

## LOCALS FEAR A RETURN OF BURMESE ARMY TACTICS OF ARRESTING AND CONSCRIPTING VILLAGERS



September 14, 2021

**HURFOM:** The Burmese army has a long history of forcefully conscripting villagers to be used as a human shield and serve as unpaid labourers. International bodies and non-governmental bodies have documented these practices dating back to the era when the State Law and Order Restoration Council ruled Burma.

Locals now fear these practices have returned since the military coup of February 1, 2021.

As military tensions have increased in Mon State, there are reports of the Burmese army arresting villagers and using them as porters. Local people have expressed their fear of this development.

Since September 7th when the National Unity Government (NUG) announced the beginning of the people's revolution, the military council's security forces have been even more active in urban and rural areas resulting in more and more "porter news".

There have been more armed clashes since September 7th and the Burmese army continues arresting, torturing and killing people, even employing them in the military activities, and using them


[Read more on page 2>>](#)

## JUNE 2021 SITUATION OVERVIEW

  
**The Human Rights  
Foundation of  
Monland**

June 2021 Situation Overview

 Monthly Overview  
of Violations in  
Target Areas

 Overview and  
Field-Based  
Insights

 Data Visualizations

[Read more on page 5 >>](#)

## PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM COLLAPSES: PUBLIC HELPLESS IN FIGHT WITH COVID-19



uly 27, 2021

**HURFOM:** The public health system of Mon State has collapsed during the third wave of COVID-19. High infection rates and deaths have left the public helpless in the fight against the pandemic.

In response to the coup, health workers have left their workplaces, and public hospitals do not have enough beds to accept COVID-19 patients. Private clinics have also closed due to the large number of cases.

The health system has failed to screen suspected patients with rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) and has been unable to implement effective quarantine protocols. The price of medicinal drugs has risen sharply, and related equipment is often out of stock.

Some communities have imposed "COVID-19 gates" at the entrance of their villages and restricted peoples

[Read more on page 2>>](#)

## LOCALS FEAR A RETURN OF BURMESE ARMY TACTICS OF ARRESTING AND CONSCRIPTING VILLAGERS



as a human shield while burning down villages.

**“We’ve heard very often the Burmese army arrested villagers in towns and villages to use them as porters. We can’t confirm if the news is true or not. But, men in our village haven’t slept at home, instead finding other places to stay at**

**night. They are afraid of being arrested and used as porters,”** said a local villager from a village in Mudon Township.

On September 10, local residents from the township were informed that the soldiers would make a night arrest and that the “Burmese army was collecting porters”. This news quickly spread to other villages

The security forces have been seen arresting young people at night in Mudon, Thanbyuzayat and Ye.

**“The news that “Burmese army was collecting porters” isn’t true, I think. The soldiers arrested anti-coup activists and young people at night and also the security forces with full military uniforms did a night check so that the people thought soldiers were collecting porters at night,”** said a member of Thanbyuzayat Township General Administration Team.

## TOTAL POLITICAL PRISONERS RELEASED IN HURFOM AREAS

### ANALYSIS

On 30 June, the junta announced there would be over 2000 prisoners released from various prisons around the country. Most families were made aware of the news through social media and word of mouth. They came to wait outside the prisons, some as early as 5 AM. In the midst of a worsening public health crisis in Burma, they spent the day hopeful that familiar faces of loved ones would greet them as they walked through the gates. Journalists and rights defenders – who should have never been imprisoned – were released, including several charged under sections of the Penal Code.

In HURFOM target areas, very few political activists and rights defenders were among those released. Our fieldworkers have been speaking with civilians impacted by the junta’s violence and lawlessness. Families are distraught as they worry about the safety of sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, and friends who are taken away in handcuffs. Many do not know where those arrested have been detained. HURFOM calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained. Their unlawful arrests speak to the fear the junta is trying to evoke and it must not be tolerated.

### TOTAL POLITICAL PRISONERS RELEASED IN HURFOM AREAS



July 1, 2021

**Mawlamyine:** HURFOM is relieved that some political prisoners in our target areas of **#Karen #Mon #Dawei** were released yesterday. However, many more remain behind bars for their pro-democracy activities. Peaceful protest is not a crime and yet the junta locks up anyone who defies their rule.

### Analysis

On 30 June, the junta announced there would be over 2,000 prisoners released from various prisons around the country. Most families were made aware of the news through social media and word of mouth. They came to wait outside the prisons, some as early as 5 AM. In the midst of a worsening public health crisis in Burma, they spent the day hopeful that familiar faces of loved ones would greet them as they walked through the gates. Journalists and rights defenders – who should have never been imprisoned – were released, including several charged under sections of the Penal Code.

In HURFOM target areas, very few political activists and rights defenders were among those released. Our fieldworkers have been speaking with civilians impacted by the junta’s violence and lawlessness. Families are distraught as they worry about the safety of sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, and friends who are taken away in handcuffs. Many do not know where those arrested have been detained.

HURFOM calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained. Their unlawful arrests speak to the fear the junta is trying to evoke, and it must not be tolerated.

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### In this issue

- **News :** Junta’s MOHS not providing COVID-19 testing even in high risk townships
- **News :** COVID-19 death toll reaches new record in Mon State

- **HURFOM REPORT:** The Human Rights Foundation of Monland Expresses Concern Over Junta’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in latest briefing paper, “Running Out of Air”
- **News:** COVID-19 patients rely on charity groups for oxygen



## PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM COLLAPSES: PUBLIC HELPLESS IN FIGHT WITH COVID-19



movements resulting in delays or simple stopping the transportation of food and medicine.

***"The third wave is different from the first and second ones. The symptoms are severe. There have been an inadequate number of doctors, so proper treatment can not be provided. We don't want to blame the doctors even though there have been lots of weaknesses as they'd tried their best,"*** said one covid 19 patient.

As the hospitals and clinics have closed, others in need of healthcare assistance including pregnant women have been struggling to get health service.

***"I'm a pregnant mother so I have to visit the doctor regularly. But the clinic I've visited has closed till the end of the month. If I feel an illness at the moment, I will be in trouble,"*** said a resident from Mawlamyine.

The rapid spread of the virus has outpaced the ability to screen individuals with RDTs across Mon State. Only fever clinics are equipped to provide a COVID-19 test, and only for patients with severe symptoms.

