

# JULY CHRONOLOGY 2020

## Summary of the Current Situation:

**507** individuals are oppressed in Burma due to political activity:

**35** political prisoners are serving sentences,

**155** are awaiting trial inside prison,

**317** are awaiting trial outside prison.



Rakhine students jailed protesting internet ban (Photo Credit - Arakan Students' Union)

**WEBSITE** | **TWITTER** | **FACEBOOK**



**Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)**

**နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း**

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# ACRONYMS

<b>ABFSU</b>	All Burma Federation of Student Unions
<b>CAT</b>	Conservation Alliance Tanawthari
<b>CNPC</b>	China National Petroleum Corporation
<b>EAO</b>	Ethnic Armed Organization
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>KHRG</b>	Karen Human Rights Group
<b>KIA</b>	Kachin Independence Army
<b>KNU</b>	Karen National Union
<b>MFU</b>	Myanmar Farmers' Union
<b>MNHRC</b>	Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
<b>MOGE</b>	Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise
<b>NLD</b>	National League for Democracy
<b>NNC</b>	Naga National Council
<b>PAPPL</b>	Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law
<b>RCSS</b>	Restoration Council of Shan State
<b>RCSS/SSA</b>	Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army – South
<b>SHRF</b>	Shan Human Rights Foundation
<b>TNLA</b>	Ta'ang National Liberation Army
<b>YUSU</b>	Yangon University Students' Union

## POLITICAL PRISONERS

Arrests: 52

Charges: 22

Releases: 45

Sentences: 24

Bad Health: 4

Released by EAOs: 6

### ARRESTS

#### **Two Youths Arrested in Kyauktaw Township**

On July 1, Nay Myo Tun and Ye Tun (Thein Tun Aye) from Pannechaung Village were arrested by Battalion #375 near Katsanadi bridge in Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State while they were on the way back home from Kyauktaw market. Two other detainees contacted Daw Tin Tin Oo, Nay Myo Tun's mother, about their arrest. However, officers from Battalion 375 at the bridge were questioned and denied any knowledge of the matter. Ko Ye Tun works as a motorcycle taxi driver and Nay Myo Tun works to support his mother.

#### **Three Villagers Arrested and One Dead After Army Raid**

On July 3, 70-year-old Tha Hla from Tan Byint Gyi village in Mrauk-U Township from Arakan State was allegedly injured by gunfire from a 300-strong military contingent, which opened fire on the village after returning from neighbouring Myaung Bway village. Furthermore, three men were arrested by the military. Security personnel also reportedly raided some houses in the village and arrested Maung Thein Tun, 62, Kyaw Maung, 42, and San Shwe Khaing, 52, according to family members of the detainees. Army troops were deployed in the village at around 8 p.m. on July 3 and the three detained villagers are reportedly being held at the village's monastery, according to locals. As many as 700 people have fled to nearby villages in the wake of the army's detention of the three men.

#### **Military Arrests Civilian in Taungup Township**

On the morning of July 5, around eight soldiers entered Lamuma Sanpya Village, Taungup Township in Rakhine State. San Chit Aung, a carpenter, was then arrested and taken away for questioning. More than two days after his arrest, nobody knew where he was being detained.

### **Two Arrested from Zin Chaung Village in Kyaukphyu Township**

Four men from Zin Chaung village in Kyaukphyu Township, Arakan State were detained by military and police personnel on July 7. Early that morning, members of the local police and Battalion 34 took Win Thein Aung (45), Aung Saw Tun (55), Maung Aye Naing (37/38), and Win Naing (27/25) into custody in Kyaukphyu town. Later that day Win Thein Aung and his brother, Aung Saw Tun were released from a police station in the Zin Chaung village-tract, but the other two men remained in custody and arrested. According to family members, Win Naing owns a phone repair and photocopy shop in Zin Chaung village, and Maung Aye Naing is a motorcycle taxi driver. The Zin Chaung village administrator, Tun Tun Oo, said that authorities searched Win Naing's shop and arrested him because they found ties to the Arakan Army (AA).

A full week after the arrest and detention of the two men, concerns among family members grew with no way of contacting them or knowledge of their whereabouts. In an interview with Development Media Group (DMG), one relative of Maung Aye Naing said he was told by a member of the military security personnel that the two were "brutally tortured in military detention", were "unable to speak", and "their condition is considered life-threatening". After 20 days of being held incommunicado, and no official information released about the two men, Win Naing's mother, Htwe Khin, requested permission to see them. Htwe Khin said that she wants "the detainees to be dealt with in accordance with the law," but is worried since she was unable to get in touch with the military. Instead, local authorities and lawmakers were notified of the men's enforced disappearance. Kyaw Zaw, a police lieutenant from Kyaukphyu Township police station, said that the two had not been transferred to the police station, and that he knew nothing about their arrest.

### **A Man and Woman Arrested and Interrogated on Suspicion of a Landmine Explosion**

On July 3, Aung Lwin Soe and Soe Soe Maw from Kamar Village were arrested and interrogated by police on suspicion of connection with a landmine explosion near Taraba Village in Taungup Township, Arakan State. Soldiers also searched the homes of Aung Lwin Soe and Soe Soe Maw. On June 29, in Taungup Township, a landmine exploded near Taraba village, killing four people.

### **6 Villagers Arrested on Rambree Island of Arakan State**

On July 11 six villagers were arrested in Alay Chaung village of Rambree Township, Arakan State, by security forces. In Alay Chaung, villagers identified the six arrestees as Maung Chan Nyein (20), Maung Tun Win, Zan Lwin (35), Saw Myint Tun (37), Maung Myint Tun (37), and Maung Myint Win (25).

According to the Alay Chaung village administrator, a column of military soldiers from Light Infantry Battalions (No. 34 and 36) arrived in the early hours of the morning to conduct a raid and probe families for information. Soldiers then chose the six villagers for further interrogation and took them to an undisclosed location.

### **Two Locals Arrested in Kyaukphyu Township**

On July 7, the army arrested two locals of Laytaung Village, Kyaukphyu Township, Arakan State. The two detainees were arrested for having Arakan national anthems on their phones.

### **More Kyaukphyu Men Arrested for Alleged Arakan Army Links**

Two men from Yay Nan Dwein village in Kyaukphyu Township, Arakan State were arrested on July 13 by the Military. According to their families, the two villagers; brothers Saw Maung, and Nyi Tun Maung, were detained by Light Infantry Division No. 34 and taken away for questioning on suspicion of having ties to the Arakan Army (AA). In a statement the following day, the Tatmadaw True News Information Team announced its arrest of Saw Maung, but made no mention of Nyi Tun Maung. In its July 14 statement, the Tatmadaw True News Information Team stated that when military personnel raided Saw Maung's home they found a knife, a mobile phone, and papers linking him to the ethnic armed group which led them to bring him in for further questioning.

### **Two Youths Arrested in Maei Town**

On July 12, Than Zaw Zaw and Than Zaw Htay, 17-year-old twin brothers from Maei Town, Taungup Township, Arakan State, were arrested at around 12 midnight by 30 soldiers, including four policemen who arrived at their home and searched the house, then arrested the twins. On the morning of July 13, their older brother was also arrested and released the next day. On July 19, the military reported that the twin brothers were arrested because they were members of the Arakan Army. Than Zaw Zaw works at a barbershop in his neighborhood and Than Zaw Htay works as a carpenter. At present, the twins are being held in the dormitories of the Maei Police Station according to administrator U Tun Tin Aung from Ward No. 1.

### **Two Kyaukphyu Villager Arrested for Suspected Links to AA**

Two residents of Kyan Chaing village, Aung Tin Wai and Myint Myat Tun, in Arakan State's Kyaukphyu Township were arrested over alleged connections to the Arakan Army (AA) and are to be charged under the Counter-Terrorism Law, the Tatmadaw True News Information Team said on July 29. Security personnel intercepted six men travelling to Paungnetgyi Island in two boats on July 21. Three of the men managed to flee the scene by jumping into the water, one of whom was arrested about 45 minutes later. Aung Tin Wai and Myint Myat Tun were responsible for collecting food and money for the AA, and a landmine blast at Thaing Chaung Junction on June 3 was masterminded by the duo, the

military's statement alleged. The two detainees are to be transferred to the concerned department and charged under the Counter-Terrorism Law. Locals are defending the six men from Kyan Chaing village and saying they went to Paungnetgyi Island to fish, Arakan State MP for Kyaukphyu Township U Kyaw Lwin quoted residents as saying.

