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Recap

Hi folks, June is always significant for Myanmar people because of the detained leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday. On June 19, she turned 79, one of yet another birthdays she spent under arrest. Since the coup, people commemorated her birthday with Flower Strike, referencing flowers she usually wore in her hair. Up to a dozen women who participated in the Flower Strike were arrested by the military this year. Earlier this month, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's longtime aide and one of the founding members of NLD U Tin Oo also passed away on June 1 at the age of 98 with heart failure.

Talk of the town this month was the regime's killing of Bhaddanta Munindabhivamsa, one of the senior abbots in the Buddhist Order in Myanmar. While the abbot was traveling in a car in the central plain region, the regime soldiers shot the car he was in, killing the abbot, injuring an accompanying monk and the driver. Initially, the regime put the blame on PDF fighters, but after a witness account had surfaced on social media, the military admitted the killing of the abbot.

In June, the majority of Myanmar residents continued to face the disconnectivity of VPN apps. After the coup in 2021, the military blocked the usage of social media and messaging apps such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. However, residents used VPN apps to hack the blockage. This month's VPN blockage came unexpectedly and several individuals struggled to remain in contact with their family members. Small businesses that operate and promote on Facebook also faced difficulties and struggled to find an alternative platform to engage with buyers. On June 19, the advocacy group Justice for Myanmar revealed that Chinese technology is being used to moni-

tor Internet service providers, mobile operators, and Internet Gateways, which can further elevate the capability of censorship such as detecting phone messages and email contents. JFM warned that such surveillance technology was used to arrest more dissidents.

While young men who are eligible for mandatory conscription continue to flee from the country, news reported this month that the regime turned to women for conscription. Although the Central Committee had yet to order an official directive, some administrators in Bago and Tanintharyi regions listed the names of eligible women when the men in families were not present.

Notably in this month, details of the Byaing Phyu massacre which took place in late May unfolded as news verification was initially unable to be conducted due to communication disruption in Rakhine State. Myanmar Now talked to escapees who said torture, starvation, mutilation, and rape allegedly took place. AA initially reported that 76 individuals were killed. The involvement of the Arakan Liberation Party, led by Saw Mra Yar Zar Lin, was also mentioned.

In the last week of June, fighting erupted in Naung Cho and Kyauk Me towns of northern Shan State and Mogok town of Mandalay Region where TNLA advanced to take control of the military's outposts. TNLA reported that 24 military bases were seized in these three townships. However, locals reported to news outlets that civilian casualties were reported due to the severe clashes. Fearing the fighting expanding to Pyin Oo Lwin, residents fled to safe places.

Since last month, the price of rice bags has increased 2-3 times high-

er than the price before the coup in 2021. In order to control the price hike, the regime imposed a certain price for the rice sales. In June, the regime allegedly detained the Myanmar Paddy Producers Association chairperson, and a few other rice producers and traders were also under investigation for selling rice at a higher price than the set value. Managers of supermarkets such as City Mart, Ocean, and Capitals were also summoned and forced to sell rice at their price. To avoid the regime's forcible control of the market and arbitrary arrests, a black market emerged where good quality rice bags were discreetly sold while rice was not easily available to purchase in several towns. Critics also pointed out that the regime's torching of farmlands resulted in disruption of rice production, which could potentially lead to scarcity of rice.

With the expansion of conflict areas, humanitarian relief remains a crucial need across the country. This month, KNU reported that more than 1,000,000 displaced people have been taking refuge in its territories, but the ethnic group is only able to provide aid to 55% of this population. In mid-June, the NUG also reported that more than 800 children were killed from February 2021 to May 2024 with the highest number in Sagaing Region, followed by Shan State.

The month ended with UN Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews's publication of a new report which revealed that 16 banks in seven countries facilitated the regime's military procurement in the past two years. While the effectiveness of international sanctions is questionable, call-outs like this on an international level are crucial to hold the regime's aides accountable.

June 1, 2024

U Tin Oo, a founding member of the National League for Democracy (NLD) alongside Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, passed away in Yangon at the age of 98 due to heart failure. A military veteran with 33 years of service, he served as the commander-in-chief of the Myanmar military from 1974 to 1976. His funeral was held on June 5 in Yangon.

General Saw Than Hlaing, the commander of the Nay Pyi Taw Regional Military Command, was transferred to the reserve force. General Soe Min, previously the commander of the Coastal Regional Military Command, has been appointed as the new regional commander for Nay Pyi Taw. According to some military observers, General Soe Min's transfer to the less active Nay Pyi Taw region may be due to recent attacks by the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and People's Defense Forces (PDF) on military council camps in Tanintharyi.

June 3, 2024

The British-based Nuclear Engineering International magazine reported that the Russian government has approved a draft agreement to construct a small nuclear power plant requested by the military council. The two sides are expected to sign the agreement soon. This follows a memorandum of understanding signed in November 2022 between the regime and the Russian state-owned Rosatom Atomic Energy Corporation.

June 6, 2024

Thailand's Ministry of Labor confirmed that undocumented migrants, including those from Myanmar, will be eligible for a new official work permit known as the pink card. This initiative covers migrant workers from Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, and aims to address the challenges of both illegal and legal immigration to Thailand amid economic hardships in neighboring countries.

June 2, 2024

Brigadier General Min Maung, commander of the No. 1 Military Operation Command, has been sentenced to 10 years in prison by the military council, according to Irrawaddy news sources. During Operation 1027 by the Three Brotherhood Alliance, he refused to surrender at the Laukkai military headquarters, leading to his continued appointment as commander of MOC 1. In contrast, the five brigadier generals who chose to surrender were arrested, tried, and received life sentence.

A skirmish broke out between the regime's forces and the Arakan Army (AA) near the world-famous Ngapali Beach, located in Thandwe Township, Rakhine State. The skirmish has continued for days, and the junta is said to be using navy ships, ground forces, and aerial attacks.

June 4, 2024

Since the beginning of the month, news surfaced that the regime is drafting a law to ban the use of VPNs in the country. Although not yet passed or implemented, regime lackeys have been harassing and blackmailing the public by exploiting this pending law. In Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, Ayeyarwaddy, and Nay Pyi Taw, soldiers have been stopping people on the streets, checking their phones, and demanding money or confiscating phones if a VPN app is found.

June 7, 2024

The British government announced the continuation of sanctions on 39 individuals and 31 companies, targeting key figures in Myanmar's military leadership. Among those sanctioned are coup leader Min Aung Hlaing, along with top leaders General Mya Tun Oo, Lieutenant General Aung Lin Dwe, Lieutenant General Ye Win Oo, General Tin Aung San, and former Chief of Defense Staff General Maung Maung Kyaw. The sanctions list also includes Htoo Company Group, U Tay Za and his two sons, and Union Attorney General Daw Thida Oo.

June 8, 2024

At a press conference, Arakan Army (AA) spokesperson U Khaing Thu Kha appealed for donations to support approximately 500,000 displaced people in Rakhine State who urgently need assistance. The onset of the rainy season exacerbated the need for shelter, food, medicine, and clothing for those displaced by ongoing conflicts. Since November 2023, intensified fighting in Rakhine State has forced many residents to flee their homes.

