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Myanmar Junta Extends Martial Law

Military Greenlights Abuses; Denies Fair Trial Rights

On February 22, Myanmar's junta announced martial law orders for three additional townships in Sagaing Region, after expanding martial law in 37 townships elsewhere in the country [earlier this month](#). A total of 50 townships are now [under martial law](#) in Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, and Mon States, as well as in Yangon and Mandalay Regions.

The three townships in Myanmar's northwest now fall under the executive and judicial jurisdiction of regional military commander Maj. Gen. [Than Htike](#), who has been [sanctioned](#) by the European Union for serious human rights violations, including excessive use of force and an attack on a school in Depayin township in September 2022 that killed 11 children.

The Myanmar junta's application of martial law permits a disproportionate, overbroad and open-ended response. It allows for even

ecoi.net description:

Article on the extension of martial law, which means further repression of basic rights to free expression, peaceful assembly, and association; 50 townships affected

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further repression of basic rights to free expression, peaceful assembly, and association. In essence, these martial law orders all but guarantee that ongoing military abuses remain unchecked and those responsible unaccountable.

Under martial law, legal proceedings held in military tribunals against alleged coup opponents – closed-door hearings without adequate opportunity to present a defense – deny defendants any semblance of a fair trial.

Defendants on trial before military tribunals face almost certain conviction regardless of the evidence against them. Neither the public, human rights monitors, or foreign diplomats have access to the trials, and defendants have no right of appeal. Since the February 2021 coup, military tribunals have [sentenced](#) more than 100 people to death, including 41 tried in absentia.

For two years, Myanmar's junta has brutalized a population that has bravely opposed military rule. So long as martial law remains in place, it's clear the military has no intention of changing course. Concerned governments need to hold the junta to account. Member states of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in particular Indonesia as chair of ASEAN, should do more to press Myanmar's military to end its abuses and restore the civilian democratic government.

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Austrian Red Cross
Austrian Centre for Country of
Origin and Asylum Research and
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Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041
Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

Contact
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