***"Most private clinics have closed due to COVID-19. The Mawlamyine General Hospital has opened but it has only few staff. Because they have to prioritize the COVID-19 patients, other patients are in trouble. The health system is in a state of chaos,"*** said a Ye resident.

Individuals who lose their sense of smell and taste (symptoms of the infection) are urged to stay home and avoid contact with others.

There has been a high demand for basic medicines, and prices have risen sharply.

***"Most of the pharmacy shops were closed in Mawlamyine. Some big shops have provided service but not for the whole day. The price has unexpectedly risen. We could get a card of paracetamol with 600 Kyat before, but now it costs 1,500 or 1,700 Kyat,"*** said a resident from Mawlamyine.

Analgesic, antipyretic and cough suppressant drugs and vitamins have been either out of stock or can only be bought with limitations.

***"Not only me but every patient has trouble now. We have to pay an***

***unreasonable price for medicines. But we have no choice as it's a health issue,"*** said a woman from Mawlamyine.

While there has been no assistance forthcoming from the military, in many communities villagers and young people have organized self-reliance health teams to assist.

Mawlamyine-based Thar Thanar Nwe Foundation has created a mobile clinic program and is providing a free health service that comes to people's homes. But the program can accept only 20 patients per day.

In another community to help control the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the local administrative body, a community health team and a youth charity group installed a COVID-19 check gate at the entrance of their village and has put in place limited movement protocols.

At the COVID-19 check gate in Kaw Dut village, Ye Township, Mon State individuals are not allowed to enter the village. The transportation of food and medicine to Kalagote Island was also stopped leaving villagers in trouble.

***"We patrolled the village and announced with loudspeakers how to prevent COVID-19, how to receive treatment and what health measures to follow. If there are suspected patients or a person who has lost their sense of smell or taste, the "village COVID-19 control team" will take care of everything,"*** said a young volunteer with a community based COVID-19 prevention team.

***"Most private clinics have closed due to COVID-19. The Mawlamyine General Hospital has opened but it has only few staff. Because they have to prioritize the COVID-19 patients, other patients are in trouble. The health system is in a state of chaos,"***

## News

# JUNE 2021 SITUATION OVERVIEW



## The Human Rights Foundation of Monland

June 2021 Situation Overview



**Monthly Overview of Violations in Target Areas**



**Overview and Field-Based Insights**



**Data Visualizations**

July 2, 2021

HURFOM, Mawlamyine: In June HURFOM observed pro-democracy activists targeted alongside increasing midnight arrests in Mon State, Karen State and Dawei. Our monthly breakdown spotlights these injustices, which are ongoing & continue to unjustly target civilians. See in full: <http://ow.ly/Dmi650FnFAF>

### ANALYSIS

Over the last month, multiple tragedies have unfolded in Burma which have explicitly targeted civilians. Unlawful arrests, particularly at night, are on the rise in HURFOM target areas. Despite a release of political prisoners at the end of the month, very few from Mon State, Karen State and Dawei region were freed, particularly political

prisoners. The internal conflict which has waged across Burma's ethnic states are also contributing to a humanitarian crisis where hundreds of thousands of civilians are displaced.

On World Refugee Day, HURFOM released a briefing paper titled, **DISPLACEMENT ON THE RISE: A Crisis in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi Region** which observed the chaos and instability of the current situation inflicted by junta security forces. Their brazen attacks on civilians are being perpetrated with impunity. With the military in control of key government ministries, there is no law. There are no domestic mechanisms of accountability being upheld. The violations are ongoing and have led to at least 1000 residents (in HURFOM target areas) fleeing daily threats and violence. The lack of security in these areas only exacerbates people's fears. Many are forced to relocate at least temporarily as they hope for conflict to end so that they can return safely to their communities.

The international community must use their leverage to hold the Burma Army accountable to put an end to the economic and human rights crisis they are responsible for.

# PRICE OF RICE INCREASES AS RUMOUR OF LOCKDOWN CIRCULATES



July 6, 2021

**HURFOM:** The number of COVID-19 cases has dramatically increased during the third wave and there is a rumor that the authorities may lockdown some specific wards or villages in order to control the spread of the virus.

The number of COVID-19 patients and the death toll in Mawlamyine and

Thanbyuzayat has been increasing day after day. On July 3, five COVID-19 patients died in Mawlamyine General Hospital and 15 patients already passed away in Mon State in 2021.

The five wards in Thanbyuzayat have been put under a "Stay at Home" order and restaurants in some townships have been ordered to operate only via "Take Away" system.

People are afraid of commodity shortages and are starting to buy and store rice, resulting in a sharp price increase. A bag of rice is now 5,000 Kyat.

***"We've heard that if the infection rate of the virus continues, Mawlamyine and Thanbyuzayat will be locked down soon. So people are collecting the***

***commodities. That's why the price of rice has sharply increased,"*** said a member of a charity group in Mudon.

In June, the price of a 100-lb rice bag was about 35,000 Kyat but that same month, people were paying 40,000 Kyat.

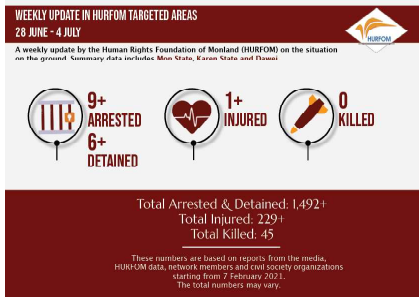
***"The commodity price shouldn't rise during the COVID-19. The more the disease spreads, the more people are in trouble. There are movement restrictions and a decline of income. People can't afford food. So the authorities should control the commodity price,"*** continued the member of the charity group.

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## News

## WEEKLY UPDATE IN HURFOM TARGETED AREAS (28 JUNE – 4 JULY 2021)



July 5, 2021

A weekly update by the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) on the situation on the ground. Summary data includes Mon State, Karen State and Dawei Region.

### Weekly Analysis

As life under the junta's rule reaches another month, HURFOM is still reporting increasing numbers of civilians being arbitrarily arrested, detained and victimised by the regime. Most of those targeted are young people, especially those active in protesters. Of those arrested, two were from Mawlamyine, two from Mudon, two from Paung, two from Dawei, and one from Hpa-An.