## **ARRESTS BY ETHNIC ARMED GROUPS**

### **Four Chin Youths from Paletwa Township Arrested by AA**

On July 30, The Khumi Affairs Coordination Council (KACC), a local civil society organization, released a statement that four Chin Ethnic Youth from Chin State's Paletwa Township were arrested at Nga Tha Rine Village in Arakan State's Kyauktaw Township on July 29. These four youths were Salai Aung Soe, Salai Van Tar Man, Salai Aung Tun Ko and Salai Khin Maung Soe. Locals informed KACC that these four youths were out of seven people returning together from Kyauktaw Township to Paletwa Township.

## **CHARGES**

### **Local Television Reporter Charged after Posting COVID-19 Content on Facebook**

On July 1, the government filed a lawsuit in Ottorathiri Township against Nay Pyi Taw-based reporter Aung Ko Ko from Eleven Media Group under Section 68 (a) of the Telecommunications Law for writing a post on Covid-19 on his Facebook account. He was granted bail after two guarantees worth 500,000 kyat each (\$365). The next trial was on July 16. Police Captain Ye Aung from the Central Investigation Department (CID), as the plaintiff, lodged a complaint to the court saying that the reporter remarked on Facebook that the Ministry of Health underreported and delayed news releases related to Covid-19 situation and that the reporter spread misinformation with intent to harm the states image. The CID investigated the owner of Aung Ko Ko Mann Tharlay Facebook account and tried to sue him at the court under Section 27 of the Natural Disaster Management Law. But after instruction, the law was changed, and instead he was sued under Section 68(a) of the Telecommunications Law.

### **Three from Kyauktaw Township Charged, Two under Counter-Terrorism and One under Export Act**

On June 27, five men from Chaung Wa quarter in Apaukwa village, Kyaukdaw Township were arrested by military troops from Battalion No. 539 while traveling to a funeral in Ponnarkyun via car. The five men are Bo Kyaw Than, Than Win Win Naing, Tun Aye Maung, Myint Zaw Oo, and Aung Naing Soe. However, Aung Naing Soe and Myint Zaw Oo have been released between July 3 and 6.

Tun Aye Maung is now facing charges for possession of an unlicensed vehicle and for falsifying the car's import and export license. Bo Kyaw Than and Than Win Naing face charges under the Counter-Terrorism Law after a search of his mobile phone revealed incriminating photos of him holding a remote controlled detonator and screenshots of GPS locations for two mines set up nearby Apaukwa. But on June 29, along with these findings, the military announced that the other three men would be released.

### **Eight Charged from Sai Chone Dwein, Rakhine State**

The military arrested nine people from Kat Thabyay village on June 26 and a 100-household Chief from Sai Chone Dwein village on June 28. The detainees were remanded in police custody at Kyaukphyu Myoma police station on July 5. Eight of the men including the Chief was charged under the Counter Terrorism Law. Those charged are Hla Maung Than, Maung Ngay, Maung Hla Myint, San Hla Maung, Aung Tin Chay, Kun Kya Aung, Hla Nu Aung, all from Katta Pyay village. They are between 20 and 27 years old. The 100-household Chief from Sai Chone Dwein village is Hla Maung Myint.

### **Villager Charged for Talking to Media**

On July 11, Lu Kyan from Saydisate Village, Homalin Township, Sagaing Division was arrested by members of the Katha Battalion for questioning. On July 13, he was transferred to Homalin Police Station. Then, Myo Myo, Township Police Chief of Homalin People's Police Force filed a case against Lu Kyan under Section 17 (1) of the Unlawful Association Act. Prior to his arrest, Lu Kyan contacted the Shan Red Voice Journal on July 6 and said that during his trip, military personnel repeatedly came to his home for questioning. Although he does not know all the details of why he was questioned, it is related to his interview with a local media outlet about the Shan National Army (SNA) in 2018.

### **Military Sues 105 farmers for Encroachment on Disputed Land**

On July 13, Captain Zaw Win Naing filed a lawsuit against 105 farmers for constructing fences, building houses, and living on military land in Singu Township Mandalay Division. The court summoned the farmers to appear in court that day, but the case has not been heard. Around 3,000 acres of farmland in Nyaung Wun and Ngwe Taung villages in Sint Kue Township are in a dispute over ownership between the military and local farmers.

### **Sagaing NDF party chairman charged with defamation**

Zaw Naing Oo, the Sagaing Township National Democratic Force (NDF) chairman, has been charged under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code. On June 30, U Chan Myo Tun from the Sagaing Township General Administration Department filed the case against Zaw Naing Oo for distributing leaflets reading "Save Sagaing" regarding the COVID-19 epidemic. Zaw Naing Oo was charged with defamation



over the contents of the letter in regards to the regional government. He is currently being held at the Sagaing police station.

### **Military Releases One of Detained Kyaukphyu Duo, Charges Other with Terrorism**

Around 4am on July 11, a large military contingent arrived in trucks at Sai Chone Dwein village where they gathered villagers at a local school and checked their mobile phones. According to villagers, Ko Tun Myint Soe and Phyo Win Aung were arrested and taken to Dhanyawadi Naval Base about a mile from the village. On July 15, after several days in detention, the military released Ko Phyo Win Aung; finding that he has no connections to the Arakan Army (AA). Ko Tun Myint Soe, however, has been charged by the military for suspected links to the AA under Section 52(a) and (j) of the Counter-Terrorism Law, according to a statement released by the Tatmadaw True News Information Team on July 21. He is now being held at Kyaukphyu Prison.

### **Civilian Charged with Defamation on Social Media**

Hla Win, the owner of the Shwe Khi account, has been charged under Section 124 (a) of the Penal Code for posting on a social media site to defame and discredit the Mandalay Chief Minister and the Union Government. Hla Win, the owner of the Shwe Khi account, was accused of spreading false information with fake screenshots of the Facebook chatbox to discredit the Mandalay Chief Minister and the Union Government. Bahan Township Administrator Sein Kyi filed a lawsuit in Rangoon Western District Court seeking action against him. On July 23, the Bahan Township Police arrested the accused Shwe Phe account holder, Hla Win, in front of his office and issued an arrest warrant. The trial will begin on July 29.

### **Three Women from Kyaukphyu Township Charged**

On the evening of July 22, military troops detained three women, two children, and one village administrator from Yay Nan Dwein village in Kyaukphyu Township, Arakan State for suspected association with the Arakan Army (AA). The women identified as local shopkeepers, Byar Ma aged 53, and Hla Than Khin aged 40, and an actress aged 37 were arrested at their homes on the suspicion of providing food to the Arakan Army (AA). The actress' two children, aged 6 and 8, were taken with her. That night the military also detained the village administrator, Maung Htaung, aged 60 years old. On July 24, the military filed charges against the women under Section 50(j) and Section 52(a) of the Counter-Terrorism Law.

A sister of the one of the accused, Hla Than Htay, and Khin Moe Aye believe these charges are likely due to a misunderstanding by the military of village philanthropy unrelated to the AA. In March, the actress arrived to perform at Ye Nan Dwein village but due to the pandemic was prohibited from performing, and forced to stay in the village. To help the woman and her children survive, villagers had been



donating rice to the artist's family. Both women worry the military may have been misinformed and mistaken this aid as assistance to the AA. Comments on these charges by officials were not at first forthcoming, but on July 25 the Tatmadaw True News Information Team held a press conference where it emphasized that it would not charge women any less for crimes committed if found guilty simply because of their gender. Court hearing dates have not yet been set, but the Kyaukphyu Myoma Police Chief, Kyaw Zaw, has commented on the case saying, "There has been a violation of the law on terrorism"... "They are being sent to prison. All three."

### **Sixty Farmers Charged for Trespassing**

At the beginning of July, Captain Zaw Win Naing from Supply and Transport Battalion No.121 charged 60 farmers from Singu Township in Mandalay Division under Section 114 and Section 427 of the Penal Code at the Let Pan Hla Area Police Station for cultivating military-owned land. On July 28, Let Pan Hla Area Police Station questioned the farmers for the first time. Since 1972, Supply and Transport Battalion No. 121 has confiscated approximately 3000 acres of land in Nyaung Wonn Village and Ngwe Taung Village for the military's Agriculture and Livestock Project, said local farmers. However, in 1995, the military rented these lands to the Great Wall Company for a 30 years contract. The company was unable to cultivate all the land and had a surplus, so farmers started farming in 2014 while the company was operating. About 750 farmers are reportedly cultivating on two acres of confiscated land for a farmer.

## **TRIALS**

### **Poet and Activist Appears in Court over Internet Ban Protest**

Maung Saung Kha, a poet and activist, appeared in court on July 7 to face charges that he helped stage an unlawful protest demanding an end to internet blackouts in Arakan and Chin State. He is accused of putting up a protest banner and faces a police lawsuit filed under part of a Peaceful Assembly Law, which outlaws unauthorized assemblies and can carry a maximum three-month prison sentence, a fine or both. Also, on the anniversary, Maung Saung Kha organized a virtual protest with hundreds joining a video call. He is not facing charges in connection with that. He said after the hearing that he should not face charges since no physical assembly had taken place. The prosecutor declined to comment outside the court. On July 14, Kyauktada Township Police Chief Myo Thet was questioned by the court as a prosecution witness in the second hearing in the case against Maung Saung Kha.

