

**STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS & SANCTIONS IN MYANMAR**

**FEBRUARY 2021 REPORT**

**Summary.** This report reviews the February 2021 developments relating to human rights in Myanmar. Relatedly, it addresses the interchange between Myanmar’s reform efforts and the responses of the international community.

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## I. Coup

On February 1, Myanmar's military staged a coup and overturned the results of democratic elections that had resulted in a landslide victory for the National League of Democracy ("NLD").<sup>1</sup> In his first public televised address since seizing power, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing told citizens to prioritize "facts" not "feelings," pledged to hold "free and fair" elections and to hand over power to the winner.<sup>2</sup> Min Aung Hlaing justified his seizure of power by claiming Myanmar's electoral commission used the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to not allow fair campaigning and said "no organization is above national interest."<sup>3</sup> He did not say when elections would be held but repeated claims the November 2020 poll (in which the NLD won an overwhelming victory) was fraudulent. The military formed a new cabinet and official national governing body, the State Administrative Council, largely made up of generals and ex-military officials, along with some members of its political proxy party, the Union Solidarity and Development Party ("USDP").<sup>4</sup> The state of emergency, imposed when Min Aung Hlaing seized power, is in place for one year.<sup>5</sup> The election commission has denied the military's claims, saying any irregularities would not have been enough to change the overall result.<sup>6</sup>

State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi has been held incommunicado since she was detained hours before the military took control.<sup>7</sup> She is under house arrest, charged with breaching the import-export law, while President Win Myint is accused of violating the natural disaster management law.<sup>8</sup> Myanmar human rights organization, Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, has documented at least 133 government officials and legislators and 14 activists detained since the coup.<sup>9</sup>

Tens of thousands of people have taken part in protests against the February 1 coup, despite a long history of brutal crackdowns by the military and threats to use live ammunition against demonstrators.<sup>10</sup> In Yangon, protesters marched toward Sule Pagoda in the former capital's downtown chanting and holding up the anti-government three-finger salute from the "Hunger Games" movie franchise that became a popular protest sign during the 2014 coup in neighboring Thailand.<sup>11</sup> Sule Pagoda was at the center of anti-government demonstrations that were violently suppressed by the military in 1988 and 2007. On live feeds posted on social media, protesters could be heard shouting "the people stand together against the dictator's government" and seen holding banners with portraits of deposed State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi's face.<sup>12</sup> Since the coup, protests have spread to Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Rakhine, Mon and Shan States.<sup>13</sup>

In a statement on February 9 on the government-run MRTV channel, the military warned that "democracy can be destroyed" without discipline and that people who "harm the state's stability, public safety and the rule of law" could face legal action.<sup>14</sup> The warning came as two people were seriously injured in the capital Naypyidaw on February 9 after police officers allegedly shot at protesters, according to the NLD.<sup>15</sup> A 20-year old woman was shot in the head and killed by riot police during the protests.<sup>16</sup> On February 9, the government imposed new restrictions on public gatherings and instituted a curfew for major towns and cities across the country, including the capital, Naypyidaw, and largest city, Yangon, where large protests are ongoing.<sup>17</sup> According to a notice published by state-owned newspaper The Global New Light of Myanmar, people are prohibited from gathering in groups of more than five, restricted from joining protest marches on foot or by car, and are not allowed to make political speeches in public areas.<sup>18</sup> A curfew is in place from 8 p.m. until 4 a.m. in most major towns and cities.<sup>19</sup> While the notice said it came into force on February 8, it did not say when restrictions would lift.

