

## MON POLITICIAN CALLS OUT MILITARY COUNCIL'S PROMOTION OF FESTIVE EVENTS AS A DISTRACTION TO FACING THE POLITICAL CRISIS



Read more on page 2 >>

### “ INSIDE ”

Authority bans drones after military forces attacked

News No 4

Use of Kratom leaves on the rise in NMSP controlled area

News No 5

Military junta threatens consequences for anyone joining Feb 1 silent strike

News No 6

Junta installs CCTV system to monitor civilians 24 hours/day

News No 7

Mon Youth Policy expected to adopt a "Selective Service System" (aka obligatory military service)

News No 8

### AUTHORITY'S CONDUCT REGULAR NIGHT SEARCHES FOR PDF MEMBERS AND CDM ACTIVISTS, FUELING COMMUNITY WORRIES



January 19, 2022

HURFOM: Local authorities in the big cities of Mon state have been conducting night searches with the hopes of catching the members of People Defense Force (PDF) and those involved with the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM).

Local people are increasingly worried about the authorities making false arrests.

"Night searches were rarely done before. But now, they(the au-

Read more on page 3 >>

## News

# MON POLITICIAN CALLS OUT MILITARY COUNCIL'S PROMOTION OF FESTIVE EVENTS AS A DISTRACTION TO FACING THE POLITICAL CRISIS



January 17, 2022

**HURFOMP:** In order to distract from the current political crisis including the long lasting anti coup movement, the military junta has been promoting festive events, suggests at least one Mon politician.

The critique points to the fact that permission has been granted to hold any events in Mon State despite the need for adherence to COVID-19 public health and safety measures. Furthermore the military wants to detract public attention from the rampant killing of anti-coup activists, prolonged detentions and growing number of armed clashes including the mass killing of civilians in some ethnic areas.

The focus on festivals, it is argued, is a ploy to create an image that the country is stable and peaceful.

"The explosions happen very often and the situation is unstable but the military doesn't want people to be aware of the real situation. They've allowed the orga-

nization of honorable ceremonies and monk's funerals despite the need for COVID-19 public health and safety measures. They want the people to see the country as peaceful," said a Mon politician and former member of the Mon Unity Party (MUP).

The military council has approved a budget of 50 millions Kyat to organize Mon affair events in Mon State.

"There have been explosions and shootings ... the military should ban festive events but instead they are promoting festivals. I think they want to disguise the reality of the current political crisis," continued the politician.

Critics of the junta note that since the coup, the military has committed thousands of human rights violations including what some say amounts to crimes against humanity. The military has shut down popular news agencies, arrested, jailed and killed hundreds of reporters and relies on its State-controlled media to promote its versions of events, which are suspect.

- “

The explosions happen very often and the situation is unstable but the military doesn't want people to be aware of the real situation. They've allowed the organization of honorable ceremonies and monk's funerals despite the need for COVID-19 public health and safety measures. They want the people to see the country as peaceful,

” -



## News

# AUTHORITY'S CONDUCT REGULAR NIGHT SEARCHES FOR PDF MEMBERS AND CDM ACTIVISTS, FUELING COMMUNITY WORRIES



## QUOTE

Night searches were rarely done before. But now, they(the authorities) check nearly every night, especially in Maw-lamyine, Thanbyu-zayat and Ye cities

”

January 19, 2022

HURFOM: Local authorities in the big cities of Mon state have been conducting night searches with the hopes of catching the members of People Defense Force (PDF) and those involved with the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM).

Local people are increasingly worried about the authorities making false arrests.

“Night searches were rarely done before. But now, they(the authorities) check nearly every night, especially in Maw-lamyine, Thanbyuzayat and Ye cities,” said one Mawlamyine resident.

Night searches are conducted by police and soldiers working together. If they find a suspect, they arrest him/her at once, and they also check people’s mobile phones for incriminating evidence.

“If they suspect someone, they arrest him/her at once and there are lots of complications after the arrest. They are targeting the PDF and the CDM — but everyone should be cautious at night,” said another Mawlamyine resident.

Some members of the village General Administration Department (GAD) confirmed to HURFOM that senior level authorities had ordered soldiers and police to shoot those who refused to stop and submit to a search.

Last month, a family from Rangoon was stopped by the security forces at a checkpoint in Ye. They failed to stop immediately and security forces opened fire. The driver’s wife was shot dead.

## YE RESIDENTS NOW PAYING 900 KYAT FOR 1 KWH

March 5, 2022

HURFOM: Residents of Ye Township, in Mon State do not have access to electricity provided by the State. Instead they must buy for electricity service provided by private companies.

Southern Myanmar Development (SMD) Company Limited, SEGAP Company Limited and BFL Company Limited are the private companies providing electricity to Ye Town and nearby villages.

Starting in March 2022, these companies have decided to raise their prices. A staff person with the Ye Electricity Providing Committee reported that, beginning in March, 1 kWh of electricity will cost 900 Kyat.”

