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Recap

Folks, talk of the town in July was junta chief Min Aung Hlaing appointing himself the presidential role after the interim President Myint Swe's deteriorating health condition. This month, the National Defence and Security Council needed to convene and extend the "state of emergency" for another six months, and only Myint Swe as the interim president could convene the council. With him out of the way, Min Aung Hlaing convened the council on his own and extended the emergency period on July 31. Although his title change doesn't make much difference, it is good to have him at the top of the order of precedence when it is time to hold accountable for crimes of the Myanmar military.

In early July, Kokang's MNDAA and allied forces launched offensives to besiege the regime's Northeastern Regional Command in Lashio. On July 25, MNDAA declared that the town was free from the military's control and marked its effort "historical" via social media after clashing for 23 days. About 200 political prisoners who had been detained at the infamous Lashio Prison were released including U Tun Tun Hein, former deputy speaker of the lower house. Two days after MNDAA's siege, hundreds of troops from the Wa army entered the town after reportedly having discussions with both the regime and MNDAA. Since the arrival of Wa troops, clashes have de-escalated.

The PDF's and local defense forces' Operation Shan-Mann is also accelerating by seizing Singu Township, 40 miles away from Mandalay City where Central Regional Command is based. The resistance forces also managed to control other smaller outposts and military bases around Mandalay

City, threatening the safety of the regional command. Mogok Town has also been under the control of Ta'ang's TNLA.

In the western part, Arakan Army (AA) managed to capture Thandwe Airport and Light Infantry Battalion 566 on June 27, Infantry Battalion 55 on July 9, and controlled Thandwe City, including the hotel zone on the famous Ngapali beach and other administrative offices. Due to the regime's indiscriminate retaliation, hotels were reportedly destroyed by artillery shelling. With the AA having controlled eight townships in Rakhine State, the military defends not to lose control of its Danyawaddy Naval Base.

One of the heart-warming scenes we witnessed this month was the resistance fighters going back to their homes after three years. Comrades from Mogok and Singu were seen unlocking their abandoned homes that were covered with plants. This month, Dr Tay Zar San, one of the protest leaders at the frontline, was also back in Mandalay where he staged the earliest protests in the first week of February 2021. He released a series of his photos in Mandalay, spreading the spirit of revolution with his wide smile and three-finger salute.

Another hot news of the month was the arrest of Serge Pun, one of the wealthiest business tycoons in the country. He has been kept under house arrest since late May, and rumor has it he is likely to face 20 years of jail time. In late July, Yoma Strategic Holdings announced Serge Pun's resignation from the company and his son has taken over his position.

The country's economy continues to spiral downward with Myanmar kyats depreciating to a record low. In the last week of July, it has been

reported that 1 USD is equivalent to 5500 MMK. Commodity prices are also high due to inflation. The banking sector is also chaotic due to the military leadership's various directives to tighten the regulations.

On the international front, the junta chief received India's national security adviser in Nay Pyi Taw to discuss election preparation matters this month. While the northern ethnic groups have been boasting victories militarily, China urged a ceasefire to protect its businesses in Myanmar. Meanwhile, Thai authorities announced that they have been investigating Thai banks after Mr. Tom Andrews's report revealing the banks' facilitation of the Myanmar regime's arms procurement. A large number of undocumented Myanmar migrant workers were arrested in Thailand, and the NUG requested the Thai government to ease some immigration rules for Myanmar migrant workers to which the Thai authorities have yet to respond.

This month also marked the illegal execution of Ko Jimmy, Ko Phyo Zeya Thaw and two civilians inside the Insein prison. From netizens to guerilla protesters, many remembered these men standing up with the people and the truth until the end.

UNOCHA reported that more than three million civilians are displaced countrywide and 18.6 million people are in need of assistance. While nationwide conflicts have caused the need for humanitarian aid, the monsoon also brought floods in 12 cities in four states/regions. Despite these hardships, the morale of the people has been kept up with recent wins. Now onto the next.

July 1, 2024

The Election Commission under the regime announced its rejection of the Arakan National Party's (ANP) request to continue operating as a political party. The ANP, which secured the majority of Rakhine state constituencies in the 2015 and 2020 elections, was denied registration on the grounds of non-compliance with Section 7 of the Political Parties Registration Law which prohibits the registration of organizations deemed illegal, declared as terrorist organizations.

Thousands of villagers have been evacuated from the Myitkyina area in Kachin State due to rising water levels in the Ayeyarwaddy River. Reports indicate a shortage of rescuers as residents began fleeing their homes on the night of June 30, with water entering most neighborhoods along the riverbanks. By July 1, nearly the entire town of Myitkyina was submerged.

July 4, 2024

The Chin State Defense Force-Matupi (Brigade-1) announced that 13 political prisoners detained by the military council during the battle for the town of Matupi in Chin State have been released. The group included 12 men and one woman, with two individuals sentenced to life imprisonment and two employees arrested for participating in non-violent civil disobedience (CDM).

The Political Prisoners Network Myanmar (PPNM) released a statement indicating that political prisoners in Magway Prison, recently transferred from Mandalay's Obo Prison, are facing oppression from prison authorities. Over 40 political prisoners were moved to Magway Prison on June 15. Some were beaten for looking at the authorities when they were giving a speech inside the facility. About ten people have also been placed in solitary confinement.

July 2, 2024

The Chinland Defense Force (CDF-Matupi) released a statement that three religious buildings and several houses were destroyed by the junta's bombings during the Matupi clash the previous week.

July 3, 2024

The ICJ announced that Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Britain, and the Maldives have been permitted to participate in the proceedings of the case brought by the Gambia to the ICJ accusing Myanmar of committing genocide against the Rohingya. These seven countries have been granted the right to submit written observations addressing their concerns, with further decisions on oral testimony to be announced later.

