National Unity Government

U Win Myint  
President

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi  
State Counsellor

Duwa Lashi La  
Vice President

Mahn Win Khaing Than  
Prime Minister

Foreign Affairs

Daw Zin Mar Aung  
Union Minister

U Moe Zaw Oo  
Deputy Minister

Home Affairs & Immigration

U Lwin Ko Latt  
Union Minister

Khu Hte Bu  
Deputy Minister

Planning, Finance & investment

U Tin Tun Naing  
Union Minister

Min Zayar Oo  
Deputy Minister

Education

Dr. Zaw Wai Soe  
Union Minister

Ja Htoi Pan  
Deputy Minister

Health

Dr. Zaw Wai Soe  
Union Minister

Dr. Shwe Pon  
Deputy Minister

Humanitarian Affairs & Disaster Management

Dr. Win Myat Aye  
Union Minister

Naw Htoo Phaw  
Deputy Minister

Defense

U Yee Mon  
Union Minister

Daw Khin Ma Ma Myo  
Deputy Minister

Naing Kaung Yuat  
Deputy Minister

Federal Union Affairs

Dr. Lian Hmung Sakhong  
Union Minister

U Chit Tun  
Deputy Minister

International Cooperation

Dr. Sa Sa  
Union Minister

Women, Youths & Children Affairs

Naw Susana Hla Hla Soe  
Union Minister

Daw Ei Thinzar Maung  
Deputy Minister

Natural Resource & Environmental Conservation

Dr. Tu Khaung  
Union Minister

Khun Bedu  
Deputy Minister

More on NUG. Pg-3

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Started out as the Spring Revolution, Myanmar’s fight for democracy has entered the middle of summer. In our last issue, we talked about fighting back the regime in April. Some sure did fight back. From ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) to people’s defense forces, multiple warfronts were opened against the military. The military faced severe attacks from Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in northern part and Karen National Union (KNU) in southern part, resulting in the loss of several junta’s soldiers and military outposts. For the evil military, the answer to its terrible loss is to always use heavy artillery and attack the villagers. According to UNOCHA, about 4,000 civilians in Kachin State, around 3,900 in Shan State and an estimated 40,000 civilians in Kayin State are displaced from their homes, taking refuge in safe havens which are usually not too safe. In the past, mass displacement like this was mostly seen in conflict-prone ethnic areas, but this month, we saw civilians in Sagaing and Bago regions fleeing from their homes to nearby forests because evil military violently cracked down on protesters, looted and raided houses. In addition to clashes with EAOs, the Myanmar military was confronted by civilians-led defense forces in Chin State. Calling themselves Chinland Defense Force - CDF, the resistance fighters used traditional hunting rifles and fought back junta’s soldiers for abducting civilians. Similarly, news of young men travelling to ethnic areas and taking military training from EAOs spread online. Not so long after the news, explosions occurred, mostly taking place in government offices across the country, almost every day in the second half of April. Culprits were always unknown, but many assumed the activities were organized by people’s forces.

Just as people stepped up the revolution, so were the junta’s forces, escalating their fear tactic. Arbitrary arrests continued, photos of severely-beaten-up detainees were aired on national television, doctors who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) were issued arrest warrants, and when the CDM staffers were not found at their homes, family members were taken instead. Cars on the road were stopped and thoroughly searched. Personal phones were also checked to see if the owner wrote political contents on Facebook or kept memes mocking the coup leaders. Despite these desperate attempts to instill fear in the public, protests were organized nationwide – from marching strikes to guerilla protests, depending on the security.

In terms of state power, the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) published the Federal Democracy Charter and formed the National Unity Government (NUG), as mandated by the people. However, ASEAN leaders were not convinced. Coup leader Min Aung Hlaing was invited to attend ASEAN emergency summit on Myanmar situation, which the murderer-in-chief claimed that he was invited as a legitimate head of state. Another sign that we are on our own, ASEAN will not help restore democracy nor will the UN.