Compared to 2021, the price of electricity has risen by 50%.

“Last year, a liter of gasoline cost 600 – 800 Kyat (and if you used gas to power a generator) so we had to pay 300/400 Kyat per 1 kWh. Gasoline prices have been rising and the electricity bill is getting higher and higher also. It has risen from 400 Kyat to 500 Kyat and then, we had to pay 800 Kyat per 1 kWh. Now, starting from this month, 1 kWh will cost 900 Kyat,” said an electricity worker in Ye Township.

A household with a typical electricity usage requirement will pay between 20,000 to 30,000 Kyat per month and a small business operator will pay between 50,000 to 60,000 Kyat per month.

## News

# AUTHORITY BANS DRONES AFTER MILITARY FORCES ATTACKED

January 10, 2022

HURFOM: On January 2, 2022, a local People Defense Force (PDF) unit used drones to attack military forces in Pearl Township, SaGaing Division, located in Northern Burma. The People Soldier's Production Team announced on January 5 that they successfully modified drones to carry bombs and attack military targets.

Soon after, the junta's authority banned the use of drone technology which is often used for video recording or photography in festive events.

Many such ceremonies take place across Mon State with their organization committees wanting to record these events using drone technology.

"Recording with drones is popular at the moment so the organizing committees want to record their events. But the authorities have banned their use. So we dare not use drones," said a professional video photographer from Mudon Township, Mon State.

There is no process for exemptions or consideration of how such technologies are used in communities. Critics note that since the coup, the junta's authority often issues unreasonable orders.



The junta has claimed there are security reasons for issuing what many see as unreasonable or illogical directives such as barring two men from riding a motorcycle, wearing a mask during a pandemic, or even wearing sunglasses.

## ELECTRICITY BLACKOUT PERIODS MEAN PEOPLE ARE LIMITED TO 3 TO 6 HOURS/DAY OF POWER



March 11, 2022

HURFOM: More than a year after the military coup, power outages are getting worse nationwide. Since March, 2022, people in Mon State have had access to electricity for only 3 to 6 hours a day.

"When waking up in the morning, the power is already cut off. We can't cook and the water supply system is also not

working. Sometimes, the power comes back on at 1 am, then we have to wake up at midnight and do all the cooking, because we don't know when the electricity will turn off again. Now, we only have 3 to 6 hours of electricity a day," said a Mawlamyine resident.

The military junta announced on March 6, 2022 that 24-hour blackouts will occur from March 12 to 18, 2022.

"The blackouts periods are getting worse, so we have to buy firewood and charcoal to do our cooking. Households have to buy a solar system to have lighting. We can't afford a power generator. The households who have generators can't operate them as they can't afford the gasoline," said a villager from Thanbyuzayat Township.

The price of gasoline rose to roughly 2,500 Kyat per liter on March 10. Ye res-

idents who have to buy electricity from the private companies are paying 1,200 to 1,400 Kyat per 1kWh of electricity.

The military junta has not released a detailed time table for expected power cuts, resulting in water supply and health related problems. There is also the danger of fires due to people having to burn firewood or charcoal.

"Some people thought they were experiencing power cuts because they didn't pay the electricity bill so they (went to the electricity office and) paid their electricity bill for the whole year. But even if they paid for their electricity usage (that they refused to pay to the military junta), power cuts still happen frequently," said a Mawlamyine resident.



## News

## USE OF KRATOM LEAVES ON THE RISE IN NMSP CONTROLLED AREA



January 11, 2022

HURFOM: According to an official from the Drug Control Department of the Thantong District New Mon State Party (NMSP), the use of drugs and Kratom leaves has increased dramatically.

Previously, only the use of methamphetamine(WY) was found in the area but now, Kratom leaves are widely available. The leaves are boiled and used as a drug in nearly all villages.

"Previously, there was only the use of the WY tablet. There was no Kratom leaf. Now, it's different. Nearly all young people are using Kratom leaves. When a drug arrest takes place now, Kratom leaves are always included," said the official.

According to locals, there are armed groups in the NMSP controlled Kawka-rate, Kyaikmayaw and Hpa-An Townships who surrendered to the Burmese army, and they operate a drug trade business. While armed groups openly operate a drug trade as a big business, the local police department and military forces have neglected this abuse.

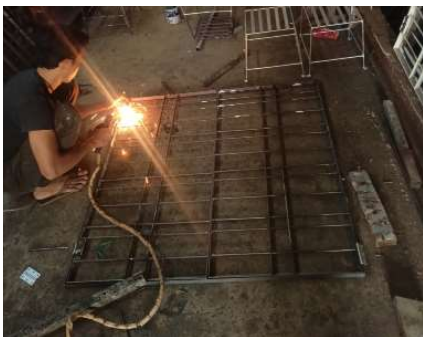
"We have arrested the members of the armed groups. The drug has come from them. They also sell Kratom leaves. Ordinary villagers do not have the courage to do this," said the official.