Civilians from Dawei were forced to pay junta security at various tollgates for travel permission. The amount ranged

from 3,000 to 10,000 kyat. The payments are bribes, especially for those who cannot provide their national identification cards. Meanwhile, movement restrictions are still rampant between Mon and Thanintharyi regions. Of additional concern is the military's Coastal Regional Command, based in Dawei, which deployed more troops with heavy artillery and ammunition to Yebyu township, and Dawei.

Villagers from four villages in Mudon, Mon State, were forced to support militia forces formed by the junta with each household being ordered to pay 1,000 Kyat for their activities.

Alongside the military's devastation is rising COVID-19 cases. The total number of cases increased to over 580 in Mon State, and the death toll rose to 17. Despite this, the junta-appointed Ministry of Education decided to open schools and universities regardless. The decision has been regarded as selfish.

The Mawlamyine University Student Union announced that in a release of political prisoners, no student leaders, protesters or activists were released on 30 June and 1 July.

Approximately 12 guerrilla strikes were organised this week by local youth in Paung, Mudon, northern Ye townships as well as Thayet Chaung, Yebyu, and Long Lone in Tanintharyi Region.

**CIVILIANS FORCED TO  
PAY EXCESSIVE BRIBES  
AND ARE EXTORTED BY  
THE JUNTA SECURITY  
FORCES**

**2 CASES OF  
DISAPPEARANCES**  
**3 CIVILIANS SENTENCED  
TO 2 YEARS IN PRISON  
UNDER SECTION 505A  
OF THE PENAL CODE**

## JUNTA'S MOHS NOT PROVIDING COVID-19 TESTING EVEN IN HIGH RISK TOWNSHIPS



July 13, 2021

**HURFOM:** As of July 11, 2021, there have been more than 2,600 COVID-19 cases and 80 deaths in Mon State.

Mawlamyine and Thanbyuzayat Townships have the highest rate of infections. Meanwhile, the junta-controlled Ministry of Health and Sport

(MOHS) has failed to open COVID-19 diagnostic centers in those townships.

*"Mawlamyine and Thanbyuzayat have the most patients. But there is no diagnostic center from the junta. People come and go as usual. We have to control things ourselves. The junta's MOHS has only released statements but is not taking any protective measures,"* said a member of a rescue team active in Mawlamyine and Thanbyuzayat.

Mawlamyine has many COVID-19 patients and the General Hospital can not accept patients from other townships.

*"We have to take care of our township. We can't send patients to Mawlamyine."*

*There is no space there. Our township has inadequate medical instruments and medicine. We have tons of troubles. We have lots of patients but very few oxygen cylinders,"* said the rescue team member.

After the Mawlamyine authority announced that they could not provide confirmation tests to suspected COVID patients, the junta responded simply by restating MOHS advice that people must follow the recommended protective measures.

During the third wave, there are high rates of infection and casualties and the hospitals are no longer able to accept more patients. There is also a shortage of oxygen cylinders and poor protective measures in place in quarantine centers.

News

# VILLAGERS FEARFUL AS ADMINISTRATOR AND MILITIA CONDUCT NIGHT CHECKS



July 16, 2021

**HURFOM:** In Hnee Padaw village, Mudon Township, Mon State, the junta-appointed village Administrator and members of the local militia group are forcefully entering houses claiming to be conducting ‘night checks’.

*“With the curfew in place, the village has no movement and is in silence after 8 pm. But they (the Administrator and militia) are busy checking houses. They hit the wall of the house to make the owner open the door. We have never experienced this before and they didn’t inform us in advance so we’re frightened. Also we felt angry,”* said one local villager.

In some households, the men and young people are working abroad and only women and old people are left in houses. Often, the intrusions are conducted very late at night leaving residents frightened and feeling unsafe.

*“A man in military uniform and other authorities entered my grandma’s house and did a check at night. The Administrator was not present at that time. They surrounded the house. After the check, they said they would come back to check if there is any visitor or stranger,”* said a local woman.

The homes being targeted are those of social activists, members of charity groups, or those providing support to Mon national education and former Mon soldiers.

It is not uncommon for one home to be repeatedly targeted.

*“Our village has about 1,300 houses. They checked about 20 houses. I experienced a night check (locally called ‘check for visitors/strangers’) twice. They repeatedly checked my house,”* said one villager whose home was entered at 9pm and 10 pm on July 3rd and 10th respectively.

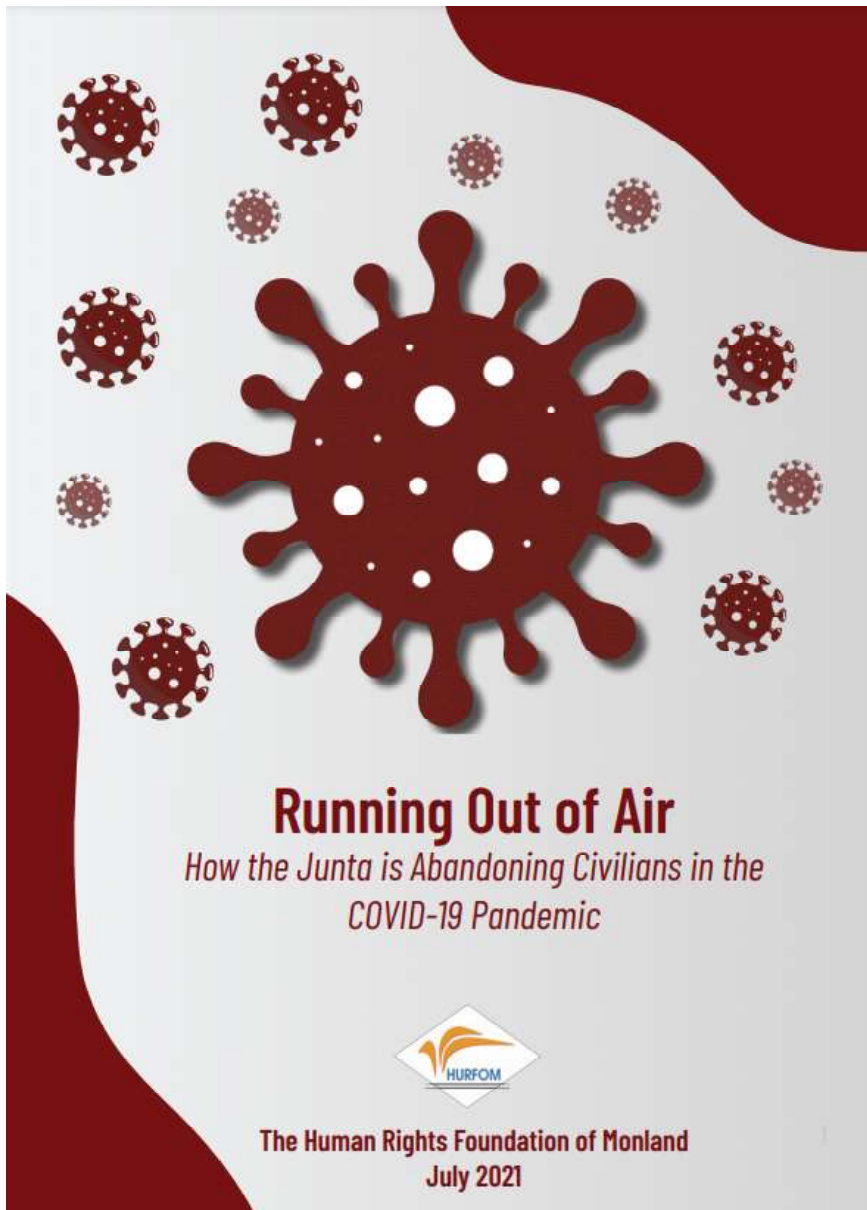
Soon after the coup, the military council amended “the Laws of Village/Ward Administration” and re-imposed “Law of Reporting about Visitors/Strangers” which had been abolished by the NLD government. According to the law, the junta-appointed Administrator can collect 2,000 Kyat per visitor/stranger from the villager. However, the law indicates that prior notice of a check is required.