Kyodo News reported that the Japanese ambassador in Yangon met with Hiroshi Kasamatsu, a Japanese national arrested in connection with a rice pricing issue. The Japanese government has requested Kasamatsu's immediate release, resulting in the meeting being granted. Ambassador Ichiro Maruyama confirmed that Kasamatsu is in good health and is currently being investigated at an unspecified police station.

July 5, 2024

Four dead bodies were found near the Dawei Deep Sea Port Project in Tanintharyi Region. They were taken by the regime's soldiers as human shields on June 1. A total of eight villagers were taken, and the whereabouts of the others remain unknown. Local reports indicated that ten people, comprising both men and women, were taken hostage. The regime's troops have been conducting an offensive in the west of Ye Pyu Township since June 30.

July 6, 2024

The NUG reported that resistance forces destroyed a regime tank during battles in Mattaya Township, Mandalay Region. In the clash, the regime used two tanks; one was attacked with RPG-7 rockets three times, destroying its wheels. During the two-day clash, the PDF confiscated significant weapons and captured junta soldiers. About 25 regime stations fell under PDF control in Mattaya Township.

The Political Prisoners Network Myanmar (PPNM) released a statement reporting Insein Prison authorities of extorting money from inmates for various purposes such as painting walls and renovating buildings. The PPNM stated that it is illegal to demand money from detainees, calling it a form of oppression.

July 9, 2024

The Ministry of Defense of the NUG announced that PDF battalions from the Sagaing and Mandalay regions are actively participating in the resumption of Operation 1027 and the Shan-Mann Operation. Seven battalions from commands 52 and 55 in the Sagaing Region, Battalion 26 from Nyaung U District, and the People's Defense Army (Mandalay) in the Mandalay Region are included in the operations.

U Thein Wai, one of Myanmar's wealthiest businessmen and real estate magnate associated with Yoma Bank and FMI, has been under interrogation by the regime in Nay Pyi Taw for several weeks. Sources indicate that the 71-year-old billionaire, along with eight directors from his companies Yoma Land and Yoma Bank, has been under investigation since early June. They were placed under house arrest, and while two directors have been allowed to return home after questioning, the rest remain detained.

July 7, 2024

In northern Shan State, as fighting between the Three Brotherhood Alliance forces and the regime extends to Lashio neighborhoods, thousands of residents have evacuated, many now stranded on the Lashio-Hsipaw exit road. Over 1,000 vehicles were reported stuck on this route. According to a resident who spoke to Myanmar Now, the offensive by the Three Brotherhood Alliance intensified after they captured the regime's Infantry Battalion 507 headquarters near Ward No. 5.

July 8, 2024

A July 8 report by Amnesty International revealed that some regional countries are supplying jet fuel to Myanmar's military, which is attacking civilians. The report highlighted that a Chinese-owned tanker, HUITONG78, exports jet fuel to Myanmar via Vietnam, involving Singapore-based Sahara Energy International Pte., Chinese state-owned CNOOC Trading (Singapore) Pte. Ltd., and entities from the UAE.

July 10, 2024

The military council and private banks met in Nay Pyi Taw to discuss rising non-repayable loans, bank branches in revolutionary-controlled cities, and significant cash shortages in the banking sector. Sources indicated that the main focus was on the lack of cash balances. A businessperson close to the banking industry informed Myanmar Now that private banks requested the military council's central bank to reduce interference in banking rights, including deposit withdrawal restrictions. They argued that such controls decrease public trust in banks.

July 11, 2024

Fortify Rights, a human rights group, disclosed evidence of military council forces brutally torturing detainees. The group stated that in March 2023, they received ten secretly recorded videos showing military forces torturing detainees at an interrogation center in Mandalay. The victims, including two women, reportedly endured electric shocks and other forms of torture, including threats of sexual violence, between October and November 2021. According to Fortify Rights, these videos were recorded by a member of the regime's Air Force present during the interrogations. The soldier escaped to a liberated area with the footage.

Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa, and Myanmar regime's Foreign Minister U Than Swe convened for an informal meeting in New Delhi. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand issued a press release stating that the discussions centered around cooperation on mutual interests between Thailand and Myanmar.

July 14, 2024

The Arakan Army (AA) reportedly captured the Kanyin Chaung Special Economic Zone (SEZ) located in Maungdaw Township, Rakhine State. The SEZ, situated two miles north of Maungdaw Town, was manned by at least 200 troops, many of whom fled upon the AA's attack. The regime conducted airstrikes following the capture. The Kanyin Chaung SEZ is one of two key border economic bases that trade with Bangladesh, which has suspended activities since last November due to the resumed clashes.

July 12, 2024

The military council announced that individuals blacklisted for participating in the non-violent Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) after the military coup will be removed from the list and granted leniency. The regime stated that employee absences have negatively impacted both social life and human resources. Therefore, CDM participants can report back to their respective departments starting July 15 to be removed from the blacklist, depending on their circumstances.

July 13, 2024

Following an attack and occupation of Nwe Yone village by PDF joint forces in Singu Township, Mandalay Region, PDF soldier Ko Wai Moe Kyaw was able to return to his home. His house had been sealed off by the military council for over three years due to his involvement in the Spring Revolution in Singu Township, for which an arrest warrant had been issued against him.

July 15, 2024

The regime carried out an artillery attack towards villages in Tanintharyi Region. The fire, responsible for the Artillery Unit 306, fell in Ashae Maw Tone Village Tract, Kanyotan Village, killing Daw Mee Nge, aged 40. Although there is no active battle nearby, the regime's soldiers were said to have been firing artillery in the township starting July 13.

July 16, 2024

Commander General Maung Maung Aye of the regimes, Army, Navy, and Air Force Coordination Command met with India's Ambassador to Myanmar, Abhay Thakur, in Nay Pyi Taw to discuss increased military cooperation. According to the regime, their discussions covered military relations, air cooperation, and trainee exchanges. They also agreed to collaborate on border security, stability, and law enforcement.

