



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners

နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း

THE NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN BURMA



482,300+

DISPLACED PEOPLE



1/2

OF THE POPULATION AT RISK OF PERVASIVE POVERTY AND JOBLESSNESS



> 14 M

PEOPLE IN NEED OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

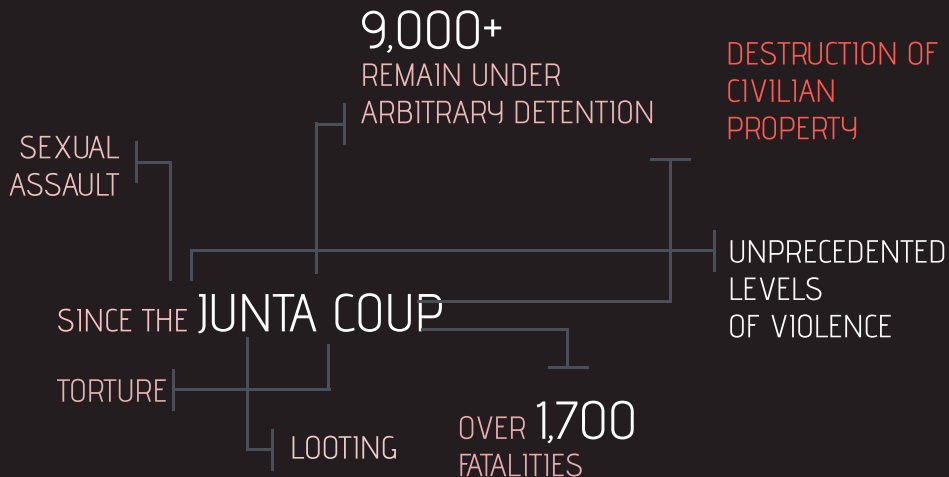
SOURCE: UNHCR, 2022

THE MILITARY COUP AND THE CAMPAIGN ON TERROR

SINCE February 1, 2021, people in Burma have suffered an unprecedented level of violence delivered by the military junta, to incite a climate of fear and subjugation to dictatorial rule.

At least 1,719 pro-democracy supporters have been killed, and 13,024 remain under arbitrary detention, many in secret locations amounting to enforced disappearances.

Widespread attacks, including torture and sexual assault in detention, and looting, arson, and destruction of civilians' property will have long term implications for the mental health of people in Burma.



BRIEFING PAPER: THE NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN BURMA



30%

SUFFER MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS



250

PREVENTABLE MATERNAL DEATHS



ECONOMIC INSECURITY

Displacement can likewise be a cause of severe mental health problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, and it is estimated around 30% of displaced populations by conflict suffer from these mental health disorders [1]. As of February 2022, there are at least 453,000 internally displaced people in Burma, and around 29,300 are estimated to have crossed the border seeking refuge in neighboring countries [2]. That means at least 144,600 displaced population are very likely to be burdened by mental health problems in Burma.

Women access to sexual and reproductive health services is also being compromised, due to attacks on hospitals, movement restrictions and overall insecurity. In August, it was estimated that more than 685,000 women were pregnant, and around 250 preventable maternal deaths would occur without appropriate obstetric care [3]. LGBT+ populations are being targeted, detained, tortured, and brutally abused, by the military, and CSOs are expressing serious mental health and security concerns [4].

Increasing unemployment rates and economic insecurity are also severely impacting people across Burma, causing acute stress and worry. The upheaval of violence, moreover, constrains humanitarian assistance delivery in the country, and limits online psychological support due to internet shutdowns, especially in northern areas.

EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS

MILITARY NEGLECT
LED TO TENS OF THOUSANDS OF COVID-19 RELATED DEATHS.

The 2015-2020 NLD government had modest success in containing spread of disease for the first year of pandemic, but third wave brought about by military neglect led to tens of thousands of COVID-19 related deaths. The military junta has weaponized this crisis, restraining medical and oxygen supplies to the people of Burma, redirected to military facilities, as well as systematically targeting doctors and healthcare workers.

Facing the aforementioned atrocities, it is evident that the psychological trauma affecting the population in Burma is unparalleled, and rates of distress, depression and suicidal ideation are massively rising. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) Mental Health Assistance Program (hereafter known as MHAP) was in the most suitable position to address coup victims' feelings, which is essential in healing a society grappling with drastic and potentially long-term deterioration of the institutions of rule of law.