*“The government must follow the law and they should inform us in advance if they want to make a night check. They do not provide advance notice. We want to live peacefully and we don’t want something messy at night,”* said a Hnee Padaw villager.

In a blatant abuse of the “Law of Reporting about Visitors/Strangers”, the junta’s security forces are forcefully invading houses and arresting members of political parties, activists and those who oppose the military coup.

## HURFOM REPORT

## THE HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION OF MONLAND EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER JUNTA'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN LATEST BRIEFING PAPER, "RUNNING OUT OF AIR"



July 22, 2021

**HURFOM, Mawlamyine:** A new briefing paper by the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), *"Running Out of Air: How the Junta in Burma is Abandoning Civilians in the COVID-19 Pandemic,"* finds that the Burma Army is ill-equipped to handle the response to COVID-19. Since the military seized power in a coup on 1 February, the lives of civilians have been under constant attack. Hundreds have been killed by state-sponsored forces and thousands remain imprisoned for their role in pro-democracy activities, include health care providers. With multiple crises unfolding nationwide, the junta's poor handling of the pandemic threatens to only worsen the already dire situation in the country. ([Download in Eng](#))

In HURFOM target areas of Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region, hospitals and various health infrastructure are running out of supplies. This has crippled civilian livelihoods who are struggling to access oxygen, masks and medicine from pharmacies. With prices of material goods increasing, and the junta blocking all pathways to access life-saving support, civilians are being

pushed to the brink of survival. Our findings indicate that the military is deliberating excluding the most vulnerable from access to healthcare, in order to preserve their own interests.

HURFOM is greatly concerned for the people of Burma. A lack of effective coordination to secure life-saving access to personal protective equipment and medical supplies has resulted in human lives paying the cost for the junta's negligence. Without an immediate recourse in the response plan, the situation on the ground is only likely to worsen. Health providers must be protected and civilians guaranteed pathways to accessible, affordable care. Millions are at risk, and they are running out of options. HURFOM calls for immediate, urgently needed intervention by the international community and for regional actors including the Association of South East Asian Nations. The people of Burma cannot afford to wait any longer.

### For more information:

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*Running Out of Air: How the Junta in Burma is Abandoning Civilians in the COVID-19 Pandemic*



## News

# COVID-19 DEATH TOLL REACHES NEW RECORD IN MON STATE



Photo: Zin Moe

July 7, 2021

**HURFOM:** The third wave of COVID-19, has resulted in more than 1,100 patients as of July 6, 2021 and the death rate is high, according to the local sources.

*"The death rate is more than that in the second wave and the virus has spread rapidly. In the past, just 50 cases were detected per day but now, we've found about 100 new cases daily,"* said

Ko Zin Moe from a rescue team in Mawlamyine.

Recently, more COVID-19 patients have died. Between July 3rd and the 6th, 22 individuals died due to the virus. The age range of the deceased was from 35 to 80 and most were from Mawlamyine Township.

Since February 1, there have been 38 documented deaths due to COVID-19.

*"There is a shortage of oxygen in the (Mawlamyine) hospital and the patients with the underlying conditions can't also battle COVID-19. Therefore, the death rate is high,"* continued Ko Zin Moe.

The Mawlamyine hospital has been full with the COVID-19 patients and an extra ward was needed to handle the case load.

Even though the death rate has been high, the military authority has not issued any directives to close schools.

*"They ordered the restaurants to only operate using a "Take Away System" and some wards were put under "Stay at Home" order. But they haven't closed the schools. Now, there have been more COVID-19 patients in Thanbyuzayat. In villages, only the teachers come to school while the students stay at home,"* said a local resident from Thanbyuzayat Township.

The main cause of the high death rate during the third wave of COVID-19 is due to low blood oxygen levels in patients. Hospitals across Burma do not have sufficient oxygen cylinders or beds for the growing number of patients.

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# PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR COVID-19, TRIPLES IN PRICE DURING THIRD WAVE IN MON STATE



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July 9, 2021

**HURFOM:** The rise of Covid-19 cases and an increasing death rate is impacting the price of personal protective equipment (PPE).

According to the local sources, the price for PPE items like hand sanitizer, face masks and related shielding has tripled in price. Some PPE is even out of stock due to the high demand.

*"Previously, the price for a box of disposable face masks was between 1,000 or 1,500 Kyat, but now a box of surgical masks is priced at 2,500 or even 3,000 Kyat. In some medical stores they are out of stock. Customers have to order two or three days in advance,"* said a store owner from Thanbyuzayat.

Case counts have been increasing in Mon State, resulting in the Ministry of Health and Sport issuing a "Stay at Home" order effective July 7th.

