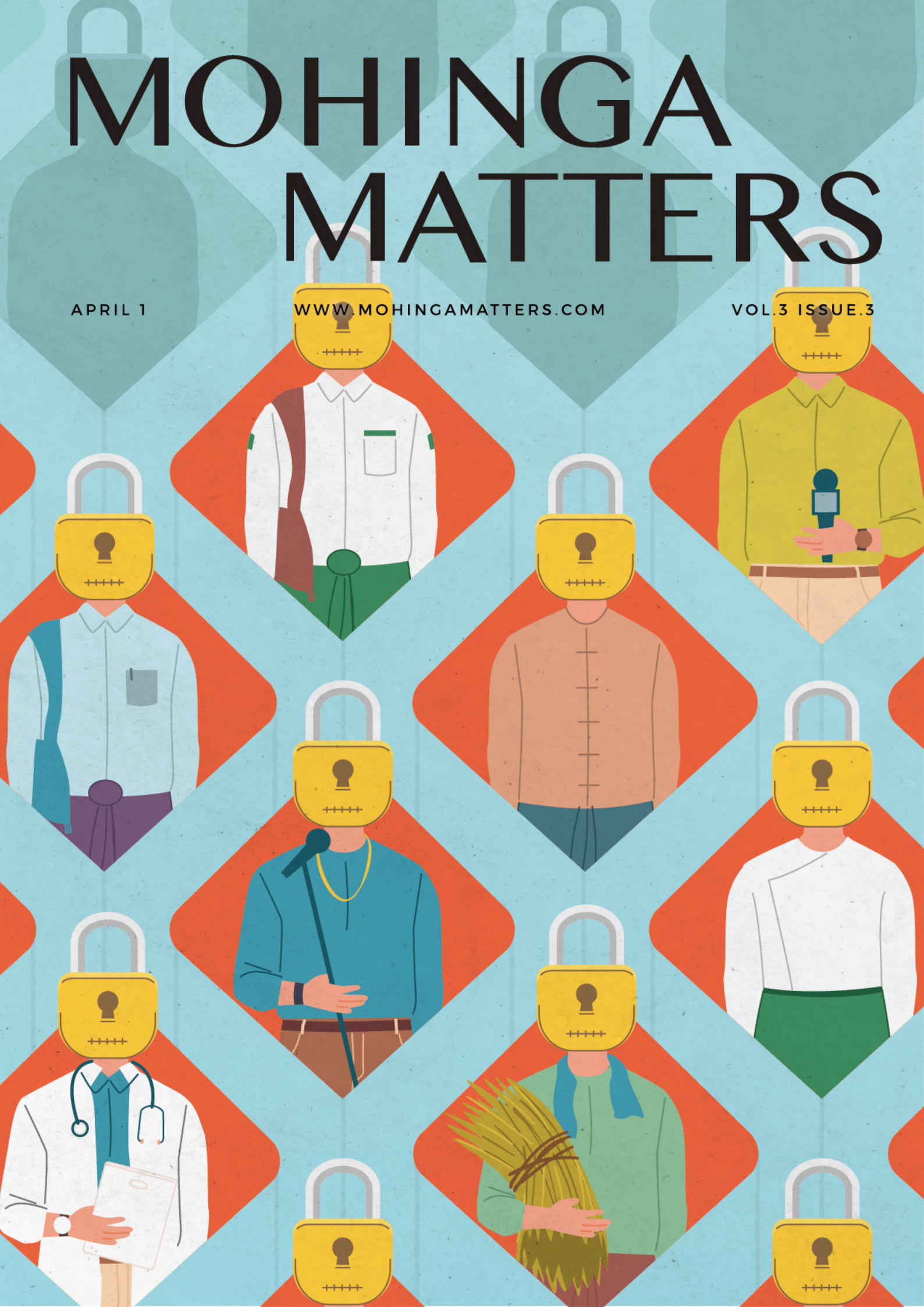


MOHINGA MATTERS

APRIL 1

WWW.MOHINGAMATTERS.COM

VOL.3 ISSUE.3



Recap

March started with the news of the NLD dismissing four high-ranked members including former chief minister U Phyo Min Thein and former MP Daw Sandar Min for complying with the military regime. It was not surprising since we had seen how the former testified against Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in the junta's courts and how the latter reportedly asked for the Lady's blessing to partake in the regime's 2023 sham election. What made things messier was that Daw Sandar Min and another dismissed member talked to the media and wrote on social media to delegitimize the current NLD officials who are taking a lead in the revolution. Later in the month, the regime-assembled Union Election Commission dissolved the NLD after months of speculation. Having witnessed the NLD's journey from its foundation (we have a separate infographic inside this issue), we believe that the party will never cease to exist as long as it has the people's backing.

Conversely, the regime does not think twice about using anyone for its political gain. This month, the military's delegation team crossed the Naf River to arrange repatriation for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazaar. In news reports, the Rohingyas expressed their concerns about the regime's orchestration of this repatriation, arguing that it could be politically motivated to gain a few points on the international stage. Amidst these concerns, the UNHCR provided logistical support to the military's delegation, which made many people raise their eyebrows. We received a comment which read, "Does the UNHCR really think Myanmar is safe for the Rohingya's return?" We do wonder the same thing.

Internally, the military has not

slowed down its attacks on civilians. Three massacres were reported this month: one in Tartine Village in Sagaing Region which saw the massacre of 15 civilians; another at an IDP camp in Pinlaung Township of Shan State where the regime soldiers killed about 30 civilians; and an aerial attack killed at least 10 civilians in Thantlang Town of Chin State. Rape, torture, and murder cases were also reported in Mandalay and Sagaing regions this month.

On the war front, the regime launched offensive attacks in four townships in Karenni (Kayah) State, which resulted in the displacement of 200,000 civilians in the state so far. In Karen State, fighting broke out between Karen forces and the military in late March where artillery shelling from the regime side killed civilians. Aerial attacks were also observed in conflicts between KIA and PDFs on one side, and the regime on the other in Kachin State.

While the wildfire of civil war spread across, especially in ethnic areas, the regime organized a two-day peace dialogue with seven EAOs who signed the peace agreement with previous governments in late March. Before this, the regime's peace brokers also held meetings separately with three EAOs from the Northern Alliance. Staying on brand, the coup leader Min Aung Hlaing held the extravagant Armed Forces Day parade on March 27 and threatened in his speech that effective actions will be taken against EAOs that support the NUG and PDFs. Despite the extravaganza, nobody cared at this point except for 88 Generation U Ko Ko Gyi who attended the parade. It was only two years ago when these soldiers in the pa-

rade shot peaceful protesters with live rounds of ammunition on this very day. While prominent individuals like U Ko Ko Gyi turned a blind eye, we will never forget.

On the international front, UN Special Envoy Dr. Noeleen Heyzer presented Myanmar's latest situation at the UN Assembly, but the UN has been relying on the ASEAN to tackle the Myanmar issue. However, ASEAN under the leadership of Indonesia has not made any substantial move except for setting up a special office for Myanmar in its foreign department. Closer to home, the NUG issued a letter to Thailand's state-owned energy company PTTEP to stop dividend payments from the Yadana offshore gas field to the regime and make future payments to the NUG. The demand letter also warned that if the Thai company failed to cooperate within 30 days, the civilian government would take the matter to a court in Singapore. A couple of days after this news, the residences where Myanmar citizens lived in Mae Sot were inspected by Thai authorities, and arrests were reported for "being linked to the armed resistance movements". Although it is difficult to correlate the Thai authorities' inspection as a retaliation to the NUG's demand letter, the NUG must be careful in dealing with Thailand for it shelters thousands of Myanmar people at the moment.

Regardless, the third Thingyan festival under military rule has fast approached. There is no joy when our villages are burned down. There is no delight when our youths are locked up in prisons. There is no pleasure when our voices are taken away. There is no celebration of the new year when the nation is in mourning. There is only resilience, revenge, and resistance in our hearts and souls.

March 1, 2023

Global Witness, Amnesty International, and Burma Campaign UK published a new report which uncovered that companies from Europe, Japan, India, and Thailand were involved in new shipments of aviation fuel to the military junta which has been using airstrikes against the civilians.

March 6, 2023

The Strait Times Newspaper reported that Singapore Keppel Land Company, which has invested in Yangon Sedona Hotel, Junction City Tower, and hotel and construction businesses, have sold their shares for USD 57.4 million. Greenfield Development, which is 100% owned by Singapore Keppel Land and its subsidiary Double Peak Holdings, will sell its investments to Spring Blossom Ventures in a deal of USD 57.4 million.

