and the recruitment of child soldiers are serious problems in Myanmar. Child soldiers are enlisted by the military and ethnic rebel groups, which also recruit civilians for forced labor. Various commercial and other interests continue to use forced labor despite a formal ban on the practice. Trafficking victims include women and girls subjected to forced sex work and domestic servitude, as well as women who are sold as brides to men in China—an expanding practice in some ethnic minority states. People displaced by ongoing conflicts are especially vulnerable to sexual and labor exploitation.

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