At least 27 people were arrested during protests in Mandalay.<sup>20</sup> Two local media organizations confirmed the arrests, which included a journalist for the Democratic Voice of Burma, who said they were detained after filming police violence against protesters.<sup>21</sup> Those arrested could face prosecution under Section 144 of the Criminal Code for “unlawful assembly.” Section 144 has been used in the past as a way to stop lawful protests and to justify violent crackdowns on mass demonstrations. Protesters have also been contending with widespread internet and communications restrictions since the coup, with mobile data networks and social media sites Facebook, Twitter and Instagram intermittently blocked.<sup>22</sup>

Also on February 9, the self-declared Parliament formed by elected lawmakers of the NLD appointed Aung San Suu Kyi to a second term as State Counselor in an act of defiance against the military rule.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, the Myanmar military raided the headquarters and executive committee offices of the NLD.<sup>24</sup> The military reportedly confiscated property from the offices, including documents and computer hard disks. At least six senior NLD figures were detained by the military regime in a series of raids on February 10.<sup>25</sup> According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a total of 220 people have been detailed since the coup, including government officials, national leaders, election commissioners, political activists, monks, writers and peaceful demonstrators.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the military regime’s assembly ban, throngs of anti-coup protestors continued to take to the streets throughout the country on February 10.<sup>27</sup> Nearly 500 government employees from four ministries took to the streets in Naypyitaw to protest against military rule.<sup>28</sup> Their participation added fuel to the country’s ongoing Civil Disobedience Movement, in which civil servants are refusing to work in order to express their opposition to the coup.

On February 10, the regime suspended the articles from the Privacy Law enacted by the NLD administration to prevent citizens targeting each other with lawsuits and to protect privacy and security.<sup>29</sup> The authorities are now allowed to enter into private properties to search, seize evidence and arrest without a warrant. Private messages can be intercepted and the authorities can demand personal telephonic and electronic communications data from telecoms providers. The military regime also suspended the requirement for a court to approve the seizure and destruction of possessions and property. The authorities can now open, search, seize or destroy private correspondence, which was previously prevented by the Privacy Law. The regime has also reinstated provisions (only some provisions) from the 2012 Ward or Village Tract Administration Law which requires citizens to report overnight guests to the authorities. Furthermore, the State Administrative Council amended Myanmar’s high treason and sedition laws in an attempt to guarantee impunity for the military leaders who seized power.<sup>30</sup>

The military regime launched an investigation into the finances of the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation, a charity founded by Aung San Suu Kyi.<sup>31</sup> The foundation was established in 2012 to promote improvement in the health, education and living standards of the Myanmar people, especially in the country’s least developed areas. Until the coup, the foundation also accepted public donations for COVID-19 vaccinations. As of January 29, two days before the takeover, it had transferred a total of 2.5 billion kyats (US\$1.77 million) to the government. Following the coup, the foundation announced it was closing temporarily.

## **II. Political Developments**

### **A. Rohingya Refugee Crisis**

On February 22, the UNHCR appealed for the immediate rescue of a group of Rohingya refugees in distress on the Andaman Sea. The UNHCR had received reports of an unconfirmed number of Rohingya refugees aboard a boat that was in distress and many of the refugees were suffering from extreme dehydration.<sup>32</sup> In addition, refugees reported that the boat had run out of food and water several days ago and that many of the passengers were ill and some had died.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the boat was reportedly adrift as a result of a broken engine and had been drifting for over a week.<sup>34</sup> As precise information as to the refugees' location was unknown, the UNHCR alerted the relevant nearby countries and appealed for their assistance should the boat be found in their area of responsibility for search and rescue. The UNHCR stated that it would provide humanitarian assistance and quarantine measures for those who were rescued, in line with public health protocols.<sup>35</sup> On February 25, India's coast guard found the boat adrift in the Andaman Sea. Eight refugees had died prior to the boat's rescue.<sup>36</sup> According to the Indian External Affairs Ministry, the boat had left Cox's Bazar on February 11 with 90 people and its engine failed on February 15. The Indian government is in discussions with Bangladesh to secure the refugees' safe return.<sup>37</sup>