The NMSP has arrested many drug dealers. Increasingly parents are reporting their own children to the authorities as they are unable to control their children's drug habits.

WY tablets have increased in price during the pandemic and Kratom leaves have emerged as a low cost substitute, which accounts for their rise in usage.

"Kratom leaves are farmed here and their use in the drug trade has rapidly increased. When arresting the drug users and dealers, there is danger but we have no alternative," said the official.

## POWER CUTS FORCING SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS TO CONSIDER SHUTTING DOWN



March 12, 2022

HURFOM: Since February 2022, the military junta has been unable to distribute enough electricity for citizens. Power cuts for increasingly long periods of time are frequently happening across Burma.

Most small and medium enterprises (SMEs) rely on State provided electricity, but now business owners are thinking they may have to shut down, due to long and frequent power cuts and steep hikes in the price of gasoline.

"Now, power cuts are happening very frequently and every single time a power cut takes place, it is for at least 6 hours. We have to use a generator to run our business. But because the gasoline price is so high, running a power generator every day is not okay for us. I'm thinking I have to shut down my business now," said a Mawlamyine resident who has a welding business.

Gasoline prices have been increasing

daily. By mid March the price reached around 2,500 Kyat per liter.

"We have to use a generator if there is a power cut. The price of gasoline is going up every day and power cuts are happening every day. If we increase our service fee, it'll make our customers frustrated. If this situation continues, we have no alternative but to stop our businesses," said a small business owner.

Power cuts, high gasoline prices are fueling high commodity prices, making life for the people of Burma increasingly difficult living under the military junta.



News

## MILITARY JUNTA THREATENS CONSEQUENCES FOR ANYONE JOINING FEB 1 SILENT STRIKE



January 29, 2022

HURFOM: In order to mark the anniversary of the military coup in Burma, there are plans for a silent strike. To show opposition to the military

coup, shops will be closed, people will stay at home, and the streets will be silent and empty from 10 am to 4 pm on February 1, 2022.

The initiative is becoming popular, triggering the military junta to attempt to stop the campaign.

Patrol cars equipped with loudspeakers are on the streets in all ten townships within Mon State, threatening consequences for those who participate.

The junta is recording names of shop owners in Mawlamyine and pressuring them to sign documents guaranteeing they will operate their shops on February 1.

"The security forces in civilian clothes have been watching the shops in Mawlamyine. They ask for the names of shop owners without

giving any reason. Then, they make them sign a document promising they will not close their shops on February 1," said a man from Mawlamyine.

The military junta is threatening that if people participate in the silent strike, they will be charged under the Anti Terrorist Act as well as the Burmese Criminal Code and their belongings will be seized.

"I've also heard that the junta has patrol cars making announcements of prohibitions and consequences in Ky-aikmayaw," reported one news source.

A silent strike was held on International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2021 which received significant attention from the international community.

## TRAVEL DIRECTIVE NOW REQUIRES NRC CARDS: CRITICS SAY, THIS IS A NEW EXTORTION TACTIC

March 15, 2022

HURFOM: On March 5, 2022, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population released a statement indicating that everyone traveling must show an authentic NRC (National Registration Card). No longer would supportive documents issued by the General Administration Department or a Police Station be accepted for any travel, visit or short stays and/or related business travel.

Effective April 1, 2022 everyone must instead now show an authentic NRC (National Registration Card).

Critics argue that this new order simply creates a new way for soldiers and police forces to extort money at all checkpoints.

Travelers and passengers informed HURFOM they were already being extorted by the soldiers and police forces, despite the directive not yet coming into force.

"Some travelers who wanted to visit the pagodas hired my car. At the checkpoint, the security forces told me that I needed to meet with the official as my car had too many people. When meeting with the official, I had to give 5,000 Kyat for "tea money". I didn't want to give it so I instead showed my driver's license. Then, the official said nothing was wrong but they just asked for the money. So I had nothing to say but gave them what they wanted. I also saw that other cars had to pay from 1,000 to 5,000 Kyat in order to pass through the gate," said a car driver from Southern Ye Township, Mon State.

Since the February 1, 2021 coup, travelers/passengers have routinely experienced attempts at extortion by security and police forces. Critics note the military council has failed to bring peace and stability to the country despite the many checkpoints/ security gates at all towns and cities across Burma. Many citizens note these checkpoints now serve as places where security forces

are able to extort money or goods.

A young man from Kyarinnseikyi Township, in Karen state summed things up this way.

"Yesterday, one of my friends went to Mudon from Kyarinnseikyi. He was stopped by Burmese soldiers and they asked for 50,000 Kyat from him claiming his motorbike didn't have a proper license. If he didn't pay, he wasn't allowed to pass the security gate. Because he was afraid of being arrested, he finally had to agree to pay 50,000 Kyat."



## News

## JUNTA INSTALLS CCTV SYSTEM TO MONITOR CIVILIANS 24 HOURS/DAY

January 21, 2022

**HURFOM:** The military junta has installed a CCTV system at every street intersection throughout Mawlamyine, Mon State and other big cities. The system monitors civilian's movement 24 hours/day, every day.