Resistance rangers carried out a mission targeting the regime's military airbase located at Aye Lar Airport, Naypyidaw. The rangers, led by Brave Warriors for Myanmar (BMW), MKCDF, and MRF, fired seven 107 MM rockets towards the airbase, initially resulting in the deaths of four officers and fifteen soldiers. BMW released a statement the following day, stating that a total of 34 personnel, including seven officers, were killed in the incident. Four buildings, such as a drone inventory, chemical bomb preparation garage, weapon inventory, and aircraft repair area, were destroyed.

July 19, 2024

The Chinland government demanded that the Arakan Army (AA) immediately stop interfering in Chin State's affairs and the political matters of the Chin people. Amid ongoing conflict between the Chin State government and the regime, the AA entered Chin State territory, leading to unnecessary ethnic clashes due to political meddling. They urged the AA to respect the efforts of the Chin people to achieve national equality and self-determination.

July 21, 2024

While intense fighting continues in northern Shan State, two Shan ethnic armed groups are also clashing in the southern part of the state. Despite a joint ceasefire statement issued in November 2023, sporadic fighting has occurred between the SSPP/SSA and the RCSS/SSA since mid-year. On the night of July 21, RCSS and SSPP forces clashed in Rassak Township, resulting in the deaths of five SSPP soldiers, as reported by the RCSS.

July 17, 2024

The MDY-PDF reportedly seized Singu Town in Mandalay Region, 54 miles from Mandalay City. This marked the first time a town in Mandalay Region had fallen under PDF control. Since then, the regime has attempted to recapture it using navy ships. Recently, military supporters and lobbyists spread fabricated news that the junta had recaptured the town.

July 18, 2024

On the night of July 18, the military council announced through their controlled media that Acting President U Myint Swe is in poor health and unable to perform daily activities. Despite being examined by a special medical team led by the Minister of Health on June 30 and July 14, his condition has not improved.

The NUG has requested the Thai government to allow individuals with pink cards and work permits to travel and work freely in Thailand by issuing a five-point statement regarding Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand.

July 20, 2024

Around 5:30 am, Chin forces carried out a mission named Operation Run, conducting a raid on the Myoma Police Station in Hakha Town, Chin State. In the clash, four regime police were killed and many were injured. A total of 62 detainees held in the station, made up of 49 men and 13 women, were released. About 23 firearms were confiscated before the rangers retreated.

July 22, 2024

The military council announced that U Myint Swe, the acting president, handed over his duties to General Min Aung Hlaing on July 22. Due to health issues, U Myint Swe had to take medical leave, leading to the transfer of National Defense and Security Council responsibilities to General Min Aung Hlaing.

July 23, 2024

Some of the detainees held and interrogated in the regime's detention facilities were released after the capture of Infantry Battalion 41 by the MNDAA in Lashio, Shan State. Among them were three men and one woman, all in their 20s, detained since November 2022. They were all arrested for the possession of weapons, and their families are relieved that they made it out of the junta's notorious interrogation routine. More political detainees were released, but they have not been identified yet.

July 25, 2024

Videos of TNLA and PDF soldiers being welcomed by civilians in Mogok emerged on social media. This series of videos confirms that Mogok is now under the control of TNLA, despite the State Administration Council and pro-military supporter channel's denial that revolutionary forces have taken control of the area.

July 27, 2024

The junta's battalion units 116 and 119, based in Patheingyi Township, Mandalay City, were targeted with rockets. According to local sources, a total of eight free flight rockets were fired towards the compounds. Multiple explosions were heard, followed by ambulance sirens. The exact measure of casualties is unknown.

July 29, 2024

Dr. Daw Mie Mie Winn Byrd, a retired Lieutenant Colonel of the United States Defense Forces and a professor at the Asia-Pacific Security Studies Department of the United States Department of Defense, stated that significant victories will continue to be achieved due to the coordinated attacks by ethnic groups and revolutionary forces against the State Administration Council.

July 31, 2024

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing, who recently appointed himself as the interim president, convened the National Defence and Security Council and extended the state of emergency for another six months.

July 24, 2024

Due to the uncertain situation surrounding tycoon Serge Pun, who has been arrested and detained in Nay Pyi Taw, the company announced that he will resign from all his positions in its subsidiaries, including Yoma Strategic Holdings, a group listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange where he holds a majority stake.

July 26, 2024

The junta chief Min Aung Hlaing met with India's National Security Adviser Shri Ajit Doval in Nay Pyi Taw to discuss preparations for holding elections in Myanmar, according to the regime's announcement. They also addressed the political situation in Myanmar and border stability between the two countries.

July 28, 2024

When the MNDAA attacked Lashio, there was an argument between Colonel Naing Naing Oo, the commander of the No. 2 Regional Military Command, and Major General Soe Tint, the commander of the Northeastern Region. As a result of Major General Soe Tint insulting the Regional Military Commander, the Major General was not

July 30, 2024

The Three Brothers Alliance announced that those spreading false and misleading news about ethnic revolutionary groups seceding from the country to establish a new nation will be identified and prosecuted.



Boycott Campaigns Received Unexpected Boost

"I don't know what BC (boycott) is. I am not even well literate on A to Z," declared mockingly by Myanmar's prominent rockstar [Lay Phyu on July 5, 2024](#), eliciting an overwhelming cheer from the crowd. Just days before the event, which was set to take place in the heartland of the military generals and officials, many Myanmar civilians took to social media to call for a halt to the event and pressure the rockstar to disassociate from the military. Despite their efforts, the boycott advocates were ridiculed in front of an audience of regime supporters. Following the viral spread of the video mocking the boycott movement, activists and participants renewed calls for a more effective public boycott strategy.