The military coup has led to increased fear among the Rohingya refugees. Although attempts at repatriation under Aung San Suu Kyi's leadership had failed, the coup re-installed Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to power. Min Aung Hlaing was the military commander who led the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya in 2017.<sup>38</sup> Despite Min Aung Hlaing's statement in the days following the coup that a repatriation process would continue, for many of the greater than one million Rohingya refugees that currently live in camps in Bangladesh, returning to a Myanmar ruled by their persecutors is not an option.<sup>39</sup> Nurual Amin, a Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh, told the *Associated Press* that "Even if they try to repatriate us, will not agree to go back under the current situation. If they take us back to that regime, they will torture us even more."<sup>40</sup> In addition, the director of the International Crisis Group's Asia program noted that, even if the military leadership says that it would move forward with repatriation, it is unlikely that the Rohingya would be willing to return as overall military repression is increasing.<sup>41</sup>

### **B. Corruption**

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative ("EITI"), a transparency and anti-corruption group focused on the oil, gas and natural resources sector, has suspended Myanmar from participation in the group following the coup in early February.<sup>42</sup> According to the EITI, a country can be "suspended" in situations such as when "the situation in the country does not allow the EITI process to move ahead, such as in the case of political conflict."<sup>43</sup>

In a speech broadcast on state-run MRTV, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said that the military is investigating the civil government for corruption related to misuse of COVID-19 prevention funds.<sup>44</sup> The military has already charged President Win Myint and Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi with numerous crimes, including incitement, incitement using walkie-talkies, breach of the Natural Disaster Management Law and possession of illegally imported walkie-talkies.<sup>45</sup>

### C. International Community / Sanctions

On February 12, 2021, the United Nations (“UN”) Human Rights Council adopted a resolution deploring the removal of Aung San Suu Kyi’s democratically elected government by the Tatmadaw and calling for the restoration of the democratically elected government.<sup>46</sup> The resolution also stressed the need for the military and police to refrain from violence and protect the rights of protestors and the media in accordance with international human rights law.<sup>47</sup> China and Russia continue to defend Myanmar’s military, insisting that the coup is an internal domestic affair—both countries have refused to condemn the coup as members of the UN Security Council.<sup>48</sup>

In response to the military coup, numerous countries, including the following, have imposed sanctions or suspended high level ties with Myanmar.<sup>49</sup> New Zealand does not recognize the legitimacy of Myanmar’s current military government and has suspended all diplomatic ties with Myanmar, including aid and funds that were intended for Myanmar.<sup>50</sup> The United States announced a new sanctions regime, placing ten individuals and three entities connected to the military apparatus responsible for the coup on the U.S. sanctions list.<sup>51</sup> U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen stated that the Treasury Department is “prepared to take additional action should the military not change course.”<sup>52</sup> USAID redirected \$42.4 million in funds allocated to assist Myanmar and will use the funds to “support and strengthen civil society.”<sup>53</sup> Canada announced sanctions against nine Myanmar military officers, including coup leaders Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Vice-Senior General Soe Win.<sup>54</sup> Japan, a major donor to Myanmar, is also considering halting new assistance projects in Myanmar.<sup>55</sup>

After the death of a young anti-coup protester, the United States urged Myanmar’s military regime to refrain from further violence and relinquish power; U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has also pledged to work with partners and allies to press the Myanmar military to reverse its actions.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, in response to the “serious violations of human rights” which took place following the coup, the United Kingdom imposed further sanctions on six Myanmar generals, including army chief Min Aung Hlaing, to send “a clear message... that those responsible for human rights violations will be held to account.”<sup>57</sup> According to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, the Myanmar military used one of the military units accused of committing atrocities against the Rohingya to crack down on anti-coup protesters.<sup>58</sup> The UN, Canada, Japan and the European Union have strongly condemned the Myanmar military’s violent crackdown on anti-coup protests that left at least 18 people dead.<sup>59</sup>