March 8, 2023

Junta-administered matriculation exams began amid tight security. According to the Examinations Department, 180,000 students from across the country registered to take the exam.

March 10, 2023

Over 6,000 residents of Demoso Township fled their homes when a 200-strong junta column advanced into Kayah State's Demoso Township as part of their clearance operations, according to Karenni Human Rights Group and Karenni Nationalities Defense Force.

March 13, 2023

RFA Burmese reported that the regime planned to hold a meeting with seven ethnic armed groups which signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). General Saw Kyaw Nyunt, the spokesperson of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee, said that the meeting would take place in Naypyidaw.

March 15, 2023

The regime's delegation led by Rakhine State's Minister for U Aung Myo Oo met with Rohingya refugees at the Transit Center in Taknaf, Bangladesh to gather information to prepare for the repatriation process.

March 3, 2023

The National League for Democracy (NLD) removed U Phyo Min Thein, Daw Sandar Min, U Toe Lwin, and U Win Myint Aung from the party, stripping party-related titles and duties. The announcement stated that the aforementioned party members failed to follow the NLD's rules, abused the party's name, and complied with the military junta.

March 7, 2023

The regime-controlled newspapers reported that the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Chen Hai held a meeting with the junta-assembled Union Election Commission, and discussed the situation on the upcoming election.

March 9, 2023

Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Zambry Abd Kadir said that he would continue to engage with ASEAN member states "to find solutions to the Myanmar crisis". He warned that there is a "possibility of other powers coming in later to intervene" which can impact the stability of the ASEAN region.

March 11, 2023

U Yee Mon, the NUG's Minister of Defense, sent a formal message commemorating the 34th anniversary of the formation of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), widely known as the Kokang Army. In the message, he said that the NUG would be willing to cooperate with the MNDAA in the anti-regime armed resistance movement.

March 14, 2023

A protest was held in front of the Japan-Myanmar Association office in Tokyo. Many people spoke out against its chairman, Hideo Watanabe. The regime recently awarded Watanabe and former Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso medals. Since the 2021 military coup, Watanabe has met with Min Aung Hlaing at least four times.

March 16, 2023

UN special envoy to Myanmar Dr. Noeleen Heyzer said that the violence and atrocities committed by the military regime had continued in the third year on “an alarming scale”.

March 18, 2023

A village in Bilin Township, Mon State was hit by artillery from the junta, resulting in the tragic death of a 6-year-old child named Saw Phoe Thagyan from Awungyi Village.

The PDF and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) combined forces to launch an attack on the regime’s police station located near Lone Khin Village in Hpakant Township, Kachin State.

March 20, 2023

The joint forces of the KIA and PDF coordinated an attack on the junta’s army that held a station in Kyautmhaw Village, five miles northeast of Tigyain Town, Sagaing Region.

An explosion occurred in the Department of Transport Planning Office in Mandalay, resulting in four people injured. A man reportedly attacked the facility with a grenade around 11 am, located on 83rd Road between 34th -35th streets, Chanayetharzan Township.

March 22, 2023

Three delegations from the Northern Alliance, namely, United Wa State Party (UWSP), Mong La’s National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), and Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP), held a meeting with the regime’s peace negotiation team.

Thai military and immigration authorities raided a four-story building in Mae Sot, the border town located in Thailand’s Tak Province, and arrested two Myanmar nationals, including a 14-year-old boy accused of being linked to the armed resistance movement after the military coup in Myanmar.

March 17, 2023

About 100-strong military columns launched simultaneous attacks against villages in Myaung, Salingyi, and Khin-U townships in Sagaing Region. The raids had caused a total of 54,000 residents to be displaced internally.

The NUG’s Ministry of Home Affairs issued a directive that requested local and international NGOs, and civil society groups to report to the civilian government if they make movements in its controlled areas.

March 19, 2023

Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) expelled Deputy Chairperson Saw Mra Yarzar Lin for failing to follow the party’s rules and regulations according to the party’s statement. The Rakhine party, one of the NCA signatories, is now split into the ALP led by Saw Mra Yarzar Lin and the ALP led by Khaing Ye Khaing.

March 21, 2023

Local resistance forces conducted an offensive on Zeephyukone Village in Pale Township, Sagaing Region. Myanmar Royal Dragon Army (MRDA) led the attack, raiding the village at 5 am in the morning. The resistance forces had to retreat after four were killed and five more were wounded by the aerial attack.

March 23, 2023

In Khin-U Township, a 50-strong military column entered Mya Kan village, burning down an undisclosed number of houses as they conducted their raids.

March 24, 2023

The Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States announced that it had imposed sanctions on seven individuals including Tun Min Latt, the arms broker of the Myanmar military.

March 25, 2023

Junta-controlled media reported that about 163 companies and individuals donated 1.13 billion Myanmar kyats (approximately USD 400,000) towards the Armed Forces Day parade happening in Naypyidaw on March 27. Sources at the Quartermaster General's Office in Nay Pyi taw told The Irrawaddy that the identities of around 20 of the companies making donations.

March 27, 2023

The military organized Armed Force Days' parade in Naypyitaw, and U Ko Ko Gyi, the former political prisoner, was also seen among the attendants.

March 29, 2023

Close to 100 shophouses in Mingalar Township, Yangon were bulldozed and destroyed by the military council to open a shopping mall according to a shop owner.

March 30, 2023

Hundreds of regime soldiers have been deployed to Rakhine State despite the informal ceasefire among the AA and the military.

March 26, 2023

On the eve of Armed Force Days, the UG guerrilla forces launched an attack on Naypyidaw military training ground, and the attack was done as an commemoration for the birthday of U Phyo Zeyar Thaw who was executed by the military junta on 23rd July, 2022.

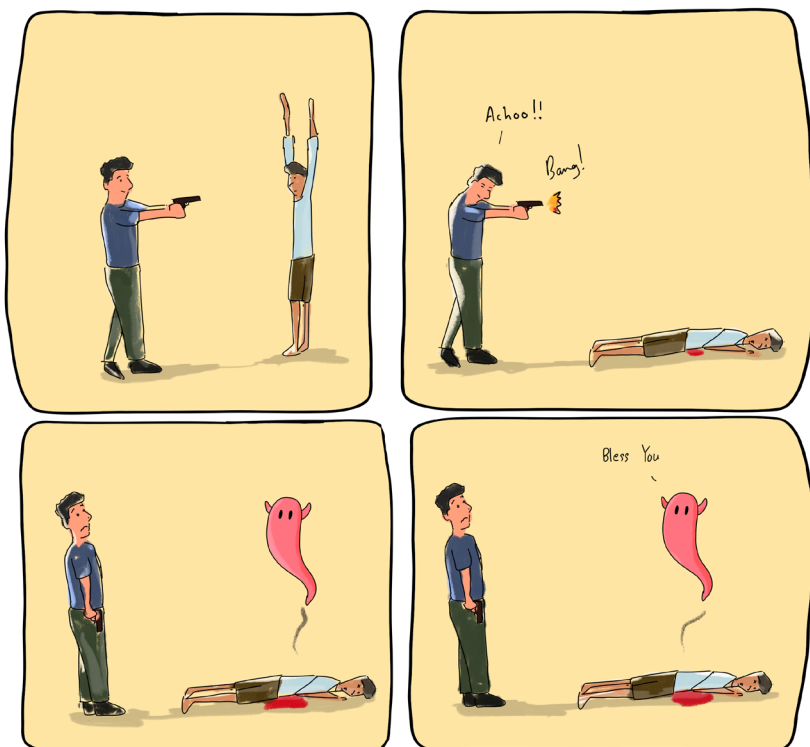
March 28, 2023

The regime-assembled Union Election Commission (UEC) announced that it had dissolved Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) and Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) party.

PDF attacked Myawaddy Trade Zone, and the battle resulted in the casualties of 11 police, and 8 captives.

The regime pressured Rakhine civil societies group not to support the Arakan Army, NUG, and PDFs.

reflexes



NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR DEMOCRACY

How far has it come? How far will it go?

1988

September 27: Founded by Brigadier General Aung Gyi, U Tin Oo, Brigadier General Aung Shwe, Colonel Kyi Maung, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to run in the election promised by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in the aftermath of the 8888 Uprising, with the hope to bring political change through an election.

1989

The NLD campaigned for the 1990 election where Daw Aung San Suu Kyi travelled to different parts of the country to gather the public's support. As the NLD gained overwhelming popularity among the public, the military leadership attempted to sabotage it.

