

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

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| Bilagsnr.: | 849 |
| Land: | Myanmar |
| Kilde: | Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) |
| Titel: | Briefing Notes Summary (July-December 2024) |
| Udgivet: | 31. december 2024 |
| Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet: | 3. juli 2025 |
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Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Myanmar – July to December 2024

31 December 2024

01 July 2024

Security situation

Six civilians were injured and another one was killed in Waingmaw (Kachin State) on 10.06.24 in fighting between the Myanmar military and the Kachin Independence Army.

On 19.06.24, security forces at a police checkpoint near Mandalay shot dead the prominent monk Sayadaw Bhaddanta Munindabhivamsa, who had publicly condemned the military coup of February 2021.

Following armed clashes with the Chinland Defence Force, troops of the military junta set fire to the village of Taingen in the north of Chin State on 20.06.24, thereby completely destroying it. Information on deaths and injuries could not be independently verified.

On 22.06.24, the military killed 17 civilians, including a child, in a night air raid on a monastery in Indaw municipality (Sagaing region).

Between 25.06. and 27.06.24, fighting between the military and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army in Madaya and Mogoke (Mandalay region) displaced thousands of civilians from a total of ten villages. Seven civilians are reported killed and ten others injured.

In Rakhine state, around 10,000 people in the embattled community of Maungdaw are cut off from food and medical supplies. The local WFP warehouse burnt down on 22.06.24; the military has also closed roads and hospitals in the region. On 27.06.24, the aid organisation Doctors Without Borders announced the suspension of its work in the communities of Rathedaung, Buthidaung and Maungdaw due to the violence. Eight civilians, including one child, were killed and 14 others injured in airstrikes in Ann, Taungup and Myebon townships between 17.06. and 20.06.24.¹

Extension of compulsory military service to include retired and former soldiers

According to local media reports, the military began recalling retired or former military personnel at the beginning of June 2024. A corresponding announcement had already been made in May 2024. Men up to the age of 67 are affected by the measure. Those who are called up must serve for at least three years, with returnees under the age of 55 being deployed at the front. Refusal to do so could result in the cancellation of their pension or up to three years in prison. According to UN figures and investigations by human rights organisations, the Myanmar military regularly commits war crimes and crimes against humanity in the fight against armed opposition and ethnic groups.²

15 July 2024

Security situation

Between 03.07. and 08.07.24, at least 15 civilians were killed in Lashio (Shan State) in fighting between the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and the Myanmar military. Around 50,000 people fled. The military responded to the capture of the town of Nawngkhio (Shan) by MNDAA ally Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA with over 100 air strikes on Nawngkhio on 10.07.24, the TNLA informed. Ten civilians died, nine others were injured and almost the entire population of Nawngkhio (around 16,000 people) was displaced.

During a raid in the community of Yebyu (Tanintharyi region) on 01.07.24, military troops arrested eight civilians and had killed at least four of them by 04.07.24.

As a result of fighting between the Karenni Army and the military around Loikaw, the capital of Kayah state, at least three civilians were killed on 05.07.24.

In Madaya (Mandalay region), armed clashes between local resistance groups (People's Defence Forces, PDFs) and the military claimed at least one civilian life on 08.07.24. At least four people, including two children, were injured. On 10.07.24, the military killed six people and injured numerous others in drone attacks on a clinic in Budalin (Sagaing region), where local PDF fighters were being treated at the time.