June 10, 2024

The regime's forces and Pa-O National Organization (PNO) members arrested about 59 villagers in Ye Phyu Village, Hsi Hseng Township, Shan State – south. Since January, clashes have broken out between the allied forces of the regime and PNO against the Pa-O National Liberation Army in Hsi Hseng, Pinlaung, Hopong, and Nyaungshwe townships. The local populace, including those from Ye Phyu Village, fled to safety.

June 12, 2024

The Arakan Army (AA) reportedly captured the regime's station on the Myanmar-Bangladesh border in Maungdaw Township, Rakhine State. The station was manned by 300 regime soldiers and regarded as a strategic base for the gateway to the sea and reinforcement routes.

June 14, 2024

The regime's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the signing of the 2024 Mekong-Lancang Special Fund Project Agreement with China in Nay Pyi Taw. According to the agreement, China will provide \$3.6 million to Myanmar for 12 projects to be implemented by six ministries. These projects will focus on agriculture and livestock, forest resource protection and conservation, environmental practices and innovations for small and medium businesses, village-level poverty reduction, information technology innovation, and cultural sector upgrades.

June 9, 2024

The junta's newspapers reported that the regime had arrested nine members of the Urban Guerrilla Force who had planned to attack the Thanlyin New Bridge opening ceremony in Yangon. They were arrested in Dagon Seikkan Township as they planned to fire a 107 mm rocket toward the ceremony.

June 11, 2024

At a cabinet meeting, National Unity Government (NUG) Acting President Duwal Shi La emphasized the need to build and strengthen alliances with ethnic armed forces. He stressed the importance of moving beyond partnerships to form a robust and cohesive alliance based on trust and proven collaboration. "Trust is the most important element in an alliance. Therefore, it is crucial for us to build a stronger and more compact alliance by demonstrating our commitment and building trust," said the Acting President.

June 13, 2024

At least 10 businessmen from Yangon, who increased employee salaries and expenses during a time when the Myanmar Kyats value dropped to a record low and commodity prices skyrocketed, are reportedly under investigation by the regime this week. The businesses involved include a coffee shop, mobile phone shop, restaurant, electronics stores, and construction companies.

June 15, 2024

The coup leader Min Aung Hlaing announced that a general election would be held in 2025 across the country. During his visit to Meiktila Town in the Mandalay Region, he mentioned that a general census will be conducted in the coming October, which will precede the country-wide election the following year.

The NUG reported that over 800 children have been killed between February 2021 and May 2024. The highest number of fatalities occurred in the Sagaing Region, with more than 250 deceased children, followed by Shan and Rakhine states. Of the victims, 59.2 percent were boys and 31.5 percent were girls. The remaining 9.2 percent were disfigured beyond recognition, making their gender undistinguishable.

June 18, 2024

China's Special Representative for Myanmar, Mr. Deng Xijun, arrived in Myanmar and met with the regime's Foreign Minister U Than Swe and Mr. Deng Xijun in Nay Pyi Taw. The meeting covered bilateral relations, cooperation in border region stability, and increasing collaboration between the two countries.

June 20, 2024

The Karen National Union (KNU) announced on June 20 that since the military coup in 2021 until May 2024, over 1,000,000 civilians have been displaced from their homes in KNU-administered areas. Out of the total 1,078,505 displaced people, they can only assist approximately 600,000 people currently, and efforts are underway to secure humanitarian aid for the remaining victims.

According to The Hindu, as of June 20, more than 5,400 Myanmar citizens have sought refuge in Manipur state due to airstrikes and attacks in Myanmar. The refugees began arriving in Kamjong District in 2023, with Assam Rifles officials noting their arrival and the temporary settlement of over 5,100 individuals across eight villages since November. Local authorities have gathered biometric data including fingerprints and voice recordings from the refugees.

June 16, 2024

The Dhaka Tribune reported that Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, joint general secretary of Bangladesh's main opposition party, BNP, accused Myanmar of smuggling a large amount of contraband weapons into Bangladesh through the border. Rizvi highlighted the severe economic struggles of the Bangladeshi people, noting that even the middle class is facing hardships.

June 17, 2024

Several inmates were beaten, and some were placed in solitary confinement following a dispute with authorities in Thayawaddy Prison, Bago Region. The incident occurred after some inmates refused COVID vaccinations due to their health conditions, with some collapsing immediately after the shot. Authorities beat those who refused the vaccine. Three political prisoners, Ko Htoo Aung, Saw Chit Win Tun, and Ko Thet Paing, were chained in ankle shackles and placed in solitary confinement.

June 19, 2024

The military has arrested numerous individuals who participated in the "Flower Strike" movement commemorating the 79th birthday of detained leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who is serving a 33-year prison sentence following the military coup. Military propaganda Telegram pages released the names of those involved in the Flower Strike, leading to the arrest of at least a dozen people in one day.

June 21, 2024

General Zaw Min Tun, the regime's spokesperson, admitted that the regime forces shot and killed Bhaddanta Munindabhivamsa, the abbot of Win Neinmitayon Monastery in the Bago region, and announced that an inquiry commission would be formed to investigate the incident. The shooting occurred on June 19, when regime troops fired at the car carrying the senior monk between Myothar village and Panchi Kamma village in Ngazun Township.

Businessmen close to commodity markets told Myanmar Now that on June 21, the military arrested and interrogated several owners of the Bayinnaung Commodity market for allegedly selling rice at prices higher than the official rates. Among those detained is U Ye Min Aung, chairman of the Myanmar Rice and Paddy Traders Association. Reports indicate that about a dozen rice fair business owners, including U Lu Maw Myint Maung, chairman of the Bayinnaung Rice Commodity Board, are under investigation.

Ko Htet Yan Naing @ Htet Htet, a political prisoner held in Mandalay's Obo Prison, was beaten to death by prison guards. He was targeted for attempting to report a drug dealing case involving prison authorities. A group of guards beat him with wooden bats, metal rods, and vibrators until he lost consciousness. He died from his injuries in Mandalay Public Hospital.

June 24, 2024

The Directorate of Investments and Companies (DICA) under the regime announced the blacklisting of eight companies, including Aya Hintha Company owned by prominent businessman U Zaw Win Shein, since June 24. The companies are accused of fraudulently importing palm oil from overseas. U Zaw Win Shein, who owns A Bank and Aya Hintha Group, and recently acquired Ooredoo Myanmar, was among those affected. Myanmar Now contacted Aya Hintha Company for comment on the blacklisting, but they stated they were unaware of the decision.

June 22, 2024

Around 9:30 pm on June 22, regime forces opened fire on an ambulance, killing a monk on board on Myopat Road, Myingyan Township, Mandalay Region. The victim was Abbot U Ottama from Sakhama Monastery, who was transporting a patient to a hospital when the ambulance was attacked near an inspection gate.

Local resistance forces attacked the regime's Battalion Unit 77's station in Nanttha Village, Indaw Township, Sagaing Region. In response, regime forces launched aerial strikes, dropping bombs on a monastery and killing several civilians. A total of 13 people, including a monk, were killed in the incident. An additional ten people, including children, were injured.

June 23, 2024

On the evening of June 23, the Arakan Army (AA) reportedly seized Thandwe Airport, the only air entry to Ngapali Beach in Rakhine State. Prior to the capture, violent clashes broke out along the beach, forcing residents to flee for safety. Battles continue around Thandwe City, but with the fall of the airport, the regime is unable to send reinforcements and supplies. The AA continues to attack the regime's light infantry unit 566 and infantry unit 55 near the city.