April: Before Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gave a speech in Danuphyu Township of Ayeyarwaddy Region, an army officer ordered six soldiers to shoot her, but a major stopped the soldiers.

July 20: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest and U Tin Oo was also arrested. No concrete justification for the arrests was provided. Many NLD members were arrested throughout the year.

1990

May 27: The General Election took place, and the NLD won 392 out of 485 parliamentary seats.

July 27-29: As the SLORC leaders stalled to transfer power, the NLD organized a two-day convention from July 27 to 29 at Yangon's Ghandi Hall to discuss how to proceed with the situation. The party called on the SLORC to transfer power and convene the parliament session on September 30. No power transfer took place eventually. The detained NLD leaders and members, and other student activists remained imprisoned. It was widely believed that Chairman U Kyi Maung's comment, in which he explained that the NLD would not seek accountability as in "Nuremberg-style tribunals", counterproductively pressured the SLORC, and contributed to its refusal to transfer power.

1992

Opinions were polarized inside the NLD for some wanted to partake in the SLORC's National Convention to keep the party legal while others suggested that the party should boycott because it was designed to delegitimize the 1990 election results.



1993

January: The NLD decided to attend the National Convention. Out of 702 representatives, only 81 from the NLD were invited. U Aung Shwe headed the NLD delegation.

1995

July 10: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest. Two other founders U Tin Oo and U Kyi Maung were also released and worked with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to rebuild the party.

November: The NLD delegation at the National Convention walked out for no real political dialogue was taking place.

1996

The NLD resumed its party meetings on a daily basis. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo assumed their former positions in the party. The NLD leaders and members gathered in Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house on University Avenue Road. They gave speeches to the public through the gate which was known as the "People's Forum".

LATE 90S

The military government allowed the NLD to reopen its party offices.

The NLD continued to call on the military to recognize the results of the 1990 Election and to convene the parliament session.

2003

May: the military attempted the assassination of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who was travelling in Depayin Township, Sagaing Region as a part of the party activity. The organized crime resulted in the deaths of about 70 people, but Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and a few NLD members escaped the scene. She was put under house arrest again for the next six years.

MID-LATE 2000S

The military prohibited the NLD from conducting its party activities.

Many members of the NLD resigned from the party as they were pressured by the military.

2010

The democratization process was introduced under the notorious 2008 Constitution with a general election scheduled on November 7.

May: The election laws disqualified any political party with its members in prisons. With the majority of its prominent leaders being locked up, the NLD had to expel its leaders in detention if they wished to run in the election. The NLD announced that it would boycott the 2010 election.

A faction of former NLD members, led by U Khin Maung Swe and U Thein Nyunt, founded the National Democratic Force (NDF) to contest the 2010 Election.

November 13: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest.

2011

November: the NLD announced that it will re-register as a political party to contest the by-elections.

2012

April: The by-election took place to fill 48 vacant seats in the parliament. The NLD won 43 out of the 44 seats it contested, with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi assuming a seat in the lower house.

2015

November 8: The General Election took place where the NLD won a landslide by securing 390 out of 664 parliamentary seats.

2016

February: The NLD's MP-elects convened the parliament.

April: The NLD formed a government headed by U Htin Kyaw, a long-time aide of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

2017

The NLD and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received overwhelming criticisms for failing to speak out against the Rohingya genocide committed by the military.

2019

As a part of the government, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi represented Myanmar at the International Court of Justice, defending the military's crimes against the Rohingya.

2020

November 8: Despite the local and international criticisms, the NLD won the General Election, securing close to 400 seats in both houses of the parliament.

2021

February 1: The NLD MP-elects were set to convene the parliament sessions on February 1, but at the dawn of the day, the military staged the coup d'état, putting the NLD leaders under arrest.

February 5: the ousted MP-elects formed Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

April 16: The parallel government, National Unity Government (NUG) was formed with the majority of NLD members.

2022

July: Some NLD members requested the Central Executive Committee to reopen party offices and resume activities, which the CEC rejected.

December: Two NLD members met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Naypyidaw Prison to request her blessing to run in the 2023 election that the regime is planning.

2023

March 3: The NLD expelled four high-rank members, including former chief minister U Phyu Min Thein, and former MP Daw Sandar Min, for defying the party's policies and the people's will to reject the military, and collaborating with the junta.

March 28: The military dissolved the NLD from the status of a political party.

March 29: March 29: The NLD announced that 1235 party members have been detained, 26 members were killed in interrogation centers, and a total of 63 were arbitrarily killed.

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- Two NLD Members Meet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi by the Irrawaddy
- NLD Expels Four Members for Collaborating With Myanmar Junta by the Irrawaddy

Funding the Resistance

April 26 marks the day of the first reported conflict arising after the 2021 coup in Myanmar. It was the day the local defense force in Chin State, Chinland Defense Force began armed resistance in Mindat Township. But the official date of Myanmar armed resistance against the military regime is set as May 5, 2021—the day the National Unity Government (NUG) formed the People's Defense Force (PDF).

The armed wing operated under the NUG's Ministry of Defense (MOD), and since then, there are reportedly more than 250 PDF battalions under the command of the NUG across the country. There were also about 250 township-level defense force organizations and over 400 urban guerrillas and local defense groups that are cooperating with the NUG, according to an update by the NUG in May 2022. Combined with the battalions of Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF) and Chinland Defense Force (CDF), there are some 300 battalions nationwide, and about 63 PDF battalions are reportedly still waiting for recognition by the NUG's Defense Ministry, according to an analysis by the United States Institute of Peace.

NUG's Budget

On March 15, 2022, the NUG's MOD published a defense budget on its six-month anniversary, outlining the breakdown of the budget and how the public can support the PDFs. The budget showed a monthly budget to support a soldier (USD 20), 10 soldiers (USD 200 U.S dollars), three squads (USD 600), three platoons and one squad (USD

2,000), five divisions (USD 10,000) or five battalions (USD 30,000).

On March 31, 2023, the MOD published a news release that it has received an estimated 9.42 U.S dollars since its inception 15 months ago, and the funds are used for the PDFs, and was able to support about 75 percent of the total food subsidy. These only covered the PDFs which are under the command of the NUG's MOD, and there were over 600 armed resistance defense forces which are not covered by this budget.

Resistance Forces in Debt

A report by Myanmar Now on March 11, 2023 revealed that most resistance forces continue to survive and fight against the junta forces with their own money and mostly in debt. Mohinga Matters spoke to two resistance groups based in Karenni and northern Shan states who echoed similar sentiments.

"in March our team is in 13 lakhs Myanmar kyats in debt due to our rescue operation in western Demoso Township earlier this month in which we had to assist over 5,000 fleeing from the con-

flicts," said a 26-year-old spokesperson of a resistance armed force* based in Karenni State. [Name is redacted for security purposes as requested by the source.]

On March 9, clashes broke out in the eastern part of Demoso Township in Karenni State in which over 5,000 people had to be evacuated. According to the source, his resistance force rescued 500 people from three villages who were stuck, and they rented trucks and cars to evacuate the people over five days. The team helped the people get to safe places and find temporary accommodations for about 70 families who were in need of food and shelter due to sudden displacement.

"We also provided materials to 30 families to build temporary shelters in the IDP camps in western Demoso and gave them rice also," he added. The team donated 15 bags of rice and ten raincoats from their rations to the existing IDP camp in the western Demoso Township where more than 300 people were already residing.

This operation has put them into



over 1.3 million Myanmar kyats debt on top of their monthly expense of 6.5 million Myanmar kyats.

"We are an independent team of 42 who are currently part of the border operations. In terms of military operations, we get support from one of the ethnic resistance organizations. Our essential monthly expense is about 6,500,000 Myanmar kyats," the spokesperson explained.

He also added that the force survived with funds they managed to crowdsource from their friends and families nearby.

"Cash flow is a struggle for us whenever we are on the frontline. We are always in debt as we need to take loans to inject cash into our military operations, especially when the operations are linked with our humanitarian assistance operations," the spokesperson said.

Fundraising Campaigns

A spokesperson of PRA Magway said their force of about 200 members ran fundraising campaigns with the support of the public.

"Our campaigns consist of lucky draws, auctioning off valuable items. We do not upload these on our pages, but created two other pages to run these campaigns," said the PRA Magway spokesperson.

PRA Magway was founded on March 28, 2021, and they are a local defense organization based in Minbu District, Magway Region, which have also conducted four batches of military training so far. They have gotten some support from the NUG since August 2022 for food and medicines but have yet to receive armory support

from the government.

