

Burma

# Random Brutality by Myanmar Security Forces in Mandalay Pushes Death Toll to 260

Wednesday 24 March 2021, by [The Irrawaddy](#) (Date first published: 23 March 2021).

**After three more people — including a 7-year-old girl — were shot dead in Mandalay, the country's protest-related death toll since the military's Feb. 1 coup reached 260 on Tuesday.**

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Since March 21, the military regimes' security forces have been conducting a series of raids in several wards in Chanmyathazi Township including Aung Pin Lae, Aung Tharyar and Mya Yi Nandar, removing roadblocks erected by residents as barriers and shooting at crowds opposing the raids.

During the raids in Myanmar's second-biggest city, riot police and soldiers used live rounds, rubber bullets, stun grenades and tear gas.

Mandalay's residents told The Irrawaddy on Tuesday that police and soldiers have been opening gunfire on bystanders and pedestrians they see on the streets and roads.

A 7-year-old girl named Ma Khin Myo Chit, was shot dead by the soldiers during a house raid at Aung Pin Lae in Chanmyathazi Township on Tuesday afternoon. The frightened girl was slain while being hugged by her father.

A 19-year-old man, the girl's brother, was reportedly beaten and taken away by security forces.

A 25-year-old man was fatally shot in the head by security forces and other three people were wounded during a raid against Aung Pin Lae ward in the evening.

Amid no protests in the street, Ko Chan Thar Htwe, 21, was also killed with a headshot by security forces at Aungtharyar ward in Chanmyathazi Township on Tuesday morning while he was in front of his house.

Ko Than Naing Htun, brother of the victim, told The Irrawaddy that his younger brother was deliberately killed by the security forces as he was attempting to get inside the house.

"There is no word to describe the brutal behavior of them (police and soldiers). We can be only peaceful without them in our country," said Ko Than Naing Htun.

He also added, "We want only the government that we elected. We don't want this kind of government which seized power by force."

On Monday, the military's security forces opened fire in the wards of Mandalay's Chanmyathazi Township throughout the whole day.

During the raids, police and soldiers set on fire the roadblocks that had been erected by residents to prevent access to their neighborhood. Security forces also destroyed several vehicles belonging to local residents and damaged houses.

About seven people were shot dead and more than 50 were wounded in the raids on Monday.

On Sunday night, eight people were killed and more than 30 were injured when the police and soldiers opened fire with automatic weapons during raids in Aung Pin Lae and another location in Chanmyathazi Township.

The shootings followed a deadly confrontation between security forces and anti-regime protesters which left one protester dead and several injured earlier on Sunday afternoon.

A charity group assisting wounded protesters and providing funeral services to for the dead told The Irrawaddy on Tuesday that the body of 16-year-old teashop waiter who was killed on Sunday night, had been taken away by the force Monday afternoon when security forces interrupted the funeral ceremony.

"They (police and soldiers) seem abnormal. They are shooting everyone they see on the roads," said an official of a charity group in the city.

He said that the death toll in the city might be higher than the reported numbers as many injured people are hiding due to the fear of arrest.

Amid the deadly crackdowns, tens of thousands of people across Myanmar continue to take to the streets day and night in defiance of the military regime.

## **The Irrawaddy**

- The Irrawaddy 23 March 2021:

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## **Myanmar Security Forces Loot, Destroy Civilians' Property Amid Crackdown**

In Myanmar's state-run media these days, security forces are occasionally portrayed as "someone working hard day and night for the rule of law and safety of the people." Whenever they have to quell protesters, they always follow crowd control protocols. They only apply a "minimum use of force" and use "riot gear" because "live ammunition is not allowed to be used."

Scenes on the ground suggest differently, however.

Following the February coup, anti-regime protests have erupted across the country every day, demanding the restoration of democracy and the release of the country's democratically elected leaders of the President U Win Myint and State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and others

arrested by the junta. The regime's troops have responded to the protests with lethal force. More than 250 people have been killed so far.

Contrary to what the state and military-controlled media continue to claim, the men in uniform have behaved like thugs and looters while treating people they have arrested with no respect for human dignity. Arrests and killings have been arbitrary.

Last week security forces fired tear gas, used stun grenades and fired live rounds on anti-regime protesters in Twante Township in southern Yangon. When the protesters fled and residents went into hiding, security forces committed robbery in broad daylight. The ransacked shops and houses, looting everything they saw, from buckets of ice cream to iPads. They stole everything from cash to jewelry to cooking gas cylinders to dried fish.

"It was an armed robbery. Once they [security forces] stopped their truck, they came into my house, shooting. They also shot open the door of my house and looted everything," a man who sells dried fish and gas cylinders told The Irrawaddy.

In local wet markets, they took advantage of the absence of people amid the crackdown to steal things. Two policemen were caught on camera taking bunches of bananas from a roadside fruit stall after the vendor had run for his life. When the pictures went viral on Facebook, Myanmar's popular social media, the police were condemned. "They are like a plague of locusts. They steal everything, even from the poorest of the poor," one person wrote.

Riot police take away bunches of bananas from a fruit stall during a crackdown.

