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Myanmar junta arrests 50 in Yangon-area crackdown

By RFA Burmese

Myanmar's military junta has arrested nearly 50 young people in and around Yangon over the past three weeks, residents told Radio Free Asia.

The people, mostly under 30 years old, were arrested between Nov. 1 and 21. Approximately 30 of them were arrested in Kayan township, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Myanmar's largest city. People from the area told RFA Burmese that the Kayan People's Defense Force have frequently conducted attacks on junta targets there.

It has not yet been possible to obtain information on the reasons for their detention or their whereabouts, and their family members have no access to them, said a resident who insisted on anonymity for security reasons.

Arrests of civilians has been a common practice since the February 2021 coup, when the military took over control of the government. The Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners released an updated report on Nov. 21 stating that over 25,000 civilians have been arrested across the country since the coup, with 19,702 still remaining in detention.

At least 10 of the people arrested in Kayan township were taken into custody on Nov. 19, when the junta inspected overnight guests at a dormitory there, the resident said.

"Soldiers inspected overnight registration at a dormitory. The arrestees had been living there for some time," the resident said. "They showed all their documents, but around 10 young men were apprehended. They have not been released and cannot be contacted."

The other 20 people from Kayan township were arrested between Nov. 1 and 18, usually at night. This has resulted in decreased nighttime activity

in the township, residents said.

Over the same period of time, three people were arrested in Kamayut township, five in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) township and 10 in North Okkalapa township. People monitoring these arrests told RFA that it remains unknown whether they will be released or not.

Two of the Kamayut arrests occurred on Tuesday, a covert online media group called Kamayut Information told RFA.

"We have learned that some young men living on the first floor of Sin Ma Leik wholesale market were arrested around 7 pm," a member of the group told RFA on condition of anonymity to speak freely. "The military has also made arrests at the bustling San Yeik Nyein bus stop, Hledan bus stop and Hledan train station in Ward 3 since August and September."

Staying home

A resident of Shwe Pyi Thar township told RFA, requesting not to be identified for safety reasons, that news of arrests keeps people inside at night.

"In our ward, no one goes outside at night after we ask the children to come back home before we close the doors."

Ko Kaung, a participant in recurring anti-junta [flash protests](#) in Yangon, told RFA that the junta soldiers arrest individuals during their patrols, with a specific focus on targeting the youth under 18.

"They make arrests if they find anything suspicious on mobile phones during inspections, and they also detain individuals around 18-year old during their patrols," he said.

Ko Ye Ba Wal, the chairman of the Octopus youth organization that helped to organize flash protests, told RFA that the military has three separate plans to maintain power.

"The first plan is to hide the battle news across the country. The second is to defeat urban resistance forces, and the third one is to extort money as ransom from those apprehended."

The Mirror, a military controlled newspaper, reported Wednesday that false information had been circulating suggesting that young people were being forced to do military training to become porters for the military.

According to the report a junta official said that this was misinformation, and did not acknowledge that any arrests had occurred.

RFA attempted to contact Attorney General Htay Aung, the spokesperson of Yangon Region government for a comment but phone calls went unanswered.

Translated by Aung Naing. Edited by Eugene Whong and Malcolm Foster.

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