Boycott, a method of nonviolent action, involves refraining from cooperation with an adversary or perpetrator. Technically, the non-cooperation or boycott movements are divided into economic, social, and political noncooperation. Economic and social boycotts are often employed to ostracize individuals associated with the opposition. Historically, boycott movements have played a crucial role in global movements, with notable successes including [Gandhi's Swadeshi movement](#) and the campaign against [South Africa's apartheid regime](#). In the case of Myanmar's pro-democracy struggle after the February 2021 coup, two key resistance strategies have emerged: the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), falling under the political

noncooperation category, and Social Punishment (SP), falling under social noncooperation, also named as Social Boycotts. These methods reflect the citizens' determination to challenge the military junta and seek justice for its widespread abuses. The CDM is a broad-based protest strategy aimed at crippling the government through strikes and non-cooperation across various sectors, from civil service to industry. This resistance seeks to disrupt the military-backed administration's operations, underscoring the public's refusal to endorse or sustain the military regime's governance. In contrast, Social Boycotts or Social Punishment (SP) is a more targeted approach, utilizing social media and public shaming to isolate and pe-

Businesses with military ties faced boycotts, and high-profile individuals associated with the junta were publicly shamed, leading to notable economic and social pressure on the military elite.

nalize those seen as supporting or benefiting from the military regime.

Initially, the SP campaign involved mass reporting on Facebook, leading to the removal of many military-related accounts and pages. It soon evolved to target the personal lives of military officers and their families. In the coup's early days, many pro-military figures and their families shut down their social media profiles due to the public backlash. The viral campaign eventually reached the elite circles of the military. While many actors and influencers have condemned the coup, those who have remained silent face intense social pressure. Notably, [Nay Chi Oo, a social influencer and daughter of a retired high-ranking military officer, became a target of SP](#). Her beauty blog, "beautybynaychi," was widely boycotted, and many businesses publicly announced they would not collaborate with her. Similarly, Myanmar's hip-hop star Sai Sai Kham Hlaing faced public boycott, leading him to reduce his social media presence.

As the military and police forces intensified their actions against civilians, the public's retaliation extended to the families of the officers, even those abroad. For instance, the daughter of a military junta official studying at Toyo University in Japan faced public shaming through posters around the university and bus stops. Af-

ter filing a police report and complaining to the embassy, she has decided to quit her studies and return to Myanmar. Businesses with military ties faced boycotts, and high-profile individuals associated with the junta were publicly shamed, leading to notable economic and social pressure on the military elite. One notable early success was Japanese beer giant [Kirin's decision to sever ties with Myanmar Economic Holdings Public Company Limited \(MEHL\)](#), a military conglomerate.

The principles of boycott and civil disobedience have also taken center stage in [Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia](#). The recent consumer boycott against Western brands such as Unilever, McDonald's, and Starbucks in response to perceived support for Israel highlights a different facet of the boycott movement. This consumer-driven action, spurred by the Israeli government's killings of Palestinian civilians, underscores how individuals fight against the oppression, apartheid, and injustice globally. In Indonesia and Malaysia, the boycotts have resulted in significant economic impacts on multinational companies. Unilever reported a substantial decline in sales in Indonesia, while Starbucks Malaysia experienced a revenue drop attributed to the boycott. These actions reflect a broader pattern where consumer sentiment aligns with political and humanitarian concerns,

driving individuals to use their purchasing power as a form of protest.

At the outset of the coup, Myanmar's boycott movement proved highly effective. The Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and Social Punishment (SP) campaigns significantly disrupted the military regime. However, despite these early successes, sustaining such efforts amid intense political repression and violence has proven challenging. By the third year of the coup, the boycott movement began to lose momentum and faded from the public eye. In contrast, recent boycotts in Indonesia and Malaysia have achieved notable success. Many in Myanmar now believe that the viral video of rockstar Lay Phyu mocking and insulting the boycott advocates and pro-democracy supporters has served as a wake-up call. It has given an unexpected boost and revitalized the boycott campaign against the military and its affiliates.



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/>



! Myanmar's Economic Crisis: An Urgent Call for Action

Myanmar economy is facing mounting challenges from both COVID-19 impacts and the military coup that happened in 2021. Myanmar is the only country in Southeast Asia (SEA) with negative or stagnant GDP growth with no sign of an immediate economy rebound in the next foreseeable years. Within 3.5 years, MMK currency has depreciated down to a mere one-fourth of its value at pre-coup timing. This is further worsened by upper- and middle-class consumers who aggressively convert their MMK earnings/savings into non-productive assets such as gold and real estate leading to more wealth gaps and economic inequality. The general population can no longer afford non-essential/luxury spending as before. The deficiency of essential resources such as electricity and fuel energy, caused by the ongoing conflicts and scarcity of foreign currencies, also raises concerns for the livelihood of the Myanmar population.

From a public sector perspective,

increased spending on various fronts, including infrastructure projects and military expenditures, outpace the country's revenue generation, contributing to a high budget deficit. Military government continues to neglect other public sector spending in education, healthcare, and social programs. To protect the growing budget deficit, the military imposes strict restrictions against general imports which only lowers the trade partners' confidence in the long-term and causes more shortage of consumables such as medicine, raw materials, automobiles, and electronic goods.

From a private sector perspective, many companies come to have doubts about future sustainability as their daily business operations get disrupted significantly. Recent conscription law has driven away many young workers outside of the country leading to a sudden scarcity of manpower supply. Business transactions are further hindered

by the liquidity crisis of the local banks and the economic sanctions linked to overseas banking. The cost of doing business is skyrocketing driven by increased Operating Expenses or Expenditure (OPEX). For instance, unreliable or insufficient power supply requires businesses to spend at least three times higher cost for running generators. Last but not least, foreign investors have also lost confidence in Myanmar withdrawing their capital and exiting the market. This also impacts the local players negatively as the ecosystem is largely disrupted across the value chain of multiple industries.

In summary, Myanmar has little chance of rebound without significant reforms in economic and political governance. The military is evidently incapable of sustaining the country's situation, and further economic collapse, instead of the recovery, is anticipated.