Just like that, April has come and gone. It rained here and there this month, which reminded us that the monsoon was not too far away. From spring to monsoon, people’s defiance will carry on. It has been depressing at times but every day brings a new hope.
On March 31, right after we published our March issue, the CRPH officially announced the abolishment of the 2008 Constitution, which was the major obstacle in Myanmar’s democratization process. Only on the last day of Thingyan festival on April 16, the cabinet lineup for the long-awaited National Unity Government (NUG) was revealed to the public.

To no one’s surprise, the NUG is headed by President U Win Myint and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, but some questioned the relevance of including two detained leaders who had no capacity to lead the country in the time of crisis. To take over the role of the detained president, CRPH appointed a well-respected Kachin lawyer Duwa Lashi La, who marks as the first Kachin nationality to hold the high office of a Vice President. Interim Vice President Mahn Win Khaing Than, aka Super Mahn, is now taking over as Prime Minister of the NUG.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Mahn Win Khaing Than, the NUG is formed with eleven ministries, ten union ministers supported by twelve deputy ministers and will be extended as necessary in the future. Four interim ministers who were appointed by CRPH in March – Daw Zin Mar Aung, U Tin Tun Naing, U Lwin Ko Latt, Dr Zaw Wai Soe and Dr Win Myat Aye remain in the NUG lineup but there are some slight changes in responsible sectors. CRPH’s Special Envoy to the UN Dr Sasa runs the Ministry of International Cooperation solo while Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Federal Union Affairs have two deputy ministers each. Dr Zaw Wai Soe was in charge of three ministries back in March: health, education and labour, but now in NUG, he leads the Ministry of Health with support from Deputy Minister Dr Shwe Pon, and the Ministry of Education supported by Deputy Minister Ja Htoi Pan. The Ministry of Labour is yet to be formed under the NUG.

The NUG cabinet is somewhat inclusive because it contains a decent mix in terms of ethnic representatives, gender and age. Although almost half of the cabinet members are Burmese, three representatives each from Kachin and Karen ethnic groups, two representatives each from Chin, Karenni, and Mon, and one representative each from Ta’ang and Kayan ethnic minority groups are present in the lineup. However, Shan and Rakhine representatives are missing in the NUG. In terms of demographic, eight out of cabinet members, almost a third, are women whereas the majority of the cabinet members are in their prime age of 40s and 50s. The oldest member is 76 years old State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the youngest is 26 years old Deputy Minister Daw Ei Thinzar Maung. Since the National League for Democracy (NLD) won a landslide in the 2020 General Election, it is no surprise to see that 12 members of the NUG represent the NLD: all of them with previous lawmaking and administration experiences. The rest of the cabinet is made up of independent professionals such as lawyer, researcher, educator, medical doctor, social workers and activists, who do not have prior ties with political parties.

In response to the formation of NUG, some ethnic interim coordination teams, ethnic armed groups and civil societies welcomed the NUG and were open to cooperation in order to take down the military regime, and work towards the federal democratic state. However, the largest ethnic political party in Shan State, Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) did not make any remark on the formation of NUG. For Rakhine ethnic representation, General Twan Mrat Naing of Arakan Army (AA) tweeted that the CRPH approached the AA but it had its own visions and goals so it turned down the offer.

On April 23, the State Administration Council (SAC) denounced the NUG as an illegal parallel government, and filed lawsuits against all 24 members of the NUG. The announcement was made in the state-owned newspaper with photographs of each NUG member, which allowed the public to get familiar with their new ministers.

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In the Federal Democracy Charter published on March 31, the CRPH included formation of a wider consulting group National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC). According to the Charter, the NUCC will be formed with representatives from political parties, ethnic armed groups, Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) groups, civil societies and strike committees, and the council will “mobilize, discuss and negotiate with various democratic forces” to move forward in the journey to federal democracy. Basically, the NUCC’s duties are designed to complement the work of NUG. The Council is yet to be formed, but many are hopeful to see even more inclusive representatives in the council.