### **Military Determined to Re-Persecute Karenni Farmers in State Court**

Early this month, the military appealed the conviction of Karenni Farmers from Loikaw and Demoso Townships on charges leveled against them by military officials last year. In 2019, after attempting to

cultivate land confiscated by the military, three staff members of the Karenni State Farmers Union (KSFU) and 37 farmers from Demoso Township were charged for violating at least 5 laws including; Article 6(1) of the Public Property Protection Action Act and Article 447 of the Trespassing Law. In March, the farmers were sentenced by local courts to pay fines and a short prison term - which the judge waived as time already served while awaiting trial. Feeling that this sentence by local courts was too lenient, several Military battalions have addressed the Karenni State court to appeal this conviction. Loikaw-based Artillery Battalion 356, and Light Infantry Battalion 250 appealed the conviction of farmers in Loikaw Township, and the Demoso-based Artillery Battalion did the same against farmers in Dawsoshay village in Demoso Township. As a result, 20 farmers from the villages of Dawmokala, Thon Mai, and Loi Kamu in Loikaw Township, and six farmers from Dawsoshay received notice letters on July 2 and 7 to appear in state court.

On July 10, farmers from Dawsoshay attended a court hearing in Karenni State court, and farmers from villages in Loikaw were due to attend theirs on July 24. Some farmers were left with no land to cultivate after their plots were confiscated by the army, and as a result many have struggled to make ends meet, especially with the added challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The costs of transportation alone to the new court hearings add substantially to farmers' financial difficulties- some farmers even going into debt from borrowing money to go to court.

### **Court Agreed having farmers' representatives for Kholam Farmers**

On July 21, Shan State's Namhsan Township Court agreed to have five farmers' representatives for 47 farmers in Kholam Township, Loilem District, Southern Shan State. On June 9, Infantry Battalion No.66 based in Kholam Township, which confiscated the land, filed a case against 47 farmers in Namsan Township court. The Namhsan Township Court has summoned the court four times in connection with the case, but the military has so far not appeared. The military appeared before the court at the fifth hearing. Some of the accused farmers are old and in poor health, making it difficult for them to travel. Therefore, on June 29, an application was granted to the Namsan Township Judge for having farmers' representatives and refusing to allow 47 accused farmers to go to court, but the court rejected the application.

### **Seven Farmers Summoned to Court**

On July 15, the court summoned seven farmers from Hsi Hseng, Shan State. Captain Nay Lin Soe of Light Infantry Battalion No.424 filed a lawsuit against the seven farmers on August 8, 2019, under Trespassing Law and Section 447 of the Penal Code. At present, Captain Nay Lin Soe is no longer in

Light Infantry Battalion No.424 and will be replaced by Major Nai Zin Kyaw. Khin Maung, an 87-year-old man, was among the seven accused farmers, and he was taken to court by car.

### **Order to Re-Examine the Original Case of Buddhist Monk U Sein Ti Ta**

On July 17, Mandalay Region High Court ordered a re-examination of an original case with Buddhist monk U Sein Ti Ta under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code. The charge was filed by a military officer over a Facebook post of U Sein Ti Ta's that allegedly could have harmed the state or public tranquility, but a court in Mandalay's Pyigyidagun Township dropped charges against monk U Sein Ti Ta. Afterwards, the military appealed against the rejection, and the Mandalay Region High Court ordered a review. Before the military appealed to the Mandalay Region High Court, the military filed another case in September 2019 under Section 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law regarding the abbot's criticisms, at that time the abbot was granted bail of 5 million kyats on March 5. While facing Section 66(d), the Supreme Court also ordered a reconsideration of the original charge regarding section 505(b), leaving monk U Sein Ti Ta facing two cases for the same case.

## **SENTENCES**

### **17 Activists Ordered to Pay Fines or Be Sentenced**

On July 10, a Bahan Township court ordered 17 activists to pay 5,000 kyat (\$ 3.66) or face seven days in prison for participating in a ceasefire and peace demonstration. On May 12, 2018, the 17 activists participating in the protest were charged under Section 20 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law in Bahan Township Court.

### **Artists Freed After Anti-Buddhist in COVID 19 Mural Charges Dropped**

On July 17, three artists from Kachin State charged with offending Buddhism in a COVID-19 awareness street mural were freed by the township court in the state capital Myitkyina. Naw Htun Aung, director of Kachinland Research Center, Cecilia Ja Seng and Zayar Hnaung faced charges filed by the deputy director of the state's Religious Office under Article 295(a) of the Penal Code on April 3. The three were freed after more than 12 court hearings over three months. They painted murals in Myitkyina's streets to raise coronavirus awareness in late March. One mural showed the Grim Reaper wearing red robes, spreading coronavirus while three medics try to save the planet. In early April, pictures of the mural spread on social media, sparking criticism that the figure looked like a Buddhist monk. According to their lawyer, Daw Doi Bu, the charges were dropped after the three managed to prove the Grim Reaper carrying a pot was not supposed to be a Buddhist monk. The mural was painted over on April 3.

## **Arakan Students Jailed Protesting Internet Ban**

On July 23, two members and student leaders of the Rakhine Students' Union (Yangon Universities) were sentenced to a month in prison for holding a protest against the internet ban in several townships of the Rakhine and Chin States. They were sentenced at the Kamaryut Township Court in Yangon Division under Section 19 of the Peaceful Assembly and Procession Law. The two students, Myat Hein Tun and Kyaw Lin, were charged for leading a protest on February 23 that called on the government to lift the internet ban in place for over a year across eight townships of the northern Rakhine State and Paletwa Township in Chin State. In addition to the resumption of internet services, the student leaders demanded that those responsible for an artillery shell exploding on primary school grounds in Buthidaung Township be held accountable, and to give international media "the right to freely access areas to report."

Students from the Rakhine Students' Union, as well as students from the All Burma Federation of Students Union, and the Yangon University of Economic Students' Union (Ywathagyi area) were in attendance at the protest. Nine, including Myat Hein Tun and Kyaw Lin, have been charged. On March 25, Maung Htet Aung, Aung Pyae Sone Phyo, Hnyin, Aye Myat Mon Kyaw, Thu Ta Soe, Sit Naing, and Thet Tin Aung were sentenced to a month in prison with hard labor under Section 19 of the Peaceful Assembly and Procession Law, also sentenced by Kamaryut Township Court in Yangon Division. Students involved in protesting against the year-long internet ban on June 21, 2020 have also had charges filed against them under the same law and section.

## **RELEASES**

### **Two Educators Freed in Arakan State**

On July 17, two educators, including a teacher from Arakan State, were released from Sittwe Prison without charging them. Kyaw San Naing, aged 34, a teacher along with Nay Zaw Tun aged 22, a clerk in Alaka Agnumaw middle-school of Rathedaung Township were arrested in December 2019. They were picked up by security forces on December 3 under suspicion for being involved in a landmine explosion that killed a 14-year-old youth, as well for some suspicious photos found in cell phones. Both of them were charged under anti-terror act 50(a) & 52(a). They were kept since then in Sittwe prison. However, recently the Sittwe district court ordered for both men to be released without any charges as authorities failed to present sufficient evidence

### **Three of Four Imprisoned for Selling Arakanese Calendars Released**

On July 27, three out of four men who were sentenced to two years in prison under the Unlawful Associations Act for the circulation and sale of a calendar that ruffled feathers in 2019 in Ayeyarwady

Region were released early and walked free. The released men were Kaung Myat Thu, Bo Hsan and Win Bo. Police detained the three men as well as the publisher of the Rakhita calendar, Thein Aung Myat, on April 6, 2019, while they were selling them on Haigyi Island. They were sentenced to two years in prison each by the Ngapudaw Township Court in Ayeyawady Region on November 18, 2019, under Section 17(1) of the Unlawful Associations Act because “Arakan Army Day” was a noted date on the calendars. Thein Aung Myat, who remains in prison, was said to have taken the lead role in peddling the calendars, while the other three men were accompanying him on the day of their arrests. Thein Aung Myat was sentenced to two years in prison under the Unlawful Associations Act and faced additional prosecution on law provisions pertaining to illegal publication.

