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RSF – Reporters Sans Frontières

Even journalists deemed close to the junta are no longer safe in Burma

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) calls for the immediate and unconditional release of two journalists who have been held ever since their arrest for asking unwelcome questions at an information ministry press conference in Myanmar’s capital, Naypyidaw, on 18 November.

The two journalists, **Win Oo** and **Zaw Min Oo**, were not on the military junta’s [list](#) of wanted journalists. But they are being held in a prison in Naypyidaw, according to Burmese social media reports on 23 November that RSF has verified, even if they have yet to be confirmed by the authorities.

The editors of online media outlets tolerated by the junta, they dared to raise sensitive issues at what was a well policed event of the kind normally limited to on-passing the statements of senior members of Myanmar’s armed forces, known as the Tatmadaw. Only journalists with a reputation for being docile, for not asking difficult questions, are invited.

Total paranoia

“This is undoubtedly the first time since the coup d’état on 1 February 2021 that Myanmar’s junta has targeted journalists who normally transmit its propaganda – which speaks volumes about the total paranoia now prevailing in Naypyidaw,” said Daniel Bastard, the head of RSF’s Asia-Pacific desk.

“The international community cannot remain indifferent to the fact that the panicked military government keeps resorting to more and more terror. We therefore call on the UN authorities responsible for monitoring Myanmar to toughen the sanctions to which the country’s generals are supposedly subjected.”

Zaw Min Oo, who runs an online news agency called *Dae Pyaw* (“Tell us frankly”), dared to ask about the failure of the army’s peace talks with the “Kawthoolei” (Karen National Union), the rebel group operating in the southeast of the country. He also reportedly asked about Myanmar’s soaring inflation, which is affecting basic necessities in particular.

Burning issue

Win Oo, the host of an online video channel called [New History for People](#), made the mistake of referring to the dozens of journalists who are still detained. This is a burning issue after [six journalists](#) were included in the several hundred detainees whose pardon was announced on 16 November without any explanation as to why these journalists were being freed and [62 others continue to be held](#) in Myanmar’s jails.

In another sign that the junta’s generals are forging ahead with their policy of terror, the journalist **Sithu Aung Myint** was sentenced on 24 November to another two years in prison with hard labour – in addition to the three-year jail sentence [he received last month](#).

According to RSF’s press freedom barometer, Myanmar is the world’s second biggest jailer of media personal, second only to China. In relation to population size, it is by far the biggest. It is ranked 176th out of 180 countries in RSF’s 2022 [World Press Freedom Index](#).

ecoi.net summary:

2 journalists arrested by the
military junta for asking unwelcome
questions at an information ministry
press conference

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Myanmar

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