On March 1, 2021, Myanmar’s military regime has dismissed the Myanmar Ambassador to the UN, Kyaw Moe Tun, following his address to an informal UN General Assembly meeting in which he expressed support for the democratically elected National League for Democracy (“NLD”) government and denounced the military coup.<sup>60</sup> Kyaw Moe Tun also asked the international community not to cooperate with the military regime and to help remove it and restore power to the NLD government.<sup>61</sup> According to leaked documents, Myanmar has recalled at least 100 staff from diplomatic missions in at least 19 countries, including missions in the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, Austria, Brazil, France, Norway, Belgium, Serbia, China, Japan, India, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Cambodia, South Korea and

the Philippines.<sup>62</sup> The leaked document also includes orders transferring more than 50 staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to fill the newly vacated positions in those countries.<sup>63</sup>

On February 24, 2021, the Myanmar junta's foreign minister met with his Thai and Indonesian counterparts in Thailand to broker an end to the deadly unrest triggered by the military coup.<sup>64</sup> Indonesia's participation in the talks spurred protests outside of the Indonesian embassy in Yangon.<sup>65</sup> In the wake of the protests, Indonesia's Foreign Ministry denied the existence of an action plan on Myanmar and stated that Indonesia does not support the junta's plan to hold a reelection in one year.<sup>66</sup>

Myanmar submitted an objection to the International Court of Justice ("ICJ") on January 20, 2021, objecting to Gambia's eligibility to file the case against it. In November 2019, the Gambia filed a case at the ICJ alleging that Myanmar committed atrocities against Northern Rakhine Muslims in Rakhine State in 2016 and 2017.<sup>67</sup> The Gambia may respond to Myanmar's objections by submitting a written statement to the ICJ by May 20, 2021.<sup>68</sup>

The Australian government has called for the release of Professor Sean Turnell, an Australian citizen, who served as an economic adviser for Aung San Suu Kyi and was detained following the coup.<sup>69</sup> Despite repeated calls for his release, the whereabouts of Professor Turnell are unknown.<sup>70</sup>

The UN and the United States criticized Malaysia after the government defied a court order not to return a group of over 1,000 Myanmar nationals to Myanmar pending a judicial review.<sup>71</sup>

New Zealand suspended all diplomatic ties with Myanmar as it does not recognize the legitimacy of the current military government, which includes the suspension of aid and funds that were intended for the country, according to New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.<sup>72</sup> This raises concerns that New Zealand could impose economic-related sanctions, and potential blocks in the exchange of payments, which might result in investors from New Zealand pulling out of Myanmar. According to Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, New Zealand has invested US\$6.95 million in Myanmar.

### **III. Civil and Political Rights**

#### **A. Freedom of Speech, Assembly and Association**

In the wake of the coup on February 1, the military completely blocked access to Facebook and Instagram beginning on February 4, as online campaigns against the coup, including the Civil Disobedience Movement, began to organize on the platforms. On February 7, demonstrations took place across the country.

The military regime is preparing to grant its telecommunications ministry sweeping control over data access as well as online content and service.<sup>73</sup> The legislation, which was initially drafted by Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government, would permit government entities to access personal information for security reasons and designate a place for online service

providers to store consumer data.<sup>74</sup> The proposed bill would require providers to “prevent, remove, destroy and cease” in “a timely manner” a range of content on their platforms, including any that inspires hate, disrupts unity or damages stability or peace as well as any “written or verbal statements” against the law.<sup>75</sup> It would also empower the state to conduct surveillance for various reasons and shut down any online service.<sup>76</sup>

On February 22, millions of Myanmar people joined a nationwide general strike against their country’s military junta.<sup>77</sup> This demonstration reflected growing public outrage over the regime’s willingness to use deadly force against protesters.<sup>78</sup> It was the second nationwide popular uprising in Myanmar’s recent history, after the one on August 8, 1988, in which millions of people also took to the streets—in that case to defy the then Socialist regime.<sup>79</sup> The strike on February 22, 2021 has become known as the “22222 Popular Uprising.”<sup>80</sup>