## **Restrictions on Civil and Political Rights**

### **Four months and No Word on Missing Minbya brothers Since Alleged Military detention**

Two brothers from Phar Phyoo village in Minbya Township, Arakan State, have not been heard from since they were allegedly detained by a local military contingent over four months ago, family members said. Ko Than Shwe and his younger brother, Ko Maung Win Shwe were reportedly going to shop in the Minbya town market on March 1 when they were arrested by Military troops near Rarmaung Bridge, said their father, U Phyu Gyi. Family members have not seen the two since they were taken away, and have received no information about them thus far. The family took their case to the Arakan Human Rights Defenders and Promoters Association on June 30 and the director, U Myat Tun, said that the association will file a complaint with the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission this month. Brigadier-General Zaw Min Tun and Major-General Tun Tun Nyi from the Tatmadaw True News Information Team were sought for comment on the situation, but could not be reached. Residents said the two brothers work in village agriculture with their father. These disappearances came just before an outbreak of violence in the village four months ago, when artillery shells fell on the village, injuring several people, and later, at least two people were killed and eleven homes destroyed by a fire broke that one local lawmaker blamed on the Military.

### **Families of Two Villagers Who Died in Military Custody Accuse State Media of Dishonesty**

The families of two people from Shwepyi village in Kyauktaw Township who died in military custody are pushing back against news coverage of their deaths that posted that they succumbed to illness

while detained. Tun Shwe, 57, and Kyun Choke Maung, 39, died from underlying health conditions, according to the Yadanabon newspaper on February 29. According to the state-run newspaper, Tun Shwe suffered from hypertension, diabetes and gastritis, and died from these diseases. Kyun Choke Maung was said to have died of alcoholism and dehydration. However, Yin Thar Nu, the wife of Tun Shwe, denies these claims and says they were fabricated.

On February 26, the military detained six men from Kyauktaw Township who were aboard a ferry traveling to Paletwa, Chin State, to sell commodities. Four of the detainees were subsequently released, but Tun Shwe and Kyun Choke Maung remained in military custody. The families of the two men have sent a complaint letter to the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission via the Arakan Human Rights Defenders and Promoters Association to uncover what really happened.

### **Rathedaung Woman Files Lawsuit against Soldiers for Rape**

A 36-year-old mother of four said she was sexually assaulted by three uniformed soldiers in rural Rathedaung Township on June 30. She was hiding in a shelter with her daughter, infant granddaughter, mother, aunt, and mother-in-law. Soldiers who entered the house discovered the women when the baby cried out. She said they made her choose between giving them her life or her body. Afterwards, the soldiers instructed the women not to tell anyone what they had done and handed her 20,000 kyats (14 USD). The soldiers intended to rape the victim's daughter, but her mother-in-law begged them not to because the younger woman had given birth six days earlier.

On July 7, Rathedaung Township administrator Aung Myint Thein said that Colonel Min Than, Rakhine's security and border affairs minister, ordered him to bring the woman and the witnesses to the state capital Sittwe for questioning, which lasted 12 hours. The alleged victim's sister-in-law said that the police asked her about the rape and about the soldiers taking the victim's daughter, intending to sexually assault her. The woman's aunt also said that she told the police all she had observed because she wants justice for her niece. On July 10, the victim filed a lawsuit at the Sittwe Myoma police station against the three soldiers. The Sittwe Myoma police station launched an investigation into the case under Section 376, Section 366 and Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The victim submitted medical results and other evidence for her case. The military investigated the claims and found the alleged rape not to be true, with the Tatmadaw True News Information Team on July 2 saying the allegation was intended to mislead the public

### **Release of Three Residents in Mrauk-U**

At around noon on July 4, Maung Kyaw Nu, Shwe Sein Khaing and San Shwe Khaing, three villagers from Tinpyingyi, Mrauk-U Township, Arakan State, were released. The army entered the village and arrested them on July 3

### **Twelve Suspects Transferred to Kyaukphyu City Police Station after no Affiliation with the AA**

On July 3, the military True News Team announced that twelve suspects, who were questioned about the bombing of the army convoy, were transferred to the relevant administration as they were not affiliated with the Arakan Army (AA). The statement said that on June 30, AA insurgents carried out a landmine attack against the military convoy which was heading to Kyaukphyu Township, Arakan State. A search of the area turned up 10 suspicious men and two women and handed them over to the Kyaukphyu City Police Station. The 12 suspects include seven men and two women from Pyartae village, Kyaukphyu Township, one man from U Kin village, one woman from Gone Chain village, and one man from the officer's quarters, Kyaukphyu town.

### **Unidentified Perpetrators Destroy 35 acres of Farmers' Corn in Hsihseng Township**

Unidentified perpetrators destroyed nearly 35 acres of corn farms owned by at least 10 farmers in Hsihseng Township in the Pa-O Self-Administered Region of southern Shan State on July 3 and 4. One farmer stated that he lost all of his investment in the corn farm and he does not know how to return his debt of more than 20 kyat (approx. 1,460 USD). The Army seized more than 1,900 acres of land in Hsihseng in 1996, including the farmland on which the destroyed corn was planted.

Farmers said that the army did not inform them that they had confiscated this land and did not pay them compensation. Land disputes have been ongoing between farmers in five villages in Hsihseng since May. The army has prosecuted more than 70 farmers in the area. The farmers have said they will take legal action against the perpetrators. The destruction of their crops will create economic hardships, including difficulties in paying school fees and maintaining food security.

### **Body Parts Found on Bank of Kaladan River after Victim Detained by Military**

Parts of a male corpse were found on the bank of the Kaladan River near Kisapanadi Bridge in Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State, on July 7, after a local resident saw part of a dismembered right leg along the riverbank. The body was identified by family members as 31-year-old Kyaw Hlaing from Kyauktaw town's Pikethae. He earned a living collecting glass bottles and was arrested by a military contingent while he was out collecting bottles on July 2 and was taken to Kyauktaw community religious hall, according to his wife. She also said that he was arrested for no reason and was killed without committing any offence.

Daw Suu Chay, the victim's wife, made the announcement concerning her husband's murder at a press conference held at the Sittwe office of the Arakan Human Rights Defenders and Promoters group on the morning of July 15. She also told the press that he was spotted the next day after his arrest hanging from a banana tree by the back road of the building. A military captain went to demand the release of



her husband but he said no arrests had been made. No comment or statement was released by Brigadier-General Zaw Min Tun

### **Three Locals in Myakone, Sagaing, Shot with Rubber Bullets**

On July 7, about 200 locals protested against Sagaing Division Government's plans to build a checkpoint near Myakone village and three locals were shot with rubber bullets. One of the three victims was taken to hospital with serious injuries and the other two suffered abrasions. Locals objected to the construction of the checkpoint because the place is owned by the village and the trees near the village had to be cut down for construction. After the incident, a local man and four women were detained by police and released.

### **Three Kyauktaw Men Charged with Counter-Terrorism over AA Ties**

The military True News Information Team has said the army will charge three men, who were recently arrested near the Kisapanadi Bridge in Kyauktaw Township in Arakan State, with Counter-Terrorism Law charges. In a statement on July 6, the military's public relations team said two of the three detainees are suspected of having links to the Arakan Army (AA) and the third is a private from the ethnic armed group. Army security personnel interrogated one of the men after he was detained on July 3 while walking from Mrauk-U to Kyauktaw. According to the military, the other two men were apprehended the same day on a motorbike returning from a local bazaar in Kyauktaw after purchasing some items near the Kisapanadi Bridge.

The three detainees have been identified as Maung Maung Htay, 19, from Phayar Paung village, and Ye Tun, 24, and Nay Myo Tun, 20, from Peinhne Chaung village in Kyauktaw Township. They are currently being held in police custody at the Kyauktaw Myoma police station and are due to appear before the Kyauktaw Township Court on July 17. However, family members said the three men were arrested on July 1, contradicting the army account claiming that they were detained on July 3.

### **Detainee's Status Unknown after One Month**

A young man from Chet Phaut village in Taungup Township in Arakan State was arrested by the military more than a month ago, but no information regarding his wellbeing or situation has been made available. Mg Nay Ye Win (Nga Moe) aged 20, was arrested at his home on June 3 according to his father Maung Win. He also said that his son was receiving medical treatment at Yangon General Hospital for a tumour in his thigh and returned home at the end of May. The father had enquired about his son to the Taungup Myoma Police Station but was told that he was not there. The military arrested five Chet Phaut villagers in June and subsequently released three of them. Kyaw Tin Aung, 37, one of the remaining detainees, has been charged under Section 52(a) of the Counter-Terrorism Law, but there has been no word on Mg Nay Ye Win so far.