June 25, 2024

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the National Unity Government (NUG) announced the temporary suspension of Salai Isaac Khen, their representative to India, following a complaint of sexual harassment by a female office worker. The investigation, conducted by the department, has been referred to the Policy Implementation Committee on Protection from Exploitation and Sexual Violence.

June 26, 2024

Dr. S. Jaishankar, India's Minister of External Affairs, disclosed that he held discussions in New Delhi with the regime's Minister U Than Swe regarding the protection of India's interests in Myanmar. Expressing concern over the violence and instability affecting border areas, Jaishankar emphasized the need for engagement with all stakeholders to address these issues. He highlighted challenges such as illegal drugs, arms smuggling, and human trafficking impacting India and expressed India's readiness to assist its citizens in Myanmar.

June 28, 2024

The regime held a completion ceremony for the first batch of military trainees across the country. Following the ceremony, the new graduates were sent to various battlegrounds. The new cadets are transported to the warfronts without being informed of their destination until halfway through the journey. Parents are also kept in the dark by authorities.

The Chinese Embassy in Yangon announced that former President U Thein Sein will visit China to attend the 70th anniversary of the publication of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. At 79, U Thein Sein, who regularly meets with Chinese diplomats and the coup leaders, is making his first public appearance in years. The ceremony was set to be held on June 28 and would include former political leaders, academics, journalists, and entrepreneurs.

June 27, 2024

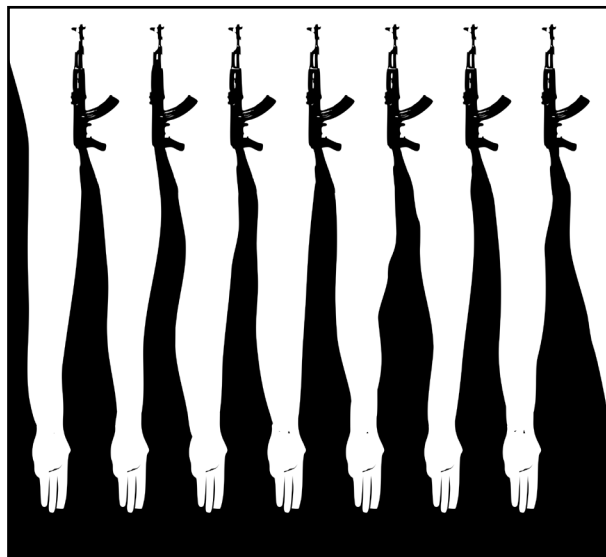
The National Unity Government (NUG) Ministry of Defense announced that the Shan-Mann operation, involving the People's Defense Forces (PDF) and their allies, has successfully penetrated Mandalay and is underway. Beginning on June 25, alongside the resumption of Operation 1027 in Northern Shan State and Mandalay, PDF joined forces conducting balanced operations and achieving continuous victories.

June 29, 2024

Chin resistance forces reportedly seized the last standing regime battalion station in Matupi Township, Chin State, effectively putting the entire township under their control. On June 17, the regime's light infantry unit 304 fell, followed by the fall of the largest strategic unit in southern Chin State, unit 140, on June 29. The Arakan Army (AA) and Yaw Defense Force (YDF) coordinated the offensive alongside Chin forces.

June 30, 2024

Ko Kangyi Maung, leader of the Magwe Guerrilla Force, reported that at around 1:00 p.m., Police Sergeant Hlaing Myint and his wife, Myint Myint Ri, were shot and killed by revolutionary forces on the Magway-Taungdwingyi road in Taungdwingyi Township. The couple, who had challenged the PDF forces, died at the scene.





Reconciliation to Retaliation!

After the regime's military brutally cracked down on the 88 people's uprising, it proposed sham elections to ease the opposition's temper. As a result, new political parties were registered under the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)'s political party registration law on September 30, 1988. The National League for Democracy, one of the leading political parties after the 88 Uprising, was led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi @ Daw Suu, with an ideology of non-violent movement towards multi-party democracy in Myanmar.

Some chose a different path. A group led by student leaders and revolutionary minds set up armed resistance. One notable armed organization formed after

the 1988 uprising was the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF). Several students, protesters, and exiles joined ABSDF forces and waged war against the army.

Not long after political parties were registered, NLD leaders, including Aung San Suu Kyi and other prominent political figures, were detained and placed under house arrest by the military under the State Protection Act on July 20, 1989. Despite this, the general election was held as promised in 1990. Ironically, the NLD, whose leaders were in custody, won in a landslide victory. The junta did not accept the result and brazenly annulled the election. Instead, the regime introduced the National Assembly process under

its roadmaps to maintain its grip on power.

The military regime, led by Than Shwe, hoped to build the nation under its iron fist but later released Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest. She was freed for the first time on July 10, 1995, after six years.

According to a New York Times article dated July 12, Daw Suu delivered a speech to crowds in front of her residence, saying, "We will not bear grudges against anybody else" following her release. NY Times writer Philip Shenon described this as a "conciliatory tone" in his article, adding that her remarks should delight the Burmese Junta lead-

Her non-violent stance was influenced by her education, Western political theory, Gandhian philosophy, and Buddhism. Daw Suu emphasized dialogue, democracy, and peaceful resistance, rejecting armed struggle.

ers. Daw Suu added, “I have always believed that the future stability and happiness of our nation depend entirely on the readiness of all parties to work for reconciliation.” She warned her supporters, “We have to choose between dialogue and utter devastation.”

Daw Suu chose political reconciliation, non-violent peaceful resistance, and dialogue. Throughout her political journey, she demonstrated utmost tolerance towards her political rivals, the regime’s army, which viewed her party and herself as sworn enemies. In every confrontation with the regime, the NLD maintained its non-violent policy; however, the army never showed mercy, always waging war against the party’s activities and peaceful protesters. Ultimately, Daw Suu and her loyalists often ended up in jail.

On May 30, 2003, a “notorious massacre” occurred in Depayin, Sagaing region. The junta wanted to prevent Daw Suu and NLD members’ convoy from continuing their rally, which was attracting large crowds. Regime strongmen wanted to use “any means” to achieve this goal. At least 70 people were killed after a mob attack directed by army elements. In response to this inhumane massacre, the late U Tin Oo, a patron of NLD, filed a complaint at the nearest police station. No action has been taken

against the perpetrators to date. Why was Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a democracy icon of Myanmar, so committed to non-violent movement, peaceful resistance, and dialogue?

Her non-violent stance was influenced by her education, Western political theory, Gandhian philosophy, and Buddhism. Daw Suu emphasized dialogue, democracy, and peaceful resistance, rejecting armed struggle. In one interview, she said, “I do not believe in armed struggle because it will perpetuate the tradition that he who is best at wielding arms wields power. That will not help democracy.” Daw Suu’s non-violent, peaceful resistance and dialogue strategy finally paid off after 24 years of struggle for her, her party, and the people of Myanmar who longed for democracy. In the 2012 by-election, Daw Suu contested and won a seat in parliament after years of boycotting. The NLD won a landslide victory in the 2015 General Election, and the transition of government was smooth for the first time in Myanmar’s history. Daw Suu said, “I know it is the slower way, and I understand why our young people feel that it will not work. But I cannot encourage that kind of attitude (armed means). Because if I do, we will be perpetuating a cycle of violence that will never end.”