The installation of the CCTV system was first introduced by the civilian government NLD (National League for Democracy) government, but following the February 1, 2021 coup, the military junta rushed to complete the project.

The CCTV system has also been installed at nearly all government offices and departments.

"The military has installed CCTV so that CDM anti coup activists could be arrested. Lot of activists were arrested because their images were caught on CCTV. The system also allows for ordinary civilians to be monitored. No one can do what they don't like. Even motorbikes and cars have been monitored," said a restaurant owner from Mawlamyine.

The system will operate even when electricity service is disrupted or during black outs.



"When electricity has been cut off and there is no Wifi, the CCTV in our shop doesn't work but the CCTV installed by the military operates differently. The military has created a reserve power system for their system, allowing continuous operation even if there is a blackout in the city. So, we'll be watched 24 hours/day," said a Mawlamyine resident.

Last year the junta removed privacy rights and protections for all citizens via amendments to the country's national laws. In response Telenor, a popular and foreign owned telecommunications company decided to exit from Myanmar as the military junta misused their customers' private data and personal information.

## ADDITIONAL CHARGE FOR STREET LIGHT-ING BURDEN LAMINE RESIDENTS



March 22, 2022

**HURFOM:** Privately owned companies that distribute and sell electricity in Ye Township, Mon State have been steadily increasing electricity fees month after month, citing the rise in gasoline as the reason for the price hikes to consumers.

Bedok Construction & Engineering Co. Ltd, who distribute electricity in Lamine Sub-township and the nearby Kawdut village, is also collecting an "extra fee" for street lights. Local villages see this as unfair.

Every household who uses electricity provided by the Bedok Company must pay the fee for street lights and each household must pay an extra five kWh for street lights.

"We've been having a problem with street light issues for a long time. When the electricity bill was not too much, paying for street lights was acceptable. But now the electricity bill has increased

a great deal and the company still collects the street light fee— this isn't okay for us," said a Lamine resident.

The street light fee means that each household must pay an additional 4,000 Kyat every month. It does not matter if a street light is in front of a home or not—all homes are charged for the lighting. "When we had to pay 300 or 400 Kyat per kWh, it's okay (even though that was expensive) to pay for the street light. Now with an overall rate hike to 900 Kyat plus the extra charge for street lighting, means we pay 4,000 or 5,000 solely for the street light. It's a burden to us," said a local resident.

Bedok indicated that higher prices will remain in effect for a few months.



News

## MON YOUTH POLICY EXPECTED TO ADOPT A “SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM” (AKA OBLIGATORY MILITARY SERVICE)



January 27, 2022

**HURFOM:** The second Mon Youth Conference will be held in Thaton District, from January 27 to 29, 2022, where a broad Mon Youth Policy will be discussed and likely approved.

The policy will include a “Selective Service System” component, which refers to obligatory military service training with the New Mon State Party.

Nai Nyan Seik Raman, an Advisor to the Mon Youth Forum, said that “one important item at the conference will be to discuss and approve this system for all Mon

youth who have already turned 18 years of age.”

Another key topic of discussion will be to “reinforce the Mon Youth Forum”, he added.

It is expected that about 150 Mon young people from civil society organizations, regional youth organizations and the Mon political communities will attend the conference.

“Politics is the critical issue at the moment and young people must be involved in political issues. And they must take military training and do military services (in the NMSP) for one or two years after that. We should adopt this policy,” said Nai Nyan Seik Raman.

The Mon Youth Policy has included representatives who work on a variety of issues including politics, education, health, social cohesion, economics, literature, peace and security, combating drug addictions, as well as the protection of the lands, environment and natural resources.

## MILITARY TIGHTENS SECURITY AFTER KILLING ACTIVIST: VILLAGERS FEEL UNSAFE WHILE TRAVELING

March 23, 2022

**HURFOM:** On March 18, 2022, there was a shooting incident in Wae Paung village, Ye Township, Mon State. The incident took place near the New Mon State Party (NMSP) controlled area.

A People Defense Force (PDF) vehicle broke down, and members of the PDF were repairing the vehicle near a gasoline shop at the entrance of Wae Paung. The Burmese military responded by shooting at the PDF forces.

“There were five PDF members. One was shot to death and another was injured. Another two individuals were arrested, while the 5th member managed to escape,” said a local source.

The injured PDF member has been identified as Ko Aung Khant Hein, a popular

social activist from Ye. The military junta had an outstanding arrest warrant for him issued in March, 2021.

Ko Aung Khant Hein was sent to a military investigation camp, where he was killed on March 21, 2022.

“Ko Aung Khant Hein was a good social activist in Ye. He was very good at organizing people and he listened to the voices of the villagers. It’s a great loss to lose a youth like him and we’re unhappy. I want to advise young people to act carefully and not to be unaware of the situation,” said another local source.

Since the shooting, military forces have tightened their security protocols. Local travelers are feeling insecure about going anywhere, according to local sources.

