



Myanmar Situation Update (1 January 2022 - 9 January 2022)

After the horrifying attack on civilians by junta forces on Christmas Eve in Hpruso township of Kayah state that killed more than 35 people, including women, children, and two employees of Save the Children¹, and the continued airstrikes in Lay Kay Kaw of Kayin State that resulted in thousands of people fleeing their homes to the Thai-Myanmar border and some crossing the border to Thailand, fights between the junta forces and the civilian resistance forces and ethnic armed groups have intensified over the first week of 2022 in several areas such as Kayin, Kayah, Shan, Chin, Kachin States and the Sagaing Region. The Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security, a local research group, said that about 61% of the country is in armed conflict right now while it was only 35% before the coup².

The media also reported a higher number of explosions in Yangon in the first week of January as dozens of junta troops and junta-appointed ward administrators were reportedly killed and several People's Defense Forces (PDF) attacked junta targets. Several attacks were reported in Hlaing Tharyar township, with more reported in North Okkalapa, Thaketa, Insein, Mingaladon, Kyauktada, Thanlyin and Thamwe townships³.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen's trip to Myanmar started on 7 January 2022 amid criticisms from the international community and the people of Myanmar. He is the first head of government to visit Myanmar after the military coup in February 2021. More than 200 CSOs based in Myanmar and Cambodia and support organizations around the world released a statement on 4 January that strongly condemned Hun Sen for supporting the military junta in Myanmar and demanded an urgent coordinated international response to immediately halt the junta's campaign of terror⁴.

¹<https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3161320/save-children-confirms-two-staff-dead-among-myanmar>

² <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/independence-01042022210130.html>

³ <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/yangon-resistance-fighters-step-up-attacks-on-myanmar-junta.html>

⁴<https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2022/01/04/joint-statement-by-the-civil-society-organizations-of-myanmar-and-cambodia-condemning-hun-sens-support-of-the-myanmar-military-junta/>

Before his departure, Hun Sen said he had not set any pre-conditions before his visit to Myanmar and his aims were not far from the five-point consensus or the peace plan. The Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation issued a press statement regarding a telephone conversation between Hun Sen and Indonesian President Jokowi. It further said that "the two leaders exchanged views on the current developments in Myanmar and underlined the important need to focus ASEAN's efforts on assisting Myanmar in finding suitable solutions, in order to achieve national reconciliation, lasting peace, stability, and development"⁵. Myanmar junta has announced on 4 January 2021 that Hun Sen would not be allowed to meet ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi during his visit⁶. However, ASEAN special envoy to Myanmar and Brunei's second foreign affairs minister Erywan Yusof cancelled his visit to Myanmar last October as the junta did not allow him to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi. Two bombs also exploded near the Cambodian Embassy in Yangon ahead Hun Sen's visit to Myanmar.

The junta-controlled Global New Light of Myanmar has reported that Hun Sen met with the Senior General Aung Min Hlaing in Naypyitaw and exchanged views on the promotion of diplomatic relations, friendly ties and cooperation between the two countries, the participation of the ASEAN Chairman's special envoy and Cambodia in the process, undertakings of Myanmar in accord with the five-point consensus of ASEAN⁷.

The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) reported that junta forces burned more than 40 houses in Thantlang, including Gospel Baptist Church, Methodist Church, and their living quarters on 3 January and 13 more houses on 6 January 2021. CHRO also noted that as of 6 January, 800 houses, including dozens of religious buildings have been burned in Thantlang since 9 September 2021 as the junta continues attack the town⁸. Thousands of civilians have fled the town since junta forces started attacking the town in September 2021 and reports says over 30,000 people have crossed the border to India from the Chin state due to the heavy fighting and junta troops have blocked roads and aid convoys and attacked health care workers⁹.

