

Burma

# Myanmar Junta Charges and Arrests Striking Doctors and Senior Medical Staff

More than 710 civilians have been killed by the junta's forces

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*Doctors from the emergency unit of Yangon General Hospital initiated the civil disobedience movement on Feb. 3 / The Irrawaddy*

The Myanmar military regime has charged 19 government doctors, including a director of the health ministry, several medical superintendents and specialists across the country, with incitement for their support of the civil disobedience movement (CDM) and for backing the committee representing elected lawmakers.

The doctors are from government hospitals in Naypyitaw, Yangon, Mandalay, Sagaing and Tanintharyi regions and Shan and Kachin states.

The junta blames the doctors for inciting government healthcare workers to take part in the CDM. It also said that the doctors are supporting the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluattaw (CRPH), which has been declared an unlawful association by the military regime.

The CRPH was founded by lawmakers from the National League for Democracy (NLD) who were democratically elected in the November 2020 election, but ousted from office after the military's Feb.1 coup.

All 19 doctors have been charged under Article 505(a) of the Penal Code. They face up to three years imprisonment if found guilty, according to the amendment to Article 505(a) made by the junta since their coup.

Doctors have been targeted by the military regime ever since hundreds of healthcare workers from Yangon and Mandalay initiated the CDM on Feb.3 in protest at the junta's overthrowing of the NLD government.

Tens of thousands of government staff and workers from the private sector across Myanmar have since joined the CDM, leaving many government offices, ministries, hospitals and banks deserted or closed and severely restricting the regime's administrative machinery.

Junta spokesperson Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun has accused the doctors of murdering people in cold blood since they stopped working in government hospitals.

However, the doctors supporting the CDM have been providing free treatment for patients whose medical records are held with government hospitals at private and free clinics, despite ongoing harassment from the regime.

On April 6, junta security forces stormed the home of orthopedic surgeon Dr Kyaw Min Soe in Yangon's Mayangone Township. The doctor, a professor at the University of Medicine, Yangon, had been involved in the CDM.

The professor's hands were tied behind his back during the arrest, a black bag was put over his head and he was dragged away from his residence by soldiers and police, according to witnesses.

Dr Kyaw Min Soe had been treating people injured in anti-regime protests. It is assumed that he was targeted because of that, but there has also been speculation that he was arrested because of his close relationship with Dr. Zaw Wai Soe, a prominent figure in the CDM who has been appointed as an acting minister of three ministries by the CRPH.

Another physician Dr. Maw Maw Oo, head of the Emergency Department of Yangon General Hospital, was reportedly arrested on April 12. The doctor had also been treating protesters injured during the junta's crackdowns on anti-regime demonstrations.

On Tuesday the military regime threatened private clinics and hospitals where doctors on their arrest list are working with having their hospital licenses revoked. In addition, the owners of those private clinics and hospitals will be prosecuted, too, the junta said.

Other government medical staff in the CDM movement face arrest if they are providing treatment at the private clinics and hospitals, the regime warned.

As of Tuesday, more than 3,000 people including elected leaders, election commissioners, anti-regime protesters, teachers, doctors, journalists, writers, artists and civilians have been arrested since the coup, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP).

More than 710 civilians including anti-regime protesters, bystanders and local residents have been killed by the junta's forces during their crackdowns, raids, arrests and random shootings.

## **The Irrawaddy**

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