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RSF – Reporters Sans Frontières

Figures for past year’s persecution of journalism in Myanmar

One year after the armed forces seized power in Myanmar, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) offers a damning overview of the scale of the military junta’s press freedom violations. In order to hide its massacres of civilians and tighten its grip on the country, the junta has arrested, jailed, tortured and even summarily eliminated journalists who could undermine its control over news and information.

115 journalists arrested

In the past year, at least 115 journalists have been arrested while covering protests or after being tracked down by the intelligence services. Some were arrested at their homes and violence was often used. At least 15 media professionals, including the woman journalist **Yin Yin Thein**, were [badly beaten](#) and sustained injuries when arrested.

57 journalists arbitrarily jailed

57 journalists – nine of them women – are currently detained arbitrarily, according to [RSF’s press freedom barometer](#). Very little information emerges from Myanmar’s prisons, where conditions are said to be extremely harsh. In most cases, the families of detainees receive no news of their loved ones. Myanmar is now [the world’s second biggest jailer of journalists](#), second only to China.

14 journalists convicted

Of all the journalists currently in prison, only 14 have been tried and convicted. All 14 of them were convicted under section 505a of the penal code, which penalises information liable to endanger the interests of the armed forces.

3 journalists killed

At least three journalists have been killed since the military coup. The photographer **Soe Naing** was declared [dead on 14 December after four days of violent interrogation](#) in police custody. *Federal News Journal* editor **Sai Win Aung** was killed [during an attack by the armed forces on 25 December](#) in the east of the country. **Pu Tuidim**, the founder and editor of the *Khonumthung Media Group*, was abducted in the northwest of the country, near the Indian border, on 7 January by soldiers who used him as a human shield and then [cut his throat after first mutilating him in an appalling manner](#).

7 cases of torture or extreme violence

In addition to Soe Naing and Pu Tuidim, who did not survive, at least two other journalists have been tortured while detained. One was **Nathan Maung**, a US journalist who was detained and tortured for three months. Maung [reports](#) that, while detained, he saw [Kamayut Media](#) co-founder **Han Thar Nyein** being tortured and threatened with sexual assault. As well as these cases of torture, three other journalists have been subjected to considerable violence at the time of arrest or during detention. Two *Myanmar Pressphoto Agency* journalists were [injured by an army vehicle](#) that deliberately drove into a crowd of protesters in Yangon and one of them, the woman video reporter **Hmu Yadanar Khet Moh Moh Tun**, was hospitalised with severe injuries. **Sai Lwin**, a photographer also known as Moe San, was [injured by 10 shots fired with rubber bullets](#) while he covered an anti-junta protest.

10 interrogation and detention centres

Journalists are being detained throughout the country in at least 10 interrogation and detention centres. After interrogation, some are transferred to a prison but others continue to be held at the centre where they were interrogated, near their place of arrest. The biggest detention centre for journalists is Insein prison, located in a suburb of Myanmar’s biggest city, Yangon. At least 14 journalists are currently held at Insein, which is notorious for its [“dogs’ cages.”](#)

12 media banned

Within the first few months of the coup, the junta formally [banned the leading independent media outlets](#). Some were prosecuted under section 505a of the penal code, while others [had their licence withdrawn](#) without any official grounds being given. This was the case with the *Democratic Voice of Burma*, an independent radio and TV broadcaster which continues to operate from bases abroad, as it did before the coup.

2 measures to limit Internet use

With the Internet now the only way to obtain news and information not controlled by the junta, the military authorities are planning to impose [heavy taxes on Internet services](#). And a [new cyber-security law](#) due to take effect in the coming weeks will enable the authorities to control electronic communications, violate the confidentiality of data and clamp down on VPNs.

15 multinationals petitioned by RSF

Of the 15 multinational corporations that have been [getting letters](#) from RSF asking them to end activities that directly or indirectly support the junta’s crimes, a total of five – Chevron, TotalEnergies, Volitalia, Telenor and Ericsson – have so far announced plans to pull out of Myanmar.

1 video

To mark the first anniversary of the coup and to support Myanmar’s journalists, RSF is

releasing a video that can be shared.

140th in the World Press Freedom Index

Myanmar is ranked 140th out of 180 countries in RSF’s 2021 [World Press Freedom Index](#). Already in the world’s bottom quarter, this ranking was assigned before the biggest surge in press freedom violations.

ecoi.net summary:

Overview of the military’s
junta press freedom violations one
year after their seizure of power

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