With the unexpected coup d’état three months ago, Myanmar people have come to realize the importance of federalism, diversity and equality to move forward and build a better state. The NUG is the very first step towards the federal democratic country, and millions of Myanmar people rely on the NUG to take a strong lead in the long journey ahead.

References
CRPH, Announcement 24/2021, 16 April 2021.

Prominent Associations that Support NUG

- Myanmar Teachers Federation
- Karenni State Consultative Council (KSCC)
- Ta’ang Political Consultative Committee (TPCC)
- Union Level Committee of CSOs Peace Forum
- Mon National Network
- Zomi Reunification Organization
- KNU Concerned Group
- Kachin Alliance/Rvwang Development Association/ Lisu National Organization
- Kachin Political Interim Coordination Team (KPICT)
- KNU/KNLA
- Peace Processing Steering Team (PPSt)

No Turning Back

There you go again,
For a privilege of a few.
You declare the war against people.
Threaten us with arms.
Yes, we are afraid.
But living in a world without future,
Fear us more.
This time, we won’t back down
You may have bullets but
We have the power of people
CRPH announced the abolishment of 2008 Constitution and revealed the Federal Democracy Charter.

Junta issued arrest warrants for 20 celebrities including singers, actors, social media influencers and activists.
Civilians who were interviewed by CNN’s Correspondent Clarissa Ward and her crew were abducted.

Nationwide, civilians joined Easter eggs strike where they painted and wrote anti-coup messages on eggs.

15 sailors including an officer from Mupon naval base in Mawlamyine defected from their posts.

SSPP/SSA shot junta’s chopper and one high ranking officer got injured.
Junta ordered to remove PSI satellites from the buildings and homes throughout the country.

Junta’s spokesperson Zaw Min Tun said in a press conference that government operations would soon return to normal, and elections would be held within two years to return democracy.

A military tribunal sentenced 19 people to death for killing one military member and injuring another in Yangon.
At least 60 civilians were killed and many injured in a military crackdown in Bago.

Protesters from at least 100 townships joined the Flashlights strike.

The beginning of Myanmar New Year Thingyan festival, the whole nation chose not celebrate. A series of themed protest were planned for the four-day festival instead.
April 15, 2021
Myanmar military used heavy weapons, including Russian-made jets and attack helicopters, in rural areas controlled by various armed ethnic groups.
EU agreed to impose sanctions on 10 more people connected to Myanmar’s military coup and, for the first time, to blacklist two military-companies, Reuters reports, citing two diplomats.
Wai Moe Naing, prominent protest leader from Monywa, was abducted in the mob fashion as junta’s forces crashed a private car into the motorbike rally.

April 16, 2021
The CRPH announced members of the National Unity Government.

April 17, 2021
A spokesperson for Thailand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed local media that ASEAN emergency summit on Myanmar was set for April 24 in Jakarta, with the coup leader Min Aung Hlaing to attend.

April 18, 2021
Japanese freelance journalist Yuki Kitazumi was detained in the night by junta’s forces in Yangon.

April 19, 2021
Junta announced that the coup leader Min Aung Hlaing would attend ASEAN summit. Protesters joined the “Blue Shirt Campaign” by uploading photos of themselves wearing blue shirts online and calling for the release of detainees. The U.S. added two more Myanmar state-owned companies to its sanctions list.

April 20, 2021
MRTV reported that the NUG was denounced as an unlawful association. A bounty worth 10,000,000 Myanmar Kyats (about 6,500 USD) issued for the arrest of Dr. Tayzar San, a protest leader in Mandalay. Junta media announced that CDM doctors were put in the blacklist and their passport were revoked.

April 21, 2021
Wai Moe Naing, a leader of the anti-coup movement in the city of Monywa, and 41 others are being held in custody in connection with the killing of two policemen and defamation of the state. ASEAN Summit was held with the coup leader’s presence. The leaders reached to a five-point consensus which was widely criticized for not reflecting the on-ground situation. NUG wasn’t invited to the summit, but its MOFA Minister Daw Zin Mar Aung sent a statement which was read out at the summit.