"The NUG has supported our production of weapons and allocated some funds for the drone project as well. However, there was never monthly support of sorts," he said.

PRA Magway rarely publicized their campaigns or military operations widely online, so they are not considered a popular group, the spokesperson said. "On the ground, the Magway natives know who we are. As other groups rose to popularity, we received less support so there are instances where we had to request funds support from the popular groups," he added.

Finding Creative Ways to Fund

Pyae, a member of a student-led force based in the northern Shan State, also shared about crowdsourcing and finding new ways to stay afloat on the ground. He said that the support from the people had decreased significantly today, and the variables are many things, such as higher commodity prices and many people facing day-to-day struggles in Myanmar.

"The ERO in our region supported us with rice and accommodation, but the rest, we need to cover on our own and survive with funds that we have managed to crowdsource among our friends and families," Pyae Sone said.

But he explained that there were times they couldn't survive with the donations from their friends and families, and that's when they needed to get creative.

"A few of us on the team would take up research projects to earn income, and then we would give the earnings to our team funds. We have done research on mi-

grant workers and worked on policy papers for foreign universities," Pyae shared.

The spokesperson from PRA Magway also said that their day-to-day life is not completely reliant on the support of the public these days. He shared the exact outlook as Pyae that more and more people are struggling with high commodity prices and not having enough income, so some of their fundraising campaigns have also failed.

"Currently, our force has farming and agriculture programs, and we are surviving day-to-day with our farm outputs. In terms of weapons, we are still struggling and need a lot of assistance," said the PRA Magway spokesperson.

Despite the hardships that they are facing, the resistance forces are determined to give their best to fight against the military regime and they have relayed their messages to the civilian government, to the people and to the international community.



Weekly Updates

We write weekly to document the coup, to share our experience, and to contemplate.

The daily entries can be read here:

<https://mohingamatters.com/weekly-updates/>

TO THE NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT

“Please continue to implement ways to get international support for our revolution and not just go with the flow. This revolution is not going to end tomorrow. We are aiming to eradicate the military system from its roots, it’s a long process. The NUG should draw up a proper strategic plan and want them to have field inspections to monitor and evaluate which forces are actually working and implementing things on the ground. It shouldn’t just be supporting the PDFs under the command of the NUG. Please set up a proper chain of command to collaborate with local PDFs on the ground and have the ultimate defense forces to fight against the junta forces.”

-Spokesperson of PRA Magway

“I feel like as NUG or as MOD, they should put more effort into learning what the teams on the ground are doing so that they can accommodate and address the needs of all of the groups on the ground.”

-Resistance armed force based in Karenni State

TO THE PEOPLE

“Please don’t stop resisting military rule. We request everyone’s unified support so that the revolution can be won successfully. This is the time we need to stop dividing within ourselves based on ethnicity and religion and come together as one.”

-Resistance armed force based in Karenni State

“Please don’t give up. We promise to continue working hard to win this revolution. Please keep your revolution spirits up. It doesn’t need to be money support but continue supporting in any other way for this revolution.”

-Spokesperson of PRA Magway

TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

“Please stop referring to the crisis in Myanmar as an internal affair. Many innocent civilians are suffering, and even if you can’t and don’t want to support the resistance efforts, I think that more humanitarian support should be coming. The recently approved legislation by the US House of Representatives in December 2022, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included an amended version of BURMA Act, and it aims to broaden the U.S government to impose further sanctions as well as aid the Myanmar opposition and resistance groups. This is the way the rest of the international community can help us the groups on the ground who are taking up arms against the junta forces, rescuing civilians, and feeding the internally displaced population.”

-Resistance armed force based in Karenni State

“I want to ask how many more of our youths and children have to die... We cannot move ahead properly without the international community's support. We need the international community to pressure [the junta] and your support and help to stop the atrocious crimes the junta is committing. It is just not enough with the statements you have been issuing. We need action. We need your cooperation with the resistance organizations.”

-Spokesperson of PRA Magway

The Perishing Freedom and the Return of Censorship: An Interview with Ma Thida (Sanchaung)

Without a doubt, the current military regime has crippled the country in various aspects. Some things like Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) are measurable, but others like self-censorship are harder to see. Human rights defenders raise concerns that any sort of rights, expression and freedom has been taken away from the people of Myanmar in the past two years. But how bad has it been? This month, we talked to Ma Thida (Sanchaung), a renowned writer to get insights on the current status of freedom of expression, as well as the return of state-imposed, self and peer censorship among artists.

MM: How can you analyze the current situation of freedom of expression in post-coup Myanmar?

MT: The situation is extremely terrible. Since the coup, the regime has taken away the people's freedom of expression systematically. By amending Cyber Security Laws and Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens, any legal changes have contributed to oppressing the people's freedom. Even the recent amendment of the National Education Law in late 2022 limited the freedom to learn languages, and the amendment of the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Law also further worsened the current publishing sector than the previous regimes. The worst thing is that even ordinary people, who are not journalists or writers or bloggers, are now afraid to react to social media posts, let alone express their opinions. The public has to think twice before they react or express their feelings on

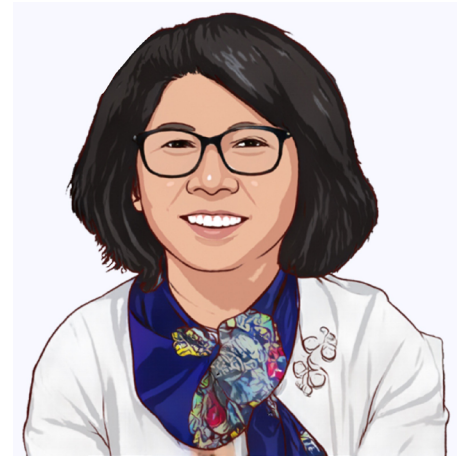
social media. So that's the current situation which is very, very terrible, I must say.

MM: You lived through tight censorship during the previous military regimes. What is the difference between oppression against freedom of expression in the last regime and the current regime?

MT: To be frank, the oppression is a lot worse now. In the past, the censorship board was there, but individuals were able to speak their minds more freely, and they had conversations at tea shops. These days, people use social media the way they converse in teashops. They write on their Facebook as if they talk to their friends casually, not like criticising something or someone intentionally, but even doing so is no longer safe. The majority of the people refrain from expressing their opinions, except for some people who say or do whatever the regime likes. This time around, there is zero tolerance for criticism.

MM: Myanmar public experienced the freedom of expression (although limited) in the past decade, the democratization process. In your opinion, how did this brief period of freedom change people's understanding and perspectives towards their freedom and rights?

MT: In that period, censorship was lifted, and associations were able to form under the Registration of Associations Law. So, the space for civil societies expanded, and training sessions on human rights were given to the public across the country. At PEN Myanmar, we provided training to peo-



ple from all walks of life, including parliamentarians, journalists, students from students' unions, and the public. Through these training and workshops, the capacity of the fifth column was proliferated in addition to gaining legal warranty. Despite the red tape processes like having to request permissions from General Administrative Department to organize literature lectures or workshops, we reached out to more people and were able to educate them. In retrospect, the public did gain knowledge of human rights during that period, and they eventually practised them. There was a time when we thought we did not see any substantial improvement in society. But looking back at a decade of the "democratization process", the space for open dialogues was expanded but the public dared not practice free speech and human rights in the first half because there were a few cases where people got penalized. In post-2015, the public became more confident to express their opinions. But since the number of people who practised free expression increased, the number of legal cases also built up relatively, which should not happen though. Despite all these, after

the Spring Revolution, we can easily see how much the public understood their role, and how much they learned about their rights in the past decade. In the past, these improvements were not visible, but to me, this revolution is proof. During the Covid pandemic outbreak, the public understood their role as the fifth column and learned to cooperate with the state to tackle critical situations. The public applied this knowledge in the Spring Revolution. They know their power and become confident to bring change by putting in the effort. This kind of resilience and perseverance can be seen among the Myanmar public to this day.

MM: Did you notice any difference in the way the public in 2021 reacted to the regime's oppression compared to the previous regime's?

MT: Of course. It is so encouraging to see the public's reaction to the coup this time around. The public has shown that they understand their role and refuse military rule. Now we are at a point, let's say even if the People's Defence Forces (PDF) decided not to fight anymore, it is not the end of the revolution. This afternoon I saw a video clip in which an old lady from Anyar (central plain regions) said and I quote, "Come and kill me, even when I'm dead,

my spirit will continue to resist". This is too bold. You can feel that she is determined not to be ruled by the military. That sentiment has become too strong. Looking back at the 1988 military coup, the public was living in total isolation, so they did not know their role, and did not understand how effective their role was. There was no alternative except to accept military rule. The Civil Disobedience Movement was initiated but did not take off because they had to depend on the state for their livelihood. This time around, they have alternatives for their livelihood. Again if you look at people like this old lady I mentioned before, this group of people used to live in fear and did not have awareness, so the reaction in the past wasn't as strong.