Despite Daw Suu’s reconcilia-

tion efforts with the military regime, the question remained whether the military constitutionally wanted political reform. She answered, “I don’t think we can say until the army is totally committed to change because, under the present constitution, the army can always take over all parts of the government if it feels necessary. So until the army comes out clearly and consistently in support of the democratic process, we cannot say that it’s irreversible.” The military proved her right, showing their intention to cut the country off from democracy permanently by staging a coup on February 1, 2021.

At the beginning of the coup, people didn’t know how to react. By the end of the day, a letter popped up on social media, supposedly from Daw Suu, urging the people of Myanmar to reject it. At the same time, her trusted advisor, Win Htein, cited Mahatma Gandhi and called for civil disobedience, following Daw Suu’s strategy of nonviolent resistance. This started the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). Health workers and teachers were the first to join, refusing to work. Soon, trade unions, civil servants, music and movie stars, LGBT+ groups, and ethnic minorities joined in support. Like the previous uprisings in 1988 and 2007 (Saffron Revolution), the 2021 spring revolution practiced non-violent protest movements at first, as Daw Suu wished. However, the anti-coup protests gradually transitioned from peaceful strikes to self-defense measures as the army made it clear they would not support the public’s desire to maintain the democratic process in the country.

When the army saw the surge of resistance, they tried to stop it with lethal strikes against peace-

ful protesters using live bullets. The Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), formed with outcast lawmakers from NLD, announced on March 14, 2021, that the public would practice “self-defense in response to the terrorist (regime army)’s violence.” The CRPH stated, “Fundamental humanitarian rights of citizens, which are the right to defend life, and the right to live in freedom and security, as well as to give the citizens the right to defend one’s livelihood in accordance with the law.” For the first time in Myanmar’s history since gaining independence in 1948, an internationally recognizable armed resistance against its own army is emerging.

In 1988, there were two groups – the political wing (NLD) and the striking wing (ABSDF). When Daw Suu and her party introduced the policy of non-violent movement and political reconciliation, almost all of Myanmar followed the political wing, showing little support to the ABSDF, causing the failure of military intervention against the regime’s army. But in the 2021 spring revolution, almost everyone has committed to the fighting wings. Even those in the political wings support mil-

itary intervention. Unlike 1988, in 2021, numerous striking forces emerged, including militias, local resistance forces, revolutionary forces based on ethnicity, and union forces such as the People Defense Force (PDF) by the National Unity Government (NUG), fighting alongside longstanding Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) like Kachin, Karen, Ta’ang, Kokang, Rakhine, Chin and Karenni forces.

A research paper, “Burma’s Struggle” by Lt. Col. T.J. Bouchillon, reads, “We are seeing the Burmese people rise against the military and take arms against the military in a way they never have before.” He adds, “Community-based, now organized groups, primarily from the ethnic Burmese who haven’t always protested against military rule. They are the ones who are fighting back now against the military and some of these former military strongholds.” He concludes, “The people had a taste of democracy and they were not ready to give it up with this latest coup.”

Daw Suu spent her latest birthday in jail on June 19, 2024. As armed resistance intensifies in Myanmar, some people worry that

the army might use her, once a non-violent opposition leader, to calm the military convention’s tempo. Both sides (army and resistance) want to hear Daw Suu’s comments about the ongoing armed clash. Her legal team officially said that Daw Suu is not aware of the current situation since she has been behind bars since the coup began. What if she is released now? What would be her reaction to the armed conflict? She once said, “I will prioritize the party’s interests over personal ones. I will place the country’s needs above those of the party. I will make decisions by consulting with the people, ensuring nothing is done against their will.” This is what people want, “the end game,” and Daw Suu herself may understand that the generation is different from her era. This generation does not want to practice non-violent and peaceful resistance against ignorant, brutal army leaders. This generation understands that not just tyrants, but the entire army institution is a threat to democracy in Myanmar. This generation is not willing to wait another 20 years to get what it wants. This generation understands that the regime’s army is not for those with a big heart.



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/>

Weekly Updates



Falling Myanmar Kyats & Growing Junta's Arrests

Since the coup, the value of Myanmar Kyats has plummeted and the price of everything has skyrocketed. The regime has taken various measures to stabilize the market, including setting caps on exchange rates and gold prices. Obviously, these measures haven't worked as prices continue to rise. One particularly interesting tactic of the regime is arresting business people. We've seen the arrests of gold businessmen, raids on dollar exchange centers, and recently the targeting of rice mill owners and traders. What are they trying to achieve with this? We discussed this with a Myanmar Development Economist (MDE).

MM: What do you think the regime's rationale is behind arresting business people?

MDE: Well, I think it is just pure stupidity and lack of accountability on MAH's part. As usual, the military just blamed all their miscalculations and mistakes onto their enemies. Moreover, I think the military officials in charge also lack basic understanding of business or economics. They are too afraid to face the facts that market forces are beyond anyone else's control. It is in Myanmar Sit-Tat's DNA that they want to be in control of everything, and they don't have the courage to face uncertainties. It is their way of self-denial.

MM: Who do you think is giving Min Aung Hlaing & Co. such advice? Is there a real economist on the team, or is this move fully borne out of military generals?

MDE: That is a very good question! I think MAH is the only one who can answer this question. But even if there are real economists on his team, he has neither the audacity to listen to opposing perspectives nor the intellect to understand basic economic principles. Who knows MAH is listening to? Maybe Moe Hein (Thuriya Nay Wun) or Dr Yin Yin Nwe? How can any technocrat willing to give honest advice to MAH who is already hysterical and de-

lusional, at the risk of losing his/her head?

MM: How do you think these arrests are impacting the confidence of the remaining business community? Are they inspired to invest more or are they perhaps planning their escape routes?

MDE: Definitely, but here we have to clearly define who the business communities are. Cronies used to be sheltered from politics under Than Shwe's administration because Than Shwe knows exactly how to be a dictator. Than Shwe tended to use both carrot and stick approaches to either reward his loyal supporters or punish dissents. Average business communities, the kind of individuals you find in your daily life, are already struggling so much. Ordinary people have nothing to invest, nor can plan any escape routes. Now that even cronies are not even protected from MAH's whims, and that is something that is unheard of in Sit-Tat's 70-year rule. Only a few cronies remain in the country, perhaps due to restrictions by the Sit-Tat or due to personal reasons. However, most of their movable wealth (assets) are already transferred out of the country, and they are still sheltered from price volatility thanks to the assets. But never underestimate the power of cronies in Myanmar's political economy context. They are the first ones to hear about the coup, even before the State Counsellor herself. You will be dumbfounded to learn how well-connected they are.

MM: Can you compare the regime's approach to economic stabilization with any other countries? Have the generals found a new 'best practice' in crisis management?"

