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(Author)

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The crackdown against opposition to military rule intensified. Thousands of people were arbitrarily detained and more than 1,000 opposition politicians, political activists, human rights defenders and others were convicted in unfair trials. Widespread torture of detainees continued. Four men were executed following unfair trials on politically motivated charges. Indiscriminate military attacks on civilians and civilian objects resulted in hundreds of deaths and mass displacement. Foreign companies were found to have supplied aviation fuel to the Myanmar military that was responsible for carrying out aerial attacks killing hundreds of civilians. Tens of thousands of ethnic Rohingya people remained in squalid displacement camps and their rights remained severely curtailed. Military authorities continued to restrict the delivery of humanitarian aid.

### Background

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Report on the human rights situation covering 2022

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While Win Myint was still listed by the UN as the president and head of state, military rule continued under Myint Swe, appointed by the military as acting president, and the State Administration Council, led by Min Aung Hlaing, an army general. Both non-violent and armed resistance continued against this military rule, which was imposed following the February 2021 coup and the imprisonment of civilian leaders. Fighting intensified between military forces and ethnic armed organizations, as well as the People's Defence Forces and other armed groups set up to resist the coup, spreading to central Myanmar and other areas previously unaffected by armed conflict. The military continued with its "Four Cuts" strategy to cut off armed groups from funding, food, intelligence and recruits with devastating consequences for civilians. The National Unity Government, formed in 2021 by representatives of the deposed National League for Democracy (NLD)-led government, ethnic armed organizations and civil society continued their opposition to military rule. On 21 December, in its first resolution on Myanmar in over 70 years, the UN Security Council expressed deep concern at the grave impact of the military coup and called for an end to the violence, the release of political prisoners, unimpeded humanitarian access and respect for the rights of women and children.

## Arbitrary arrests and detentions

Mass arbitrary arrests and detentions of NLD members and other supporters of the anti-coup movement persisted. According to the NGO Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) (AAPP), military authorities arrested at least 5,415 people during the year.

In November, 402 political activists were among more than 5,000 prisoners released to mark National Day. At least 13,272 people arrested since the coup for political reasons were still detained at year's end.

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The military authorities often denied detentions and the whereabouts of many detainees remained unknown for extended periods, amounting to enforced disappearance. The right to petition to challenge unlawful detention remained suspended. Children and others were arbitrarily detained as proxies for their parents or relatives. At year's end, military authorities were reportedly holding at least 277 people, including 38 children, because of their relationship with a wanted person.

## Freedom of expression, assembly and association

Authorities intensified both on- and offline surveillance, further diminishing the space for freedom of expression and severely restricting other rights including to privacy, information, association and movement. People were stopped and searched at random at numerous checkpoints in towns and cities throughout the country and plain-clothes informants were employed in every ward.<sup>1</sup> There were reports of CCTV cameras with facial recognition capabilities being used in major cities. Authorities continued to impose periodic internet and telecommunications shutdowns, particularly in regions affected by armed conflict.

In October, the State Administration Council adopted a revised Organization Registration Law that imposed tighter restrictions on NGOs. Under the law, humanitarian and other NGOs carrying out "social tasks" are required to register with boards made up of government representatives and to comply with broad and vaguely worded provisions, including prohibitions on "mentioning false data" and "interference in the internal affairs of the state or politics". Non-compliance was punishable by up to five years' imprisonment.

Military authorities attempted to starve the resistance of funds by seizing the property and other assets of individuals accused of being members of or providing financial or other support to the National Unity Government

or armed resistance groups. Others were arrested for donating money for internally displaced people after authorities traced donations from mobile banking records.

## Journalists

Two journalists were killed during the year including Aye Kyaw, a freelance photojournalist who had documented anti-coup protests in the Sagaing region. He was arrested by military authorities on 30 July and died in custody the same day. At least 74 media workers were among those detained at year's end. Independent media outlets remained banned and the military authorities subjected those continuing to publish to harassment and threats of arrest and prosecution.