Amid the growing fightings between junta forces and the KNLA Forces in Kyain State and the huge influx of Myanmar refugees to Thailand, The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) advised the government to assist Myanmar refugees in the border provinces of Mae Hong Son

5

<https://www.mfaic.gov.kh/posts/2022-01-04-Press-Release-Telephone-Call-between-Samdech-Akka-Moha-Sena-Padei-Techo-HUN-SEN--Prime-Minister-of-the-Kingdom-of--19-21-45>

⁶ <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/concerns-over-hun-sens-aims-ahead-of-asean-chairs-visit.html>

7

<https://www.gnlm.com.mm/state-administration-council-chairman-prime-minister-senior-general-min-aung-hlaing-holds-talks-with-cambodian-prime-minister-samdech-akka-moha-sena-padei-techo-hun-sen/#article-title>

⁸ <https://twitter.com/ChinHumanRights>

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/29/world/asia/myanmar-coup-refugees.html>

and Tak and further said the government should promote local mechanisms between the government, private business and civil society to take care of the refugees¹⁰. According to the Karen Human Rights Groups, more than 10,000 civilians have fled their homes near the Thai border since December. Aid workers from Myanmar side also seek permission from Thai authorities to provide assistance to Myanmar refugees that has been rejected by the Thai government so far¹¹.

The World Food Programme described the situation as “the most acute humanitarian crisis the country has faced since Cyclone Nargis in 2008” and warned that the number of people needing emergency food supplies would nearly double this year to 4 million from 2.4 million in 2021¹². UNDP also predicted that the number of people living below the poverty line could nearly double to 46% of the population of 55 million by early 2022¹³.

The special court in Naypyitaw is set to give the verdict of the trial of detained State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi on two charges of the possession and illegal importation of walkie-talkies on 10 January 2022. The verdict has been postponed two times as first it was set on 20 December and later postponed to 27 December 2021¹⁴. The junta court sentenced her to four years in prison in early December on charges of incitement and breaches of COVID-19 regulations, later reduced to two years. She also faces 9 more cases in the court.

The junta also announced a 20,000 kyat commercial tax on the sale of SIM cards and a 15% tax on the incomes of internet providers. The announcement in Global New Light Myanmar further mentioned that this measure will prevent “extreme use of internet services on the employment of the people and physical and mental sufferings of new generation students can be reduced”¹⁵. People will have to pay additional 20,000 MMK (approx. 11 USD) to activate a new SIM card, which increases the price of a new SIM card to 21,500 MMK (approx. 12 USD) from 1,500 MMK (approx. 1 USD) previously. The junta also continued the telecommunication cuts in Yinmarbin, Budalin, Kani, and Pale Townships in Sagaing Region where active conflict takes place between the junta forces and the civil resistance forces.

The Peace Process Steering Team (PPST), made up of the 10 EAO signatories of the 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) released a statement condemning the 24 December

¹⁰ <https://www.nationthailand.com/in-focus/40010554>

¹¹

<https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/aid-workers-seek-permission-thai-authorities-provide-cross-border-assistance-myanmar-refugees>

¹² <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/01/1109382>

¹³ <https://www.undp.org/press-releases/myanmar-urban-poverty-rates-set-triple-new-united-nations-survey-finds>

¹⁴ <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-court-postpones-suu-kyi-verdict-for-second-time.html>

¹⁵ https://cdn.myanmarseo.com/file/client-cdn/2022/01/7_Jan_22_gnlm.pdf

killings of 35 civilians in Mo So Village in Hpruso Township, Kayah State. They called on all concerned parties to address the current political crisis through dialogue. CRPH also issued a statement regarding the Cambodian Prime Minister's visit and expressed concern that the trip would be interpreted as a changing of stance by the ASEAN towards the junta and called on Cambodia to engage with the NUG instead of the junta.

As of 8 January 2022, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) recorded that 1,444 people have been killed by the junta. 8,468 people are currently under detention. 78 have been sentenced to death and 1,966 are evading arrest warrants¹⁶.

Prepared by

Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)

10 January 2022, 11:30 am (Bangkok time)

¹⁶ <https://aappb.org/?p=19645>