April 22, 2021
UN’s WFP warned that up to 3.4 million people Myanmar would face hunger in the coming three to six months. MRTV announced that all cabinet members of the NUG were charged with high treason. NUG urged Interpol to work with Indonesian police to arrest junta leader Min Aung Hlaing when he traveled to Jakarta for the ASEAN summit.

April 23, 2021
CRPH announced that it included three more members who were democratically elected in November’s general election.

April 24, 2021
Guerilla protests grew stronger in Yangon, up to 200 protesters gathered in Tarmwe and Thaketa township. Coup leader Min Aung Hlaing said that the junta was prioritizing the stability in the country, and delegation team proposed by ASEAN leaders would be considered when the stability was restored.

April 25, 2021
Myanmar military air bases in Magwe and Meiktila were attacked with missiles in the early morning.

April 26, 2021
NUG announced that European Union EU has welcomed the efforts made by CRPH and NUG, promised to provide humanitarian aids to the people of Myanmar and said it would not recognize the SAC.
A war to end all wars?

Civil War is nigh. Some might argue that civil war has always been in this country since the Independence, and they are not wrong. But this time, it is a war of unprecedented scale, engulfing most parts of the country, if not all, and affecting everyone. While the decades of civil war have affected us directly or indirectly, no observer would compare what we faced to the kinds plaguing Syria, Yemen or Afghanistan. However, almost 3 months into Min Aung Hlaing’s coup, such future looks certain.

Till now, the federal democrat-ic forces, i.e., protestors, ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) and other pro-democracy groups, and junta’s forces are in a warm-up phase. Originally, the protestors embraced non-violence ideals even in the face of bloody beat-up and shootings. But increased number of the people grow new perspectives after facing repeated bloody onslaughts by junta’s forces who has shown they will kill anyone without hesitation, if that means gripping tight to the power. Still, non-violence protests and marches remain backbone of ongoing Spring Revolution, and that will remain so in the future, but alternatives are being considered. Why should non-violent protestors get slaughtered violently? Dialogues between ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) and the democratic representatives of 2020 election, Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) also seem to point towards armed resistance with National Unity Government (NUG) being formed in mid-April. The game plan has been set for both side and on course to collision. The talks of forming Federal Army at the national scale and Civil Defense Forces at local levels are getting more concrete as well, with the latter (whether named so or not) getting into shape with recent battles in Myin Chan, Kalay, currently ongoing Min Dat and more. Not all are successful for the people, but cases such as in Min Dat, where citizens with handmade guns deterred Tatmataw’s onslaught and inflicted heavy damage towards junta’s lackeys has inspired us all and showed Min Aung Hlaing’s army can be stopped with guns. Media reports of urbanites going into EAOs controlled areas to seek out military training have grown as well. Among the EAOs side, they are accepting refugees and welcoming cadets, some, most intensely Karen National Union (KNU) and Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), are staging attacks into Tatmataw’s positions to expand their holdings, even when Tatmataw retaliates with brutal bombings against civilian population in EAOs-controlled areas. It seems things will morph into a restless year or years ahead.

Considering the alternative to victorious armed revolution is the Orwellian regime we lived through for decades, civil war is definitely more appealing to democratic protestors and general populace. For EAOs, they are well accustomed to the guns that had successfully pacified major cities in 1988 and 2007 turning towards them soon afterwards. Despite past misunderstandings and grudges among the people, the junta had created opportunities to form a united resistance for first time in a generation. However, there is still a fear among public because some people are setting their eyes on the bright future without junta alone. It’s as if, if we all dedicated towards this war, we all will be able to build a society with human rights, human dignity and other noble aspects. That is the goal for sure, but is that the only possible outcome?