Communication was an issue in the past. We couldn't communicate strategically even among ourselves so the resistance could not grow further. Now, even in areas where the internet was shut down, pamphlets and newsletters were distributed. The public tried to communicate with each other. The public is very confident and they know their impact. They are not resisting emotionally, they are resisting for their rights.

MM: Let's turn to your experi-

ence as a writer and artist. In the past, artists and writers worked creatively to avoid state-imposed censorship. As an artist who lived through that period, did you ever notice self-censorship in your works or in your peers' works?

MT: Of course. Let's say the issue of land confiscation. It has happened before, and it is still happening. Knowing that this kind of topic is risky for writers, we did not see any literature on these matters even during the period when censorship was abolished. As a writer, one would think that he/she doesn't censor his/her writing process, but the mind can already filter out the topics that could potentially put the writer in trouble. That is basically self-censorship. So certain topics become taboos, for instance, religion has become a very sensitive topic. Once the writer has learned these sensitive topics, he/she automatically avoids them. It is not visible at a glance, but self-censorship does exist among us. Also, peer-censorship can also be found in these sensitive topics. When our peers pressure us, we accept it without resisting it. If you go ask any artist, they will say they think freely but a certain degree of self-censorship or peer-censorship exists. That's why when we talk about freedom of expression, it begins with freedom of opinion. We always remind the public that even before we express ourselves, we tend to limit or censor ourselves in the process of building or forming our opinions.

MM: In the past five years under the NLD administration, what was the status of self-censorship among artists or creators, in your opinion?

MT: In my view, self-censorship did exist to some extent. But I noticed that some writers tried to

“The worst thing is that even ordinary people, who are not journalists or writers or bloggers, are now afraid to react to social media posts, let alone express their opinions. The public has to think twice before they react or express their feelings on social media. So that's the current situation which is very, very terrible, I must say.”

break this barrier. The difference between news media and literature is that literature takes time to produce. The writer tends to reflect on themselves repetitively before producing the artwork. But news media work ad hoc so journalists have very little time to reflect on their work. In literature, writers probably do not notice self-censorship especially when they are living through a certain event, and writing about it. Only in retrospect, it is more noticeable how much freedom artists had in their works. I am sure artists try to be as free as possible during their progress. Artist's knowledge is also important here. I define knowledge as the wisdom one develops from the combination of information and lived experience. Artists' knowledge shaped the selection of contents, forms and formation of opinions, so obviously, we have seen artists become freer in the last decade, but they are not truly free.

MM: It's been more than two years since the military coup. How will this return of the junta impact our art scene and society as a whole?

MT: The impact is extensive. Art forms take time to produce, so sometimes, artworks may not affect both artists and the audience immediately, but over time and in retrospect, their impact can be more visible, and become meaningful. To be frank, in order to create any sort of art at this time, one has to deceive oneself that everything is normal before producing any art form. Otherwise, it's difficult to produce art. Self-deceit exists to some extent because artists have to refrain from producing artworks that come from their actual feeling or topic of interest. Artwork that comes out from self-deceit is never truly free. And if the audience sees these artworks repeti-

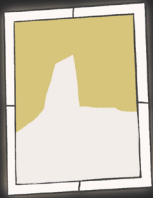
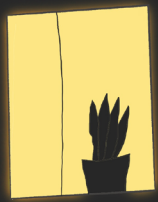
tively, they shape their opinions. Right now, artists who have the freedom to produce whatever they want experience peer pressure to remain in close proximity to the revolution, and it's also another important factor. When we talk about authentic freedom, it should be free from any sort of influence. If artists are only creating artworks that are related to revolution, the revolution becomes a limitation which prevents the artist from creating art with true freedom. So the point is if there is no true freedom or if a society cannot guarantee such freedom, self-censorship will exist within any artist whether they are in Myanmar or not, whether a Myanmar citizen or not. So as a society, the return of the regime is a very dangerous thing, in fact.

MM: In the past, we have seen writers taking the lead to shape public opinion such as Min Lu's political satire poem "What has gone wrong?". This time around we see such efforts in the online blogosphere, but not in literature. How can you make sense of it?

MT: I noticed that too! Not a lot of contemporary writers pursue literature, and these days, people tend to read more on digital platforms. Some don't even like long-form writing. So now it is in the hands of bloggers and influencers to shape public opinion, and their impact becomes greater. I am surprised that there are very limited pieces of literature about the revolution. In the beginning, I did see some artistic writings based on certain incidents, but afterwards, I did not see any more. Due to the risk, artists probably keep them to themselves. But we cannot underestimate though. Maybe in some time, a large number of artworks about the revolution might appear out of nowhere.

MM: Since our main audience is international friends, would you like to say anything to them?

MT: Our international friends try to apply knowledge-based logic to Myanmar issues, and I want to say that it's not the right way. To me, knowledge is the combination of information and experience. They tend to apply their knowledge and logical reasoning to our country's situation, and it is not going to work. I want them to apply their logic to pure information/data that comes from the ground. For instance, let's look at the topic of elections. Without a doubt, people might think an election is a good idea because it implies a peaceful transition, and this logic comes from their experience. From our experience, everyone knows that an election is not a solution. We saw what happened at the 1990 Election. And look at other elections afterwards. When did we ever have a free and fair election in Myanmar? Only because the public collectively showed their choice in 2015, the change took place. Before we question the fairness of the 2020 election, we need to look at what happened in the 2010 election or 2012 by-election. There are so many questions. So, the international community must not apply logic and knowledge based on their experiences. They must look at the actual situations on the ground, apply logic based on data and information that comes from the ground, and try to see things from our perspectives.



Yangon Nights: Business as Usual? Think Again!

If someone visits Yangon today, one could look at the scenes in the streets and argue that the resistance is in a recess. For the first time since the Covid first wave in 2020, restaurants have returned to business, bars have started serving customers until midnight and a sense of normalcy is witnessed back in people's gestures. Ignore military barricades and occasional explosions, a day in Yangon today does look like just another day under the control of the semi-democratic government during 2015-2020. If Myanmar is heading to a failed state as many reported, why is its economic capital boasting greater-than-ever spending power after dark?

Resurrected Nightlife

In the early days of the coup, Yangon was one of the areas where the regime imposed a curfew between 8 pm to 4 am. Later the curfew was relaxed to allow people to stay out until 10 pm, and on March 22, 2022, the junta adjusted it from 12 midnight to 4 am, which has remained the same to this day. Although a few nightclubs and bars were already enjoying great business up to that point, the relaxation effectively allowed multiple entertainment centers to blossom and shape the nightlife culture under military rule. With that, enter the drugs.

"Back in the day, we just went clubbing to get drunk and dance.

Don't get me wrong, we did use drugs but never in bulk and it was never our primary goal" said Kaung, a 24-year-old employee from a company based in Yangon.

He added that party drugs such as Ketamine (better known as K) and Ecstasy (E) pills were sold and used openly in nightclubs these days. The places offer a complete package where one only has to show up in the facility at the appropriate hour and substances are delivered to their table with a few phone calls or sometimes, with a mere code sign.

And it's also relatively easy to get around those appropriate hours. Hsu, a 30-year-old sales agent

said, “A friend of mine works as a Disc Jockey (DJ) and he works more than a few places a night, which requires moving from one club to another during curfew hours, he occasionally gets stopped by soldiers on the road and when that happens, he simply has to show a paper that he works as a DJ for this and that company and they let him go”. For that reason, people believe that these entertainment centers are run by families with military affiliations who have multiple purposes, including making money and portraying the country as a normal state.

Normal Scenes

While it is easy to blame solely on the rich and military-affiliated, there is no denying that ordinary people with somewhat stable income also have a stake in normalizing this city.

Myat who frequents bars with unplugged shows as well as supports the resistance financially said, “Yangon nights are more normal than ever. Before the coup, you could count on your two hands the hangout places that had live bands but now they are everywhere. I too drop by once or twice every week and spend a minimum of MMK 100,000 (approx: USD 35). I do realize if I contribute this amount to the resistance movement, the money would be better spent. But I deserve this much to treat myself.”