The Myanmar Army : A Bad Egg Born from Good Intentions

When somebody mentions “Myanmar Army”, people immediately think of Ne Win’s army, Than Shwe’s army and Min Aung Hlaing’s army, which staged successive coups in the history of Myanmar. “Myanmar Army” is an institution that has never hesitated to torture generations of Myanmar people both physically and mentally. In reality, the history of “Myanmar Army” goes way beyond the modern military dictators. As the country and the current army institution itself is on the brink of a total collapse, let’s look back on the history of how this army was born, who were the founding fathers and how did such institution transform from good to an evil?

Royal Burmese Army (Kong Baung Dynasty – 1752 to 1885)

Royal Burmese Army in Kong baung Dynasty was a powerful army and earned respect by its contemporaries from neighboring countries. The first Monarch of the Kong Baung dynasty, Alaungpaya himself was a warlord, who rebelled the second Burmese empire and successfully overthrown the last dynasty of ToungOo and created “The Third Burmese Empire.” Since its formation, eleven Kings ruled the Kobaung Empire. In the early stage of the dynasty, the first Monarch of the Kobaung, Alaungpaya, was able to restore the unification of Burma, which had been torn apart by the fall

of last kingdom. Once its dynasty was stabilized, the first King deployed its troops and invaded parts of Siam (Thailand). And another milestone was set when the Chinese invaded central Myanmar (Sino – Burmese war); King Hsinbyushin and his comrades were able to stop the waves of Chinese invasion and secured assurances of Burma’s independence from the Qing Dynasty. The third Burmese Empire’s success continued until the 6th King of Kong Baung Dynasty, Bodawpaya conquered Mrauk-U Kingdom, in Arakan (Rakhine).

However, when the British invaded Burma (the first Anglo – Burmese war, 1824 – 1826), Bagy-

idaw, the 7th King of the dynasty surrendered Arakan and Tenasserim (Taninthayi) to the British due to the inferior weaponry and technology, despite the fierce defense by the Royal Burmese Army. Later, the British controlled the Lower Burma after their second invasion (1852 – 1853) while the dynasty was under King Pagan Min. Over thirty years later, the last King of Kong Baung Dynasty, Thibaw Min, was captured and expelled to India after the Royal Burmese army failed to defend against the British in their last invasion in 1885. In contrast, apart from some minor controversial issues and major defeats to the British invaders, the Royal Burmese Army performed well throughout 130 years of the third Kingdom's reign.

Reborn of Burmese Army (1885 – 1941)

As colonialism was adopted after the British occupied Burma in 1885, the Kong Baung Dynasty collapsed and the Royal Burmese Army was dissolved. Once the British set up to rule Burma, those who were still loyal to the Kingdom revolted. Many soldiers from the former Royal army, officials and outcasted royal princes waged guerrilla warfare against the British army. During their over 50 years of ruling Burma, the invaders experienced various

forms of opposition against the empire. However, Burmese royalists failed to build a decent army to face the British to reclaim the independence. And then in 1940, a Burmese youth student named Aung San was issued a warrant by the British government as he led “nationalist movement” during World War II. He escaped and went on to realize his dream of forming an army to fight back the British Empire with the help of Japanese. Aung San was later appointed as a commander of Burmese newly formed army.

After thirty comrades led by Aung San finished military training with the Japanese during World War II, they formed the Burmese Independence Army (BIA) in Thailand in 1941. This was the very first time in 50 years of Burma history since 1885, the new proper Burmese Army was born again by the students and nationalists. BIA solemnly pledged to fight against anyone who would attempt to invade, colonize the country and to retain Independence. After the thirty comrades formed BIA, they marched back to Burma along with the Japanese imperial army.

The BIA's reentry to the country was astounding. The whole country was excited to see their own army for the first time since it was colonized. The army received

enormous support from the public. The number of BIA personnel grew rapidly as everyone was joining along their way. The original thirty comrades were occupied training the new personnel and setting up the administration across the country while the Japanese Imperial army was driving the British back to India. After the Japanese completely controlled the country, they began installing their own administrative system and subsequently, they disbanded BIA and transformed to small scale troops named Burmese Defense Army (BDA) in 1942. Within a year of the new Burmese Army formed, the amount of its troops was cut by force. But they still had their righteous leader, General Aung San, as the commander.

When Burma realized the true intention of the Japanese, which was not to grant genuine independence, the leader called on his fellow people to strike against the fascists. In 1945, BIA renamed Burma National Army (BNA) and joined the Allied sides. Many Burmese around the country joined the BNA and fought bravely, driven by both the hunger for independence and hatred towards fascism. During 1752 to 1945, this was one event in Myanmar history ever recorded that the public's voluntarily eagerness to support and join the army, showed their willingness to take risks and sacrifice for the army led by General Aung San. The BNA successfully achieved victory for the country as they promised. The success story of the founding fathers of the new Burmese Army (the Thirty Comrades) and their leader General Aung San is still told today.

The fall of Burmese Army (1962 – 2021)

Most historians say that the fall of the army was due to General

Had such a democratic system worked in Myanmar, Ne Win, as an army chief, would have been many steps behind the civilian government and would have taken orders from them. Clearly, he did not want to sit back and took orders from the Democratically elected civilian government.

It is important to note that “guns and power can change someone’s mindset, especially in this country”. The collective aim must be to destroy dictatorship, not to become dictators themselves.

Aung San’s assassination. However, the ultimate truth behind the fall of the army was because a group of people in power had nothing but selfishness to take the leadership position. Surprisingly, the person most responsible for the downfall of the army was not a total stranger at all. It was Ne Win, one of the Thirty Comrades who had founded the new Burmese Army, the BIA. Yes, it was him who turned upside down the original objectives of the army and broke all promises to Burmese people.

When Ne Win was at the height of his power, he personally used his capacities to turn against the public to maintain his status. He did not want to return the people’s army to the public although the country was paving the way for a progressive future. Had such a democratic system worked in Myanmar, Ne Win, as an army chief, would have been many steps behind the civilian government and would have taken orders from them. Clearly, he did not want to sit back and took orders from the democratically elected civilian government. Hence, he looted the power from the civilian government in 1962,

and ruled the country under the iron fist for the next twenty six years, until another military coup.