“Before, the military just checked people at the big bridge in Ye. But since the shooting in Wae Paung, they now come to Kyone Long village and check on the villagers. We don’t have a free and secure movement,” said a local source.

Prior to the shooting about 70 soldiers had established a presence at the monastery in Wae Paung village where they stayed for two nights.





**News**

# NEW ARMED GROUP TORTURES AND EX-TORTS MONEY FROM VILLAGERS



February 1, 2022

HURFOM: According to the local sources, a new armed group has emerged in Southern Ye Township, Mon State.

A local source confirmed to HURFOM, that the group is known only as MMA have tortured and extorted money from villagers.

"They said their group's name was MMA and they have about 15 or 16 members. They are fully equipped with weapons. They're active in the area but have not been here for very long, but already extorted thousand of kyat from the villagers and they have also tortured some villagers. But we've never heard

that they fought with the Burmese army. What they do is just extortion," said a resident from Han Gam village, Ye Township.

The conduct of the MMA group has been a popular topic on social media with users strongly criticizing what they have done to the local people.

On January 27, 2022, a video clip of the MMA was spread on social media and in that video, the group treated a villager horribly. The villager was arrested by the group for possession of a small amount of Kratom leaves.

"Just a small amount of Kratom leaves were found in the villagers' possession.

These days, every house has Kratom leaves. But they (MMA) exaggerated the issue and arrested and treated him like a big criminal. Why is there an armed group here? They just made trouble for the villagers. They extort money from the villagers and make the people depressed," said a Mon affairs activist from Southern Ye.

Since the coup, political instability has spread across the country and there are many new armed groups emerging in South-ern Ye. Some groups oppose the dictatorship while some are just extorting and torturing villagers.

## News

# ONE YEAR LATER: CRIME ACTIVITY RISES, COMMUNITY TRUST WITH POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES DECLINES



February 2, 2022

HURFOM: It has been one year since the military coup took place. In the time period there has been marked increase in criminal activity. Community members say the authorities show no interest in responding to criminal cases, unless they can profit from it.

Victims of crime are reporting cases to their Village General Administration Departments (GAD) and the police but the military junta does not appear to care or take action in support of the victims .

A community member whose family was subjected to repeated violent attacks said, "After my mother was attacked with a knife, the police came to my house once or twice and all they did was to put a warrant on the attacker's house. The attacker's family is staying peacefully at their home. The attacker also shot my father before. But he wasn't arrested by the police. Now, he has attacked my mother again. It happened three months ago but there is no investigation or arrest."

Because the attacker remains free of any consequence, the victim and family members fear the possibility of another at-

tack.

Robberies are also commonplace now across Mon State, with the authorities showing little interest to investigate or file charges.

One victim of a robbery reported that, "After the coup, my motorcycle was stolen. I did not bother to report this to the police. Instead, I shared it on social media and requested help from my community. I searched for it by myself. People don't want to connect with the military junta so they don't do any report to the police, they just stay silent."

In another case a woman who was violently attacked went to the police station to file a report. The police said she had to pay them in order for a legal case to be filed. Community members have reported that police officials and the Village Administrator had accepted a bribe from the abuser to prevent the case from being investigated.

Since the coup, communities increasingly believe the rule of law has failed. Now security forces are focused on oppressing the people rather than providing them protection. As a result community trust is being eroded.



## News

## VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR KILLED BY UNKNOWN ASSAILANT: SOLDIERS RESPOND WITH GUNFIRE, FRIGHTENING VILLAGERS



February 4, 2022

HURFOM: On February 2, 2022, the Junta-appointed Administrator of Ah Sin village, Ye Township, Mon State was killed at approximately 10:30 am.

Soldiers in the vicinity believed the killers were nearby and responded with random gunfire, frightening Du Yar villagers.

The soldiers patrolled the areas for the whole night, according to the local villagers. Checks of pedestrians, motorbikes and cars have been on-going.

“During the night patrol, soldiers saw a motorbike make a U-turn and so they shot their guns into the sky and frightened the villagers. No

one was injured or killed,” said a news source. The incident has left villagers worried for their safety and parents have not sent their children to school.

“

During the night patrol, soldiers saw a motorbike make a U-turn and so they shot their guns into the sky and frightened the villagers. No one was injured or killed,

”

## News

# GASOLINE PRICES TRIPLED SINCE COUP: TRANSPORTATION AND LIVELIHOODS EXPERIENCING INCREASING HARDSHIPS

February 12, 2022

HURFOM: Since the February, 2021 coup , the price of gasoline has gradually been increasing. One year later, the gas has tripled in price.

On February 8, 2022, a liter of diesel is priced at about 1,700 Kyat and a liter of

premium diesel is priced at 1,800 Kyat. A liter of 92 octane is priced at 1,700 Kyat and the same amount of 95 octane is priced at 1,800 Kyat.