MDE: Not really. The main differ-

ence between Myanmar Sit-Tat and other authoritarian governments in the region is that Myanmar Sit-Tat considers themselves as "the State". Myanmar is Sit-Tat. Period. If you compare Myanmar Sit-Tat to their counterparts in the region, (Thai military, for example), Prayut does not think of himself as "the State". Prayut will probably think of himself as the defender of nationalist ideology or a protector of the Thai monarchy. But he wouldn't go so far as to regard himself as representing Thailand herself. But for Myanmar Sit-Tat, since they are "the State", anyone who opposes Sit-Tat are considered enemies of Myanmar. Therefore, they can also come up with many justifications to put down their enemies and even willing to sacrifice religion to protect themselves, as we have seen in 2007 Saffron Revolution. And look at how they managed to twist the story from murdering Buddhist monks in the streets to defenders of religion against Rohingya threat. My two-cent here is that the regime's approach to economic stabilization is geared towards their own survival since they are "the State", and they are willing to sacrifice everyone's well-being just to ensure they survive. They will sell out the country if they need to. So their 'best practice' in crisis management is also not geared towards the crisis management for Myanmar but solely oriented towards the crisis management for Sit-Tat. Never underestimate their ruthlessness.

MM: What could be the long-term effects of continually arresting business people on Myanmar's economy? If you could send a friendly piece of advice to the regime about their economic strategy, what would it be?

MDE: Informal networks and

black markets will thrive. Rent-seeking behaviors will thrive. Individuals who are closer to the source of power, especially at local levels, will also thrive. Productive sectors like manufacturing will not survive, not just because of Sit-Tat's mismanagement of the economy but also because of the conflicts. If the military junta truly cares about the country, they wouldn't stage a coup in the first place and they wouldn't meddle in the economy at all. The best they can do, if they truly care for the country, is to lift the restrictions they have put on the economy so that ordinary Myanmar people will have any chance of survival.

Please find Prof Sean Turnell's insights on Myanmar's economy in the link below as well. I think they are relevant for this question.

<https://www.iseas.edu.sg/media/event-highlights/webinar-on-the-state-of-myanmars-economy/>

MM: Lastly, do you think there's a point at which the regime might realize that their arrest-based strategy isn't working, or will they continue doubling down on this approach?

MDE: Well, intimidation is the only language they know, so I don't think they will change anytime soon. It will take a miracle. Self-reflection is something Myanmar military is not capable of.



People Battle Against Digital Dictatorship

In the aftermath of the February 2021 coup in Myanmar, the military junta swiftly moved to tighten its grip on power, implementing severe restrictions on communication channels and digital freedoms. Myanmar once heralded for its nascent steps towards democracy, saw a surge in internet usage following the easing of censorship in 2011. This period marked a transformative era where citizens embraced digital platforms to connect, communicate, and voice opinions freely. With the military's return to power in 2021, internet freedoms rapidly eroded. On February 8, 2021, within a week of the coup, the Military Council released the Cyber Security Law (Draft) draft-

ed by the military and passed it into law which punishes anyone who resists the junta's digital and internet restrictions.

The junta swiftly imposed internet blackouts, restricted access to social media platforms, and intensified surveillance of digital communications blocking social media, independent news media, and civil society websites. The most popular social media platform Facebook (Meta) was one of the earliest platforms that was banned soon after the military grabbed power. The public quickly turned to Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to resist the military's unlawful restriction. VPNs became indispensable for

circumventing state-imposed firewalls, accessing blocked websites, and safeguarding online privacy. Therefore, among the tools wielded to stifle dissent and control information flow is the systematic blocking of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), a lifeline for many seeking uncensored access to the global internet. With minimal success in banning FB in three years, the junta now came up with new technology in its attempt to completely ban VPNs and to develop a new social media platform called MySpace for Myanmar users. The junta again imposed a new VPN ban on May 30, 2024, stepping up its [surveillance and censorship program and furthering its digital](#)

The resilience of VPN users underscores the indomitable spirit of a population determined to resist authoritarian control. Yet, challenges remain daunting.

[dictatorship](#). Since the ban was imposed on May 30, internet traffic has significantly dropped and there have [been complaints from the online businesses, remote IT workers and students](#).

On June 19, 2024, [Justice for Myanmar reported](#) that the Myanmar military junta had leveled up its digital dictatorship with the help of two Chinese technological companies, brokered by the crony-owned Mascots Group of Companies. Leaked documents reveal that Geedge Networks, founded by Fang Binxing, known as the architect of China's Great Firewall, is developing two products for the Myanmar junta's surveillance and censorship system. Additionally, China National Electronics Import and Export Corporation (CEIEC), also associated with Fang Binxing, is implicated in a proposed location tracking system for Myanmar's Communications Ministry under junta control, JFM reported.

Arrests and threats related to VPN usage have been increasing. The junta focuses its efforts on targeting Facebook, the most popular social media platform among Myanmar people, used

for accessing the latest news, fundraising campaigns, and organizing anti-military activities. In addition to arresting people based on their Facebook activities against the military, the junta is increasingly targeting VPN usage as it indicates access to Facebook, which is banned by the military. There are reports of authorities checking the phones of people on the streets, in tea shops, and even in residential homes for VPN usage, [threatening them and extorting money](#). Military spokesperson Zaw Min Htun [addressed to the BBC](#), denying reports of arresting people on the streets for VPN usage and extortion, labeling it as false information. However, he confirmed that the military is indeed developing advanced technology to enforce a VPN ban. He likened this effort to actions taken by the United States in banning TikTok, suggesting a comparison in governmental measures regarding digital platforms.

A Yangon resident interviewed by Mohinga Matters expressed frustration over the junta's restrictions on accessing information and news. She emphasized that Facebook is her primary source for staying informed about current events within the country, stating, "We cannot trust the junta's news." She pointed out the discrepancy between official reports and what she learns through Facebook, citing the example of a monk shot by soldiers, which the junta attributed to the PDF but which she believes she learned the truth through Facebook. Regarding concerns about being arrested for using Facebook with a VPN, she revealed cautious behavior, stating, "I never bring my phone when I go outside. I deleted everything and downloaded the apps again when I came home." Despite the

latest VPN restrictions imposed by the junta, she highlighted the existence of a dependable community that shares information on which VPNs are effective and compatible with various phone models, enabling continued access to Facebook.

A developer who has relocated abroad and worked in the IT industry for a decade mentioned that it is technically feasible for the junta to completely ban VPNs, similar to China's approach. However, she noted that even in China, people can still access Facebook using VPNs that manage to bypass restrictions. The developer emphasized that new technologies continually evolve to circumvent VPN bans, although they acknowledged that such bans make accessing information more challenging for users.

As Myanmar's struggle for democracy persists, so too does the battle for digital freedom. The resilience of VPN users underscores the indomitable spirit of a population determined to resist authoritarian control. Yet, challenges remain daunting. The risks of using VPNs under military rule loom large, threatening not only individual safety but also the broader fabric of digital resilience and right to information.

Schrodinger's Aung San Suu Kyi : Understanding Myanmar's Polarized Political Figure

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the Lady, many call her “the Mother” with utmost reverence. For others, she was responsible for atrocities, particularly those committed against the Rohingyas. The pro-military camp claims her of promoting foreign and Islamic (including Rohingyas) interests at the expense of the Buddhists. A lot of views on her seem to be black-and-white and personally, we think this monolithic lens is harmful in understanding Myanmar's politics. Regardless of whether a person likes or dislikes her, the indisputable fact is that she is the number one most well-known figure in Myanmar, and under a democratic system (even if you were to accuse the democratic electoral process of a popularity contest), it proved time and time again that no one would beat her at a nationwide election. Attempts to ignore her or get rid of her influence would be ignoring the majority voice of the people of Myanmar.