An institution that was formed to be good has turned into an evil form, driven by an individual for his own interests while ignoring the majority. The Myanmar Army, which has served three generations of junta, has been in a state of failure from 1962 till now because of their lack of intention to protect its citizens.

Sunrise from the East (2021 – Present)

“We are self-propelled/we are self-driven” was a famous slogan during the 2021 spring revolution. This slogan expresses the people’s desire to resist the army’s latest coup by any means. And it has been proven right as Myanmar people did not have to wait 50 years to boast a proper army. They do not have just one but many. As it stands, the country now boasts not only one General Aung San but hundreds like him. For the second time, historians witness another groundswell of public eagerness and support for strike forces recently formed countrywide to resist junta troops. Again, civilians put their lives in risk by holding the quotes “Nothing to lose but the chains”, joined several resistance forces including People’s Defence Forces (PDF) to revolt completely against the cruel, violent and undeterred armed forces of all time in this country. For those who can’t join the physical fight, many support financially, joining social campaigns, etc.

There are over a hundred striking forces from urban guerrillas, local militias, and regional resistance to PDF forces that emerged after the 2021 spring revolution. Every force’s ultimate goal is to annihilate this parasitic army that has

drained the people’s wealth and prosperity since Ne Win’s era. There is an irony there, as once Ne Win was also part of the original group when Burmese Army was formed. He even took a blood oath along with other founding fathers. Hence, it is important to note that “guns and power can change someone’s mindset, especially in this country”. The collective aim must be to destroy dictatorship, not to become dictators themselves.

The Royal Burmese Army was formed by Alaungpaya in 1752 and destroyed by the British in 1885. It took 57 years for Burmese to see the national recognized proper army once again when General Aung San formed it. However, Ne Win destroyed what General Aung San had built in just 21 years and he and his successors established their wealth and greed using the army for many years. In 2021, when Min Aung Hlaing attempted to stage a coup, it only took a couple of months for millennials and Generation Z to build armies with immense support and ultimate sacrifice from the people of Myanmar. This time, hopefully, whoever holds the great power of armies will learn a lesson from history and not easily destroy what they have built from scratch. Each and every army has cost tens of thousands of liters of tears and sweats from the public over the decades. If someone destroys this sunrise that has just risen up, nobody knows how many decades it would take to rebuild again.

The formation of each army must be to fight against anarchy, not to destroy the hopes of the people.



Recent Shifts in Politics : An Interview with an Analyst

July was eventful, with resistance forces occupying the regime's stations left and right. Meanwhile, the regime made its own progress, with Min Aung Hlaing appointing himself as president. We spoke with a long-time Myanmar journalist to understand his take on recent events.

MM: What is your opinion on Min Aung Hlaing appointing himself as the President?

Journalist: Many believe Min Aung Hlaing is satisfied after appointing himself as the acting president. However, I see it differently. This was a last resort to navigate the political crisis within his ranks. It's ironic that he ended up as the acting president through unofficial means, highlighting his political decline

since the coup. Despite holding top positions in the State Administration Council (SAC), the cabinet, and the coup team, he transferred the president's role to the Commander-in-Chief (himself) by manipulating the 2008 Constitution, especially with the puppet vice president critically ill. This move shows his lack of trust in any close allies to assume the acting President's role. One thing is certain: nothing can halt or delay the revolution of the Myanmar people today, in 2024. Everyone, including ethnic groups, understands that not only Min Aung Hlaing but also his entire military regime can no longer remain in power.

MM: What is your remark on the SAC's bombing of Laukkaing Town while the Myanmar

National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), one of the leading forces of the Northern Alliances, was conquering Lashio?

Journalist: The last remaining strength of the Myanmar army, which has deteriorated in every aspect, is its Air Force. Though not up to international standards, it still poses a significant threat to ethnic armies. In my view, the air bombing on Laukkaing, the unofficial capital of MNDAA, is a strategy of intimidation. A military general from the SAC peace team once stated that they do not care how many cities or townships are conquered and controlled by others. They will attack them with airstrikes and bombings as they wish, without regard for the cities or civilians.

As long as Min Aung Hlaing and his army possess this brutal air force, not only Laukkaing but every other town and village under Myanmar's airspace remains in danger. Our people must learn how to defend against and prevent airstrikes and bombings.

MM: The Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) is also conquering townships with great momentum. Their general, Tar Bhone Kyaw, even stated, "This is not a boxing match to take a break." What do you think of that statement?

Journalist: The Three Brotherhood Alliances—TNLA, MNDAA, and AA—understand they have certain restrictions. In my view, the TNLA general mocked the SAC with that statement. The weakened SAC frequently sought help from Beijing, their perceived referee, to halt the Northern Alliances' attacks. If the SAC were in a stronger position, the alliances wouldn't expect a similar chance. That's why the TNLA general mocked the SAC, which hoped for a stalemate through the referee's intervention. Additionally,

he might be sending a message to the self-interested Beijing government.

MM: The Arakan Army (AA) took over Ngapali and then Thandwe. Do you think they will conquer the entire Rakhine State within this year?

Journalist: It's too early to say for Rakhine State, which has many race-based wounds. For example, the southern Rakhine Thandwe raid and the northern Rakhine Maungdaw raid. The AA faced strong defence from the SAC at Maungdaw, nearly halting their attack. Situated next to the Ayeyarwady Region, known as the SAC's "Green Land," AA cannot cut off the SAC's supply route of manpower, rations, and weapons to Rakhine via Nga Thine Chaung/Gwa road. Additionally, in Maungdaw, the SAC has armed ARSA and increased the number of Muslim Armed Forces, which slowed down the AA's attack. Fortify Rights reported that Muslim refugees from Bangladesh camps have returned to Rakhine and joined ARSA. This is bad news for AA and their Arakan

dream.