*"The disease will spread more and more. "Stay at Home" orders make it difficult to travel and PPE is expensive and even out of stock. The situation is getting harder and harder,"* said a chemist in Mudon.

As of July 8, 1,800 COVID-19 positive patients were detected in Mon State and nearly 50 had died from the virus.

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## News

# COVID-19 PATIENTS RESORT TO QUESTIONABLE HOME TREATMENTS AND PRICES OF IMMUNE SUPPLEMENTS RISE



July 28, 2021

**HURFOM:** Increasing case counts from the third wave of COVID-19 has meant that public hospitals are unable to accept all COVID-19 patients. An increasing number of persons are taking home treatments and immune supplements. The price for these products has risen sharply, and in many cases are either out of stock or limited.

However, the Mayo Clinic based in the US, and other respected medical sources have pointed out that supplements like vitamin C, zinc, green tea or echinacea which are thought to boost the immune system are unlikely to prevent you from getting sick from Covid-19.

***“Now the spread of the virus is everywhere and people are afraid of being infected so they’re aggressively buying immune booster medications. Those who have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 are taking such treatments at home and people have started keeping these medicines at home. That’s why there is a high demand of COVID-19 related medicines in the market,”*** said a pharmacist in Thanbyuzayat.

A medic from Mudon Township also indicated that immune booster

supplements were out of stock at the moment.

***“There are no supplements in the market. People are aggressively buying popular immune boosters but it’s very difficult to get ones,”*** said the medic.

According to Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases says that most “so-called immune boosting supplements” actually do “nothing.”

Despite the science cautioning people about taking immune supplements, products such as Ceovit, Enervon-C, Vice and other vitamin-c related supplements and analgesic medicine such as “Biogesic” are out of stock.

***“You can’t buy any popular immune supplements. They’re out of stock. We also can’t order the supplements,”*** said a pharmacist from Thanbyuzayat.

COVID-19 related medicines and immune supplements have doubled or tripled in price. A pill of Enervon-C is priced at 800 Kyat now. A card of “Biogesic” tablets which was priced

at 1,000 Kyat before is now priced at 3,500 Kyat. A 700-kyat Ceovit is now priced at 1,500 Kyat. No stockpiling is permitted as there are limits on what can be purchased.

Even delicacies like bird’s nest soup are thought to be helpful, however, there is no scientific evidence or research that has been done to suggest this is an effective treatment or preventive measure against Covid-19. Currently no cure exists for Covid, but the vaccines are capable of reducing the severity of the virus.

***“We’ve ordered “Bird’s Nest” (a soup made from the dissolved nest of the swiftlet bird)) but haven’t received it yet. The product hasn’t been imported for three weeks. We don’t know what the price will be,”*** said a seller from Thanbyuzayat.

As a result of the military coup, the public health system has collapsed and the public hospitals have no beds to accept the COVID-19 patients. The military junta also controls the availability of oxygen which is essential in COVID-19 treatment.

***Now the spread of the virus is everywhere and people are afraid of being infected so they’re aggressively buying immune booster medications. Those who have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 are taking such treatments at home and people have started keeping these medicines at home. That’s why there is a high demand of COVID-19 related medicines in the market***

News

# VOLUNTARY LOCKDOWNS MEASURES FAIL TO CONTROL OF COVID-19: JUNTA OFFERS NO SUPPORTS



July 30, 2021

**HRUFOM:** As the third wave of COVID-19 hits communities across the country, members of local emergency teams are urging anyone who was in contact with a Covid-19 patient to self-quarantine.

***"If a positive patient is found, those who have contact with him/her must take protective measures themselves. They have to arrange food for themselves. If they have relatives, (they can assist, but must avoid close contact and wear PPE),"*** said a local resident from Thanbyuzayat who has been in quarantine due to contact with a positive patient.

According to the directives imposed by the junta, if a positive patient is found in a village or ward, anyone who has had contact must self-quarantine, and arrange food for themselves.

Aside from making such statements, neither the military junta nor the Ministry of Health and Sport have offered any programs or support to provide food and treatment, according

to the members of a local emergency rescue team.

***"There is no one who helps a house that is subject to quarantine measures. If you are locked down, you have to take care of everything by yourselves. It isn't systematic so the virus will spread to the whole ward, village and country. A voluntary lockdown system truly doesn't work,"*** said a member of an emergency rescue team from Mudon.

The previous civilian government had offered protective measures and food. In addition, many charity groups also offered support. Since the military junta took control of the country, those in lockdown must take care of everything by themselves. As a result there is hardship.

There has been a spike in COVID-19 cases and the death rate has also increased.

Critics have noted that the military junta has not provided health assistance for COVID-19 patients, leaving people to fend for themselves.

A 14-day lockdown has been imposed by the village COVID-19 control committee in Duyar village, Ye Township, Mon State. The lockdown started on July 29. The committee notified villagers two days prior to the lockdown to collect food to sustain themselves for 14 days.

*"There is no one who helps a house that is subject to quarantine measures. If you are locked down, you have to take care of everything by yourselves. It isn't systematic so the virus will spread to the whole ward, village and country. A voluntary lockdown system truly doesn't work"*



## News

# VACCINATION PROGRAM BEGIN: MET WITH DISTRUST AND POOR PLANNING



August 9, 2021

**HURFOM:** In the last week of July, 2021, Burma started a national Covid-19 vaccination program using the China-made “Sinopharm” vaccine.

Although people have registered to be vaccinated, as rates of infections and deaths have taken a dramatic rise in the 3rd wave of the pandemic, some people are hesitant. People are either distrustful of the military junta and, or skeptical about the quality of the vaccine.

***“I don’t want to be injected with the vaccine provided by the military junta,”*** said a lady from Yebyu Township.

Another resident of Ye Township said, ***“The vaccine provided by the military junta is made in China and we don’t know if it’s good or not. Those who are fully vaccinated are still being infected by the virus. We don’t trust the (quality of) the vaccine.”***

The junta has prioritized specific categories of people to be the first to receive the vaccine. The list includes, elders (65 years of age or older), religious members, government staff and health workers, members of emergency rescue teams and charity groups, detainees and the prisoners,

restaurant staff and workers with private companies.