As of February 23, nearly 200 civilians in Naypyitaw have reportedly been detained by Myanmar’s military regime after tens of thousands of protesters joined the “22222” general strike.<sup>81</sup> Videos showed the security forces violently cracking down on anti-coup protesters in several townships, including Zabuthiri and Pinyinana, while activists attempted to march on the central government.<sup>82</sup> Lawyers are negotiating with the city’s police chief to release the detainees.<sup>83</sup> By February 22, 2021, more than four people, including three anti-coup protesters and a member of a civilian neighborhood protection group, had been killed by the security forces and more than 100 wounded in crackdowns by the regime on demonstrations across the country.<sup>84</sup>

On February 24, Myanmar’s anti-regime protesters gathered outside Asean member embassies, including those of Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, calling them to reject any cooperation with the “illegitimate” military government.<sup>85</sup>

On February 25, Facebook banned all remaining accounts, pages and media entities controlled by the Myanmar military on Facebook and Instagram, which are Myanmar’s most popular social media platforms, as well as ads by military-linked commercial entities.<sup>86</sup> Facebook continued to treat the situation in Myanmar as an emergency and it said the ban was prompted by security forces’ deadly crackdowns on peaceful protesters since the February 1 coup.<sup>87</sup> The ban does not cover government ministries and agencies engaged in the provision of essential public services, including the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Ministry of Education.<sup>88</sup>

Kachin State protesters have rejected appeals from a military-appointed negotiation team, which was reportedly formed to prevent activists from being harmed in protests and sent to jail.<sup>89</sup>

On February 27, crackdowns on the protesters were more violent and widespread. Bloody raids were reported from Kachin State in the country’s north to Myeik in Myanmar’s Deep South.<sup>90</sup> Hundreds of people, including journalists, were arrested and dozens are believed to have been injured in Myanmar on February 27 as security forces indiscriminately attacked everyone in their path during a continuing crackdown on anti-military regime protesters across the country.<sup>91</sup> State-run Myanmar Radio and Television announced in the evening that a total of 479 “protesters against the state” across the country have been detained.<sup>92</sup> That is the highest number of single day arrests since the beginning of the week-long protest.<sup>93</sup>

By mid-afternoon February 28, at least 13 people were killed and scores injured as riot police and soldiers opened fire with live rounds and rubber bullets on anti-coup protests in multiple locations across Myanmar.<sup>94</sup> As of February 28, at least 18 people are believed to have been killed, and 30 injured, according to the UN human rights office.<sup>95</sup>

## **B. Freedom of the Press and Censorship**

In connection with the February 1 coup, the military regime disrupted internet access, restricting certain regions more than others. Magway, for example, had no internet connectivity while Yangon's connectivity dropped to 50%.<sup>96</sup> Additionally, the military blocked access to Facebook on February 3, blocked Twitter and Instagram the next day, and a near total internet blackout was imposed hours later in order to quell the mass protests that have emerged in response to the coup.<sup>97</sup> Facebook is one of the primary sources of news information in Myanmar, and prior to the internet shutdown users had been able to circumvent social media restrictions via virtual private networks 'VPNs' to access news. The total internet blackout made such workarounds nearly impossible.<sup>98</sup> Internet access has remained intermittent as the military continues to suppress protests.<sup>99</sup>

News access has also been significantly hampered by increased restrictions on journalists.<sup>100</sup> On February 13, the military-controlled Ministry of Information issued directives to the Myanmar Press Council (the "MPC"), urging that the media report "ethically" and "avoid instigating public unrest."<sup>101</sup> Words like "regime" and "junta" were prohibited as ways to refer to the State Administrative Council.<sup>102</sup> In response to these directives, eleven members of the MPC resigned and noted that the council has had difficulty protecting the journalists that have been arrested and assaulted since the coup.<sup>103</sup> Additionally, over a dozen journalists and editors resigned from the *Myanmar Times*<sup>104</sup> after the newspaper's management forced one of its journalists to cover a military press conference, despite a pre-planned boycott.<sup>105</sup> Journalists for the *Myanmar Times* also alleged internal censorship, noting that that they were told by the management to use "power transfer" instead of "coup" and that terms like "coup leader" and "leader of military" were completely banned.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, an unnamed editor from the *Myanmar Times* said that the *Myanmar Times*' management asked reporters to use expressly military-approved terms and to avoid reporting on public opposition.<sup>107</sup>