## Unfair trials

Grossly unfair trials of people arrested since the coup took place behind closed doors in makeshift courts inside prisons. In areas under martial law, trials took place in military courts where defendants were denied legal representation and the right to appeal. Pro-democracy activists, opposition politicians, human rights defenders and journalists were among more than 1,000 people convicted during the year and sentenced, including to death and long prison sentences with hard labour. Lawyers defending political detainees faced arrest, threats and harassment.

Former State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi was sentenced to 31 years' imprisonment in a series of trials for corruption and other bogus charges, in addition to the two years she was already serving.

In October, Magway District Court sentenced ex-NLD parliamentarian Win Myint Hlaing to 148 years in prison on terror-related charges. Around the same time, Aung Khant, Kyaw Thet and Hnin Maung were also found guilty of involvement in the armed resistance movement and sentenced

to prison terms of between 95 and 225 years under the Counter-Terrorism Law.

## Torture and other ill-treatment

Torture and other ill-treatment of detainees remained widespread, routinely occurring after arrest and in military and police interrogation centres and in prisons. Some detainees, including men, women and people of diverse gender identity or sexual orientation, were subjected to sexual violence, harassment and humiliation, including invasive body searches, as a method of torture during interrogation and detention.<sup>2</sup> At least 356 people were known to have died in custody in connection with torture during the year.

## Death penalty

The first executions since the 1980s took place in July. Phyo Zeya Thaw, a parliamentarian and NLD member, prominent democracy activist Kyaw Min Yu (also known as Ko Jimmy), Hla Myo Aung and Aung Thura Zaw were executed following secretive trials in military tribunals.<sup>3</sup> Dozens of people were sentenced to death during the year.

## Unlawful attacks and killings

Hundreds of people were reportedly killed in military ground and air attacks, which were indiscriminate or directly targeted at civilians or civilian objects, as well as through extrajudicial executions by the military of individuals suspected of supporting resistance to the coup or on the basis of their ethnicity. Systematic looting and burning of villages also continued, further contributing to mass displacement and a deepening humanitarian crisis.

Military operations in Kayin and Kayah states against ethnic armed organizations and other armed groups in early 2022 took the form of collective punishment against Karen and Karenni civilians resulting in hundreds of deaths and the displacement of more than 150,000 people by March. Between December 2021 and March 2022, Amnesty International documented 24 artillery or mortar attacks in eastern Myanmar killing at least 20 civilians and seriously injuring 38 others, as well as causing widespread damage to homes and other buildings.<sup>4</sup> The military also conducted air strikes using fighter jets and helicopters in both indiscriminate and direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects there, as well as in Chin and Kachin states and the regions of Sagaing and Magway.

On 17 January, military fighter jets dropped two bombs on an internally displaced people's camp in Hpruso township in Kayah State, killing one man and two young girls and destroying the camp's kitchen. On 23 October, an air strike on a concert near A Nan Pa village in Kachin State killed and injured dozens of people. Musicians, children and other civilians present at the event were among the casualties.<sup>5</sup> According to media reports, state security forces blocked medical care for the injured.

Air strikes on schools, hospitals and religious buildings also resulted in deaths and damage and destruction of protected civilian objects. At least 13 people died, including children and volunteer teachers in an attack by helicopter gunships and troops on a temple school in Tabayin township, Sagaing region, on 16 September. On 9 August, a military fighter jet fired at a health centre in Daw Par Pa village, Kayah State, killing the elderly father of one of the patients and causing damage to the clinic consistent with a rocket attack.

The use of cluster munitions in aerial attacks was documented in Chin, Kayah and Kayin states, indicating that Myanmar had developed and was

deploying a new weapon system that is banned under international law.<sup>6</sup> The military also increased its use of internationally banned anti-personnel landmines, laying them in or around homes, toilets, churches and on paths to rice fields and other locations frequented by civilians.<sup>7</sup> According to UNICEF, at least 86 people including 27 children were killed by landmines or explosive remnants of war in the first 10 months of 2022 and 247 people were injured.

