

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	722
Land:	Myanmar
Kilde:	Reporters San Frontières (RSF)
Titel:	Three years in power three years of ruthless repression Myanmar junta steps up terror against journalists
Udgivet:	1. februar 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	3. april 2024



Document #2104011

RSF – Reporters Sans Frontières (Author)

Three years in power, three years of ruthless repression: Myanmar junta steps up terror against journalists

Three years after its coup, the Myanmar junta is stepping up its ruthless crackdown on journalists. The army has summarily killed four journalists, and more than 150 media professionals have been locked up. Reporters are facing increasingly harsh prison sentences. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) calls on the international community to step up the pressure on the military regime to secure their release.

1 February 2024 marks exactly three years since the military junta seized power in Myanmar in a ferocious military coup. Journalists and press freedom defenders were among the first targets of the regime's unprecedented crackdown, with four executed in cold blood and at least 150 arrested and imprisoned. To date, 61 journalists are still being held.

"For the past three years, the Myanmar generals have been crushing the people under their boots and attacking witnesses to their crimes, particularly the journalists, who make it possible for the rest of the world to be aware of them. We call on the international community to step up its pressure on the junta to release all detained journalists and put an end to its policy of information blackout."

Cédric Alviani
RSF Asia-Pacific Bureau Director

Since the putsch, four journalists have been killed by the junta: the [founder](#) of the *Khonumthung* news agency **Pu Tuidim**; the [editor](#) of the *Federal News Journal* **Sai Win Aung**; and the two freelance photojournalists [Soe Naing](#) and [Aye Kaw](#).

Under its policy of terror, the junta has also set up courts within the prisons, [which sentence journalists to heavy penalties](#) on the mere suspicion of "*terrorism*", "*espionage*", or even simply "*acts prejudicial to state security*".

As a result, the sentences handed down by the military courts have continued to lengthen, [culminating in the grotesque life sentence](#) imposed in January 2024 on documentary filmmaker **Shin Daewe**, on charges of "*abetting*" terrorism. A few months earlier, in September 2023, photojournalist **Sai Zaw Thaike** had already been [sentenced to 20 years imprisonment with hard labour](#) for alleged charges of "*disinformation*" and "*sedition*", which are regularly used to persecute journalists in Myanmar.

Myanmar, ranked 173th out of 180 countries in [RSF's 2023 World Press Freedom Index](#), is one of the world's biggest jailers of journalists with 61 detained, second only to China.

ecoi.net description:

Article on the military junta's intensifying crackdown on journalists

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RSF – Reporters Sans Frontières](#) (Author)

Original link:

<https://rsf.org/en/three-years-power-three-years-ruthless-repression-myanmar-junta-steps-terror-against-journalists>

Document type:

Appeal or News Release

Language:

English

Published:

1 February 2024

Available on ecoi.net since:

5 February 2024

Document ID:

2104011

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Asylum Research and
Documentation
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ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