MM: Lastly, we witnessed the prominent activist Dr. Tayzar San sneaking back into Mandalay City, a tightly guarded place, for a guerrilla protest. Any thoughts on this move?

Journalist: It's a bold move that sends a strong message to the SAC, effectively balancing the Spring Revolution's political and striking wings. Setting aside the armed victories of the resistance forces, a political leader like him, trusted by our citizens, bravely landing back in a city with Regional Command bases and making a public statement demonstrates the passion and determination of the young people and the entire country for this revolution. Dr. Tayzar San reactivates and stimulates a politically weary populace burdened by worries and struggles. As a journalist closely following the Myanmar Revolution, and as a citizen, I am delighted and proud of him and his actions. I am proud to have a leader like him in our generation, following the generation of '88.



Highlights of the Armed Resistance

In July, the resistance forces made significant strides, reportedly capturing five major towns. The second wave of Operation 1027 was a focal point, with the Arakan Army (AA) demonstrating relentless momentum. Below is a detailed recap of the key military events:

Skirmishes and Defense Preparations in Mandalay

On July 15, a clash occurred near Kyauktada Village in Mattaya Township, just 17 miles from Mandalay City. The regime responded by blocking the Mandalay-Mattaya highway and deploying aircraft, fueling speculations that Mandalay might soon become a major battlefield. As the second wave of Operation 1027 escalates, the junta has been fortifying Mandalay City. Notably, following the TNLA and its allies' capture of Naungcho Town in northern Shan State, Pyin Oo Lwin, which hosts major military training academies, is now the only major town between Naungcho and Mandalay. Local sources have reported that the junta is relocating soldiers' families into the palace and expanding military stations in high-rise buildings, indicating preparations for potential intensified conflict in Mandalay.

MDY-PDF Controls Singu Town, Mandalay Region

On July 17, the MDY-PDF (Mandalay Region People's Defense Force) captured Singu Town, situated 54 miles from Mandalay City. This marked a significant milestone, as Singu became the first town in Mandalay Region to fall under resistance control. Despite the regime's efforts to recapture the town through navy ships and airstrikes until the evening of

July 19, the MDY-PDF maintained their hold. During their capture of the Htone Gyi Police Station in the town, about 50 soldiers were detained for questioning and charged according to the MDY-PDF's code of conduct. Although there were casualties on the PDF side, the exact number was not disclosed. Despite false claims by military supporters and lobbyists that the junta had recaptured Singu, an MDY-PDF spokesperson confirmed on July 22 that the resistance forces remained in control.

TNLA & Allies Make Significant Gains in Shan and Mandalay Regions

On July 10, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the PDF seized control of the regime's Missile Battalion 606 headquarters, located two miles south of Naungcho Town in northern Shan State. Despite airstrikes by the regime, the soldiers eventually abandoned the station, allowing allied forces to gain majority control of the town. Within two weeks, the TNLA and their allies also captured Naungcho and the western part of Mogok.

In a subsequent offensive, the TNLA announced on July 24 that it had captured Mogok Town in Mandalay Region as part of the second wave of Operation 1027. The campaign, which began on June 25, saw the public warmly welcoming the TNLA and PDF rangers as they entered the town. The TNLA and its allies had also captured the neighboring Naungcho Township on July 10, where clashes continue.

On July 31, the TNLA captured the regime's strategic hill in Mong-

mit, effectively gaining control of the entire town. The offensive, which started on July 24, took one week to capture all regime stations in the area. Mongmit became the third town captured by the TNLA in the second wave of Operation 1027, following Naungcho and Mogok. The TNLA is continuing its attacks on the remaining regime stations in Kyaukme.

MNDAA Captures Northeastern Command Headquarters in Lashio

On July 25, resistance forces led by the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) announced the capture of the junta's Northeastern Command headquarters in Lashio, Shan State (north). This victory marked the complete liberation of Lashio, a strategically important trading town, from regime control. The capture came 23 days after the campaign's initiation and three days after regime leader Min Aung Hlaing appointed himself president. Approximately 200 regime personnel, including majors and officers, surrendered to the MNDAA. The MNDAA has encouraged health, education, and administrative staff to continue serving the public. However, clashes reportedly continue in Lashio due to remaining regime soldiers scattered across the town.

AA Pushes for Control in Rakhine State

On July 14, the Arakan Army (AA) captured the Kanyin Chaung Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Maungdaw Township, Rakhine State. This SEZ, located two miles north of Maungdaw Town and defended by at least 200 troops, saw many soldiers flee during

the AA's assault. In response, the regime launched airstrikes. The Kanyin Chaung SEZ, one of two key border economic hubs trading with Bangladesh, has been inactive since November due to ongoing clashes. The AA is now intensifying efforts to capture Maungdaw Town, where only one regime station remains, while soldiers and armed Rohingyas

are dispersed inside and around the town.