How the junta has established these classifications and is implementing injections reveals forms of discrimination. For example, a social activist from Ye Town pointed out, ***“The schoolteachers from the government schools can be vaccinated immediately but those from the Mon national schools have to wait a longer time. On July 29, two teachers from the Mon national school had to wait until evening to get vaccinated.”***

In some townships, the process of vaccination has not been well prepared, resulting in large groups clustering together, which increases the risk of infection.

***“The vaccination in our region isn’t systematic. There was a huge crowd that created a huge risk of infection. Then, the authority didn’t make a proper medical check before injecting the vaccine. I heard that those who had underlying health conditions caused by lung diseases and hypertension died after being vaccinated,”*** said a social worker from Lamine and Maw Ka Nin region.

Local people reported to HURFOM that those who publicly criticized the

quality of the Sinopharm vaccine and urged others not to be vaccinated were threatened by the authorities.

***“Those who got vaccinated didn’t share what they got and also, those who decided not to be vaccinated did not dare reveal their opinion. Because the authority threatened that those who criticized the quality of the vaccine would be punished. Anyhow, just a few people went to get vaccinated here,”*** said a local from Kan Bauk region, Tenasserim Division.

The village/ward authorities used loudspeakers with a message that urges people to register for their vaccination. However, these efforts have not been very successful. Many people remain skeptical of the military junta, others have underlying health conditions and worry about side effects, and even more people remain unvaccinated as they live in remote areas, with few if any travel options.

A villager close to the Lamine General Administration Department, Ye Township, remarked that his community only learned that elders were on the priority list to receive the vaccine from secondary sources. He added, ***“Those who are close to the village/ward authorities will know first, but most of the villagers knew nothing about the vaccination program.”***

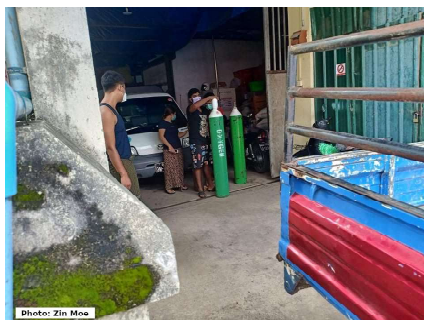


***The vaccine provided by the military junta is made in China and we don’t know if it’s good or not. Those who are fully vaccinated are still being infected by the virus. We don’t trust the (quality of) the vaccine***



## News

# COVID-19 PATIENTS RELY ON CHARITY GROUPS FOR OXYGEN



August 13, 2021

**HURFOM:** Throughout the third wave of COVID-19, oxygen has played a key role in the treatment of COVID-19 patients, but the military junta cannot provide the oxygen that is desperately needed.

They are also controlling the production of medical grade oxygen, and its distribution.

Availability of oxygen is very limited right now, most patients have to rely on the charity or emergency rescue teams for medical grade oxygen.

Even though the number of the COVID-19 patients in hospitals and quarantine centers has seen a modest decline, the need of oxygen is still high, according to local charity groups.

*"Oxygen is still in high demand. The number of patients has decreased a little but the hospitals don't have enough oxygen. So we have to find it outside. Mostly, we, charity groups, have to work on finding oxygen for the patients,"* said a member of a charity group in Mawlamyine.

The need of oxygen is so high that a 40-L oxygen cylinder which was priced at under 100,000 Kyat before is now priced at between 400,000 to 600,000 Kyat.

Public hospitals are unable to provide an adequate supply of oxygen for their patients, leaving many to fend for themselves.

*"The biggest challenge is oxygen. We try our best to buy and collect oxygen as much as we can but we still can't match the need. The patients who need oxygen have contacted us and we, charity groups, have to share oxygen among ourselves. But we still have difficulty and we can't fulfill the need,"* said a member of a charity group from Thanbyuzayat.

The military junta has neglected COVID-19 patients' need for oxygen, leaving communities to build their own oxygen plants.

Mawlamyine-based Thar Tha Nar Nwe Foundation, and the All Mon Region COVID-19 Prevent and Control Committee and other local charity groups are planning to build self-reliant oxygen plants.

As of August 7, Mawlamyine, the capital of Mon State, has recorded nearly 800 deaths due to COVID-19. Most lacked oxygen and had not received proper medical care.

# MONASTERIES EXPERIENCING FOOD SHORTAGES



August 13, 2021

**HURFOM:** Due to the high rate of infection and deaths from Covid-19, the junta has put most townships under a "Stay at Home" order. Coupled with restrictions on movement and transport of goods, some monasteries in Mon State are now experiencing a shortage of food.

Mawlamyine, Thanbyuzayat, Thaton and Belin Townships are currently under the "Stay at Home" orders.

Going out to request food (alms) or monetary support has been prohibited by the "Stay at Home" order leaving monks and nuns to prepare food for themselves.

*"My monastery is in the city and doesn't have many (regular alms) supporters. But we have many monks that now have to cook for themselves as going out for alms has been prohibited,"* said a monk from Mudon.

Most monks and nuns in metropolitan areas rely on *"going out for alms or monetary support"* for their food. But have had to stop their regular activity.

*"Nun-monasteries rely on going out for alms or monetary support for food. But we haven't gone out for months so there has been a food shortage. Our monastery is in the city and has just a few supporters so we have a tough time. Now, we're requesting our supporters to donate dry foods,"* said a nun from Thanbyuzayat. In addition to these difficulties the junta has extended public holidays from July 17 to August 15, 2021. The COVID-19 control and prevention measures have also been extended to August 31.



## News

## STAY AT HOME ORDERS ADDS TO RISING HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT NUMBERS



August 17, 2021

**HURFOM:** In order to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19, the military junta imposed “Stay at Home” orders for residents of Mawlamyine and three other townships in Mon State.

One of the impacts of this restriction on people’s movement has been that daily workers have lost their jobs.

In addition to day labourers, those working in construction, on plantations and those who work in restaurants can not go to their workplaces and have become unemployed.

**“We have to work to get food. I haven’t gone to work for two weeks already so my livelihood is getting tougher. I don’t know when I can go to work so everything is getting worse day by day,”** said a construction worker from Ka Log Tok village, Mudon Township.

As rates of infection and subsequent deaths rise during the third wave of COVID-19 the economic impacts are also growing. In addition to the shut down of many workplaces, the banks have been ordered to be closed.