In Rakhine State, the Arakan Army captured two military outposts in Thandwe and Maungdaw on 09.07. and 11.07.24. Civilian buildings, including two schools, were also hit during the fighting.³

Economic situation

At the beginning of July 2024, banks in Myanmar began to restrict cash withdrawals to between MMK 500,000 and a maximum of MMK 2,000,000 (approx. EUR 141 to EUR 566; as at 15.07.24) per day to counter the rising inflation. At least ten business owners who had announced wage increases for their employees due to the difficult economic situation were arrested in June 2024 for inciting public disorder. In the same period, eleven people were arrested for selling rice above the prices prescribed by the military government. According to the World Bank, Myanmar's economic output has fallen by 9 % since 2019. In early 2024 the poverty rate rose to over 32 %, the highest level since 2015.⁴

29 July 2024

Security situation

On 18.07.24, the Myanmar military killed at least 15 civilians in an air strike on a market in Hsenwi (Shan State). Numerous other people were injured. On 24.07.24, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) announced that it had gained control of the city of Mogok (Mandalay region). At least three civilians were killed and at least nine injured in the fighting. On 25.07.24, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) claimed to have captured a military headquarter in Lashio, the capital of northern Shan State. The military denied the report; the United Wa State Army and the Shan State Army-North, which had not previously been involved in the fighting, responded to the advance of the TNLA and the MNDAA by moving troops into the area around Lashio. At least eight people were killed in air strikes on the town and most of the population is said to have fled.

According to a report published on 20.07.24 by the NGO project Myanmar Witness, educational institutions were targeted by 174 attacks since the military coup on 01.02.21, most of them in the Sagaing region and in the states of Shan, Kayin and Kayah. A total of 170 civilian victims (64 dead and 106 injured) have been documented.⁵

Military junta head Min Aung Hlaing appointed interim president

On 22.07.24, the Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Armed Forces, Chairman of the State Administrative Council and Prime Minister of Myanmar, Min Aung Hlaing, assumed the post of interim president of the country. The provisional President Myint Swe, who had been appointed on 01.02.21, is said to have been suspended for health reasons. The state of emergency imposed after the military coup and extended for the fifth time on 01.02.24 expires on 31.07.24. A further extension requires the approval of the president.⁶

05 August 2024

State of emergency extended by a further six months

On 31.07.24, three and a half years after its coup on 01.02.21, the military junta extended the state of emergency by a further six months until 31.01.25. In an official statement, the generals justified this step with the unstable situation and the ongoing unrest in the country. Parliamentary elections are postponed again. In various parts of the country, ethnic groups, some of which have close ties to neighbouring China, are fighting against the military (cf. BN of 29.07.24), which has already lost control over many parts of the country.⁷

19 August 2024

UN annual report: war crimes committed by parties to the conflict

According to the annual report of the Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar presented by the UN on 13.08.24, the military is committing an increasing number of war crimes, including torture and sexualised violence, to suppress armed resistance groups.

The report, which covers the period from 01.07.23 to 30.06.24, describes the armed conflict, which escalated at an alarming rate, as significant. The investigators claim to have found evidence of torture, sexual abuse and ill-treatment of children. Physical mutilations of prisoners, beheadings and the public display of disfigured corpses are reported. Air raids on schools, religious buildings and hospitals are also mentioned. In addition, thousands of people were arrested by the military junta and many of them were tortured or killed in custody, the report says. Specifically, people critical of the regime are arbitrarily detained and sentenced in blatantly unfair trials. Armed resistance groups are accused of war crimes as well.⁸

09 September 2024

Security situation

Since mid-August 2024, more than 42,000 people have fled fighting between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army in the south of Rakhine State to the neighbouring Ayeyarwady region. Food and rent prices in the host communities are said to have tripled as a result. According to a report from 02.09.24, a military court in Sittwe (Rakhine) sentenced 144 people to prison for allegedly supporting insurgents. The convicts had been arrested along with another 150 people as part of a deadly military operation in the village of Byian Phu near Sittwe at the end of May 2024 (cf. BN of 10.06.24).