He continued, “Those who are seen in bars and pubs most likely have managed to keep a job in this climate and celebrate for that reason. And those who hang out in the nightclubs are mostly made up of descendants of military-affiliated families, business cronies, DJs, and party-goer-turned-drug dealers.”

Myat himself has been to a nightclub three times since the coup and met former acquaintances in each visit, some of whom have long disappeared from social media to avoid speaking out against the military takeover and some are doctors who have refused to join the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM).

Nonetheless, it's not just drug-fueled nightclubs and flashy rich kids that are keeping Yangon alive these days. Local pubs, karaoke centers, and amusement locations have also become popular venues once again for young and middle-aged Yangooners seeking a break from work and the country's political turmoil.

Business as Usual?

Are the bars and nightclubs the only businesses that are booming in this climate and driving the spending power of the city?

Aye, the owner of an art gallery located on the outskirts of Yangon, disagrees. Aye claims that the art industry is another one that has witnessed rapid growth in a short period.

According to Aye, the economy was rather difficult in the months following the coup. It was even challenging to make sufficient money to pay rent in certain months. However, everything dramatically changed in mid-2022 when business cronies entered the market. The rich fam-

ilies started buying art pieces in lots in what seemed like potentially prosperous investments for the future.

“I know that they are not really into art but they see value in such investment in a time when they have too much cash and the economy is going downhill. I swallow my pride to blend in with them and sell my pieces at a high price”.

She has faced stern criticism for associating with some military-backed businessmen although being vocal about her stance in the resistance. Aye has a valid justification for doing so. She has been supporting many CDM staff including her own family members and artists who no longer can create art and afford their own living.

Alexander is another business owner who has enjoyed a surge during this period although his consulting company has taken off for a completely different reason. Alexander and his staff used to rely on the local market, and the unstable situation has forced them to find opportunities elsewhere. The firm, run by a 100% local team, is now growing thanks to external contracts outside Myanmar. Despite the usual delays in regulatory work, Alexander does not think that the coup has affected his company on day-to-day operations. A strong supporter himself of the resistance, he

“While it is easy to blame solely on the rich and military-affiliated, there is no denying that ordinary people with somewhat stable income also have a stake in normalizing this city.”

helps the movement by recruiting CDM students and avoiding blacklisted companies in addition to finding regular work and income for his staff. When asked about tax, Alexander said he would consider paying tax to the regime at some point to keep his company afloat.

“The reason is that I do indeed feel we are making a more positive impact by paying some small tax and existing instead of paying no tax and not existing.”

Underlying Resistance

With businesses operating as usual and its nights being lit up brighter than ever, Yangon seems to be at the most normal it has been in three years when the rest of the country burns in rage. Does this all mean that the resistance in Myanmar’s largest city is really in recess?

“I don’t think there is less armed movement in Yangon today. Look, Yangon is the most diverse city in the whole country with the highest number of migrants. Yangon has to be active for the lives that depend on it. Plus, it always helps the resistance when people have stable income,” said Paing, an experienced reporter.

He added, “For the nightlife culture, the military is totally accountable for this. It’s best for them if youths spend money on drugs and parties instead of armed resistance. But I don’t think the resistance is slowed down by this. Let’s be frank about it, youths that want to fight back against the junta on a battlefield will never end up in a nightclub”. Paing is not wrong. In this month alone, two major operations were carried out by urban guerilla forces in Yangon. The first one took place in Thaketa Township, a 10-minute drive from downtown

Yangon, where two policemen were shot and killed for being the conspirators of the junta. In the second, an armed major business crony was taken down in Thanlyin, a 40-minute drive from Sule Pagoda in broad daylight.

In terms of more-lighted disobedience in the background, Hsu, the aforementioned sales agent, stressed that she had encountered her colleagues working on “Click to Donate” apps during lunch breaks so that they could help fund the activities. A resistance topic is still a frequent conversation among coworkers in most offices or even bars. On the second anniversary of the coup on February 1, 2023, the whole city was brought down to total silence, participating in the country-wide Silent Strike.

Moreover, Yangon nights may have been lit up by both sides of the resistance but average supporters of the revolution do draw a line on the ownership of the places they hang out. No matter how popular a bar is, people will not go if it’s blacklisted for associating with the military or avoid consuming military-related products. Myanmar beer which was the best-selling brand in town for many decades has virtually disappeared from the marketplace. No temptation has challenged the underlying resistance inside the people.

Resistance in Recess? Think Again

To sum up, Yangon is still the beautiful city it has always been, full of green parks, golden pagodas, delicious street food, skilled labors, and the world’s greatest hospitality despite being under the control of the military leadership. And in spite of the normalcy one may encounter on the streets these days, the re-

sistance remains intact in the city, as attested by recent development in terms of armed conflicts. Yangooners have led and witnessed various historic revolutions against injustice from the anti-colonial movement in 1920 to the Saffron Revolution in 2007. It would be premature to make a judgment that the city has counted itself out in this resistance.

Paing, the reporter compared the current situation with the colonial era when General Aung San left Yangon to take military training in Japan.

“You have to know when to leave and when to return. I don’t think the ultimate victory will ever come without Yangon being a part of the resistance. We now have many General Aung Sans in our youths, they will turn up eventually when they are called upon”.

We too like to believe so. That Yangon nights may seem normal but people in it are not, and they have not given up just yet.



Support Us

Mohinga Matters is an independent platform run by like-minded freedom-loving souls on a completely volunteer basis. If you are willing to help us fight the dictatorship and the regime’s propaganda, please reach out to us.

mohingamatters@gmail.com

My Plum Story

Yesterday, I ate a plum.
Plums are not in season here.
It was mushy and gross but
I didn't want to be rude so
I chewed it out out of obligation.

It made me think of the plums back home.
A different kind, green but sweet.
Crunchy, and sweet.
Sweet, but far.

There's something I want to say.
There's something I want to say
But I don't think I will.
I don't think I'll say what I mean
Cause I mean, who knows who's reading this...

I'll write some more words anyways and you can try
Go ahead, peak and pry.
But I won't tell you how or why these words of mine
Mean something and nothing at the best of times.
But
You understand the stakes,
Art for art's sake.

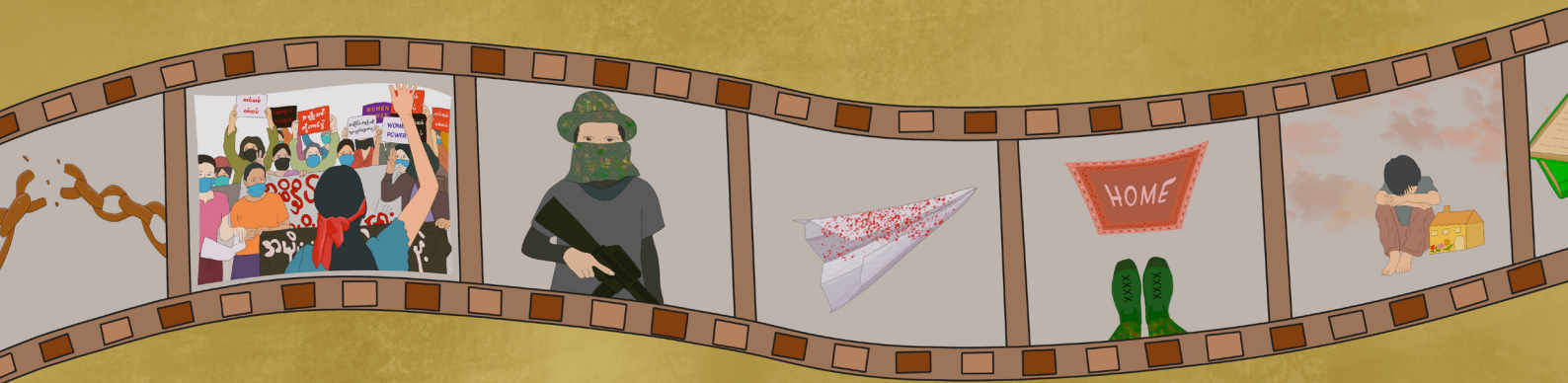
So anyways these plums back home
were my favorite snack.
I brought them to school in my flashbacks.
The last time I ate a 'back-home-plum',
at the school where they taught us what not say,
I didn't know that I was prey.
Now I'm taller although not much smarter,
The truth was never on the chalkboard,
If anything, a great departure.

As I eat this tasteless plum,
I'm looking truth straight in the eye,
A caged bird must somehow learn to fly.

Freedom plums don't taste as good.
But I guess at least they come with freedom.