The rebels who picked up arms under similar circumstances back in 2011 against similarly ruthless, sadistic and short-sighted oppressor in Syria would have shared the same ideals and optimism as we do now. Yet, after 10 years, Bashar al-Assad is in the strongest position, with one rebel holdings after another falling. Meanwhile, entire country is in a rubble, food, gasoline, and other necessities are scarce, half of the country’s population are be-

“Juntas like Bashar al-Assad or Min Aung Hlaing do not mind ruling the ruins if that means they could still be ruling.”
ing displaced internally or over-
seas, entire country is getting
more sectarian, often with for-
eign influence, poverty, tyranny
and abuses are widespread. Syr-
ian scenario is especially scary
when better-read pro-military
people seems to be inspired by
Bashar al-Assad and often cite
Syrian Civil War as an example on
the folly of rebelling against the
army. For them, this murderous
maniac is a strong ruler who has
successfully gripped on the pow-
er what is rightfully his. From their
narrative, Syria is in ruins not be-
cause al-Assad chose authoritar-
ian rule over the country's future,
but because the protestors had
the audacity to demand demo-
cratic reforms and refused to ac-
cept tyrant's will when he denied
those demands by killing scores.
There is no doubt that Min Aung
Hlaing will follow al-Assad's path
if that means he could rule. Jun-
tas like Bashar al-Assad or Min
Aung Hlaing do not mind ruling
the ruins if that means they could
still be ruling.

Another gruesome prospect of
the civil war is that it could be
an excruciatingly prolonged one.
It is unlikely EAOs have enough
resources or reasons to invade
and liberate mainland Myanmar.
The logical strategy for them is
to expand and defend their hold-
ings, while providing military
trainings to those from main-
land. Those who are training at
EAOs will prove to be essential
in urban guerrilla warfare, but in
the event of large scale warfare,
taking over cities such as Pathen-
or Sagaing will be very challeng-
ing (it will be near impossible for
Yangon, Mandalay and Naypy-
itaw to be liberated from junta's
involvement), meaning most
people in the mainland will still
be subject to junta's oppression
and those in EAO controlled ar-
eas will still face junta's airstrikes
and assaults for some time. It
could be a few years, or more.
Could the pro-federal-democra-
cy forces lose? For the time be-
ing, junta's forces are losing at all
fronts and EAOs are expanding
their territories, desertions and
defections will become more and
more common among Tatma-
taw, and with civil disobedience
movement and resisting masses
stifling the economy, the junta
is increasingly finding difficult
to gather resources required to
feed war machine. Worse, with
widespread corruption, extor-
tions and robberies committed
by soldiers, even people willing
to run a degree of economic ac-
tivities are finding it impossible
and further jamming the econo-
my. However, things that can se-
riously hamper junta's war efforts
such as arms embargo or no-fly
zone may not happen for a long
time, if these happen at all. This
will be a war of attrition, margin-
al gains, and massive sufferings
among the people.

This is in no way suggesting
against war. War is inevitable,
if the people were to have a
chance to break free of military
dictatorship. Without such a war,
the fascist military institution will
replicate itself for generations,
as General Ne Win handing over
his legacy to General Than Shwe
who once again passed down
to General Min Aung Hlaing. But
we, the people have to be both
strong enough to eradicate fas-
cist military institution, smart
enough to minimize sufferings,
and most importantly resilient
enough to embrace prolonged
sufferings. Death, destruction,
hunger, poverty, and all kinds of
sufferings loom large. Beyond
this painful struggle lies anything
between paradise and deeper
hell. It is up to us to plan ahead to
make the odds are in our favour
and to keep on marching until
we get to a better tomorrow.
As the third wave of Covid-19 ramped up among Myanmar’s neighboring countries, a lot of questions were raised on whether the military junta is prepared to tackle this incoming assault of Covid-19 third wave with over 60,000 healthcare workers on strike. While the neighboring countries like Thailand and India battle with the devastating hit of Covid-19 third wave, the military junta’s priority seems to be attempting to portray the image of peaceful and bustling life in Myanmar with forcing schools and universities to reopen on May 5 and shops to reopen in big markets like Bogyoke Zay.

The Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) have also lifted some of Covid-19 preventive measures such as Covid-19 test requirements for domestic travelers since late March, and most of the restaurants and bars in Yangon have also reopened in the past two weeks after the long Thingyan holidays.