**“Due to the high rate of spread of the virus, it isn’t okay to go to other villages or houses for work. We shouldn’t do that in this condition. The shops have been closed and it’s difficult to go and come. My livelihood will be tough till I can return to my work,”** said a construction worker from Thanbyzayat.

Unemployment numbers are rising sharply due to the coup and COVID-19. 1.2 millions workers in Burma have lost their jobs during the past three months, according to the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

It is anticipated the rate of job losses will increase in the future due to the current political, social and economic crisis across the country. The most impacted sectors are construction, garment and hotel and tourism.

**“Due to the high rate of spread of the virus, it isn’t okay to go to other villages or houses for work. We shouldn’t do that in this condition. The shops have been closed and it’s difficult to go and come. My livelihood will be tough till I can return to my work,”**



## News

# SOUTHERN YE VILLAGERS EXTORTED BY UNKNOWN ARMED GROUP

August 21, 2021

Two months ago, an unknown armed group entered villages in Southern Ye Township, Mon State. In one case reported to HURFOM, involved group members going to the Village Administration department and demanding a list of all the households in the community.

HURFOM was informed that an armed group entered villages in Southern Ye on August 14, 2021, and extorted villagers. The group included nine people who wore full military uniforms and carried weapons. They entered the village by car and met with the Village Administrator.

The armed group also demanded money from villagers who work on plantations in the area. This was done by giving the plantation workers a document with instructions on how much and where they were to pay.

**“Those who received the paper had to go to a specific place described in the note and pay the money. Most villagers had to pay the money at a plantation outside the village. Some villagers have paid the money, but not all. Last week, they entered the village again and demanded money from those who haven’t paid yet,”** said a villager.

The group also ordered the Administrator to announce that those who have not paid the money demanded, must come to a Mon national school and pay the money.

**“I had to pay 250,000 Kyat. Those who didn’t have the money were in trouble. They had to borrow the money from the others,”** said another villager.

Depending on the amount of their income, the villagers had to pay between 80,000 to 300,000 Kyat. Households that did not have the money were told to pay half and the other half would be paid later.

**“Our household had to pay 240,000 Kyat but I did not have that amount. I only paid 150,000 Kyat. They recorded that I had 90,000 Kyat left to pay them. We all have a tough life now, so no one wants to give away their cash. But, if we don’t pay them, we’re afraid that they will endanger us. After paying the money, we believe we can return to work at our plantation without any fear,”** said a villager.

The armed group has not physically harmed any villagers, but those who have not paid the extortion demands have been feeling unsafe when going to their plantations.

According to reports collected by HURFOM, villages that endured this type of extortion include Kyone Nyae, Mi Htaw Hlar Gyi, Mi Htaw Hlar Nage, Outside/Inside Da Ni Kyar and Ma Gyi villages, all are located in Southern Ye Township, Mon State.

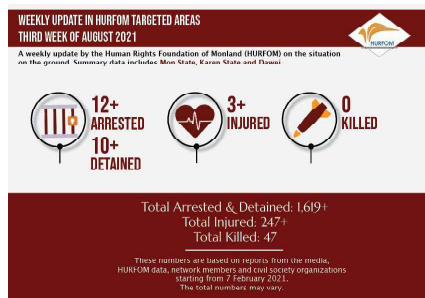
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## News

## WEEKLY UPDATE IN HURFOM TARGETED AREAS (THIRD WEEK OF AUGUST 2021)



August 23, 2021

HURFOM, Mawlamyine: Privacy laws continue to be breached in HURFOM target areas. The assault by the Burmese junta on the rights and freedoms of innocent civilians have made everyday tasks one filled with worry. Traveling by bus has been met with soldiers coming through highway bus terminals and train stations to check everything on the mobile phones of civilians, including photo galleries and recent contacts, in addition to Facebook and various social media applications. If they find something released to the Spring Revolution, they

can be arrested immediately or asked to pay a random anywhere from 5000 to 500 000 Myanmar Kyat or more.

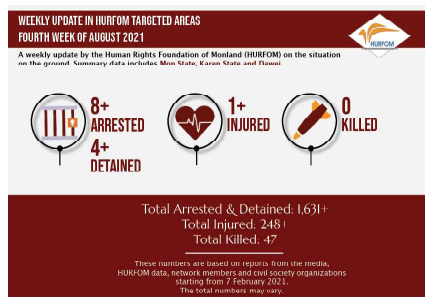
Plain clothes police officers are arresting people in broad daylight. On 21 August, a witness reported the arrest of a woman at 3:30 PM in Mawlamyine for reasons suspected to be linked to her organising efforts of a student protest in March with her University. On 19 August, a group of young villagers were also adducted by junta security forces late at night based on accusations from a military informer.

Despite the distressing situation, bike strikes are ongoing in HURFOM target areas. A resident from Long Lone Township, Dawei commanded the bravery of those continue to protest the junta saying: "We can't praise them enough—they did a brilliant job. We need these young people to continue breaking our silence."

“PRIVACY IS A  
FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN  
RIGHT. IT ALSO SUPPORTS  
AND REINFORCES  
OTHER RIGHTS, SUCH AS  
FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION,  
INFORMATION AND  
ASSOCIATION. UNDER THIS  
MILITARY REGIME, WE  
LOST EVERYTHING.”

- YOUNG LAWYER FROM  
HPA-AN, KAREN STATE

## WEEKLY UPDATE IN HURFOM TARGETED AREAS (FOURTH WEEK OF AUGUST 2021)



August 30, 2021

HURFOM, Mawlamyine: The junta is continuing with their disregard of civilian rights and protections. Extortion, arbitrary arrest remain widespread across HURFOM target areas.

## Full Analysis:

This week, the junta's battalion under the Military Operations Command MOC 13 arrested two ethnic Karen villagers, Saw Kyaw Thein and Saw Kyaw Boe, from their village in Kaw Tha Naw, Kawkareik Township. They also commandeered civilian trucks for the

transportation of troops and used them as porters following two hours of fighting between the Karen National Liberation Army and state-backed troops near Kwin Ka Lay village, Kawkareik Township.

Two young men were also abducted by the joint troops of the Burma Army and Border Guard Forces near the entrance of Kyain Seik Town, Karen State. A local witness said it seemed like the men were arrested on suspicion of being affiliated with the People's Defence Force. Their motorcycles were also taken.