-Pearl





Showtime for the Resistance

Amid the cold mid-autumn weather of October in London, Burmese people made a long line waiting for the screening of the revolutionary film. The film was called “The Road Not Taken”, directed by Ko Pauk. London had the first show and the organizers were excited for the show which turned out to be a very successful opening.

The film then traveled around the world to Burmese diaspora communities, making trips to Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland, Jamaica, the United States, Canada, Germany, Italy, France, Sweden, Norway, Malaysia, Taiwan, India and Singapore. It was screened with subtitles in each national

language for non-Burmese audiences who support the Myanmar democracy movement as well. The film tickets were sold out within a few days. All the screening halls in each country were full. Some even had to add extra screening dates and extend to other cities of the same country. Though previously ‘Sa-Mhat (Starting Point)’ was the first ever short revolutionary film to raise funds by selling the movie tickets and screening through the telegram channels, this film of Ko Pauk was the first of its own kind to make it to screens physically to raise funds needed to sustain the people’s resistance movement against military rule.

Burmese people have no short-

age of creative ideas to raise funds for the revolution as no other outside support has been received substantially. And this time— it is a film.

The Road Not Taken is based on a true story about a defector from the Myanmar military and his journey to a liberated area under control of the Ethnic-Armed Organization (EAO). The film took the audience back to the beginning months of the coup in 2021 where crowds came out to the streets to demand a return to democracy. People begged the security forces, police and soldiers alike, to join the side of the people, however, they started to shoot unarmed demonstrators. The order from the above

to shoot unarmed civilians put some kind-hearted soldiers and police in a dilemma. The main actor of this film was one of the sensible and kind-hearted ones who refused to shoot and decided to leave the army despite the risks. He defected from the army when he was posted on the front line. Away from him, his wife and daughter suffered from the social punishment of the community as the husband was a soldier killing innocent civilians. The film was well-received and many praised the director for having made a film with very limited resources in an EAO-controlled liberated area, where it frequently faces arm clashes between the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the regime's forces. In fact, only an iPhone was used to shoot the entire film. After the show, director Ko Pauk performed a live unplugged music for the audience and exchanged words of determination to continue fighting against the military.

Myanmar communities abroad are organizing various events to

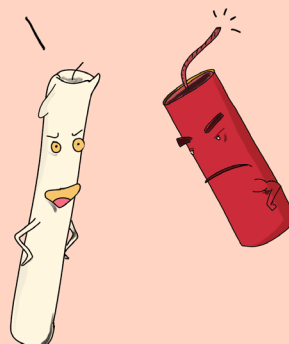
raise funds to support the People Defense Forces (PDF) fighting against the junta soldiers, and also to provide humanitarian aid to the displaced communities in the conflict areas. At such events, the organizers do not just screen films. They also sell handicrafts and Burmese food to raise much-needed funds, but sometimes they request for donations at the event sites. At some events, there were even auctions of jewelry and some treasured items.

From the screening of Ko Pauk's "The Road Not Taken" in more than 20 countries, about MMK 4600 Lakh (approximately USD 220,000) was raised. This was sent to support the PDFs and urban guerillas as well as people who had contributed to the success of the film in the liberated area where the director currently lives. Many revolutionary films, documentaries and animated short-films have mushroomed by talented artists and directors in exile or even those inside the country but hiding in safe houses. The most internationally-ac-

claimed and award-winning film is "Myanmar Diaries", filmed by a group of anonymous young Burmese filmmakers and supported by European film professionals, which has been shown in different film festivals in Europe.

Amidst the ongoing revolution, many amateur filmmakers, both in exile and in the liberated areas, have emerged to create what they experience and what they feel in regards to the fight for democracy. From 2022-2023, more than a dozen short-films related to the revolution have been produced, and they tell the stories about urban guerillas, tortures inside the prison, the loss of homes to the regime's scorched-earth tactic, women freedom fighters, and young PDF fighters. Myanmar people are determined to win this fight, and millions of funds are needed to support the PDF and to provide humanitarian assistance to people who have lost everything in the revolution. Among many strategies and ideas to raise funds, films truly are an act of creative resistance.

How dare you call me Slow Burn,
You Short Blast!!



Highlights of the Armed Resistance in March

In March, the armed resistance accelerated and spread out across the country. Skirmishes were recorded 40% more than that of February. And for the first time since the beginning of the resistance war, Mandalay Region, instead of Sagaing, claimed the highest number of battles and casualties on its ground, most of them came through landmine detonations. In the previous months, majority of the attacks were conducted via drones and grenades. It's also interesting to witness more fights breaking out in the lower part of the country, from Yangon to Tanintharyi that saw deadly encounters between the regime's army and the resistance forces. The next page describes the detailed mapping of the armed resistance in March. The highlight events are as follows:

Nine PDF rangers, including NLD chair, killed in regime's offensive in Kawthoung tsp, Tanintharyi region

On March 4, the regime's forces conducted an offensive on a PDF station near Winedin Village, Kawthaung Township, Tanintharyi Region. In the surprise attack, nine PDF rangers were killed. U Thet Naing, the chair of NLD for Kawthoung Township was also one of the fallen rangers. The 40-year-old man was the first person from Kawthoung to be listed by the junta on a warrant with the 505A sedition act. U Thet Naing chose the armed resistance and fought against the regime soldiers until his last breath. The armed conflict in Kawthoung Township has accelerated since February 19 when the PDF declared certain areas as its territory including Winedin Village.

PDF and KIA launched attack on SAC station, regime's response killed civilians in Hpakant tsp, Kachin State

On the evening of March 18, the PDF and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) combined forces to launch an assault on the regime's police station located near Lone Khin Village in Hpakant Township, Kachin State. The attack sparked a full-blown combat that continued throughout the night, resulting in the deaths of three policemen. In response, the regime's forces shelled artillery fire, some of which landed in the nearby bus station and killed civilians. At least six people, including a 7-year-old child, were confirmed to have been killed by the regime's artillery.

CDF-Mindat says Mindat-Kyaukhtu road can be used again in Chin State

On March 19, the Chin Defense Force (CDF-Mindat) issued a statement informing the public that they can resume using the Mindat-Kyaukhtu highway road. Earlier on March 13, the junta's 35-vehicle convoy was heading towards Mindat on that road, and CDF-Mindat had issued a warning to people to avoid using it due to the potential for conflict. On March 16, the convoy was attacked with a landmine detonation, resulting in the destruction of at least two vehicles. In the aftermath, the convoy is witnessed turning back to Kyauhtu Town, prompting CDF-Mindat to allow the public to use the road again. Four-day battle resulted in nearly 100 regime soldier casualties in

Demoso tsp, Karenni State

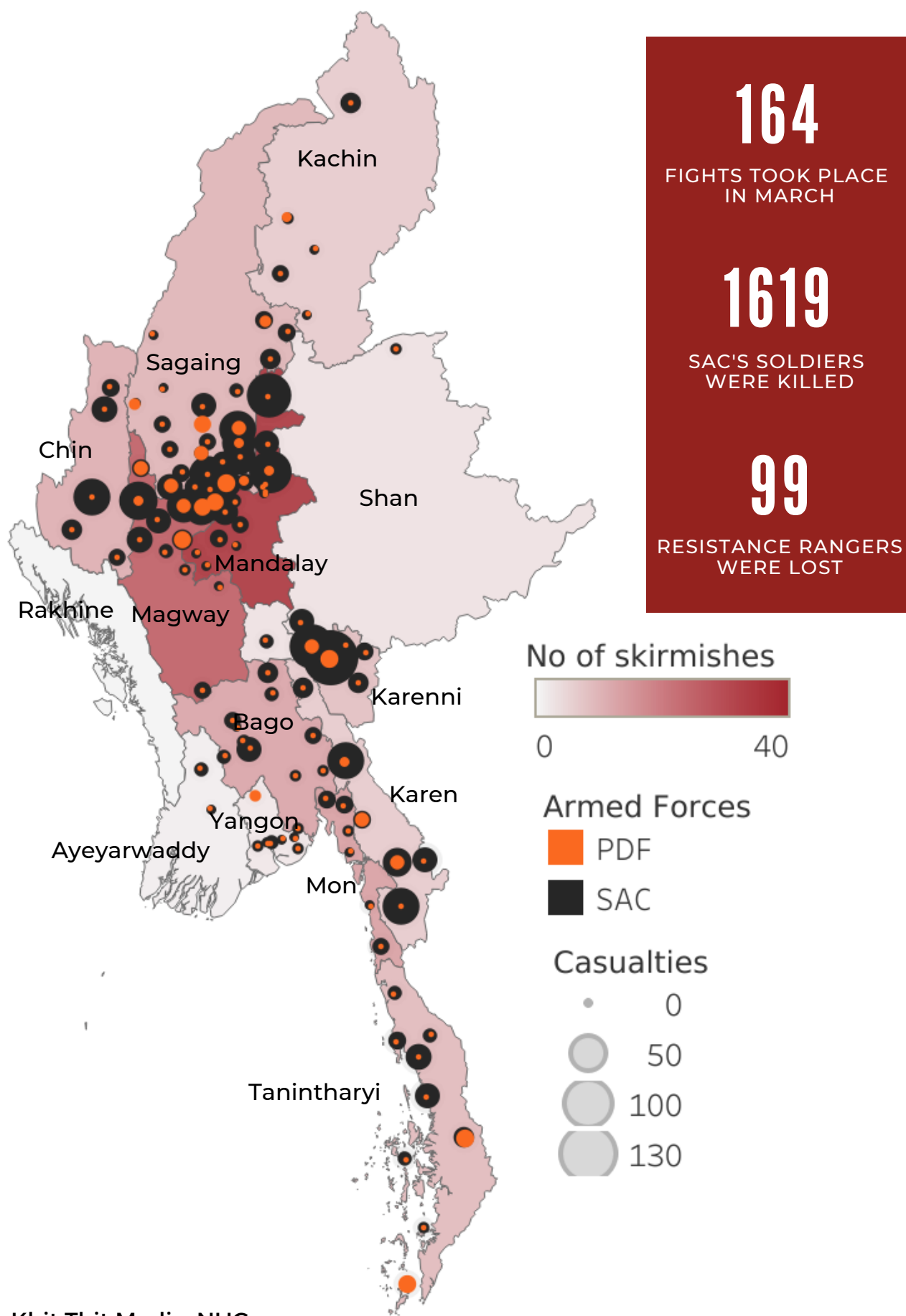
A major skirmish broke out between the regime's army and the