Despite the ‘normal life’ pretense that the military junta is trying to shove down every resident, according to the coordination meeting held at the Ministry of Health and Sports on April 22 for the assessment of the Covid-19 outbreak across the world and on prevention of a third wave outbreak in Myanmar, the Minister from the military regime admitted that it is difficult to predict the current COVID-19 situation in Myanmar due to inadequate lab testing as a result of reduced medical staff.

Based on the data published by the Ministry of Health and Sports in the state media’s newspaper, there have been only around 350 positive cases of Covid-19 in Myanmar for the month of April. Compared to the daily thousand-like number of new infections in Thailand, it might look like Myanmar is still in the safe zone.

However, with the healthcare workers at the forefront of the Civil Disobedience Movement—a movement launched to protest against the military rule, Myanmar’s testing system has already collapsed since the early days of the coup. A doctor who spoke to Irrawaddy said that the medical community in Myanmar is distrustful towards the health management under the military junta and people are reluctant to test for Covid-19.

Analyzing the data released by the MoHS, the current testing capability is just between 10-20% compared to the time before the military has staged a coup on February 1. In January, between 10,000 to 20,000 samples are tested for Covid-19 on a daily basis, and currently, only about 1,000 to 2,000 can be tested daily.

The last date that over 11,000 samples were tested was February 5, the day before everyone took to the street to protest against the military for its illegal coup. Starting from February 6 till now, only a few thousands of samples seemed to be tested daily.

We write everyday to document the coup, to share our experience, and to contemplate. The daily entries can be read here: https://mohingamatters.com/freedom-memoirs/
As of April 28, the total positive cases of Covid-19 in Myanmar is 142,790. Myanmar has also seen its first Covid-19 death in a month on April 25, and since then there have been two additional deaths, with the death toll rising to 3,209 as of April 28.

Eleven Media also reported that over 7,500 Covid-19 patients are still hospitalized today based on the data analyzed from the MoHS.

Junta leader, Min Aung Hlaing backed up those claims in his New Year Message for Myanmar Year 1382 as the Chairman of State Administration Council that 3.4 million doses of vaccines have already arrived, and 28 million doses more will arrive soon. The state media’s newspaper informed the public on April 22 that nationwide Covid-19 vaccination will continue as the country has also received the first batch of 1.5 million vaccines as a gift from the Government of India.

Since that day, the venerable monks, people aged over 65 years and civil staff received a second dose of Covid-19 vaccine in some of the townships in Yangon, Magway, Ayeyarwaddy, Mandalay, Sagaing, Tanintharyi and Bago Regions, and in Shan and Kayah States. For people living in the metropolitan area of Yangon Region, the second dose of Covid-19 vaccination has become available at Myanmar Convention Center, Inya Center and other designated areas starting from April 26.

Current Covid-19 Data

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Many of Myanmar health workers are still on strike, and over 300 arrest warrants out for the health personnel for participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement, the actual number of Covid-19 cases could be higher than the data available from the MoHS. It is not a case of them omitting the cases to lessen the panic among the public, but more of them not actually being able to assess the current Covid-19 situation in Myanmar due to shortage of staff.

The Ministry of Health and Sports continues to ‘urge’ people to follow Covid-19 prevention regulations almost every day in the state’s daily newspaper to avoid a third wave of infections and the entry of a new strain of the virus. But the junta also continues to ‘urge’ people to return to normal life as soon as possible, and forcing kids and students to go back to school and gather in crowds.

You wonder what it is that they want more… to prevent the third wave of Covid-19 from attacking the public health care system that is barely hanging by a thin thread and a country that is going through major humanitarian crisis due to the surge of civil wars, or to show the world that Myanmar people are ‘happy’ under their rule?

According to data from Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), new company registrations have decreased over 80 percent since the coup. Previously, there were 600 to 1,500 new business incorporated every month and now the number is between 100 to 200.
Mohinga Talks

Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) has already survived three months. Tens of thousands of government employees have joined CDM including a number of policemen. Mohinga Matters had a chat with one of them and here’s the conversation.

