

# Health Workers

## Are Not a Target



### 415+

Attacks & threats health workers and health care infrastructure in Myanmar.<sup>1</sup>



### 286+

Health workers arrested or detained<sup>2</sup>



### 128+

Health facilities attacked<sup>3</sup>



### 30+

Health workers killed<sup>4</sup>



Doctors, nurses and medical professionals are among the innocent civilians the military junta has targeted. Air raids have injured medics and doctors supporting the Civil Disobedience Movement and People's Defense Forces across Myanmar. Between 23 February 8 March 2022, there were at least 8 documented cases.<sup>5</sup>

### 600+

Medics are in hiding from military junta arrest warrants.<sup>6</sup>





*We have lost so many of our  
fundamental rights.*

—Interview with Doctor Chew\*, female medical professional who joined the  
Civil Disobedience Movement in Karenni (Kayah) State



**The Myanmar Military  
Intimidates, Targets and Kills  
Medics Providing Care to  
Protesters and soldiers of the  
People's Defense Forces.**



Thinzar Hein was a young nursing student who participated in the Spring Revolution. She was shot and killed by the junta while treating injured protesters at a demonstration in Monywa, Sagaing division on March 2021.<sup>7</sup>



**Across Myanmar, medics have  
been forced into hiding and to  
offer their services in private  
while facing immense risks to  
their safety.**

*The COVID-19 pandemic has only limited the  
amount of care vulnerable groups can access as the  
junta restricts medicine and supplies.*

# Myanmar Health Care Workers are Not a Target



## INTRODUCTION

The human rights situation in Myanmar is becoming increasingly unstable. Hundreds of thousands have been forcibly displaced. Among those trying to help injured civilians, protesters and combatants from the People's Defense Forces are medical professionals. **They too have been targeted by the Myanmar junta** who have used their weapons to destroy clinics and confiscate medicine. In the midst of a pandemic, these actions are increasingly volatile.

Doctors and nurses, who have joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) have been forced into hiding. Despite mass arrest warrants issued, many are still providing treatment and care in secret. **Their will and spirit cannot be marred by the junta.**

The war that the Myanmar military is waging in their cruel pursuit for power has destabilized the country beyond repair. The health care sector is one of many which has been obliterated. Health care services are now largely beyond reach of every day civilians who are **struggling to survive** on the bare minimum as conflict wreaks havoc across the country.

On World Health Day, the Network for Human Rights Documentation – Burma recognizes the many injustices perpetrated against health care workers by the soldiers of the Myanmar Army. **We condemn these unlawful attacks and call for their immediate protection**, as well as for those arrested and detained to be released and all charges dropped.

## METHODOLOGY

ND-Burma has produced a short visual report on the challenges being faced by health care workers in Myanmar. The findings are a combination of desk research and interviews conducted by our organization. These stories and statistics are only a glimpse into the many harsh realities being experienced on the ground by doctors and nurses who are committed to the Spring Revolution, despite the many risks they face.

# Case Studies



**Dr. Chew\***

The reason I joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) is because I do not want to serve under the junta, which unlawfully tried to seize power from democratically elected Members of Parliament on 1 February 2021.

Under the junta, the health care system is totally backwards. People shouldn't be killed for going to the hospital. Ordinary civilians can no longer access health services. It is difficult to go to the hospital or clinics, especially if there is an urgent matter at night. There are not even enough COVID-19 vaccinations for children. The shortage of medicine has had a huge impact on HIV and Tuberculosis patients. Medicine which was freely and readily available before, is now very expensive.

We have lost so many of our fundamental rights. If we go outside, the soldiers check and seize our phones. Our bank accounts have been frozen for no reason. Doctors who have joined the CDM have been targeted, and we are not allowed to treat patients; though we do so secretly in hiding. Many doctors and medical students are being charged with Section 505 of the Penal Code and are serving long sentences.

In sites where there are internally displaced people (IDP), the CDM doctors and health workers are taking care of the IDPs. Under the junta's health system, the situation will not improve. They must be removed from power as quickly as possible.



# Case Studies



**Dr. Christine Paw\***

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# Case Studies



Dr. Winn Oo\*

I am a Masters student who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). I stopped fulfilling my responsibilities at the hospital two days after the coup on 3 February 2021. The Myanmar military wants power, but they are trying to do so through illegal means. They sabotaged the democratic results of the election with weapons. I do not want to serve under this type of authority. This is why I joined the CDM.