Travel restrictions and the inspection of personal belongings, various properties and money extortion persists in Mon State. The junta alleges they do this because of COVID-19 but locals say it is to check the belongings of civilians and see if they have evidence of being affiliated with any People's Defence Force.

It was also reported that the junta deployed several troops near Kyay-Zu-Daw, Hnan-Kyae, Shin-Ta-Vee, and Min-Thone-Sae villages under the Karen National Union's Brigade No.4 controlled areas in northeastern Yebyu township yesterday. The Coastal Regiment Command and MOC 19 directly command these troops, according to a KNU warfare source. A local villager who witnessed the deployment in the areas said some personnel were in plain clothes with weapons. At least 130 families have fled their homes as a result of these attacks.

Despite the difficult times, food sharing activities are ongoing as led by local youth and social workers in many places in Mon State.. The elderly are prioritized, as are women and children in need. Support is also provided to COVID-19 patients and medical staff who are volunteering.



**4- CASES OF TRUCK AND  
PORTER COMMANDEERING**

**25- CASES OF MONEY  
EXTORTION DUE TO  
SECURITY INSPECTIONS.**

**8- CASES OF AUTO  
CONFESSIONS**

News

# TIGHTENED SECURITY IMPACTS GOODS TRANSPORTATION



September 10, 2021

**HURFOM:** On September 7, 2021, the National Unity Government (NUG) announced a people's revolution against the terrorist army, led by Min Aung Hlaing.

In response the military council has imposed very tight security measures resulting in difficulties with people's movements and the transportation of goods in Mon State.

*"It's very difficult to come and go. In the past, the security forces saw that we regularly transported goods, so they didn't apply strict checks every time we*

*passed. But, now, they are conducting very tight checks, and we had to spend a half hour or nearly an hour at one single check point. It further delayed our journey,"* said a man who transports goods from Thanbyuzayat to Ye.

Both the military and police forces are present at most checkpoints and the military council has also established additional check points.

*"Security has been tightened everywhere since September 7. It's very strict in Mawlamyine, Thanbyuzayat and Ye. They check the car and motorbike licenses and ask your*

*destination. They also checked the goods people were transporting. There have been lots of checks,"* said a social worker from Ye.

Military forces have stopped and checked "rice trucks" in Ye-Dawei highway road, leaving locals worried that the authorities might ban rice transportation.

In addition to calling for a people's revolution, the NUG has urged the people not to travel, to collect food and not to cooperate with the military council's members.

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## Information on HURFOM and Invitation for Feedbacks from Readers

Dear Readers,

Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) was founded in 1995, by a group of young Mon people, The main objectives of HURFOM are:

- Monitoring the human rights situation in Mon territory and other areas in southern Burma
- Protecting and promoting internationally recognized human rights in Burma,

In order to implement these objectives, HURFOM produces the monthly “Mon Forum” newsletters. If publication is delayed it is because we are waiting to confirm information, and it comes with our heartfelt apologies.

We encourage you to write to us if you have feedback or if you know someone who you think would like to receive the newsletter.

Please email or mail a name and address to:

HURFOM, P.O. Box 35, Sangkhalburi Post Office,  
Kanchanaburi, 71240 Thailand

E-mail: [info@rehmonnya.org](mailto:info@rehmonnya.org)

Website: <http://www.rehmonnya.org>

With regards,

Director

Human Rights Foundation of Monland

## NEW MON ARMED GROUP EMERGES IN SOUTHERN YE: VILLAGERS FEAR EXTORTION



ဗမာစစ်တပ်ထံ လက်နက်ချခဲ့သည့် မွန်လက်နက်ကိုင်အဖွဲ့တစ်ခု (ပုံဟောင်း)

September 17, 2021

**HURFOM:** According to the local sources, a new Mon armed group, calling itself the “Mon Land Defense Army” has emerged around Kyone Ka Nyar village, Southern Ye Township, Mon State.

“The locals said they had full military uniforms and weapons. They even have artillery weapons. They have about 20 or 30 members. But no one knows what they are,” said a Khaw Zar resident.

Reports on social media state the new group has met with Kyone Ka Nyar villagers.

“Another new Mon armed group has emerged again. They are active nearby Kyone Ka Nyar. They haven’t come to your region yet. They’ve met with the locals and explained their stance,” said a local from Khaw Zar Town, Ye Township.

Since the military coup began in February, a number of Mon splinter groups have emerged. Some have been abducting villagers and demanding money from family members for their release. Villagers fear this new group may also kidnap and extort community members, as a result they are being cautious with their movements.

Another new Mon armed group has emerged again. They are active nearby Kyone Ka Nyar. They haven’t come to your region yet. They’ve met with the locals and explained their stance

# ELECTRICITY COMMITTEE MEMBERS THREATENED TO HAND OVER VILLAGE FUNDS TO JUNTA ADMINISTRATOR



September 8, 2021

**HURFOM:** In Hnee Padaw village, Mudon Township, Mon State, 6 members of the Mon Peace Defence Front (MPDF) and the Hnee Padaw Militia arrested two members of the Village Electricity Providing Committee on September 5, 2021, for threatening other committee members to hand over the electricity fund to the junta-appointed Administrator.

They told other committee members the fund must be given to the Administrator's office at 10 am on September 6. Committee members attempted to negotiate for additional time, but the junta's administration team denied their request.

*"They took us to the office of the MPDF in Thanbyuzayat. They threatened us to hand over the fund. They had guns. If we did not hand over the funds, we felt threatened. Our lives are in danger now. We want to live peacefully so the committee planned to hand over the fund today (on September 6),"* said a local source.

After the former junta-appointed Administrator, U Ah Man, was killed by unknown gunmen on July 31, his brother-in-law U Tin Shwe became his successor.

During the time U Ah Ma was Administrator, electricity providing committee members were also threatened to give up the fund. Those extortion attempts led some committee members to flee their village.

*"The current administrator wasn't officially appointed. He just took his brother's position after his death. Even the Township GAD (General Administration Department) did not accept him. The villagers did not agree to hand over the fund. But (the village administration team) was cooperating with the armed groups, so villagers gave up because they're afraid of being harmed,"* said another source.

The Hnee Padaw Village Electricity Providing Committee was officially formed by the Mon State government on October 29, 2019 with 15 members.

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