Journalists in Myanmar also face increased safety risks, with reports of intimidation and assault of journalists, particularly those covering protests.<sup>108</sup> For example, Kyaw Zey Win reports being beaten and detained by police while covering a protest in Mandalay despite having identified himself as a member of the media.<sup>109</sup> Other journalists have reported being followed to their homes and surveilled by police after covering protests.<sup>110</sup> On February 14, police arrested several reporters for reporting on security forces firing guns at protestors during a standoff in Myitkyina, in Kachin State.<sup>111</sup> As of February 20, at least six journalists had been detained,<sup>112</sup> and as of February 28, more had been arrested, including an *Associated Press* journalist, Thein Saw, who was taken into custody while covering protests in Yangon.<sup>113</sup> The *Associated Press* condemned the arrest and called for his immediate release.<sup>114</sup> A Japanese journalist, Yuki Kitazumi, was also reportedly arrested and beaten in Yangon after covering a protest.<sup>115</sup> According to Myint Kyaw, former joint secretary of the MPC, threatening or detaining journalists for covering a peaceful protest is "effectively a news blackout."<sup>116</sup>



In a move that would further erode both press and internet freedoms, a draft cybersecurity law has been proposed, which would, among other things, require online service providers to keep a range of user data (including name and address) and provide that data to authorities when requested “under any existing law,” as well as block or remove a wide range of information at the instruction of the authorities, including “misinformation and disinformation,” and information that disrupts unity and peace.<sup>117</sup> The draft law would also allow the ministry tasked with cybersecurity to temporarily shut down communication networks, control devices related to online service provision, and issue a final ban on any online service provider in Myanmar.<sup>118</sup> The draft has been met with staunch criticism by over two-hundred Myanmar businesses and civil society organizations as well as the Asia Internet Coalition, whose members include tech giants Apple, Facebook, Google and Amazon.<sup>119</sup>

#### **IV. Economic Development**

##### **A. Economic Development—Legal Framework, Foreign Investment**

Some foreign firms, concerned for possible sanctions from Western countries in response to the military coup, have already put investment commitments on hold.<sup>120</sup> A number of Japanese companies halted their operations in Myanmar, including Suzuki Motor Corp, All Nippon Airways and Denso, due to the effects of the coup, including concerns for the safety of employees and difficulties accessing information due to unstable conditions.

Kirin Holdings Co. Ltd. announced on February 5 that it will end its joint-venture partnership with Myanmar Economic Holdings Public Co. Ltd. (“MEHL”), a Myanmar military-owned conglomerate, following the armed forces’ coup.<sup>121</sup> Kirin held 51% of both Myanmar Brewery and Mandalay Brewery, with MEHL holding the remainder. A US\$1 billion (1.34 trillion kyat) modern industrial hub project backed by Thailand’s largest industrial estate developer, Amata Corporation, has also suspended work.

According to the Managing Director of the Korea-Myanmar Industrial Complex (“KMIC”), work on the KMIC project will continue despite the political unrest.<sup>122</sup> The KMIC is the first government-to-government project between South Korea and Myanmar. The joint venture was signed in 2017 between Myanmar’s Ministry of Construction and South Korea’s Land and Housing Corporation. Myanmar holds a 40% stake in the project.

##### **B. Economic Development—Infrastructure, Major Projects**

There have been no material updates since the previous report.

##### **C. Land Seizure**

There have been no material updates since the previous report.

