



MYANMAR HUMAN RIGHTS & COVID

PROGRESSIVE VOICE

Background

176

**COVID
CASES**

6

DEATHS

10,227

TESTING

62

RECOVERED

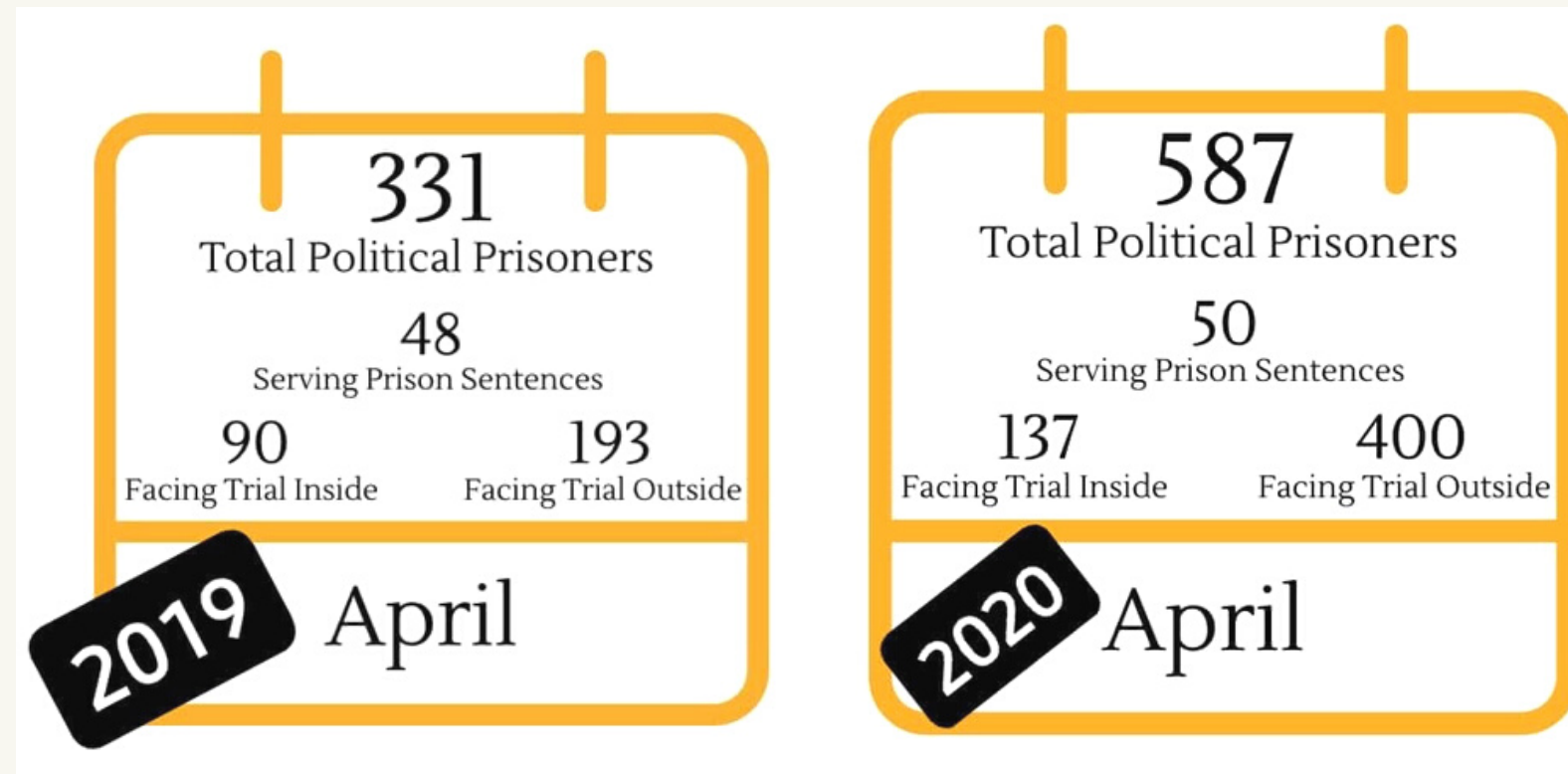
National-level Committees:

- 13 March: President forms the Central Multi-Ministerial Coordination Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment for COVID-19 (Daw Aung San Suu Kyi).
- 30 March: President forms the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Containment and Emergency Response Committee (Vice-president).

Freedom of Expression

Journalists has found that media freedom has declined in Myanmar for the third consecutive year.