### **Family Unable to Contact Missing Villager Arrested Three Weeks ago in Rambree Township**

Zaw Min Tun, from Kyauk Sauk village was arrested by the military in Rambree Township, Rakhine State and has not yet been contacted, his family members remain worried. Zaw Min Tun was taken away by the army convoy on June 26 at around 5 pm. Zaw Min Tun is a workshop student in Sane town. When he returned to his village from Sane that day, he was arrested on suspicion of being a member of the AA, according to Zaw Min Tun's sister, Ma Myint Myint Yee. She also said about five soldiers searched Zaw Min Tun's home. Zaw Min Tun is known to suffer from nervous breakdowns.

### **Military to Prosecute Protest Organizers in Kyaukme**

The Tatmadaw True News Information Team has announced that the military will prosecute three organizers of a recent protest in Kyaukme Township, northern Shan State. On July 10, Kyaukme locals held a massive demonstration demanding legal consequences for perpetrators of the military violence, and justice for civilians killed by military personnel during clashes between the army and the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) between June 25 and 29. The three protest leaders were identified as Sai Than Maung, Zawtika, and Ahriya. No official notice has been issued by the local court, according to Kyaukme parliamentarian, Sai Tun Win; only media reports stating the military's plans to charge them with violating Article 19 of the Peaceful Demonstration Act, and Article 18 of the Anti-Contagious Diseases Law.

MP Sai Tun Win did not wish to comment on the charges, but claimed the protesters had launched the demonstration before they had received official permission to do so. On July 9 however, the organizers did report the planned protest to the Shan State government. With military violence against civilians increasing in the township during recent clashes with the RCSS, locals and local human rights organizations fear that without legal consequences for perpetrators and justice for victims, that abuses (including forced labor, beatings, shootings, and widespread displacement) will continue unabated. Parliamentarian Sai Tun Win, says locals in Kyaukme are especially at risk of death and injury due to frequent shootings directed at cattle trucks. He and three other Kyaukme parliamentarians reported the most recent death of Lung Su (who was shot by military soldiers) to the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, which responded that they would take action.

### **Two Arrested, Released on Same Day under Peaceful Assembly Law at Kyaukphyu Township**

On July 13, two youths were arrested and charged at Kyaukphyu Township court under Article 19 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law. Both are members of the Coral Child New Generation Youth Group based in Kyaukphyu town and are chairman Nay To Khaing and advisor Min Za Aung. On the same day they were released on bail for 5 million kyats. On July 6, a case was opened against them under the Peaceful Assembly Act and they were summoned to court, but they did not

attend so they were arrested. On June 21, members of the Coral Child New Generation Youth Group had gathered at the entrance to Kyaukphyu to observe the one-year anniversary of the internet blackout in Rakhine and Paletwa Township in Chin state, and demand that the internet ban be lifted. Nay To Kaing and Min Za Aung were subsequently investigated under the Peaceful Assembly Act. Both are currently detained at Kyaukphyu police station. Similarly, members of Ramree youth group had gathered at the Ramree town entrance to campaign against the one-year internet ban, and the youth group's communication officer Myo Min Tun also faced charges for violating article 19 of the Peaceful Assembly Act. Subsequently he was ordered by Ramree court on June 25 to pay a fine of 20,000 kyat (\$15 USD) and the case has been settled.

### **Military Releases ANP Chair from Maei Town After Almost One Month**

Myo Lwin, chair of the Arakan National Party (ANP) in Taungup Township's Maei town, has been released after being held in military custody for more than a month, reportedly on suspicion of having links to the Arakan Army. He said he was neither beaten nor tortured and was simply interrogated. Authorities including security personnel and a Maei town ward administrator arrived at the home of Myo Lwin and took him away in handcuffs on June 9. He was reportedly held in detention by a military regiment in Ann Township and released on July 12. Elsewhere in Taungup Township, the joint secretary of the Chatphauk village ANP office and a local party member were also detained by the military last month, with the duo yet to be released from custody.

### **Release of Two Youths Detained by Military Troops**

Nay Myo Thu, a 13-year-old seventh-grade student, and Soe Kyaw, a 16-year-old ninth-grade student, from Ywar Haung Taw Village were released on the morning of July 13 in Mrauk-U Township, Arakan State. On the evening of July 12, while the two young men were going to the farm with their father Shwe Thar to look after the cows, the two youths were taken by the military and used as guides to Nat Taung mountain.

### **Clashes Break Out Between Police and ABFSU**

On July 14, Shwe Ohn and other locals from Aung Tha Pyay village were arraigned. Due to this, clashes broke out between the police and the All Burma Federation Students' Union (ABFSU). Shwe Ohn and villagers were charged under nine sections in connection with the protest against the construction of Aung Tha Pyay Cement Factory.

### **Detained Villager Found Dead by Hanging, Military Claims Suicide**

On July 13, Soe Myint Tun, 37, was found dead while being in military custody. The military claims he committed suicide by hanging himself, according to a statement from True News Information Team released on July 15. He was one of six men from Ramree Township's Alegyun village who were arrested

by the military on July 11 for alleged ties to the Arakan Army (AA). But Kyaw Hlaing, the victim's brother-in-law, said that because Soe Myint Tun's body was returned to the family with injuries to his head and neck, and a gunshot wound to his left hand, he is assumed to have been killed. Kyaw Hlaing conceded that injuries from a rope tied around the neck did appear to have been the cause of death. However, he added that injuries were also found on his face. An autopsy was conducted without the family's permission. According to the military statement, Soe Myint Tun died by hanging while being detained in interrogation at the Maei Myoma police station in Taungup Township. But Police Major Than Naing, head of the Taungup Township Police, denied that the victim had died at the police station. In accordance with procedures, the dead body was transferred to Ma Ee station hospital for examination. Interrogations will continue to be conducted with the remaining five men; the announcement read.

### **71 Workers Issued Warrants for Failing to Appear in Court**

On July 15, Hlaing Tharyar Township Court in Yangon Division issued a warrant arrest to 71 workers from the Gust Myanmar Garment Factory for failing to attend a court hearing. Starting this January, workers from Gust Myanmar Garment Factory in Hlaing Tharyar Township went on strike and protested to decry poor working conditions and low wages. Then, on March 13, the Department of Labor Relations filed a case against 97 workers under Section 46(d) of the 2012 Labor Dispute Resolution Law. The Gust Myanmar factory is now closed and it is not possible to have all of them in the court because these people are busy finding new jobs, said Aye Thuzar, a factory worker at Gust Myanmar, who attended the court hearing three times and was issued a warrant for his arrest for once failing to appear in court.

### **Parents Object to Illegal Arrest of Son**

Rakhine State, Kyauktaw Township, Maung Kyaw Hlaing, from Pauktaw Palaung village, has been detained since April 5 and has not yet been charged. Kyaw Hlaing from Pauktaw Palaung village, Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State has been detained since April 5. Therefore, his parents protested at a press conference at the Human Rights Defenders' Office in Sittwe on July 18, saying this was illegal. On April 5, Kyaw Hlaing was arrested by the military while transporting carpentry items from Pauktaw Palaung village to Tinma village. On June 3, the military handed him over to Sittwe No. 1 Police Station and a case was filed against him under 52(a) of the Anti-Terrorism Law. Kyaw Hlaing has not been charged after two court hearings and he is scheduled to be transferred from the Sittwe District Court to the Mrauk-U District Court. San San Aye, Kyaw Hlaing's mother, said that Maung Kyaw Hlaing is an honest carpenter and she was worried about her son as she found burns on his body; cigarette butts and stab wounds.

### **Kyaukphyu Activist Released After Almost 50 Days in Detention**

Security forces released Kyaw Aye Than, 47, a social activist from Kyaukphyu, on July 23. He was detained by the military on March 27 suspecting his involvement with the Arakan Army(AA) in recruiting cadres. His family alleged that Kyaw Aye Than was not handed over to the local police station by the security forces even though the country's rules declare that nobody should be detained for more than 24 hours. Within this period, the detainee must be transferred to the police station. However, Kyaw Aye Than was put inside the lockup of Kyaukphyu based army Battalion No.34 for over 50 days without any trial. Tin Thein Htwe, Kyaw Aye Than's wife, said he was released as there was no proof against him. Kyaw Aye Than said security agencies interrogated him over his involvement with AA members and his activities at Rakhine National Conference held in Kyaukphyu in 2014.

### **Village Chief from Chin State Found Dead, AA is Blamed**

Hla Kyaw, a village head from Tone Ma Wa Village in Chin State's Paletwa Township, was found dead after he was abducted by the Arakan Army (AA) in the beginning of June 2020. His body was found in a valley on July 17 and identified on July 19. As the body was disfigured, his elder brother identified it by looking at the clothes, body shape and face. The Khumi Affairs Coordination Council (KACC) blamed the AA for Hla Kyaw's death. The KACC tried everything to secure the release of Hla Kyaw, said KACC secretary Saw Mya.