local resistance forces in Dawtamagyi Village, Demoso Township, Karenni State from March 20-March 23. The battle began as a coalition of Karenni forces mounted an assault on the village that was held by the regime's army. According to Karenni National Defense Force (KNDF), over 90 soldiers from the regime were killed and about 50 were injured in the clash while four rangers from the people's side also died. Several guns and weapons were seized after the battle. Although the number of casualties cannot be verified, the video footage of the dead bodies of the regime's soldiers being carried out in carts and weapons being occupied by rangers was speculated on social media.

Clash broke out in Myawaddy and Kawkareik townships in Karen State

Since March 25, clashes have broken out between the regime's forces and the joint forces of Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and PDF in Myawaddy and Kawkareik townships, Karen State. The KNLA and PDF launched an offensive on the regime's military stations, which resulted in at least 15 soldier deaths. In response, the regime conducted airstrikes and artillery fire. Two military helicopters opened fire on Kyonedoe Town, located 15 miles from Kawkareik, killing two local men. More victims including women and children also suffered injuries due to the artillery fires. KNLA has advised people not to travel between Kyonedoe and Myawaddy towns while the regime has also imposed a curfew in the area.

People's Resistance War



Sources: Khit Thit Media, NUG

Crimes Against Humanity

3

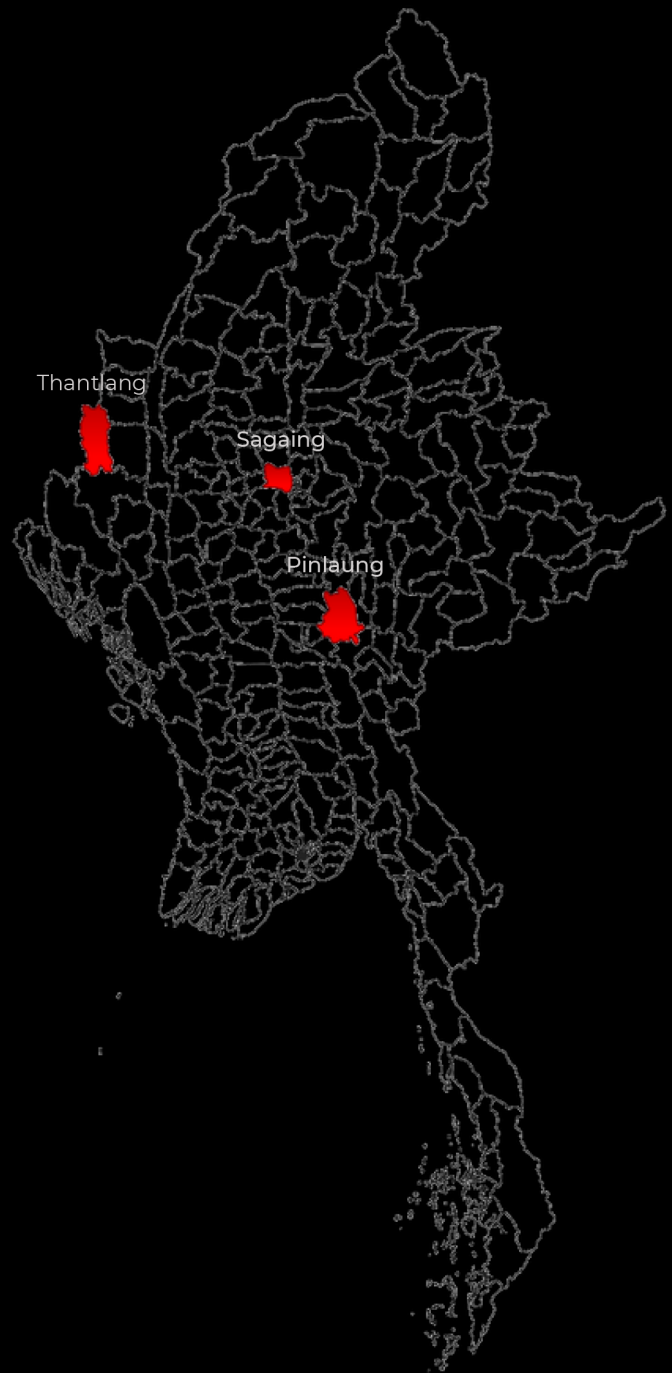
MASSACRES WERE
COMMITTED BY REGIME'S
FORCES IN MARCH

Massacre in Sagaing tsp, Sagaing Region

Between the evening of February 28 and March 1, 15 villagers were brutally tortured and killed by the regime's soldiers in Tartine Village, Sagaing Township, Sagaing Region. On February 28, the junta's forces marched along the Ayawaddy River from Myinmu Township and conducted a surprise raid on Tartine Village. They ran into Ko Michael @ Ko Kyaw Saw, a villager/PDF leader on the way to the village. They tortured, butchered, and killed him before entering the village. Ko Michael's disfigured body was found in pieces the following day. The regime's soldiers abducted 14 villagers including three women and took them as hostages on their exit. The dead bodies of all of them were later found bearing bullet wounds and torture signs. Those identified were Ko Michael's brother Ko Tun Tun aged 25, Ko Kyaw Soe aged 35, U Soe Naing aged 47, U Nga Lin aged 45, and Ko Kyaw Kyaw aged 34. The local groups have called for more serious intervention from the international community as they believe the military is set to turn these areas into ashes sometime soon

Regime's forces committed another massacre in Pinlaung tsp, Shan State

On March 12, the local resistance forces found the dead bodies of 30 people and 3 monks in Nantnein Village, Pinlaung Township, Shan State. According to initial reports, the regime's soldiers raided the village on March 11, using airstrikes and artillery fire. The troops then rounded the monastery, which had been used as a camp for internally displaced persons (IDP), ordering everyone to come out and line up before opening fire and killing all of them. In total, there were 30 IDPs and 3 monks. The process of identification and cremation of each victim has been coordinated between Karenni Nationality Defense Force (KNDF), Karenni Army (KA), and regional PDFs who have vowed to take vengeance against the regime for this massacre.



Airstrike on civilians in Thantlang tsp, Chin State

On March 30, the regime's forces conducted an airstrike on Phokwar Village, six miles north of Thantlang Town, Chin State. Despite lack of active conflict in the area, the military jet shelled four bombs on the village in the morning attack. At least 10 civilians were killed including three children and five women while more than 20 were injured. A church and many houses were also damaged by the aerial attack. The attack came three days after the coup leader Min Aung Hlaing vowed to eradicate all the ethnic armed organizations that cooperate with the NUG and support PDF.

Sources: Myanmar Now, Khit Thit Media

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