On 01.09.24, the military bombed a bazaar in Tigyaing (Shan State) killing nine civilians. Another person was killed in air strikes on Nawngkhio (Shan). Another civilian was killed in military attacks on Loikaw (Kayah state) on 04. and 05.09.24. The attacks were preceded by resistance forces' shelling of the city after the visit of junta leader Min Aung Hlaing on 04.09.24. On 05.09.24, the military shelled a camp for internally displaced persons in Pekon (Shan), killing ten civilians, including eight children, and injuring 14 others. At least 13 civilians were killed and 11 injured in a military air strike on Namhkan (Shan) on 06.09.24. On the same day, six civilians were killed in an air strike in Myaing (Magway region). At least ten others were injured. The military carried out further attacks on Natogyi (Mandalay region) and Mindat (Chin state).⁹

16 September 2024

Security situation

On 08.09. and 09.09.24, the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) killed about 70 people in air strikes on Pauktaw and Maungdaw (Rakhine State). Among the victims were Tatmadaw soldiers who were being held captive by the Arakan Army. Another ten people were injured. As a result of fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army near Hpakant (Kachin State), at least ten civilians lost their lives between 07.09. and 12.09.24.¹⁰

Flood disaster after Typhoon Yagi

Yagi, Asia's most severe typhoon to date in 2024 caused landslides and flooding in Myanmar, forcing more than 320,000 people to flee in the regions of Mandalay and Bago, the capital Naypyidaw and parts of the states of Shan, Mon, Kayah and Kayin. On 15.09.24, the military junta reported 113 dead and 64 missing. According to media reports, at least 160 people died, while social media sources close to the junta estimate 230 deaths in Mandalay alone. A further 287 people are said to have died before the storm reached the mainland. Aid workers on the ground are complaining about a lack of resources and poor coordination of rescue efforts due to the armed conflict.¹¹

23 September 2024

Security situation

In an attack on a village near the town of Shwebo (Sagaing region), soldiers of the Myanmar military killed eight civilians on 12.09.24. According to media reports, air strikes by the military on several villages near the towns of Mindat (Chin State) and Hpakant (Kachin State) as well as the town of Nawnghkio (Shan State) on 18.09. and 19.09.24 did not claim any civilian casualties. On 16.09.24, members of a resistance group from Okpho Township (Bago region) killed a police officer and a man who was believed to be a police informer. The victims were part of a group of police officers who were allegedly travelling on behalf of the military to enforce compulsory military service. On 17.10.24, suspected members of an armed resistance group killed twelve female residents of the predominantly pro-military village of Kywei Pon in Sagaing. Three other men, believed to be members of the pro-military Pyu Saw Htee, were injured in the attack. On 20.09.24, unknown persons shot dead a district administrator of South Dagon Township and another employee of the military administration in Yangon.¹²

Arrests and planned executions

On the night of 19.09.24, a protest took place in Yangon against compulsory military service, the rise in commodity prices and the military junta's disaster management in connection with typhoon Yagi. On 19.09.24, security forces arrested four political activists, some of whom had previously been in political detention. According to reports from prisoner aid organisations, former political prisoners are under special observation and are subject to regular interrogation and the risk of re-arrest for suspicious behaviour. On 24.09.24, the military junta plans to execute five activists who were sentenced to death on 18.05.23 for the alleged murder of six police officers in Yangon in August 2021 and for unauthorised possession of weapons.¹³

Compulsory military service

According to media reports, in the regions of Naypyidaw, Yangon, Mandalay, Ayeyarwady and Kayin State the Myanmar military began conscripting men up to the age of 65 and seriously and/or chronically ill people as well as people with disabilities, including men suffering from tuberculosis and HIV-positive men who are dependent on medication. In several communities in Ayeyarwady, men between the ages of 35 and 65 are reportedly banned from leaving their homes. In August 2024, the establishment of a Central Committee for People's Security and Counterterrorism was announced by the military. The committee shall train and arm civilians in Naypyidaw and other regions and federal states for the fight against resistance forces.¹⁴

Flood disaster after typhoon Yagi

According to official figures, the number of flood victims claimed by typhoon Yagi has risen to 384 by 21.09.24, with 89 more people still missing. The chairman of the military junta, Min Aung Hlaing, admitted on 17.09.24 that he had not been prepared for the scale of the disaster and put the number of people displaced by flooding and landslides at 400,000. According to UN estimates, up to 887,000 people have been affected by the typhoon. Aid organisations from the Bago region and the state of Kayah report that the military is controlling and restricting aid deliveries to prevent them from reaching resistance groups and denying aid workers access to disaster areas.¹⁵

28 October 2024

Security situation

20 civilians were killed in fighting between the Myanmar military and local resistance groups (People's Defence Forces, PDF) in Madaya (Mandalay region) on 20.09. and 21.09.24.