### **Investigation Opened Over Death of Two Students in Custody**

Parents of two students, Thant Zin Aung aged 18, and Zaw Myo Oo aged 17, both ethnic Shanni who were detained by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) following a brawl near a karaoke establishment in Sel Zin village in Kachin State on July 6 learned of their deaths while the boys were in custody. Kyi Kyi Khin, father of Thant Zin Aung, said that the KIA contacted the village headmen, asking him to negotiate between them. Through the headman, KIA officials discussed the deaths of the two young men on July 24, one day after the parents discovered they were dead. KIA officials told the parents they wanted to meet them to offer an apology. Colonel Nhpang Naw Bu, in charge of Kachin Independence Organisation's (KIO) information department, confirmed the deaths and said an investigation has been opened. The boys were not killed because of ethnic tension between Kachin and Shanni ethnic groups, he said. The KIA officer had an argument with the students, Naw Bu said, while pledging to do whatever is necessary to "fulfill the satisfaction of the parents." In a statement, Tai-Leng (Shanni) Nationalities and Development Party (TNDP) condemned the murders, calling on the KIO/KIA to take full responsibility for their deaths. According to the statement, Hkawng Lum, the KIA officer accused of killing the boys, was with Army Captain Nyi Nyi Aung when they were taken into custody on July 6.

The army captain did nothing to prevent their detention. Hkawng Lum, who is in KIA Battalion-26a and a township leader, arrived at Cho Rita KTV restaurant with Nyi Nyi Aung. According to a witness, Win Naing, who is Shanni, he paid his bill and was getting ready to leave the restaurant when Hkawng Lum approached him and hugged his neck, offering to send him home. Suddenly Hkawng Lum started beating him when they tried to leave. After this, Hkawng Lum, who was not in his uniform, started arguing with four students on motorcycles. The officer and other KIA soldiers detained Maung Thant Zin and Maung Zaw Myo Oo, while the other students escaped.

### **Death of Karen Woman by Military Sparks Protests**

On July 16, two privates from Light Infantry Battalion 409 went to Poloe Htar village carrying small firearms without permission, drank bootleg alcohol with three villagers, and accidentally shot Naw Mu Naw, a 40-year-old mother of three, in the neck and back. Then they took her golden necklace and earrings before running away from the crime scene. Privates Hein Min Htet and Than Soe Lwin whose gun killed the woman, hid in a forest between the village and their military base, but surrendered on July 17. The two confessed to the shooting and are now being detained in a military prison in neighbouring Mon State. The military's statement said a preliminary investigation found that the gun of private Than Soe Lwin went off as he confronted the victim and a bullet hit her in the head.

On July 22, over 1,500 locals from Papun District in Karen State staged a protest outside of military posts in their area, calling for an end to the military's presence in the region after the recent killing of a civilian by two soldiers. Local residents of 35 villages in Dweh Lo Township held placards with slogans and pictures of Naw Mu Naw as they marched to four military outposts. They demanded justice for Naw Mu Naw, and other locals killed and injured by the military. On July 28, an estimated 5,000 protesters marched in Hpa-an to demand the military's withdrawal from the area and an end to rights abuses. Military spokesman, Zaw Min Tun, stated the military would not withdraw from the area, but said "rules would be tightened", without giving further details.

### **Young Man from Leikkhamaw Village Released**

Soe Aung (Maung Bilap) from Leikkhamaw Village, Kyaukphyu Township, Rakhine State was arrested by a military convoy of 60 troops on July 26 who entered Leikkhamaw Village, Kyaukphyu Township and inspected the villagers. Soe Aung (Maung Bilap), Maung Kala and Maung Sin Gyi were arrested. Two of the three were released but Soe Aung (Maung Bilap) was taken away. The detainee, Soe Aung (Maung Bilap) is a poultry farmer with his family in the village. The young man was released on the evening of July 27.

### **Young Man Arrested and Tortured by Military**

On July 27, the military arrested and tortured Ko Tun Tun Win from Pardaw village, Mrauk-U Township, after the military convoy was attacked by a landmine in Narang village, Rakhine State. On his way back from shopping in Minbya, Tun Tun Win was met by the convoy and detained. During his detention, the Tatmadaw checked his mobile phone and asked him if he was a member of the AA. He was stabbed by three soldiers, injuring his face and body. He was only released some three hours later.

### **Two Men From Kyauktaw Township Released**

Two out of five men arrested on June 27 were released between July 3 and July 6 from custody at Kyauktaw Police Station, despite the army's announcement that it would release three. The two men recently released are Aung Naing Soe and Myint Zaw Oo. They were arrested along with Bo Kyaw Than, Than Win Win Naing and Tun Aye Maung, . All five are residents of the Chaung Wa quarter in Kyaukdaw Township's Apaukwa village. Family members claim that the men were traveling around 8am on June 27 to a funeral in Ponnarkyun town via car when they were arrested by military troops from Battalion No. 539 about two miles southwest of Apaukwa.

### **Detention Cases Without Explanation Pile Up in Arakan State**

From January to July 2020, approximately 30 civilians have disappeared after being arrested by the military. With fighting between the military and Arakan Army well into its second year, the number of people detained for alleged links to the ethnic armed group continues to rise, with critics arguing that due process and basic rights for the accused have been ignored and authorities fail to prosecute supposed terrorists and their sympathisers. Arrestees have primarily faced charges under Counter-Terrorism Law and Unlawful Associations Act. Some have languished behind bars awaiting trial, others have been convicted on dubious prosecutorial grounds, and in rare instances, defendants are released for lack of evidence. Some have died in custody, while others have been held incommunicado for days, weeks and even months. Furthermore, there have been cases where individuals have gone missing with little or no information known about their disappearances, including whether legitimate legal proceedings are moving forward against them. Examples include: two locals from Kama village, one from Chatphauk village and one from Lamumaw Model Village in Taungup Township; two from Zinchaung village of Kyaukphyu Township; two from Khaungtok village in Kyauktaw Township; and in Minbya Township, 18 from Tinma village and two each from Pharpyo and Nayan villages. With regard to the arrests, Brig-Gen Zaw Min Tun of the Tatmadaw True News Information Team said in some cases simple logistics were to blame, at least in cases of prolonged detention and ambiguous custody arrangements.

### **Body of Villager Allegedly Shot Dead by Military Found Weeks Later**



The body of Maung Tun Sein, a 60-year-old villager who was allegedly shot dead by the military on July 13, was discovered in a latrine on July 31 in the compound of his home in Chainkharli village, Rathedaung Township. On July 13, some people were trapped in Chainkharli village while other residents fled to safer locations after an armed clash broke out between the military and the Arakan Army (AA) near the village. According to reporting by the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), however, Maj-Gen Tun Tun Nyi from the Tatmadaw True News Information Team said the military contingent did not open fire in Chainkharli village and no civilian casualties were reported. The trapped villagers were rescued by the village administrator and residents on July 14, but the body of Maung Tun Sein was not located at that time. Some residents who had fled their homes returned to the village in recent days and the body of the missing man was found in a latrine at the back of the victim's home. A border guard police outpost near Chainkarli village was informed about the discovery of a dead local resident, but an investigation has yet to be launched, said village administrator Tun Tin Soe.

## Month in Review

### Freedom of Speech and Expression

In July, freedom of speech and expression in Burma declined sharply. Those who exercised their right to freedom of speech and expression were oppressed, facing severe restrictions because these rights are not recognized by the government as a basic human right in Buma.

In July, Aung Ko Ko, Reporter of the Eleven Media, was charged under Section 68(a) of the Telecommunications Law, Zaw Naing Oo, chairman of the National Democratic Force Party (NDF) in Sagaing, was charged under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code, Hla Win, the owner of the Shwe Phy facebook account, was charged under Section 124(a) of the Penal Code, for protesting the current state of freedom of speech and expression on social media. Moreover, Lu Kyan from Saytisate Village, Homalin Township, Saging Division was charged under Section 17(1) of the Unlawful Associations Act

in connection with a television interview about the Shan Nationalities Army (SNA) in local news media in 2018. In addition to all this, the Mandalay Region High Court ordered the re-examination of Sayadaw U Sein Tita under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code.

Furthermore, 17 activists who engaged in peaceful protest were sentenced to pay fines under Section 20 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law after over two years of facing trial. A further two activists in a separate case were also sentenced to prison under Section 19 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law.

In considering all of this, it is clear that the arena for freedom of speech and expression in Burma is narrowing. Loss of a fundamental right is loss of civil rights and will in some way affect other rights. In the current transition period, the right to freedom of speech and expression is one of the first and foremost conditions to democratization, and hence must be addressed as soon as possible. The path to reform is in expressing actual events; actual needs; and identifying what needs to be fixed. Therefore, the government must protect and promote freedom of speech and expression. Anti-democratic laws which restrict freedom of speech and expression must be repealed as soon as possible and AAPP urges the government to take action.

