



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း

Statement on Disappearances in the Spring Revolution

28 May 2021

As of today, AAPP believes there are 75 people currently missing in Burma. These disappearances have occurred since the beginning of the coup when junta seized power and detained our democratically elected leaders on 1 February 2021. Since then, the military coup has consistently been perpetrating brutal crimes against civilians, including killing and torture, and disappearing dead bodies.

A large number of pro-democracy supporters are now missing, they may be detained, tortured, or killed. Crucially, the junta regime has not disclosed where any of the arbitrarily detained are. When detainees have been located, it is because of information provided by those released from the prison, lawyers, families who have been permitted to send parcels to the prison, and legal aid groups. Many detainees are not able to see their lawyers, or contact their families, with some not in contact with the outside for periods of time. The junta regime has not issued any statement related to detention information, such as where they are being detained and interrogated.

Of the 75 missing, AAPP can verify 23 are disappeared, a further 52 are believed disappeared with precise status to be confirmed.

- 19 people are missing. 14 of these disappeared went missing while fleeing from junta troops who were raiding and shooting in villages in Yinmabin and Kani Townships. Four people, including Moe San Suu Kyi, disappeared from their hideout, and are suspected to have been detained. However, there is no information about when and who made the detention. One civilian was arrested for seven days for staging a solitary protest, but after their release, they did not return home.
- 4 people are now missing after having been initially confirmed detained. 3 were arrested for participating in a protest and supporting CDM. They were sent to Myaung Mya Prison, but no family member has been able to make contact since. Aside from this, one civilian arrested in Yinmabin Township has since gone missing, with no contact being made to his family.
- 24 people left their homes for known reasons, but after several days have not returned. This includes those who have left their homes to take part in protests, to withdraw money at the bank, to go to grocery stores, and to go outside for food.
- 28 people were detained but their families have not been told where. One of these individuals, Aung San Ko ၫ (a.k.a. Wine Chit Oo) was shot, wounded, and abducted by the junta, and he remains missing.

“Considering that enforced disappearance undermines the deepest values of any society committed to respect for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and that the systematic practice of such acts is of the nature of a crime against humanity”

The Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance

Individuals went missing when:

- Leaving their homes to participate in demonstrations, and amid brutal crackdowns have later not been able to contact families, relatives, or friends for some days.
- After being taken for questioning by junta troops whilst walking on the streets, they are later uncontactable.
- They fled their homes but have been missing with no contact since then.
- Their families could not contact them after they were arrested in the hideout.
- The location of the detainees was not disclosed, even though they were arrested and interrogated, including some of those not allowed to meet with lawyers and AAPP believes are no longer in prison.

AAPP will continue to verify the recently disappeared.

According to international law, one is considered disappeared when unlawfully detained, abducted, against their will with failure by the responsible party to provide information on said person.

International humanitarian law is explicit on missing persons. States should not perpetrate, condone the act, or impede investigation. The junta in Burma has done nothing to account for these missing persons, in fact threatening civil society and oppressing civilians who raise the issue. The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2474 on 11 June 2019, calling on all parties to actively report and search for missing persons. Time and again, resolutions have underscored knowing the fate of loved ones is a basic human right.

In the International Committee of Red Cross' study on international humanitarian law, it is affirmed “practice indicates that the obligation to account for missing persons arises at the latest after an adverse party provides notification of those who are missing”. AAPP is providing notification of 75 believed missing persons. The junta is the responsible party for the crimes and disorder resulting in these disappearances. The AAPP calls for the international community, including the United Nations and the ASEAN country members, to work effectively to investigate disappearances during this attempted coup.