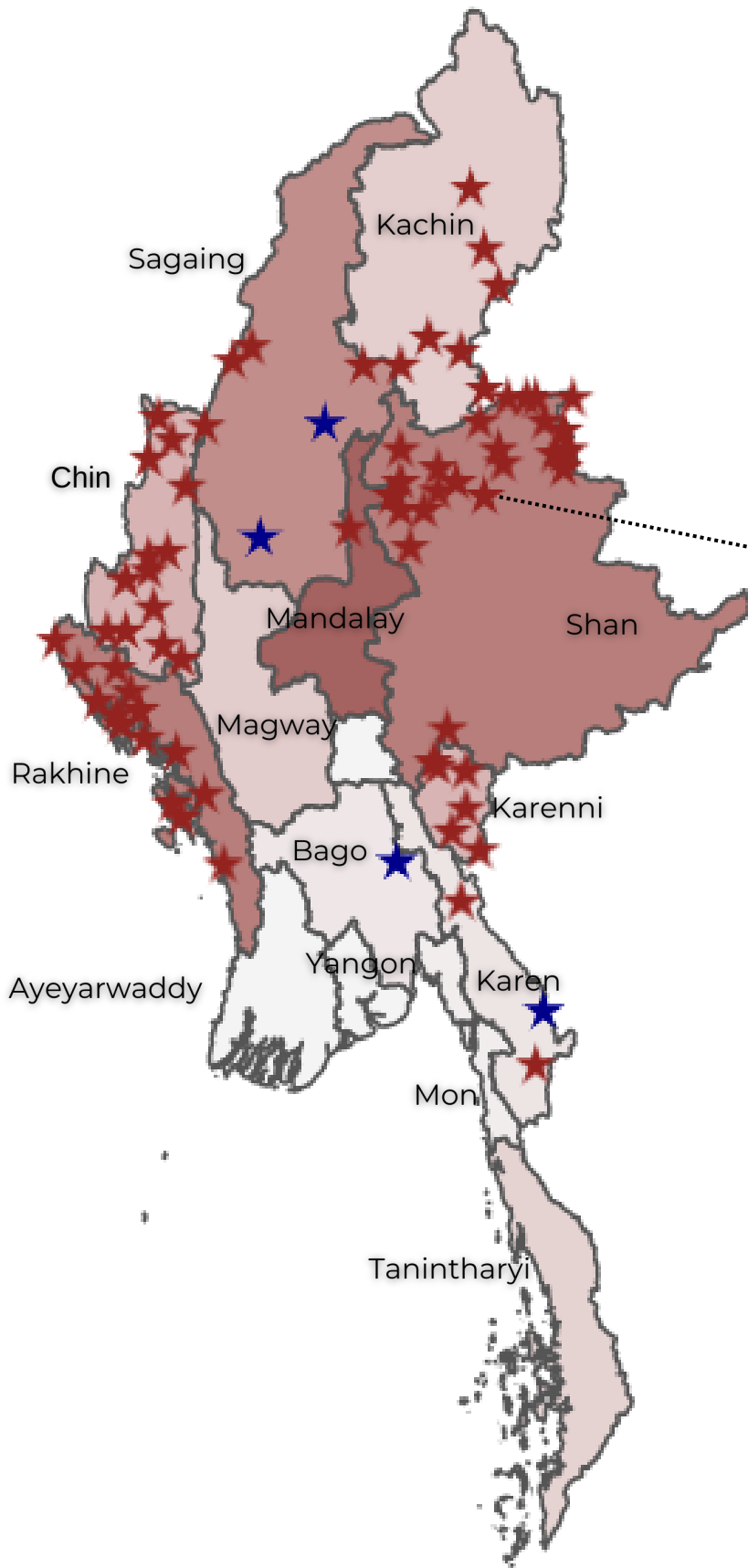
Additionally, the AA has focused on Thandwe Town, which they reportedly captured as of the evening of July 12. The regime retaliated with aerial strikes targeting civilian areas and Thandwe Prison. Previously, the AA had seized two regime stations (Light In-

fantry Battalion 566 and Infantry Battalion 55) at Ngapali Beach, gaining control over the area and its 65 hotels, including a Russian hotel project. Meanwhile, the regime is bolstering defenses in southern Rakhine State, including Gwa, Taunggok, and Man Aung, where the AA has not yet launched offensives.

I can't believe the global warming is starting to affect us.



People's Resistance War in July



23
CASUALTIES FROM
RESISTANCE FORCES

2239
CASUALTIES
FROM SAC

1223
REGIME SOLDIERS
SURRENDERED



Junta's North Eastern Command headquarters was occupied by resistance forces in Lashio, Shan-north. The first of its kind since the coup.

No. of Skirmishes



Towns captured and controlled by resistance forces



Towns recaptured by the regime

Sources: NUG, Khit Thit Media

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Crimes Against Humanity

4

mass killings (at least) were committed by Min Aung Hlaing's soldiers in July.

Five villagers brutally murdered by regime soldiers in Mingin tsp, Sagaing Region

On July 16, junta soldiers raided Tumara Village in Mingin Township, Sagaing Region. During the raid, they abducted and brutally killed five villagers. The victims were 60-year-old U Tin Win, 50-year-old U Win Swe, and 38-year-olds Ko Chit Ko, Ma Myo Myo Win, and Ma Hla Lay Nwe. A survivor recounted that six people, including his wife, were cut and murdered by the soldiers in cold blood; he was the only one who escaped. It's unknown why they were targeted but the reason of the raid was speculated to be a precaution to the anticipated PDF capture of the area.

Seven IDPs murdered by armed Muslims in Buthidaung tsp, Rakhine State

On July 19, seven bodies were found by Arakan Army (AA) soldiers and villagers in Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State. The victims, U Hla Tun, U Kyaw Hla, U Maung Tun, U Aung Gyi, U Maung Maung, U Tun Naing Oo, and U Kyar Tun Oo, had gone to pick bamboo shoots but never returned home. The first three were found with bullet wounds and their hands tied behind their backs, while the rest had knife wounds. They were reportedly killed by Muslims in the area, who had been trained and armed by regime soldiers. Although Buthidaung is now free of junta soldiers, armed Muslims loyal to the army remain present.

Regime's airstrike killed 16 including children in Kyaikmaraw tsp, Mon State

On Martyrs' Day (July 19), the junta's army conducted an aerial strike in Mon State, targeting civilians. The incident occurred around 10:15 am at the junction of Hlwasinkone Village and a monastery in Kyaikmaraw Township. Two fighter jets dropped bombs, killing 16 people, including children and a pregnant woman. Local sources reported that the jets hovered for a while before dropping the bombs, ensuring they hit the target precisely.



Artillery explosion killed five in Thandwe tsp, Rakhine State

On July 20, an artillery shell fired by regime soldiers exploded in a civilian neighborhood in Abe Village, Thandwe Township, Rakhine State. The explosion killed five internally displaced persons (IDPs) who had fled conflict areas seeking safety in the village. The artillery was fired just before a clash with the Arakan Army (AA) broke out in the area, leading to this tragedy.

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