



Myanmar Situation Update (25 April – 1 May 2022)

A Myanmar junta court convicted the former state counselor Aung San Suu Kyi for corruption and sentenced her to five years in prison. The European Union¹ condemned the sentencing as “politically motivated” and “another step to dismantle the rule of law”. Aung San Suu Kyi had been sentenced to six years in prison for incitement against the military, breaching COVID-19 rules and breaking a telecommunications law last year².

Myanmar junta charged senior National League for Democracy (NLD) lawyer Ywat Nu Aungunder under the counter-terrorism law, which carries a minimum sentence of 10 years and a maximum penalty of life in jail. She was part of the legal team defending ousted Mandalay Chief Minister and NLD vice chairperson Dr Zaw Myint Maung.³ Another prominent Myanmar businessman, Eden U Chit Khine, with ties to the NLD has been charged with corruption.⁴

China's ambassador to Myanmar and India's ambassador to Myanmar held separate meetings with the Union Election Commission (UEC) headed by Thein Soe on April 19 and 25, respectively to discuss the junta's planned new election, according to junta-controlled media. During the meetings, the ambassadors revealed their interest in the elections, which are said to be overseen by coup leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.⁵ The UEC chair said Myanmar and India had been cooperating in electoral processes since the past and India provided its support to Myanmar, which also studied the democratic system and laws of India in implementing its democratic system. India would continue cooperation with the UEC of Myanmar and its assistance, said the Indian Ambassador to Myanmar.⁶

Key ethnic armed groups leaders rejected the call of the junta chief's invitation to leaders of ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) for peace talks. The groups mentioned by The Irrawaddy included the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Karen National Union (KNU), Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and Chin National Front (CNF).⁷

¹https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/myanmarburma-statement-spokesperson-latest-sentencing-state-counsellor-daw-aung-san-suu-kyi-0_en

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmars-suu-kyi-handed-5-year-jail-term-corruption-2022-04-27/>

³<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-charges-senior-nld-lawyer-under-counter-terrorism>

⁴ <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Myanmar-Crisis/Myanmar-charges-tycoon-close-to-Suu-Kyi-s-party-with-graft2>

⁵<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/interest-in-regimes-planned-election-reveals-china-and-indias-disguised>

⁶<https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/india-will-continue-cooperation-with-myanmars-election-commission-says>

⁷ <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/ethnic-armed-groups-reject-myanmar-junta-chiefs-peace-talks.html>

Malaysia's Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah said that his government has engaged with Myanmar's shadow opposition government, National Unity Government (NUG) in response to an open letter from ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR). Saifuddin said that he had "informally" met with the NUG's Foreign Minister and the chairman of the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC), which includes representatives of the NUG, civil society groups, ethnic armed organizations, and civil disobedience groups.⁸

Thailand's state-run oil company PTTEP and Malaysia's Petronas have withdrawn from the Yetagun gas project, becoming the latest energy firms to pull out from Myanmar after the military coup in February 2021. The Thai company has a 19.3 percent stake in the Yetagun gas field in the waters of southern Myanmar. Carigali, a subsidiary of Petronas, owns 40.9 percent.⁹

The junta has officially endorsed pro-junta militias that are increasingly targeting civilians who oppose military rule. The regime was implementing a "public security system" and will strengthen them to eliminate "terrorist" forces, said by the junta spokesman in a press conference.¹⁰

According to media reports, junta troops torched more than 500 homes in five villages over the past three days in Myanmar's Sagaing region, where nearly three-fourths of townships have been cut off from internet access since early March amid ongoing military raids.¹¹

Military tensions are growing between junta troops and local resistance groups along the Dawei-Htee Khee Road in southern Myanmar's Tanintharyi Region, after resistance fighters, the Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) Brigade 4 and People's Defense Forces (PDF) from Dawei and Launglon townships, attacked a police station in Pagayi Village along the road.¹² The junta closed the border with Thailand at Htee Khee in Thanintharyi Region after the attack. The closure of that gate, a major trading point and the closest crossing to the Thai capital Bangkok, comes as another blow to trade with Thailand. The clashes between junta troops and the Karen National Liberation Army and PDFs already halted trade via Myawaddy in Karen State.¹³ According to the media reports, around 300 Karen troops have left the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA) to join the Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) to fight Myanmar's military regime.¹⁴

⁸<https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/malaysian-fm-admits-contacts-with-myanmar-opposition-shadow-government/>

⁹ <https://www.laprensalatina.com/thai-malaysian-oil-companies-pull-out-of-myanmar-gas-project/>

¹⁰<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-officially-endorses-militias-to-attack-anti-regime->

¹¹ <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/arson-04282022203326.html>

¹²<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/military-tensions-grow-in-southern-myanmar-as-regime-forces-clash-with-resistance-fighters.html>

¹³<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-closes-another-thai-border-gate-after-resistance>

¹⁴<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/around-300-karen-troops-defect-from-splinter-group-to-fight-myanmar>

A total of 257 civilians have been killed in Karenni State since the military coup announced by The Progressive Karenni People's Front (PKPF).¹⁵ In the meantime, women have faced increased sexual violence and other forms of abuse, according to a women's rights activist in Karenni State.¹⁶ Karenni health workers can only provide vital medical care to thirty percent of the civilian population as regime forces are stopping them from accessing most of those in need, said by the Karenni State Consultative Council (KSCC) set up by the interim National Unity Government (NUG) to oversee and provide health services in the state.¹⁷

As of 29 April 2022, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) recorded that 1,803 people have been killed by the junta since the coup. There are 10,499 people currently under detention. There are 106 people who have been sentenced to death while 1,977 people are evading arrest warrants.¹⁸

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¹⁵<https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/more-250-karenni-civilians-have-been-killed-one-year-and-three-months>

¹⁶<https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/violence-against-women-karenni-state-rising-after-coup>

¹⁷<https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/ksc-cant-provide-medicine-majority-karenni-state>

¹⁸<https://aappb.org/?p=21303>