14 civilians were killed and 25 injured in an air strike by the military junta on the coastal town of Thandwe (Rakhine State) on 26.09.24.

On 30.09.24 bombs exploded in two administrative offices of Kyimyindaing and Mingala Taungnyunt townships in Yangon. According to information from the military, eleven people were wounded. The guerrilla group which has claimed responsibility for the attacks, describing them as an operation against the military junta's "illegal census", has reported three people killed and 13 injured. The census comprising 68 questions, which was launched on 01.10.24, is allegedly intended to be used for the purpose of drawing up an electoral register for parliamentary elections in 2025. Pro-democratic forces see it as an attempt to collect information on opposition figures. Furthermore, as a result of the military's territorial losses, observers assume that it will only be possible to survey households in the urban areas of the central regions Mandalay, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyarwady.

Between 04.10. and 23.10.24, junta soldiers killed at least 25 civilians in a number of villages in Budalin (Sagaing region) and impaled their mutilated bodies on stakes as a deterrent.

Thousands of people fled heavy fighting between the military and local PDFs in Pulaw (Tanintharyi region) between 14.10. and 24.10.24.¹⁶

Conscription

It is estimated that the Myanmar military has conscripted 25,000 men for training since April 2024 and sent 5,000 of these to the front. According to state media, up to 60,000 people are to be conscripted by the end of 2024, in order to support the military in pursuit of its most important aims ("preventing the disintegration of the union, maintaining national solidarity, upholding sovereignty"). In Yangon and other towns and cities controlled by the military, people who are considered fit for military service are said to be picked up from their homes or in the street for conscription, without any prior warning. Migrant workers who have been returned to Myanmar from Thailand for illegally entering the country or because their visas have expired are also victims of such press-ganging. Thai authorities are said to have deported over 1,400 Myanmar workers in August and September 2024 and since July 2024 they are reported to have detained a total of 200,000 Myanmar nationals without residence permits.¹⁷

02 December 2024

Security situation

Two inmates died on 28.10.24 in an air strike by the military junta on a prison in Ho Hko (Shan state) which is controlled by resistance forces.

On 31.10.24 a drone launched by the junta killed two civilians and injured eight in the village of Phuk Khe (Shan). In an attack on the same day on the village of Mon Hla (Sagaing), one third of whose population is Catholic, junta troops destroyed a number of religious buildings.

On 05.11.24 the armed resistance group Naypyidaw People's Defence Force claimed responsibility for a bomb attack on the airport of the capital, Naypyidaw, from which military leader Min Aung Hlaing embarked on the same day on his first visit to China since the military coup in February 2021. State media reported that further attempted attacks in the Naypyidaw region had been prevented.

Almost 10,000 people have fled their homes in the face of fighting between the Bama National Revolution Army and the military junta over the town of Pale (Sagaing). A number of civilians are reported to have been killed in air strikes by the military.

Junta troops killed nine civilians and injured 13 in Mogok (Mandalay region) on 11.11.24.

On 12.11.24 the junta killed eleven civilians and injured ten in air strikes on the town of Nawngkhio (Shan), which is occupied by the Ta'ang National Liberation Army.

Nine civilians, including a number of children, died in a junta air strike on a church and a refugee camp in Konlaw (Kachin state) on 15.11.24.

According to information from resistance forces, more than 30 civilians died in air strikes by the military on Kutkai (Shan) between 12.11. and 19.11.24. 46 civilians are said to have been injured. For its part, the military has stated that it is unavoidable that civilian targets will be hit in the fight against the rebels.

