

Burma

Almost 550 Student Protesters Still Being Detained by Myanmar's Military Regime

Thursday 18 March 2021, by [The Irrawaddy](#) (Date first published: 18 March 2021).

Around 547 out of a total of 770 students arrested by Myanmar's military regime are still being detained for taking part in anti-coup protests across the country. They include a number of high school students.

Around 400 of the student detainees, who include student union leaders, have been charged by the junta, while more than a dozen students have gone missing during the crackdowns on anti-regime protests, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) and the University of Yangon Student Union (UYSU).

U San Min of the AAPP told the Irrawaddy on Thursday that the anti-regime students have been charged under 505(a) of the Penal Code and Article (25) of the Natural Disaster Management Law, while some have been charged under drug laws, which carry a sentence of up to five years imprisonment, after being accused of using drugs.

Under Article 505(a) of the Penal Code, the accused face up to three years imprisonment if found guilty, according to the amendment to the law made by the junta following their Feb.1 coup.

Article 25 of the Natural Disaster Management Law also carries up to three years in prison for anyone found guilty of breaching campaign guidelines and COVID-19 restrictions set by the country's health ministry.

Student unions and the AAPP said that family members of the detained students are concerned about the conditions in prison for their children, as they have not been allowed to see them since they were detained.

U San Min called for the release of the student detainees as students are not attacking the state's interests.

"Arresting the students is destroying the country," he said.

On March 7, security forces cracked down in Mandalay on protesters from the education sector attending an anti-regime demonstration. Around 100 protesters were detained. Most are students from Mandalay's universities, but some are high school students.

A member of Mandalay University's Student Union told the Irrawaddy on Thursday that several dozen student detainees would be charged at a court hearing scheduled for next week.

On March 3 alone, nearly 400 university students protesting against the coup in Yangon's Tamwe Township were detained during a crackdown on anti-regime demonstrations. Most of the students

have been charged under Article 505(a) of the Penal Code, according to a member of UYSU.

Another 23 anti-regime activists who had joined the student protest were told on March 11 that they face arrest, after being accused of inciting civil servants to join the civil disobedience movement defying the junta.

But nearly 100 medical students who were arrested in Yangon on Feb.28 during a crackdown on an anti-regime march were released by the police at the request of the heads of medical universities.

“The main reason why students have to come out on the streets is to protest against the military regime for seizing power from a democratically-elected government,” said the member of Mandalay University’s Student Union.

“Violent arrests and the jailing of students is unacceptable. We are not afraid of being arrested. We will continue our fight against the military dictatorship,” he added.

Despite the deadly crackdowns on anti-coup protests, students are continuing to join the nationwide demonstrations defying military rule.

Tens of thousands of people across the country continue to take to the streets day and night to express their opposition to the junta.

As of Thursday, almost 2,200 people have been arrested since the coup. They include elected leaders, National League for Democracy members, election commissioners, artists, writers, journalists, students and teachers.

At least 1,872 of them are still in detention or have been charged by the junta.

Nearly 220 protesters have been killed by the security forces during their crackdowns on anti-regime protests.

The Irrawaddy

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