I am committed to the CDM because Myanmar people do not want to go back to the dark ages where there are no human rights. I will stay involved in the CDM until the people's government resumes power.

There are no longer adequate health care services under the junta. We can see their mismanagement of the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. People are dying because they cannot access proper treatment or oxygen.

People are even dying at the entrances of hospitals. The leaders of the military coup are responsible for the Internet shutdowns, intercepted phone lines and rising commodity prices.

Before 1 February 2021, the health systems were trying to move forward. It was not perfect, but we were on the right track. Now, all sectors have been destroyed by the military. When they are no longer in control, we will be on the right path again.

***The leaders of the military coup are responsible for the Internet shutdowns, intercepted phone lines and rising commodity prices.***

# Case Studies



**Dr. Thin Thin\***

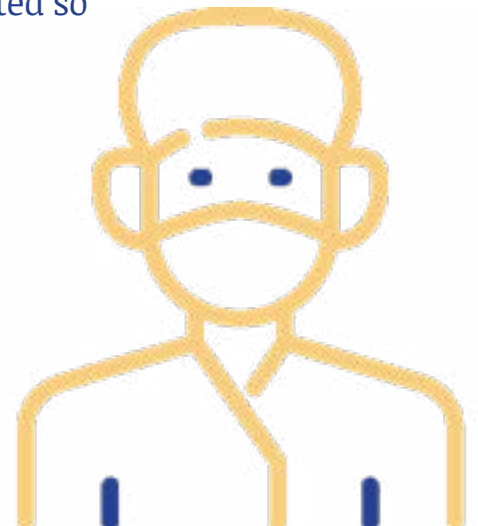
*Dr Thin Thin\* shares the cases of two doctors who were arrested by the junta:*

Among my colleagues, some have had arrest warrants issued by the junta, some have been charged under Section 505 of the Penal Code, and others have lost their jobs. We don't have a documented list of the total. The health workers affiliated with the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) are targeted. Some of my friends were arrested. Some are treating the soldiers of the People's Defense Force. Those found are targeted and arrested when informers report them.

## Case 1

One of my colleagues was arrested after there was an arrest warrant issued for their arrest. He collected donations and supported CDM employees who weren't receiving high salaries. He organized funds through social media. His name is Doctor Min Htet Pai and he joined the CDM from Myeik hospital, Tanintharyi Region.

He was evading arrest but was caught with another doctor affiliated with the CDM. We tried to advocate for their release, but their relatives were worried that they would be targeted so we did not.



## Case 2

Dr. Zaw Zaw Aung\* is a General Practitioner who runs a clinic. When the protests began, he treated injured participants in the village. One day while he was returning, he got into a motorcycle accident and was arrested because an informer told the military of his activities.

At first, his location was unknown. We collected money among our friends and paid the police for information. We found out he was at the police station. Family members have still not been allowed to see him. If they try to send food, bribes are paid to make sure he receives it. He is detained but has not been charged.

Now doctors affiliated with the CDM face many difficulties. They cannot open clinics. They have no experience with NGOs so they cannot get these types of jobs. To gain employment, they must remove their names that are not on the junta's blacklists. Doctors and health workers in Loikaw have been forced to flee after the junta raided their clinics.

**\*Names have changed to protect the identities of the individuals interviewed.**

**All interviews were conducted with ND-Burma with their full consent.**



## Endnotes

- 1 [“Our Health Workers are Working in Fear”](#): Targeted Violence against Health Care One Year after Myanmar’s Military Coup, January 2022 *Insecurity Insight* Johns Hopkins Univ.Physicians for Human Rights, 26 January 2022
- 2 Ibid
- 3 Ibid
- 4 Ibid
- 5 [Violence Against or Obstruction of Health Care in Myanmar](#), *Insecurity Insight*, 23 February – 8 March 2022
- 6 [Myanmar Junta Demands Details About Mandalay Medics and Patients](#), *The Irrawaddy*, 21 March 2022
- 7 [“Our Health Workers are Working in Fear”](#): Targeted Violence against Health Care One Year after Myanmar’s Military Coup, January 2022 *Insecurity Insight* Johns Hopkins Univ.Physicians for Human Rights, 26 January 2022



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