

Myanmar's shadow government declares 'resistance war' against military junta

Tuesday 7 September 2021, by [Myanmar Now](#) (Date first published: 7 September 2021).

The NUG's acting president calls on the public, the People's Defence Force and ethnic armed organisations to revolt against Min Aung Hlaing's military council.



Screengrab of acting president Duwa Lashi La giving the recorded speech on September 7

Myanmar's acting president Duwa Lashi La of the National Unity Government (NUG) announced on Tuesday that the people's "resistance war" against the junta had started and urged the public across the country to revolt against the military coup regime led by Min Aung Hlaing.

In an seven-minute emergency speech at 8am, the acting president also called on the NUG's People's Defence Force (PDF) to target "every pillar of the junta's ruling mechanism," as well as to protect the lives of Myanmar's people, to follow orders and to behave in line with the PDF's code of conduct.

Duwa Lashi La urged local administrators working under the junta to resign immediately.

People were warned not to undertake unnecessary travel, to stock up on food and medical supplies and to help the PDFs and civilian resistance forces by informing them of the military's activities.

He urged ethnic armed organisations to attack the coup regime's forces in every way possible and to maintain control over their territories. He also called on Border Guard Forces, junta-allied militias, and individual soldiers and police to defect from the military council and collaborate with those forces on the side of the people.

"This revolution is a just and fair revolution and is necessary to build a federal union with sustainable peace," Duwa Lashi La said in the speech.

He explained that he hoped Myanmar's neighbours, members of ASEAN, and the United Nations would understand that their action against the junta was "based on necessity."

NUG Prime Minister Mahn Win Khaing Than also announced that starting from Tuesday all civilian departments and offices under the military council—in which many of the workers continue to strike in defiance of the junta—would be closed indefinitely.

“The public revolution has started today. I urge all the people in the country to take part as much as they can, in order to eradicate the military dictatorship that has been ruling our country for years,” said Yee Mon, the NUG’s defence minister.

The military junta has murdered more than 1,000 civilians and jailed several thousand more in the wake of the February 1 military coup. Ordinary citizens have responded by taking up arms and waging targeted guerrilla attacks against the military, its infrastructure and individuals deemed to be collaborating with the coup regime.

In anticipation of increased instability, some locals in Yangon have reported stockpiling food and medicine in recent days, but the streets of the country’s major cities were still quiet as residents woke up to the NUG’s announcement on Tuesday.

Following lethal crackdowns by the junta’s armed forces on anti-coup protests, thousands of youth across the country opposed to military rule travelled to liberated areas controlled by ethnic armed organisations such as the Kachin Independence Army and the Karen National Union to undergo combat training. Many returned to their towns to take part in urban guerrilla warfare against regime targets.

Though the NUG’s defence ministry has not revealed how many resistance fighters are in the PDF, it is believed to be several thousand. It is unclear how the PDF will fight against the Myanmar military, which, according to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies—cited in a report by DW—is the 11th largest professional army in the world with more than 400,000 soldiers on active duty as of 2019.

In recent weeks, local resistance fighters and ethnic armed forces inflicted hundreds of casualties on the Myanmar army during clashes and ambushes.

A defence ministry official under the NUG told Myanmar Now on the condition of anonymity that the resistance war against the junta will transform from guerrilla-style attacks into more conventional warfare in collaboration with the public.

Myanmar Now

P.S.

- Myanmar Now. Published on Sep 7, 2021:
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