Furthermore, Burma's judicial system needs to be reformed as soon as possible. With prolonged trials defendants face lengthy trials in cases prosecuted by the authorities and most are sentenced to imprisonment, colonial era laws, and new laws cracking down on dissent are reasons for the urgent need to reform the Burmese judiciary. There is an urgent need to promote human rights, democracy, and reform the judiciary. AAPP urges the repeal of undemocratic laws and the re-establishment of the Ministry of Justice.

### **Consequences of Ongoing Conflicts in Ethnic Areas**

In July, armed clashes intensified in ethnic areas. Especially in Rakhine State, as fighting between the Military and the Arakan Army (AA) escalates, attacks targeting ethnic people are also getting worse. Arrests and abductions; disappearances; charges; torture; shootings and artillery; and landmine explosions; are all a manifestation of serious human rights abuses in the ongoing armed conflict. In addition, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a daily horror against women.

### **Human Rights Abuses Against Women**

With the outbreak of conflict, threats against unarmed civilians and sexual violence is an ongoing human rights violation. On the night of June 30 a 37-year-old local woman was raped by three soldiers

in Uga village, Rathedaung Township, Rakhine State. They also tried to rape her daughter. The Tatmadaw's True News Information Team [denied the allegations](#). On July 10, the victim filed a lawsuit against the three soldiers. [Article 8/2 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court](#) states that "rape or any other form of sexual violence is a serious violation of the [Geneva Convention](#)." Prosecution of the perpetrators is a way to bring justice to the victim. Therefore, AAPP urges that the perpetrators be punished as soon as possible.

In addition to this, two soldiers from the military's Light Infantry Battalion 409 shot [Naw Mu Naw](#) to death at her home in PoLo Hta Village, Dweh Lo Township, Papun District, Karen State and stole her jewelry. The Tatmadaw True News Information Team said two soldiers were sentenced to the maximum sentence, but have not released any details of the sentence. Transparency is crucial, human rights abuses committed by the authorities often result in impunity. If accountability is the aim, justice must be provided to the victim.

In July, women continued to be arrested on suspicion of relation to ethnic armed groups and detained whilst the cases were ongoing. This a serious lack of respect for human dignity. In Kyaukphyu Township, Rakhine State, Byar Ma from Yenau Dwin village, Hla Than Khin, and Min Min (Khin Myo Swe) the owner of the Yadanar Aung Theater, were arrested on suspicion of providing food to the Arakan Army (AA) and charged under Section 50 (j), and 52(a) of the Counter-Terrorism Law. Currently in Rakhine State, up to four women have been arrested and charged on suspicion of having links with AA.

[Article 15 \(1\) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#) declares that "States shall guarantee that women are equal before men under the rule of law." AAPP, therefore, urges the government to take steps to ensure that these women receive a fair trial. We also call for action to ensure the full security and protection of local women living in areas where armed conflict is taking place.

## **Torture**

Decades of persecution in Burma continue, to this day the lack of responsibility and accountability has meant no one has been able to prosecute the perpetrators of torture. In July, [two locals from Zin Chaung village](#), Kyauktaw Township, [Two locals from Apaukwa village](#), Kyauktaw Township, and [a villager from Parr Taw Village](#), Mrauk-U Township, who were arrested and released by the Military, and [a local from Pauktaw Palaung village](#) who are facing trial in prison, were tortured.

[A man from Alegyun village, Ramree Township](#), who was arrested by the military on July 11 and detained at Ma-Ei Police Station, hanged himself whilst in detention. The man had injuries from the torture and gunshot wounds. He hanged himself while being interrogated at Ma-Ei Police Station in Taungup Township, but Taungup Township Police Chief Than Naing denied that the man was killed at Ma-Ei Police Station. Body parts of [a civilian from Pikethae town](#), Kyauktaw Township, who was arrested by the Military, were also found. [The body of a 60-year-old villager](#) who was allegedly shot dead by the military, was discovered in a latrine in the compound of his home in Chainkharli village, Rathedaung Township.

These are serious human rights violations which are the result of armed conflict and war crimes against humanity. [Article 6 of the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment](#) states “No person under any form of detention or imprisonment shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” However, Burma still fails to adhere to and ratify domestic and international law. AAPP urges the government to implement the peace process as soon as possible without delay, as indigenous peoples are the most affected by the prolonged armed conflict.

#### **Bullet injuries and fatalities**

- Two civilians were killed and nine civilians wounded, including one child in a shooting in Kyaukpyu, Myebon, Minbya, Rathedaung, Mrauk-U, Ponnagyun, and Kyauktaw Townships, in Arakan State.
- Another two civilians were also killed in Muse Township and Namhsan Township in Shan State.

#### **Deaths/injuries caused by artillery shelling**

- At least ten civilians including one child were injured from artillery shelling in Rathedaung and Ann Townships, Rakhine State.

#### **Deaths/injuries caused by the bomb blast**

- Explosions killed two civilians and injured another two civilians in Rathedaung township and Ann Township in Arakan State.
- Four were injured in Myawaddy Township in Karen State.
- Two civilians including a child were killed and 12 civilians were injured including five children in Shan State’s Kyaukme and Kutkai Townships.

#### **Deaths/injuries caused by landmines**

- One civilian was killed in a landmine in Rathedaung Township, Arakan State.

- Two civilians were killed including a monk, and one civilian was injured in Shan State's Namkham Township.

### **Human Rights Abuses by the Authorities**

Authorities are responsible for protecting the property and security of citizens. However, in Burma, these remain a great vulnerability. In July, some 200 locals protested against the planned construction of a checkpoint near Myakone village, Palae Town, Sagaing Township, conflict occurred between 50 local police and three locals were shot with rubber bullets. One of the three locals was taken to hospital with serious injuries. [According to Article 5 \(b\) of the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials](#), "Minimize damage and injury, and respect and preserve human life.

Therefore, authorities in Burma must ensure that citizens are not harmed in any way. Armed conflict is not the way to reduce conflict, AAPP urges for a negotiated solution as the best solution.

### **Land Issues**

Farmers continue to be neglected in one of Burma's key agricultural sectors. There are various land disputes in Burma and local farmers affected by land confiscation are offered little protection. Instead, they face oppression. There have been legal shortcomings in many cases filed by the military. Infantry Battalion No.66, based in Kholam Township, Loi Lin District, Southern Shan State has sued 47 landowners but failed to attend court hearings four times . This is causing much grievance to the farmers involved. The COVID-19 pandemic also means farmers have to follow the government's order to not crowd and must protect themselves from the pandemic. Some farmers are elderly and sick and due to the current planting season, they requested the court for permission to have five farmers as representatives. On June 29, the Namhsan Township Court rejected this, but the court accepted it on July 21. This is a worrying situation for farmers, who have lost their land and are struggling to make a living, and justice is still a long way off. Therefore, the government needs to address the issue of confiscated land and land disputes as soon as possible. AAPP urges the immediate and unconditional release of farmers who are being arrested, charged and prosecuted.

# References

## ARRESTS

### **Two Youths Arrested in Kyauktaw Township**

(3 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)

(4 July 2020 - RFA/Burmese)

### **Three Villagers Arrested and One Dead After Army Raid**

(3 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

(6 July 2020 - BNI)

### **Military Arrests Civilian in Taungup Township**

(7 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

### **Two Arrested from Zin Chaung Village in Kyaukphyu Township**

(8 July 2020 - DMG)

(8 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)

(14 July 2020 - DMG)

(30 July 2020 - BNI)

(14 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

(24 July 2020 - DVB/Burmese)

(29 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

### **A Man and Woman Arrested and Interrogated on Suspicion of a Landmine Explosion**

(10 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

### **6 Villagers Arrested on Rambree Island of Arakan State**

(13 July 2020 - Narinjara)

(13 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)

(23 July 2020 - BNI)

### **Two Locals Arrested in Kyaukphyu Township**

(14 July 2020 - RFA's Facebook account/  
Burmese)

### **More Kyaukphyu Men Arrested for Alleged Arakan Army Links**

(15 July 2020 - DMG)

(15 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

### **Two Youths Arrested in Maei Town**

(21 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

### **Two Kyaukphyu Villager Arrested for Suspected Links to AA**

(30 July 2020 - DMG)

(30 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

## ARRESTS BY ETHNIC ARMED GROUPS

### **Four Chin Youths from Paletwa Township Arrested by AA**

(31 July 2020 - Eleven/Burmese)

(31 July 2020 - 7 Day News/Burmese)

(31 July 2020 - RFA/Burmese)