- The results of a nationwide survey of journalists' opinions – 2020 "Myanmar's media not free or fair" by Free Expression Myanmar



Analysis on Freedom of Expression Situation in Four Years under the Current Regime

The following figures are part of the key findings from Athan's forthcoming report "Freedom of Expression in Four Years under the Current Regime".

Analysis I. Violations

539 Lawsuits **1051 Individuals**

There are at least 539 lawsuits, in which several laws and legal provisions that are repressive to freedom of expression were used, against no less than 1,051 individuals.

Athan - Freedom of Expression Activist Organization

athan.info@gmail.com May 2, 2020 www.athanmyanmar.org

လူထုနယ်လ်များ၏ အမြင်သဘောထားအား စုံစမ်းကောက်ယူမှုရလဒ်များ - ၂၀၂၀
The results of a nationwide survey of journalists' opinions - 2020

**လွတ်လပ်မျှတခြင်းများ
ဆုံးရှုံးနေသော
မြန်မာ့မီဒီယာ**

Myanmar's media not free or fair

Endorsed by

Logos of endorsing organizations: MLN, MMLN, Myanmar Journalists Society, Myanmar Media Center, etc.

FREE EXPRESSION MYANMAR



Frontier Myanmar

ONE DAY, THREE DECLARATIONS

March 23:

- First Two COVID cases confirmed
- Arakan Army Declared Terrorist Organization
- Ministry of Communications and Transport orders telecoms providers to block "fake news"



2020 Myitkyina News Journal

KARENNI STATE ORDER DEFAMATION MEASURES AGAINST CRITICS

“We are now in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that affects everyone,” he added. “They issued this order during a time when they should be working to protect people. This is not suitable.” Dee Dee, member of Karenni State Farmers Union.

Myanmar’s Kayah State Orders Defamation Measures Against Critics; Radio Free Asia, 5 May, 2020

KACHIN ARTISTS CHARGED FOR RAISING AWARENESS ON COVID

“Myanmar’s authorities caved to outrageous demands by Buddhist ultranationalists to prosecute three street artists for expressing their views”

Myanmar: 3 Charged for COVID-19 Street Art
Repeal ‘Insulting Religion’ Law, Support Freedom of Expression;
Human Rights Watch, 8 April, 2020



Ongoing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Rakhine and Chin States

"The Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) is systematically violating the most fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and human rights. Its conduct against the civilian population of Rakhine and Chin States may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity."

Myanmar: "Possible war crimes and crimes against humanity ongoing in Rakhine and Chin States" – UN Special Rapporteur Yanghee Lee, 29 April 2020



174
KILLED
IN 2 MONTHS

Burma Monitor



229
WOUNDED
IN 2 MONTHS

Burma Monitor



157,000
DISPLACED
SINCE 2018

Ongoing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Rakhine and Chin States

“We pay tribute to the members of the Tatmadaw who have discharged their duties with courage and dedication, and sacrificed their lives to defend the lives and property of our people from the ULA/AA terrorist group, who have been engaged in destructive activities at this time when the Government, the people and well-wishers are all engaged in endeavours for the prevention, containment and cure of COVID-19.”

Office of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, 21 April, 2020



Policies in responding to COVID are opportunities to address longstanding human rights issues; Myanmar government can ensure civic space is protected by:

- Heeding the call of the UN Secretary-General for a global ceasefire and local CSOs and EAOs call to declare a nationwide ceasefire – immediately cease all military operations and ensure the protection of civilians in conflict and conflict-affected areas.
- Allow independent international investigations and local and international media access to ethnic areas, where conflict related human rights violations are rampant.
- Fully cooperate with the UN human rights bodies and international accountability mechanisms
- Allow the IIMM access to the country and ensure victims and survivors of war crimes and crimes against humanity have access to justice, accountability and reparations
- Review the current national strategy for IDP camp closure with full and meaningful participation of IDPs and affected communities and local CSOs and adjust to ensure the strategy accordingly with affected communities' wishes and international standards.
- Ensuring the free passage of humanitarian aid, particularly to IDPs who are most vulnerable in camps without adequate health, hygiene and water facilities - Immediately lift the internet blackout in eight townships in Chin and Rakhine States and allow access to life saving information
- Release remaining political prisoners and drop all charges, immediately and unconditionally, against civil society actors, including activists, HRDs and journalists, currently filed under overbroad laws including criminal defamation provisions, the Telecommunications Law Section 66(d), and the Peaceful Assembly and Procession Law, Unlawful Association Act and Counter-terrorism law
- Amend or repeal all repressive laws
- Social media giants (particularly FB and Twitter) should increase human rights due diligence work and step up efforts to protect human rights defenders and activists and cooperate with International Accountability Mechanisms (allow access to those pages and accounts FB taken down)