#### **V. Peace Talks and Ethnic Violence**

##### **A. Ethnic Violence**

The Restoration Council of Shan State (“RCSS / SSA-S”) and the Tatmadaw clashed for five days in mid-February in Hsipaw Township, northern Shan State.<sup>123</sup> The RCSS / SSA-S

confiscated items including military uniforms and ammunition.<sup>124</sup> Fighting broke out in Hsipaw Township again on February 17, this time between the Ta'ang (Palaung) National Liberation Army (“TNLA”) and the Shan State Progressive Party (“SSPP / SSA-N”) and the RCSS / SSA-S in Kyaukme Township.<sup>125</sup> The RCSS / SSA-S claimed that a joint force of the TNLA and the SSPP attacked their camps, while the TNLA claimed that the fighting was triggered by an attack by the RCSS / SSA-S.<sup>126</sup>

Since mid-December, the Tatmadaw has engaged a series of violent assaults on civilian communities in northern Kayin State and eastern Bago Region, in the context of increasing militarization – building new roads and resupplying army bases which are perceived locally as occupying forces.<sup>127</sup> Myanmar Army shelling and other attacks on civilians has displaced more than 6,000 Kayin civilians since mid-December.<sup>128</sup> According to the Free Burma Rangers, more than 700 Kayin civilians were forcibly displaced in the 5 Brigade area of the Karen National Union (“KNU”) between February 20-21 alone.<sup>129</sup>

## **B. Peace Talks**

The Peace Process Steering Team of the ten Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (“NCA”) signatories have announced that they will continue the peace process with the military regime.<sup>130</sup> The Tatmadaw said it would hold talks to achieve as concrete a peace as possible with NCA signatories.

The Karen National Union (“KNU”), Myanmar’s oldest ethnic armed group, and the Restoration Council of Shan State (“RCSS”) have expressed concerns over the military coup and detention of government leaders.<sup>131</sup> The KNU said that it “seriously requests that the Tatmadaw, as a gesture of national reconciliation, unconditionally releases all the people it has detained, including government leaders and democracy activists, and peacefully resolves all the political problems through dialogue.” The RCSS said that the coup undermines mutual trust and harms the peace process.

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2CNN, February 8, 2021: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/08/asia/myanmar-coup-protests-democracy-intl-hnk/index.html>.

3Id.

4The Irrawaddy, February 2, 2021: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-military-appoints-ex-generals-usdp-members-new-govt.html>; The Irrawaddy, February 3, 2021: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-military-regime-appoints-governing-body.html>.

5Id.

6Id.

7BBC, February 1, 2021: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55882489>

8Id.

9CNN, February 8, 2021: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/08/asia/myanmar-coup-protests-democracy-intl-hnk/index.html>.

10Id.

11Id.

12Id.

13The Irrawaddy, February 10, 2021: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmars-ethnic-states-rise-protest-military-coup.html>.

14NPR, February 8, 2021: <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/08/965413876/myanmar-coup-military-defends-takeover-and-enacts-curfew-as-protests-intensify>.

15Id.

16The Irrawaddy, February 10, 2021: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/woman-shot-myanmar-police-anti-coup-protest-declared-brain-dead.html>.

17CNN, February 8, 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3PRQ572rKM>.

18The Global New Light of Myanmar, February 9, 2021: [https://cdn.myanmarseo.com/file/client-cdn/gnlm/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/9\\_Feb\\_21\\_gnlm.pdf](https://cdn.myanmarseo.com/file/client-cdn/gnlm/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/9_Feb_21_gnlm.pdf).

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20Id.

21Id.

22Id.

23The Irrawaddy, February 10, 2021: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/nlds-self-declared-parliament-reappoints-daw-aung-san-suu-kyi-myanmars-leader.html>.

24The Irrawaddy, February 10, 2021: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-military-raids-suu-kyis-party-headquarters-yangon.html>.

25The Irrawaddy, February 11, 2021: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-military-regime-detains-members-ousted-govt-late-night-raids.html>.

26The Irrawaddy, February 11, 2021: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-military-detained-220-political-prisoners-since-coup-aapp.html>.

27The Irrawaddy, February 10, 2021: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmars-ethnic-states-rise-protest-military-coup.html>.

28The Irrawaddy, February 10, 2021: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-anti-coup-protesters-defy-ban-take-streets-fifth-day.html>.

29The Irrawaddy, February 14, 2021: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-military-junta-suspends-laws-protecting-citizens-privacy-crack-opposition.html>.

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