“Before the coup, a liter of gasoline was priced at about 500 or 600 Kyat only. Compared with today ‘s price, it’s tripled. All travel and transportation fees have risen so everyone is in trouble,” said a taxi driver from Ye Town, Ye Township, Mon State.

According to some gas station owners, the price of gas may rise even higher in the future.

The prices for gold, US dollars, rice and other commodities have also doubled or even tripled.

Alongside rising commodity prices villagers have been losing their jobs, leaving them with insufficient income. Livelihoods are threatened.

“Before, we got about 30,000 Kyat every day from my rubber plantation and it was enough for my family. Now the rubber price has risen and we’ve gotten more income but the commodity prices have risen so much more that we can’t afford things even with our income. Everything is getting tough,” said a housewife from Mudon Township.

Motorbike taxi drivers are experiencing reductions in their incomes or are losing their jobs due to increasing gasoline prices and fewer customers.

The military junta has also imposed more restrictions on the transportation and travel sector. Travel agencies in the Mawlamyine May Ne Gone Highway Station have been ordered to close their business operations.





## News

## PEOPLE LEFT HELPLESS AS CHARITY/RESCUE TEAMS FACE RESTRICTIONS



February 11, 2022

**HURFOM:** The new COVID-19 variant, Omicron, is spreading across Burma. On February 7, 2022, 40 schoolteachers and students from a high school in Kyaik Kha Mi Town, Thanbyu-zayat Township, Mon State were found infected with the virus.

On January 11, 2022, a high-school teacher, ten students and their family members in Paung Township were infected with COVID-19.

According to records released by the military junta, as of February 9, 2022, there have been 16,804 COVID-19 cases and 1,406 deaths attributed to the virus.

Despite infection rates remaining high, local charity and rescue teams are unable to provide support to the people due to the imposition of new restrictions being imposed by the military junta.

“During the third wave, the charity/rescue teams brought patients to hospital. They burned the dead bodies. They sprayed sanitizer and did everything. (When something happened), we, the people, phoned them and requested help, including bringing oxygen cylinders. Now, COVID-19 infections have started again. With the teams having to stop their services, we’ll have a lot of problems,” said a local woman.

After the coup, the military junta has imposed restrictions on local charity and rescue teams. The junta has not allowed

the teams to use unlicensed ambulances and forced them to comply by providing detailed organizational registration information. In addition, the teams have to report their activities to the junta. The junta said there are no exceptions. The teams are also not permitted to provide emergency services at night and can not bring patients from remote areas to hospital.

There is also a significant rise in gasoline prices and the number of donors has been declining so that the charity and rescue teams in Mon State are facing even more difficulties. Most have had no alternative but to stop their services.

“If a COVID-19 case is found in the village, just the local charity teams do medical check-ups and bring patients to hospital. Now they have stopped their services due to current challenges. If we have more COVID-19 cases in the future, I’m worried that we’ll be helpless,” said a resident from a village from Thanbyuzayat Township.

— “ —

According to records released by the military junta, as of February 9, 2022, there have been 16,804 COVID-19 cases and 1,406 deaths attributed to the virus.

— ” —

News

# THE MILITARY JUNTA BARS PLANTATION WORKERS FROM THEIR WORKPLACES



February 12, 2022

HURFOM: In August, 2021, the Oak Tara Myay Company Limited began an excavation project searching for treasure and other valuables left behind by retreating Japanese troops during World War II.

The project site is based at Mount Mane Bala near Wae Kawa village, Thanbyuzayat Township, in Mon State. Efforts to excavate treasure and other valuables from this site, was also attempted by the Royal Eagle Myanmar Development Group in 2018. That company found nothing and stopped their project in early 2020. By February 2022 the Oak Tara Myay Company Limited project stopped due to a failure to unearth anything of value.

However, the military junta wants to continue the project. On February 9th, 2022, the junta declared a nearby 65-acre piece of land to be included in the project area. The announcement also bars plantation owners and workers from accessing their workplace.

"The company handed over the project to the military junta as their project didn't work. But the junta wants to do it themselves and put a notice that it's a "project area". They don't allow plantation workers to go to the rubber plantation

nearby the project area. They said they haven't seized the land nor will it harm the plantations," said a plantation owner. The project area is guarded by soldiers and police. The military junta has also imposed martial law in the area. Local villagers have been threatened not to trespass onto the area without permission or they will be shot.

"We have to wait till their project ends. They even installed a "No Entry" sign on the motorbike pathway. One day before the sign was installed, plantation workers were stopped by security forces and they had to turn back as they weren't allowed to go to their plantations," said a local source.

The market price for rubber has been increasing, so barring plantation owners and workers from their workplaces is anticipated to have a huge impact on their incomes.





## News

## DISAPPEARANCE OF YOUNG DETAINEES IN YE TOWNSHIP WORRY OF FAMILY MEMBERS



February 16, 2022

**HURFOM:** Security forces for the military junta have been arresting young people for operating unlicensed motorbikes and detaining them at undisclosed locations.

These young people have not been able to have contact with their family members once arrested.