In analyzing her it would be misleading to draw her image in the narratives that ignore wider context, especially when specific nar-

ratives at times are contradictory. While Schrodinger's Cat's mention of a hypothetical cat that's simultaneously alive and dead at the same time was intended to make his point in a thought experiment, it would be absurd to say she both committed genocide against the Rohingyas and promoted the interests of the Rohingyas and Muslims at the expense of Buddhists at the same time.

In this essay, we seek to analyze her legacy based on what could be publicly observed. We believe that for all the talks about her having good or bad intentions, these proved hard to observe unless we were stationed near her for an extended period and conducted a thorough good quality qualitative research. However, the outcomes are far more easily observable and relevant to the well-being of the people.

In viewing the legacy of her administration, we believe that it is important to look at the impacts at the national scale as well as in specific communities. At the national level, the socio-econom-



ic data over her administration shows positive results in income and life expectancy to education and healthcare attainment. Regarding the question about what could have been had she continued, the World Bank's Myanmar Economic Monitor released this month provided a glimpse. In an alternative future where the coup has not happened, an average Myanmar national would be 55.56% richer in 2024 compared to the current grim reality. Even without such a study, the sight of people queuing for rice, and cooking oil and patients waiting for death due to a shortage of medicines portray a picture of what went wrong.

However, it is also true that conflicts sparked in pockets of the country during her administration and many of the development gains reflected nationwide proved elusive for populations of these areas. Yet, even when we look at conflict areas and the affected populace, the scope, scale, and intensity during her administration and post-coup are beyond compare. Having said that, it was also in handling the conflict situations where she got most blamed, particularly in the most well-known episode of con-

Figure 72: Real GDP estimates and projections (2018=19 =100)

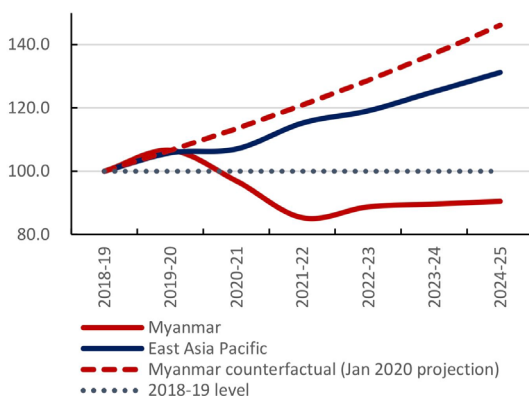


Figure: Myanmar Economic Monitor, June 2024, the World Bank

Having a massively devoted following required her to treat every action with the utmost care, and her failure led to the “We stand with Aung San Suu Kyi” campaigns, which now brought shame to the entire country.

flict in the Rohingya genocide.

It is also her involvement in the Rohingya genocide that she became Schrodinger's Aung San Suu Kyi and the way we see it, while it remains impossible to say whether she wanted to cause harm to the Rohingyas, according to the constitution, she had no authority to order the military to stage attacks or to stop attacking. Simply put, while her motives were unclear, she had no means to start or to stop. Despite her lack of means, her dazzling reputation draws massive attention to her. Consequently, as the world riled at her, Min Aung Hlaing and various political actors could take advantage of her popularity to further their agenda after putting the blame on her. While she is not entirely faultless, many observers these days forget other facts such as her party rejecting a proposal in parliament by Members of Parliament (MPs) from the Arakan National Party (ANP) for military intervention, (after the rejection) these MPs going towards Min Aung Hlaing to push for military campaigns against the Rohingyas and how Min Aung Hlaing only inform her of the planned operations. The following is from a news article covering a meeting between ANP and Min Aung Hlaing, Dr. Aye Maung, Chairman of ANP:

“Aye Maung, chairman of the Arakan National Party (ANP), which represents the interests of

the state's ethnic Rakhine people, said the lawmakers and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing discussed security issues in the northern part of the state and what to do about internally displaced persons (IDP) who live in camps in Rakhine.

“We planned to submit a proposal to the lower house and upper house [of parliament] regarding the security situation in Rakhine state, but it was rejected,” he told the online news service the Democratic Voice of Burma.

“So, we decided to approach the Tatmadaw,” Aye Maung said, using the formal name of Myanmar's armed forces.”

And the rest is a bloody history.

Having mentioned how other people used her to further their agendas, she was not entirely perfect in handling the situation. If one soldier killed civilians, the blame would lie with that soldier. If the military covered up his killings, the blame would be extended to the military institution. However, if the majority of the citizenry supported the military in the campaigns that killed civilians, the blame would lie with the citizens. For her part, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was responsible for making the people of Myanmar support these military campaigns during her administration. Having a massively devoted following required her to treat every action with the utmost care, and her failure led to the “We

stand with Aung San Suu Kyi” campaigns, which now brought shame to the entire country.

In hindsight, once the Min Aung Hlaing's killing machine began rolling, there is nothing she could have done to stop it. Trying to stop could even result in the coup coming earlier and post-2021's wider and deeper humanitarian crisis at the national level coming earlier. However, she made a miscalculation publicly defending the military thinking that doing so would make the military become cooperative and amend their ways. And she had to pay for her miscalculations with her reputation and unraveling of all the development gains. In allegations of her involvement in genocide, while many vocally accuse her of committing the genocide, she is no Hitler, or rather she has no means to be a Hitler. However, with her appeasement policies, she could be a Chamberlain to Min Aung Hlaing's genocidal Hitler. While Chamberlain could be blamed for making a strategic failure, that's a completely different matter from the crimes of Hitler.

In this article, in analyzing her legacy, we only examine the mere surface of just one well-known issue, i.e. the Rohingya genocide, to better understand the circumstances she faced and the choices she made. We could go on lengths discussing this issue alone, and there are a lot more policies and choices she made and allegations she faced during her time. In time, we hope to look deeper into these issues. But for now, what can be easily observed is that post-coup poverty, oppression, and conflicts mean the future becoming a lot darker for her, the Rohingyas, and everyone in Myanmar alike.

Highlights of the Armed Resistance

The Arakan Army (AA)'s continued dominance in Rakhine State, resumed battles in northern Shan State, and the Chin forces' victories made headlines in June. Here's a recap of the key military events:

AA's Victories in Thandwe and Ngapali Beach

In the first week of June, the AA launched offensives against regime stations in Maungdaw, Thandwe, and An Townships. Following the capture of all regime stations in Buthidaung in the previous weeks, the offensive targeted neighboring Maungdaw on June 2. Within a week, six stations fell under AA control, with the attack intensifying to capture the rest. On June 12, the AA reportedly captured the regime's station on the Myanmar-Bangladesh border in Maungdaw Township. This station, manned by 300 regime soldiers, was a strategic base for sea access and reinforcement routes. The regime conducted aerial strikes during the battles, injuring civilians as bombs fell into villages.

On the evening of June 23, the AA seized Thandwe Airport, the only air entry to Ngapali Beach in Rakhine State. Before its capture, violent clashes erupted along the beach, forcing residents to flee. Battles continued around Thandwe City, but with the fall of the airport, the regime struggled to send reinforcements and supplies. The AA continued attacking the regime's Light Infantry Unit 566 and Infantry Unit 55 near the city.

Chin Forces' Victory Over Matupi

On May 30, Chin Defense Forces (CDF) launched an offensive

against the junta's district administration office in Matupi Township, Chin State. That same morning, Chin forces captured the office compound, forcing regime security soldiers to flee into nearby villages. One Chin ranger was injured by a landmine. Subsequently, Chin forces focused their efforts on the remaining stations and captured the regime's police station and General Administration Department (GAD).