According to ISP-Myanmar and Radio Free Asia, 466 people died in massacres (attacks killing at least ten people) throughout Myanmar between 01.01. and 25.10.24. A total of 379 victims of mass killings was documented for the entire year in 2023.¹⁸

Clashes along the Ann-Padan road and in Madaya

Clashes are a regular occurrence in the mountain regions along the Ann-Padan road at the border between Rakhine state and the Magwe region, as local resistance groups attempt to prevent the junta from bringing reinforcements and supplies into the town of Ann, which is under attack from the Arakan Army (AA). The AA has captured a number of the regime's battalion headquarters and bases in the township of Ann in Rakhine state with the aim of gaining control of the town of Ann, in which the military junta's western military command is located. According to information from local resistance groups, the Ann-Padan highway is crucially important to the military as a means of transporting more troops and supplies to Ann. The local defence group Chin Defence Force (Asho) has stated that on 25.11.24 it ambushed junta soldiers who were carrying out security operations on a stretch of the Ann-Padan road in Ngape township, in the Magwe region. Four junta soldiers were killed and many injured in the ambush. A firefight also occurred on the Add-Padan road in Ngape township on 28.11.24 when another resistance group, the People's Revolution Alliance (Magway), ambushed 40 members of the junta to the east of the village of Gokkyi. The group claims to have killed nine soldiers and injured ten in the ambush. At the beginning of November 2024, the AA claimed that it was on the brink of capturing four more towns in Rakhine state, including Ann. The ethnic army stated that it had captured eight of the junta's battalion headquarters, a military hospital and an arms depot during the fighting over the town of Ann. Only two of the remaining ten junta positions in Ann house combat troops, while the remainder serve as bases for auxiliary units. The junta is reportedly using helicopters to transport reinforcements and supplies to the remaining bases in the town of Ann, which is surrounded by AA troops.

The military junta in Myanmar has regained control of western Madaya township in the Mandalay region. Since 17.11.24 more than 200 junta soldiers and the allied Pyu Saw Htee militia have been attacking villages along the Irrawaddy river and dropping chemical bombs. The junta now controls the majority of western Madaya. The junta troops are stationed in more than three villages along the river, from where they carry out raids, artillery and incendiary attacks on other villages. Thousands of villagers have left their homes. According to information from the defence ministry of the civilian National Unity Government, opposition groups ambushed over 70 junta soldiers in the west of Madaya on 17.11.24, killing twelve soldiers and seizing weapons. The junta has stepped up its air raids and artillery attacks and sent reinforcements in the aftermath of the ambush. Troops of combat support units were also involved in the attacks. The east of Madaya is controlled by the Mandalay People's Defence Force, which announced on 25.11.24 that it intends to restrict traffic on the Madaya-Singu-Thabeikkyin road.¹⁹

Flood disaster after typhoon Yagi

Two months after typhoon Yagi caused serious flooding and landslides in Myanmar (cf. BN of 16.09.24), over 30,000 people in 54 villages and 16 refugee camps in Kayah and Shan states were still waiting for relief aid at the beginning of November 2024. Typhoon victims from townships in Mandalay, Bago and Ayeyarwady have also stated that they have yet to receive any financial support (as per 07.11.24). Roads remain blocked, leading to price rises, and mud and sludge cannot be cleared away from homes. The typhoon left almost 2,000 families homeless. According to inconsistent information from state media and ministries, 5,000 or over 780,000 hectares of rice-growing land and 2.3 million hectares of farmland have been destroyed and 176,000 farm animals killed. UNICEF has reported that farming has been "severely impacted" in 84 of Myanmar's 330 townships. This is expected to lead to a further worsening of the food insecurity caused by the civil war. Official figures put the nationwide death toll at 436, with 66 people still missing.²⁰

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Imprint

Published by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge,
90461 Nürnberg

ISSN

2943-1441

Valid as of

12/2024

Printed by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Design

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Reference source

Publikationsstelle Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
www.bamf.de/publikationen

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