Recently a number of young people were arrested by soldiers and the police on the Mawlamyine-Ye Highway Road between Lamine and Ye Township.

Family members have not been given any information about the charges nor have they been able to contact those arrested.

“Our villagers were arrested for a week but we do not know the reason. They have been detained and we know nothing about their condition. It’s too much. My nephew is just a motorbike mechanic and he has done nothing related to politics. He has been arrested for a long time but we do not have contact with him,” said a detainee’s uncle who lives in R Ru Taung village, Ye Township.

Over the last few weeks, incidents of violence have increased tensions. A Sin village Administrator was killed; an explosion took place at a railway nearby Taung Bone village; and a retired major was killed in Ye Township.

Military and police forces have tightened security on the highway road between Lamine and Ye Towns and arrested drivers and seized their unlicensed motorbikes.

“Many operators of unlicensed motorbikes are being arrested every day. Some owners are released while others are being detained. Those not yet released have not had contact with family members. Lots of things are happening in Ye at the moment and the situation is chaotic. Killings have been taking place and security has been tightened,” said a driver who transports goods from Mawlamyine to Ye.

According to the Association for Assistance of Political Prisoners (AAPP), as of February 11, 2022, more than 400 people in Mon State were arrested by the military junta.

## News

# STUDENTS BECOME COVID-19 VICTIMS AS THE JUNTA FOCUSES ON STABILIZING THEIR POWER



February 17, 2022

**HURFOM:** For more than a year since the 2021 coup, the military junta has focused their attention and resources on stabilizing their power, while neglecting measures to control the pandemic. Students are one of the groups paying the price for this decision by the junta.

Case counts have been increasing steadily on a daily basis, and a cluster of COVID-19 infections was recently reported amongst high school students from Chaung Zone, Mawlamyine, Mudon and Thanbyuzayat Townships.

“They’ve gotten COVID-19 from a teacher who moved here from Yangon. Many schools now have COVID-19 infections,” said a Mudon resident.

Even though there are many schools with high rates of COVID-19 infection, the department has no plan to close or lock down these schools. At best they just close one or two classrooms but keep the rest of the school open.

“Their approach to try and control COVID-19 is to just close an infected classroom. They maintain a normal teaching pro-

gram in the other rooms,” said a social activist in Mawlamyine.

The junta-controlled Department of Basic Education has no concrete plan for the control and prevention of the COVID-19 in schools and they have just focused on continuing operations for the rest of the academic year.

“According to the teachers, the school hasn’t been locked down even though there were COVID-19 cases. The students are afraid of being at schools. Some students don’t go to their school, even if they paid the tuition,” said a high-school student from Mudon Township.

On February 12, 2022, the military council organized a ceremony to mark the “75th Myanmar Union Day” with roughly 85 students from Naypyidaw joining the event, despite some being infected with the virus. Eventually the council had to postpone the students’ exams.

According to data released by the junta-controlled Department of Basic Education, Mon State had 57 new cases as of February 14 and then it jumped to 140 new cases on February 15, 2022.



## News

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

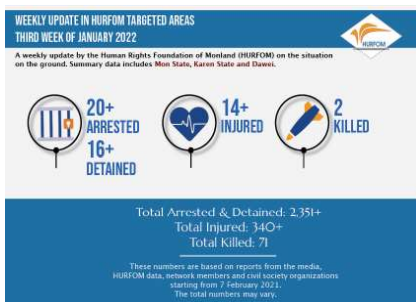
E-mail: [info@rehmonnya.org](mailto:info@rehmonnya.org)

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

With regards,

Director

Human Rights Foundation of Monland

WEEKLY UPDATE IN HURFOM TARGETED  
AREAS [THIRD WEEK OF JANUARY 2022]

January 24, 2022

HURFOM: Over the last week, fighting in Karen State led to increased displacement as over 250 villagers were forced to flee to areas controlled by the Karen National Union. The indiscriminate firing targeted innocent villagers in the midst of uncontrolled attacks by the military junta.

The junta's indiscriminate firing is continuing against local civilians in Kawkaireik Township, Karen State. The reporter network said that at around

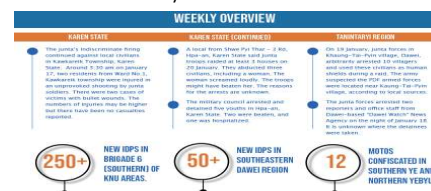
3:30 am on January 17, two residents from Ward No.1, Kawkaireik town, were injured in an unprovoked shooting by soldiers. There were two cases of victims with bullet wounds. The numbers of injuries may be higher but there have been no casualties reported. "We are facing many difficulties. We cannot go out and buy food for our families. Soldiers are firing often," said a 45-year-old Karen woman.

Civilians who have committed no crimes are being arbitrary arrested in the middle of night. Victims are treated unlawfully during their forced abductions where neighbours have reported hearing screams of those being taken away. A local from Shwe Pyi Thar – 3 Rd, Hpa-an, Karen State said junta troops raided at least 3 houses and abducted three civilians, including a woman 10:30PM. The woman screamed loudly. The troops might have beaten her. The reasons for the arrests are unknown.