The offensive then concentrated on the junta's Infantry Unit 304, with the regime defending using artillery and airstrikes. Coordinated by CDF-Matupi, Chin Brotherhood, AA, and Yaw Army, the Chin Brotherhood Forces announced the capture of the regime's Battalion Station Unit 304 in Matupi Township on June 17. This marked the first station taken by resistance forces from the junta's northwestern military headquarters in Monywa City, Sagaing Region. CDM military officials highlighted the station's strategic importance due to its modern warfare equipment and elevated position in Matupi.

On June 29, Chin resistance forces seized the last standing regime battalion station in Matupi Township, effectively putting the entire township under their control.

Resumed Clashes in Northern Shan State

Due to provocations from the regime, clashes resumed in northern Shan State despite a ceasefire agreement. The Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) reported that junta forces fired artillery and dropped aerial bombs on its station in Mongmit Township

on June 9, violating the Haigan ceasefire agreement brokered by China. Following the attack, the Three Brotherhood Alliance forces were speculated to be moving towards Lashio, as regime forces were seen destroying routes to Lashio and Hsipaw towns at the beginning of June.

Building up on that, battles resumed between regime forces and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) on the morning of June 23. The encounter began as regime forces launched an offensive near Panekham Village, 10 miles east of Lashio Town. A 30-minute battle ensued around 8 am.

On June 25, the TNLA launched simultaneous attacks in Naungcho, Kyautme towns in northern Shan State, and Mogok in Mandalay Region. Within a day, the TNLA occupied major parts of Naungcho and Kyautme towns. The MDY PDF and various local resistance forces participated alongside the TNLA. Clashes intensified in Mogok (west) and spread eastward in the following days. The TNLA and MDY-PDF coordinated offensives against regime stations, with the regime responding with heavy artillery, impacting civilian neighborhoods.

Nationwide Developments

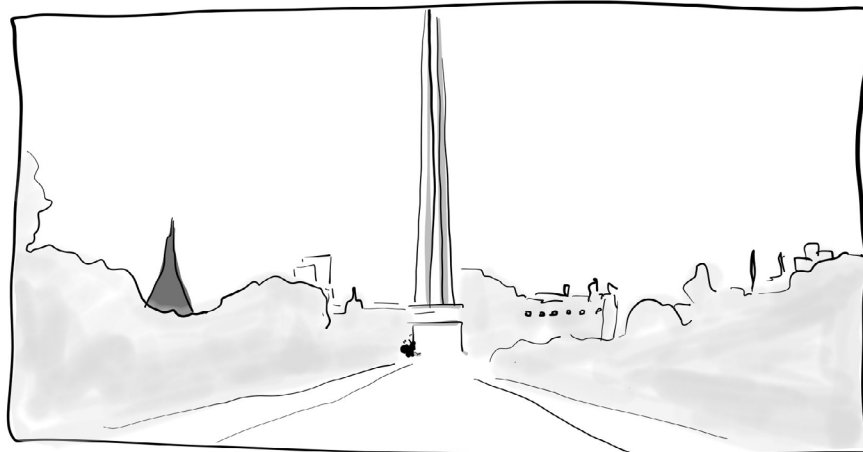
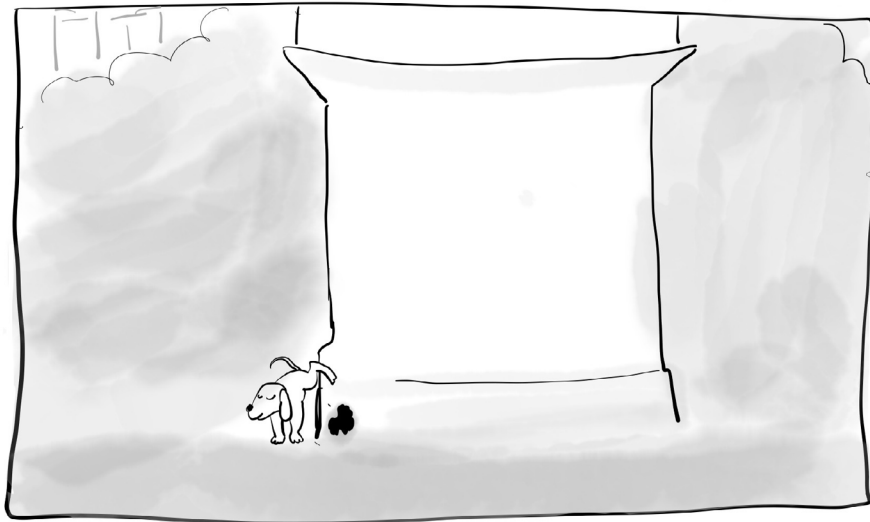
- Since May 14, the regime's forces have launched an offensive in Thayetchaung Township, Tanintharyi Region, leading to full-blown clashes with resistance forces in the area. The regime has reinforced multiple times and used navy ships for artillery and aerial strikes. So far, about 30 regime soldiers have died,

and four resistance rangers have also lost their lives.

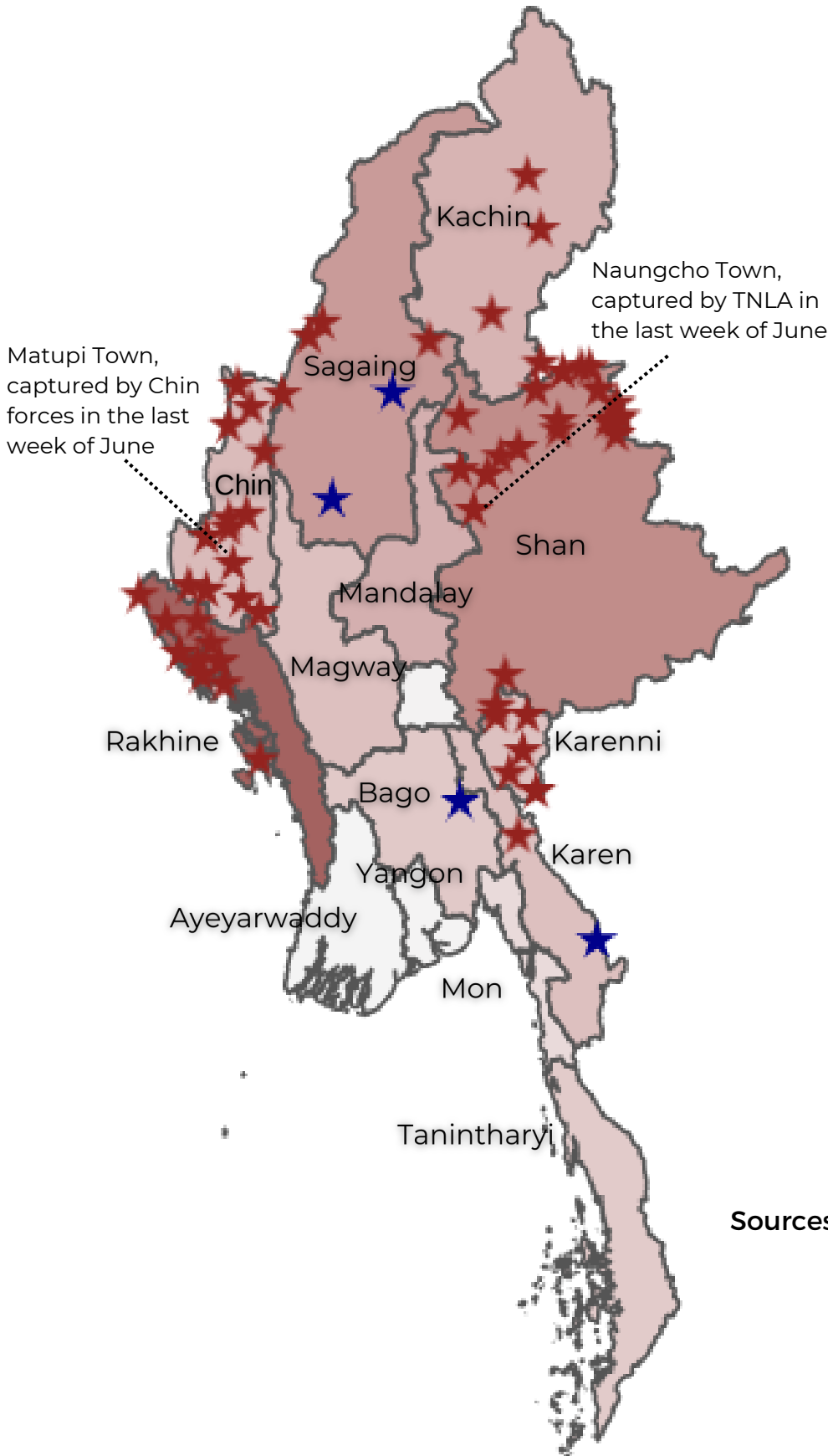
- Clashes have escalated between regime forces and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in villages east of Winemaw Township, Kachin State. Fighting near Wuyan Village, four miles east of Winemaw, has been ongoing since ear-