## CHARGES

### **Local Television Reporter Charged after Posting COVID-19 Content on Facebook**

(1 July 2020 - DVB/Burmese)

(1 July 2020 - Eleven/Burmese)

(2 July 2020 - Myanmar Times)

(2 July 2020 - Eleven)

### **Three from Kyauktaw Township Charged, Two under Counter-Terrorism and One under Export Act**

(3 July 2020 - DMG)

(3 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

(4 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)

(6 July 2020 - Narinjara)

(6 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

### **Eight Charged from Sai Chone Dwein, Rakhine State**

(4 July 2020 - DMG)

(4 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

(5 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)

(6 July 2020 - DVB/Burmese)

(6 July 2020 - VOA/Burmese)

(7 July 2020 - Narinjara)

(7 July 2020 - 7 day news/Burmese)

(7 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)

(7 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

(7 July 2020 - DMG)

(8 July 2020 - BNI)

### **Villager Charged for Talking to Media**

(13 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

### **Military Sues 105 farmers for Encroachment on Disputed Land**

(13 July 2020 - RFA/Burmese)

### **Sagaing NDF party chairman charged with defamation**

(15 July 2020 - Eleven/Burmese)

(16 July 2020 - RFA's Facebook page/Burmese)

**Military Releases One of Detained Kyaukphyu Duo, Charges Other with Terrorism**

(22 July 2020 - RFA/Burmese)

(22 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

(23 July 2020 - BNI)

**Civilian Charged with Defamation on Social Media**

(24 July 2020 - Eleven/Burmese)

**Three Women from Kyaukphyu Township Charged**

(24 July 2020 - Narinjara)

(26 July 2020 - BNI)

(26 July 2020 - Narinjara)

(27 July 2020 - BNI)

(23 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)

(24 July 2020 - Myanmar Now/Burmese)

(25 July 2020 - RFA/Burmese)

(26 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

**Sixty Farmers Charged for Trespassing**

(30 July 2020 - Myanmar Now/Burmese)

**TRIALS**

**Poet and Activist Appears in Court over Internet Ban Protest**

(7 July 2020 - Reuters)

(8 July 2020 - Mizzima)

(14 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

(14 July 2020 - Mizzima/Burmese)

**Military Determined to Re-Persecute Karenni Farmers in State Court**

(9 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

(14 July 2020 - BNI)

(24 July 2020 - BNI)

**Court Agreed having farmers' representatives for Kholam Farmers**

(10 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

(27 July 2020 - [Shan Herald Agency for News/Burmese](#))

**Seven Farmers Summoned to Court**

(15 July 2020 - The Voice's People - Kham Sar Ngor's Facebook page/Burmese)

(22 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

**Order to Re-Examine the Original Case of Buddhist Monk U Sein Ti Ta**

(16 July 2020 - Myanmar Now/Burmese)

**SENTENCES**

**17 Activists Ordered to Pay Fines or Be Sentenced**

(10 July 2020 - DVB/Burmese)

**Artists Freed After Anti-Buddhist in COVID 19 Mural Charges Dropped**

(17 July 2020 - Irrawaddy)

(17 July 2020 - Myanmar Now/Burmese)

(17 July 2020 - Irrawaddy/Burmese)

**Arakan Students Jailed Protesting Internet Ban**

(24 July 2020 - Narinjara)

(26 July 2020 - BNI)

(23 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)

(23 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

(23 July 2020 - DMG's Facebook page/Burmese)

**RELEASES**

**Two Educators Freed in Arakan State**

(28 July 2020 - Narinjara)

(26 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

**Three of Four Imprisoned for Selling Arakanese Calendars Released**

(28 July 2020 - Narinjara)

(27 July 2020 - DMG)

(27 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)

(27 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

**Restrictions on Civil and Political Rights**

**Four months and No Word on Missing Minbya brothers Since Alleged Military detention**

(1 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

(6 July 2020 - BNI)

**Families of Two Villagers Who Died in Military Custody Accuse State Media of Covering the Truth**

(1 July 2020 - DMG)

(1 July 2020 - DMG's Facebook page/Burmese)

(1 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

**Rathedaung Woman Files Lawsuit against Soldiers for Rape**

(2 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)



(2 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)  
(3 July 2020 - RFA's Facebook page/Burmese)  
(3 July 2020 - RFA/Burmese)  
(7 July 2020 - RFA/Burmese)  
(7 July 2020 - RFA)  
(11 July 2020 - DMG)  
(11 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)  
(14 July 2020 - BNI)

**Release of Three Residents in Mrauk-U**  
(4 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

**Twelve Suspects Transferred to the Kyaukphyu City Police Station after no Affiliation with the AA**  
(4 July 2020 - Eleven/Burmese)

**Unidentified Perpetrators Destroy 35 acres of Farmers' Corn in Hsihseng Township**  
(6 July 2020 - Shan News/Burmese)  
(6 July 2020 - RFA/Burmese)  
(7 July 2020 - DVB/Burmese)  
(7 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)  
(8 July 2020 - Shan News)

**Body Parts Found on Bank of Kaladan River after Victim Detained by Military**  
(7 July 2020 - DMG)  
(7 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)  
(15 July 2020 - RFA/Burmese)  
(23 July 2020 - BNI)

**Three Locals in Myakone, Sagaing, Shot with Rubber Bullets**  
(7 July 2020 - Myanmar Now/Burmese)  
(7 July 2020 - Eleven/Burmese)  
(7 July 2020 - RFA/Burmese)  
(8 July 2020 - 7 Day News/Burmese)  
(8 July 2020 - The Voice Myanmar/Burmese)

**Three Kyauktaw Men Charged with Counter-Terrorism over AA Ties**  
(7 July 2020 - DMG)  
(7 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

**Detainee's Status Unknown after One Month**  
(8 July 2020 - DMG)  
(8 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

**Family Unable to Contact Missing Villager Arrested Three Weeks ago in Rambree Township**  
(8 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)  
(9 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

**Military to Prosecute Protest Organizers in Kyaukme**  
(11 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

(14 July 2020 - BNI)

**Two Arrested, Released on Same Day under Peaceful Assembly Law at Kyuakphyu Township**

(13 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)  
(14 July 2020 - DVB/Burmese)  
(14 July 2020 - BNI)

**Military Releases ANP Chair from Maei Town After Almost One Month**  
(13 July 2020 - Narinjara)  
(13 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)  
(20 July 2020 - DMG)

**Release of Two Youths Detained by Military Troops**  
(13 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

**Clashes Break Out Between Police and ABFSU**  
(14 July 2020 - Myanmar Now's Facebook page/Burmese)

**Detained Villager Found Dead by Hanging, Military Claims Suicide**  
(15 July 2020 - DMG)  
(15 July 2020 - RFA)  
(15 July 2020 - DVB/Burmese)  
(15 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)  
(15 July 2020 - Myanmar Now/Burmese)  
(16 July 2020 - BNI)  
(16 July 2020 - Myanmar Now)  
(16 July 2020 - Irrawaddy)

**71 Workers Issued Warrants for Failing to Appear in Court**  
(17 July 2020 - Irrawaddy/Burmese)

**Parents Object to Illegal Arrest of Son**  
(18 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)

**Kyaukphyu Activist Released After Almost 50 Days in Detention**  
(21 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)  
(26 July 2020 - Narinjara)  
(26 July 2020 - BNI/Burmese)

**Village Chief from Chin State Found Dead, AA is Blamed**  
(21 July 2020 - Irrawaddy/Burmese)  
(22 July 2020 - Irrawaddy)

**Investigation Opened Over Death of Two Students in Custody**  
(26 July 2020 - BNI)  
(23 July 2020 - Irrawaddy/Burmese)

**Death of Karen Woman by Military Sparks Protests**

(21 July 2020 - Mizzima)  
(21 July 2020 - Laos News)  
(23 July 2020 - Irrawaddy)  
(29 July 2020 - Channel News Asia)  
(30 July 2020 - Irrawaddy/Burmese)

**Young Man from Leikkhamaw Village Released**

(27 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)  
(27 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)  
(28 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)

**Young Man Arrested and Tortured by Military**

(28 July 2020 - RFA/Burmese)

**Two Men From Kyauktaw Township Released**

(3 July 2020 - DMG)  
(3 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)  
(4 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)  
(6 July 2020 - Narinjara)  
(6 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

**Detention Cases Without Explanation Pile Up in Arakan State**

(30 July 2020 - DMG)  
(30 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)

**Body of Villager Allegedly Shot Dead by Military Found Weeks Later**

(31 July 2020 - DMG)  
(31 July 2020 - Narinjara/Burmese)  
(31 July 2020 - DMG/Burmese)  
(31 July 2020 - Myanmar Now/Burmese)

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