Junta forces in Khaung-Tai-Pyin village, Dawei, arbitrarily arrested 10 villagers and used these civilians as human shields during a raid. The army suspected the PDF armed forces were located near Kaung-Tai-Pyin village, according to local sources.

The situation on the ground is worsening daily as more IDPs attempt to flee to bordering countries in desperate search of safety and security.

In addition to mounting arbitrary arrests and fuelled displacement, two journalists in HURFOM target areas were also arrested this week. Twelve motorcycles were confiscated in southern Ye township, and northern Yebu. In additional three cases, junta soldiers demanded a ransom of 100 000 Myanmar Kyat each for the motorcycles to be released.



News

# NMSP URGES MON PEOPLE TO BOYCOTT THEIR OFFICES, WORKPLACES AND SCHOOLS ON MON NATIONAL DAY

February 15, 2022

HURFOM: On February 11, 2022, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) released a statement urging Mon people not to go to government offices, workplaces or schools on February 16, 2022, .Mon National Day

February 16 falls on a Wednesday which would normally be a work day for government staff and students would normally attend school.

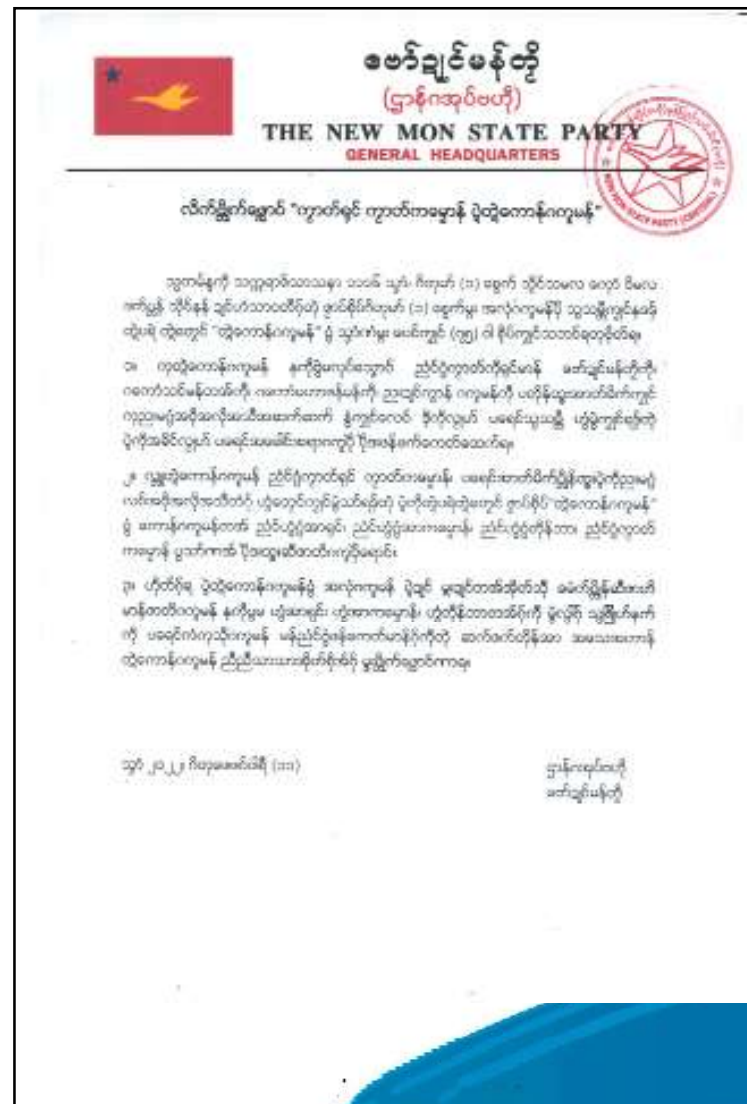
The NMSP, the Mon religious community and Mon community based organizations have long demanded that Mon National Day be a public holiday. Governments have never acknowledged the demand.

The NMSP is now urging its community to demonstrate strength and unity by refusing to go to their offices, workplaces and schools on February 16th.

The party is advocating that Mon people should instead join the ceremony of the 75th Mon National Day and to demonstrate the desire for self-determination.

“The call to action by the NMSP is a good one. The Mon community has been demanding Mon national day be recognized as a public holiday. But with no success. Now the NMSP has raised the issue again and it’s a good move. The Mon people should fight for their self-determination and make a contribution,” said a Mon youth.

The 75th Mon National Day (Central) ceremony will be held at the Ramannarattha Buddhist University in Myine Thar Yar Ward, Mawlamyine, Mon State.



HURFOM

P.O BOX 35,  
Sangkhlaburi Post Office,  
Kanchanaburi 71240,  
Thailand  
info@rehmonnya.org

PRINTED MATTER