Apart from looting and robbing residents, soldiers and police smashed civilians' property amid the crackdowns.

Since last week, many residents in Yangon, Mandalay and other cities have reported that their cars and motorbikes — parked right in front of their homes — were destroyed during day and night raids in their neighborhoods. On Monday night alone, more than 20 vehicles in Yangon's Dawbon Township were destroyed during a night raid, according to local residents.

During a visit to the area on Tuesday morning, The Irrawaddy witnessed cars with smashed windshields, broken windows and damaged hoods. Some were defaced with bullet holes. A stained glass façade of a nearby building was shattered, apparently from a spray of bullets during the night raid. People were visibly traumatized from the night ordeal. When asked for comments, a resident just said, "You see it all, what happened."

Thomas H. Andrews, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, told The Irrawaddy, "The theft, destruction of property and other crimes that are being committed by security forces reflects the criminality of their superiors, starting with the theft of a fledgling democracy and government."

Bertil Lintner, a veteran journalist who has been covering Myanmar for decades, said what the Tatmadaw (military) was doing in urban areas now is "plunder and pure criminal behavior" and equivalent to what they have done for decades in the parts of the country where ethnic minorities live.

"It is as if they want to punish people and destroy their lives because they are having the audacity to challenge the power of the military," he said.

## **Old Habits Die Hard**

While civilians in cities are just now experiencing firsthand the arbitrary shootings, looting, and destruction of personal belongings by security forces, Myanmar's military has long been notorious for the use of those tactics in the country's ethnic areas.

Human Rights groups and the media, including The Irrawaddy, have recorded and exposed the mistreatment for years.

Until a few months ago, for example, villagers in Rakhine State in the country's west woke up every morning uncertain of their survival amid fighting between the government's soldiers and local Arakan Army's (AA) troops who fought for their autonomy in the region.

Media reports showed villagers were taken away from their homes by the government's soldiers "for questioning" after being accused of being AA sympathizers.

Riot police destroy motorbikes parked alongside the road.

"They took villagers in the morning. They told their families to retrieve the bodies in the evening," a villager said.

For many years, soldiers also used forced labor in ethnic areas, grabbing anyone they saw and putting them to use them as porters. During their recent clearance operations in cities against protesters, soldiers found the tactic was still useful as they forced people to remove roadblocks that had been set up to deter them.

Recent videos recorded by residents show soldiers and police forcefully entering some homes to grab able-bodied men at gunpoint and force them to remove barricades on the road.

On Sunday morning, residents of Kyaukmyoung in Yangon's Tamwe Township were left with no choice when security forces appeared to summon people to get to the street to remove barricades with a warning that "if [you do] not comply, we will bulldoze everything and not take responsibility for any damage," posing a threat to cars parked along the roadside.

"We were under threat. We don't know what would have happened if we refused," said a resident, recalling that even women had to carry sandbags while soldiers and police were standing guard to make sure their order was followed.

The official line from the military regime was far different from that reality.

In the evening news on the same day, the military-owned Myawady Television announced, "Dutiful citizens in some townships in Yangon helped security forces on their own volition clear roadblocks that had been set up by rioters."

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## **Another Bloody Day in Myanmar as Death Toll Reaches 254**

Myanmar's protest-related death toll since the military's Feb. 1 coup reached 254 on Monday evening after four more people, including a 13-year-old child, were shot dead in the country's second biggest city, Mandalay.

Beginning early Monday, the military regime's security forces opened fire in Aung Pin Lae, Aung Tharyar and Mya Yi Nandar wards in Chanmyathazi Township in Mandalay during a series of raids.

In the gunfire Monday afternoon, three more adults and a 13-year-old boy were killed and more than 40 people were injured, according to charity groups assisting the wounded.

Security forces raided the residential quarters to remove roadblocks erected by local residents and used live rounds, rubber bullets and stun grenades in cracking down against those opposing their raids.

A resident of Mya Yi Nandar Housing told The Irrawaddy that security forces set the roadblocks on fire and destroyed several vehicles belonging to local residents during their raid on the neighborhood.

When local residents appeared in the compound of the housing quarter to oppose the raid, security forces opened fire.

"Amid no protests at our housing, security forces raided and destroyed everything they could see," the resident of Mya Yi Nandar Housing said.

He added, "They threatened and swore at the residents during their raid. Their inhumane behavior was unacceptable."

Security forces also raided Aung Pin Lae ward in Mandalay's Chanmyathazi Township and other locations in the city on Sunday night, opening fire on residents with automatic weapons. The shooting continued until midnight on Sunday.

During the Sunday night raid, eight people including a 16-year-old boy were shot dead by security forces. More than 30 were wounded.

Earlier on Sunday afternoon, police and security forces used live rounds in cracking down on anti-regime protests in Aung Pin Lae. One man was killed after being shot in the head, and six people were severely injured.

Amid the deadly crackdowns, tens of thousands of people across Myanmar continue to take to the streets day and night in defiance of military rule.

### **The Irrawaddy**

• The Irrawaddy 22 March 2021:

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