ly June, indicating the persistent and widespread nature of the conflict across multiple regions in Myanmar. On June 28, the regime held a completion ceremony for the first batch of military trainees across the country. Following the ceremony, the new graduates were dispatched

to various battlegrounds. These new cadets were transported to war fronts in northern Shan, Chin, Karenni, and Kachin states without being informed of their destinations until halfway through the journey. Parents were also kept in the dark by authorities.



People's Resistance War in June



44
CASUALTIES FROM
RESISTANCE FORCES

1679
CASUALTIES
FROM SAC

165
REGIME SOLDIERS
SURRENDERED

No. of Skirmishes



Towns captured and controlled by resistance forces



Towns retaken by the regime

Sources: NUG, Khit Thit Media

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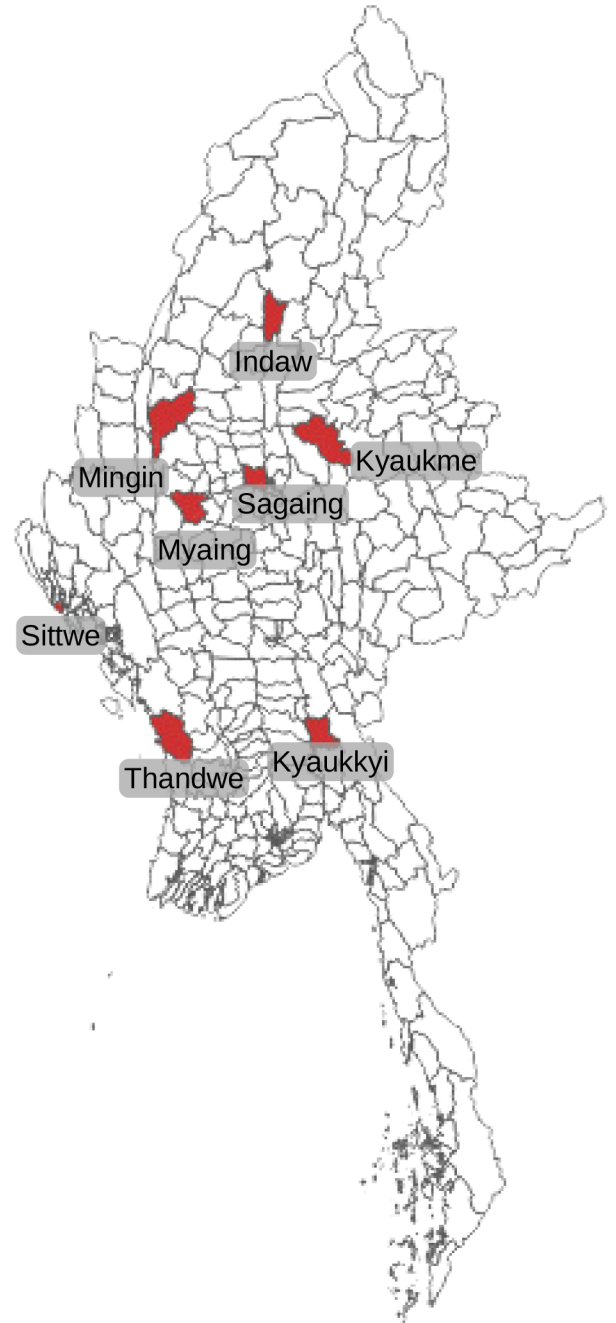
@mattersmohinga

Mass Killings in May-June

8

As of May 23, we published that a total of 232 mass killings have been committed by the regime since the coup. During a month period, we witnessed at least eight more masscres by the junta's men, resulting in more than 200 civilian deaths.

1. More than 75 civilians were killed in Byain Phyu village, close to the capital of Sittwe. The junta's forces carried out this massacre after rounding up residents they suspected of supporting the Arakan Army (AA).
2. A regime fighter jet dropped three 500-pound bombs on a wedding of a PDF couple in Mataw Village, Mingin Township, killing and wounding dozens of people.
3. The regime carried out an airstrike, targeting the village of Kan Myint Kone, followed by artillery, killed five and injured more than a dozen in Myaing Township.
4. Airstrikes by the regime killed dozens of people in the village of Sin Gaung in Thandwe Township. This incident marks the worst mass killing by the regime in Rakhine State since the start of fighting between its forces and the AA.
5. The regime's forces conducted an airstrike, targeting a monastery in Sagaing Township, where the local administrative forces were holding a meeting, killing eight including a monk, destroying several buildings.
6. The regime launched aerial attack on a monastery in Nanttha Village, Indaw Township, thinking it was resided by PDF. The attack killed and injured dozens including a monk.
7. The junta's drone attack on Myitta ward in Kyaukkyi Township resulted in seven civilian deaths.
8. A family of six was killed by the regime's artillery in Oakkyin Ward, Kyaukme Town, five others were also injured during the junta's response in the resumed clashes in Shan-north.



Date	State/Region	Township	No. of Victim	Male	Female	Child	Unidentified
May 29	Rakhine	Sittwe	76	48	3	-	25
June 3	Sagaing	Mingin	33	15	13	5	-
June 3	Magway	Myaing	5	-	3	2	-
June 4 & 5	Rakhine	Thandwe	64	-	-	-	64
June 8	Sagaing	Sagaing	8	7	1	-	-
June 22	Sagaing	Indaw	17	7	9	1	-
June 28	Bago	Kyaukkyi	7	7	-	-	-
June 28	Shan	Kyaukme	6	2	3	1	-
Grand Total			216	86	32	9	89