Security forces deliberately killed civilians. In January, soldiers shot and killed at least six civilians as they tried to escape to Thailand across the Moei river. On 3 March, soldiers shot and killed a 13-year-old boy who was collecting fruit on a riverbank in Kayin State. The bodies of three farmers from San Pya 6 Mile village in Kayah State were found with their throats slit after they left a displacement site to collect vegetables from their village. Security forces shot at relatives as they tried to retrieve the men's bodies.

Military-backed militias were also responsible for grave human rights violations. According to media reports, members of the Pyu Saw Htee militia and soldiers set fire to houses in Ngatayaw village in Magway region in August, forcing more than 4,000 residents to flee. Other militias believed to be backed by the military were reported to be responsible for targeted killings of NLD and pro-democracy activists.

## Internally displaced people's rights

As of 26 December, an estimated 1,505,700 people were displaced within Myanmar, most since the coup. There were also more than one million refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar in neighbouring countries.

Internally displaced people lived in deplorable conditions in makeshift camps and shelters without adequate access to food and water, healthcare and other basic services. The military continued to obstruct



access to crucial humanitarian assistance for internally displaced people and other marginalized groups, including via the imposition of onerous restrictions on NGO registration, banking, visas and travel. There were ongoing reports by aid organizations of deliveries being blocked or explicitly denied by the Myanmar military. On 15 September, following renewed fighting between the military and Arakan Army, the military issued a directive banning all international organizations from six of the most conflict-stricken townships in north and central Rakhine State.

An estimated 130,000 Rohingya and other Muslims remained in squalid camps in Rakhine State where they have been since 2012. Rohingya continued to be denied basic rights including access to adequate food, healthcare and education. Their freedom of movement was highly restricted and those travelling outside their designated townships faced arrest and imprisonment for “illegal movement”.

In July, the International Court of Justice affirmed its jurisdiction in a case brought by Gambia of alleged violations against the ethnic Rohingya population in Rakhine State during military operations in 2016 and 2017.

## Abuses by armed groups

Some armed groups failed to take feasible precautions to protect civilians from the effects of military attacks, in some cases co-locating near or visiting villages or displacement settlements. Some groups used internationally banned antipersonnel landmines or improvised explosive devices, placing civilian lives in danger. Opposition armed resistance groups reportedly assassinated civilian administrators working for the military authorities.

## Corporate responsibility

Puma Energy, the main foreign company involved in the handling and distribution of aviation fuel in Myanmar, announced in October that it was leaving the country and selling its business in Myanmar.<sup>8</sup> Aviation fuel imported and distributed by foreign and domestic companies was essential to the Myanmar military in carrying out air strikes. At least three other foreign companies announced that they were ending or suspending their involvement in the provision of aviation fuel to Myanmar during 2022.

Meta's (formerly Facebook) algorithms and business practices were found to have substantially contributed to grave human rights violations suffered by the Rohingya during 2017 by amplifying anti-Rohingya content and enabling and encouraging Myanmar military action against them.<sup>9</sup>

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1. ["Myanmar: International community must do more to protect brave protesters", 22 April](#)
  2. ["Myanmar: 15 days felt like 15 years: Torture in detention since the Myanmar coup", 2 August](#)
  3. ["Myanmar: First execution in decades mark atrocious escalation in state repression," 25 July](#)
  4. [Myanmar: "Bullets rained from the sky": War crimes and displacement in eastern Myanmar, 31 May](#)
  5. ["Myanmar: Deadly air strikes in Kachin State appear to fit pattern of unlawful attacks", 24 October](#)
  6. [Myanmar: Deadly Cargo: Exposing the supply chain that fuels war crimes in Myanmar, 3 November](#)
  7. ["Myanmar: Military's use of banned landmines in Kayah State amounts to war crimes", 20 July](#)

8. "Myanmar: Puma Energy to leave amid scrutiny of aviation fuel supplies", 5 October
9. *Myanmar: The social atrocity: Meta and the right to remedy for the Rohingya*, 29 September

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## Associated documents

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[Amnesty International Report 2022/23; Zur weltweiten Lage der Menschenrechte; Myanmar 2022](#) (Periodical Report, German)

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Austrian Red Cross  
Austrian Centre for Country of  
Origin and Asylum Research and  
Documentation (ACCORD)

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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F.A.Q.  
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