

**Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale**

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| Titel:                          | Junta arrests ex-presidential spokesman over social media comments |
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## RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

### Junta arrests ex-presidential spokesman over social media comments

Nearly 40 people, including a former information minister during a previous pro-military government, were recently arrested after they posted critical comments about the military junta on social media accounts.

Ye Htut, who is known for his frequent posts on Facebook, was detained on Oct. 28. Pro-junta Telegram channels had accused him of revealing a retired military officer's address on social media, [according to Agence France-Presse](#).

Out of the 37 people arrested, 15 were from Mandalay and seven were from the Yangon region, according to the junta's news release. Radio Free Asia attempted to contact family members of the arrestees, but they refused to answer due to security concerns.

The junta first announced in January 2022 that it would use the country's anti-terrorism and telecommunications laws to arrest and prosecute anyone who spreads anti-junta information on social media platforms.

Through September, 1,316 people have been arrested after the junta for social media comments since that statement appeared in pro-junta newspapers, according to Data for Myanmar.

Ye Htut was charged with violating Section 505(a) of Myanmar's Penal Code, according to a junta statement. That law pertains to the circulation of statements, rumors or reports with the intent to cause military officers to disregard or fail in their duties.

The 64-year-old was Minister of Information from 2014 to 2016 and presidential spokesman from 2013 to 2016 during then-President Thein

Sein's quasi-civilian government, which handed power to Aung San Suu Kyi following the 2015 elections.

Myanmar's military has a history of being intolerant of criticism, said Zaw Win of Fortify Rights, a Southeast Asia-based human rights group. The recent social media arrests are just another demonstration of that quality, he said.

"It never lets off the people who oppose them," he said. "They will take action no matter what."

But Thein Tun Oo, director of the Thayninga Strategic Studies Group, a think tank run by former military officers, said that the arrests show there are obligations that go with citizen's rights.

"There is a problem when you are screaming for your rights, but you are not able to fully take the responsibilities," he said.

RFA's attempts to contact junta spokesman Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun for comment on the arrests went unanswered.

*Translated by Htin Aung Kyaw. Edited by Matt Reed.*

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37 people, including a former information minister, were arrested for posting critical comments about the military junta on social media

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