Q: Tell us about your background and why you chose to join the police force.
A: I am a twenty-five-year-old policeman who is now on CDM, I served one and a half years in Mawbi Police Station, Yangon. I joined the police force because I wanted to stop crimes. (It sounded cliché and the interviewee knew it so he added) Well, I was helping my family business until one day my parents suggested I should join the police force because it may bring honor to the family. And indeed, I felt proud wearing the police uniform.

Q: What did you and your former colleagues make of the coup and protests?
A: The coup was clearly abuse of power by the military. It’s absolutely unacceptable action so the public had no choice but to go out and protest. We are in full support of the public’s protests.

Q: We see police and soldiers deployed together during crackdowns. Who takes order from who?
A: Crackdown order comes from the military directly. Police are just following commands.

Q: In some videos, we notice both police and soldiers are not just following orders, they use excessive force, humiliating the innocent civilians. And they seem to enjoy it way too much. What do you think of it?
A: Both police and soldier broke the oath that they swore in to protect the civilians by beating and treating protesters in inhumane way. And they are just using “following orders” as a mere excuse.

Q: On what occasions, a policeman is allowed to shoot somebody and when is the last time you have used live bullets?
A: We are not allowed to use live rounds unless it is an extremely emergency situation. We are not even allowed to use rubber bullets within 50 yards. And the last time I used live rounds was during my police training.

Q: So, what did you think when the coup leaders said they have not used live rounds but rubber bullets?
A: It’s another lie from the military to deceive the international community. We all witness that live rounds were used.

Q: What is your message to the public?
A: I would like to tell frontline protesters to be very careful and safe. They must also stay united and make collective decisions to win. I am also very thankful for the donations from CDM supporters across the country. They must also be careful because there is always a risk in either doing CDM or supporting CDM. Lastly, I want to request proper intervention from the international community, statements alone are not going to end this.

“We are not even allowed to use rubber bullets within 50 yards. And the last time I used live rounds was during my police training.”
Nearly three months have passed since the Myanmar military staged a coup on February 1, ousting the democratically elected government. Within the first few days, several countries showed solidarity with Myanmar demanding release of political prisoners and denouncing the coup. Solidarity rallies in Nepal, Indonesia, India and South Korea took place in front of Myanmar embassies in February with demonstrators calling for the restoration of democracy. Among those who had spoken out for Myanmar’s struggle included celebrities like Rihanna and Michelle Yeoh adding to the group of pro-democracy and pro-rights activists who are often vocal for such a cause. Thousands together with Burmese diaspora joined online strike campaigns through webinars and in offline protests.

Myanmar anti-coup protests use a symbolic three-finger salute from the ‘Hunger Games’ series, which was popularized by the Thai pro-democracy and monarchy reform movement. Soon, activists and students in Asia expressed sympathy with Myanmar’s struggle for democracy, leading Myanmar to join pan-Asian solidarity movement called, ‘Milk Tea Alliance’. Its name originates from the shared passion for the milk tea and the anti-tyrannical rule (often anti-China sentiment) in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Thailand. With China not condemning the coup and use of veto in the United Nations Security Council’s meeting on Myanmar crisis, Myanmar joins the team. Use of the hashtag #MilkTeaAlliance is reported to spike in February following the Myanmar coup and the emoji for the Alliance was launched by Twitter in April to commemorate its first anniversary of this online pro-democracy movement in Asia.

One of the first ‘Milk Tea Alliance’ protests was on February 10 where Thai activists in Bangkok staged a protest, banging pots and pans just like their neighbors and linking Thai anti-coup protests to Myanmar’s struggle. Again, on February 28, Myanmar activists called for a mass protest campaign across Asia from “Milk Tea Alliance” countries. More than 200 people in Taipei, dozens in Bangkok, Melbourne and Hong Kong took to the streets waving the Alliance signs and flags. New graphic arts created by Myanmar artists for the Alliance were circulated online. Thousands of Myanmar protestors were on the street, and it was the first Sunday at least 18 protestors were killed with more than 30 injured at the brutality of the armed forces.

Soon, Myanmar’s online anti-coup movement levelled up their game by using the hashtag and the Alliance to gain global attention and sympathy for activists fighting for the same struggle. The social media users in Myanmar in turn showed solidarity to detained Hong Kong student activists by tweeting a solidarity message along with a picture of Joshua Wong, HK student activist, whom many might not have been aware of previously. The pan-Asian alliance for democratic rights has taken a strong hold, and people are hearing each other voices’ loud and clear.

On the other hand, the leaders have failed to listen to the voices of the common. The leaders of ASEAN invited the junta chief to the summit held in Jakarta, Indonesia, on April 24. The junta chief was delighted to receive the first official invitation from the international community. He was desperate for recognition from the international community, paying the Isareli-Canadian lobbyist $2M to work on international relations issues. On his arrival, he was greeted by rallies staged by Indonesian activists, true friends of Myanmar people, standing in solidarity. Prior to the meeting, ASEAN youth had also delivered a letter to their respective lead-

Activists and students in Asia expressed sympathy with Myanmar’s struggle for democracy, leading Myanmar to join pan-Asian solidarity movement called, ‘Milk Tea Alliance’. "
ers to reject the State Administrative Council (SAC) of Myanmar. Online supports saw the spike in the use of #ASEANrejectSAC. Again, the leaders failed to hear the voice of their youth. On social media too, Myanmar has also seen support from ordinary citizens of Cambodia and Thailand sympathizing with the struggle of the people oppressed by people with power and guns. They have gone through the same struggle. They know our pain and send us messages of support, hope and strength to never give up. It is now clearer than ever that only common people understand each other and listen to each other’s voices when the leaders are busy playing politics.

It is increasingly important to realize what we ought to do. It is our solidarity movement, ‘Milk Tea Alliance’, will have to keep resisting the tyrannical rule and show the leaders the power of the masses until they hear our voice.

References
BBC, Thai protests: Tens of thousands gather again in mass defiance of government, 15 Oct 2020
BBC, Milk Tea Alliance: Twitter creates emoji for pro-democracy activists, 8 April 2021
Skynews, Myanmar: Protesters in Bangkok stand in solidarity with their neighbours, 10 Feb 2021

According to official data from Internal Revenue Department, monthly lottery tickets sold for the May 1st is 94% down from that of 24th which took place in January.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tickets Sold (Million Kyats)</th>
<th>Total Prizes (Million Kyats)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24th Aung Bar Lay</td>
<td>34,363</td>
<td>20,618</td>
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<tr>
<td>26th Aung Bar Lay</td>
<td>2,053</td>
<td>1,232</td>
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Internet shutdown between 1 am to 9 am is lifted for fiber services after 72 nights. The following restrictions remain under junta.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Since</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>online platforms filtered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>mobile data blocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>public wifi limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>wireless broadband blocked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
April in numbers

3461 people remain under detention since the coup.

About 1,000 people were detained by junta in February, that number had surged in March with 2,400. By the end of April, nearly 3500 people have been put under detention.

Over one hundred members of UEC were arrested immediately after the coup in February under pretext that they had committed election fraud. However, most of them have been released in April as only nineteen remain in custody. In April, student union members across the country have increasingly encountered house raids and abductions from junta, accounted for nearly 15% of the total detainees. The number may be small yet constantly growing is in journalist section, doubled from last month’s 23. Many journalists, especially the ones in local news have been targeted by junta.

The largest number behind bars falls under civilian group. In February, only those who participated in protest or led CDM were arrested, which has changed dramatically by the end of April, civilians can now be abducted simply because they have shared anti-military posts on Facebook.
759 people have been killed since the coup according to Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP).

Compared with March, fewer people died in April which is largely down to the reduced protests countrywide, not because junta suddenly decided to show mercy. Still, 194 deaths mean the country is nowhere near “peaceful”. Bago in 9 April alone saw at least 60 deaths.

Source: Assistance Association for Political Prisoners