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UPDATE ON JOURNALISM AND MEDIA SAFETY IN MYANMAR

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HIGHLIGHTS

The second quarter of 2024 saw the arrests of three journalists and former journalists in Myanmar, where armed conflict between the military junta and resistance groups has been intensifying - and now affects 80% of the country's townships.

The pattern of heavy surveillance and suppression of media freedom, in place since the February 2021 coup, continue and has severely restricted the flow of information in the country.

Five journalists, including one who was convicted in March but whose case only became known later, were found guilty under various security-related laws, mainly the Counter-terrorism Law. These highlight a significant number of long jail sentences that have been handed down this year to journalists under security laws put in place by the State Administration Council (SAC), as the junta is called, even if the number of arrests has dropped since the early months after the coup.

A Dawei Watch journalist was sentenced to life imprisonment after being convicted under three counts of terrorism.

A reporter and a night guard from the Development Media Group were sentenced to five years in prison, also for terrorism. A journalist from The People's Voice was sentenced to three years in prison for incitement, and another from the Democratic Voice of Burma got a four-year prison term for terrorism.

A photojournalist was released after completing his prison sentence in April. Three other journalists were included in the Junta's prisoner amnesty announced for the Myanmar New Year in the same month.

As of June 2024, 57 Myanmar journalists and media professionals remained behind bars. Ninety-one percent of the detainees are men, and the remaining 9% are women. Seventy-eight percent of the detained journalists are reporters or photojournalists.

Cumulatively, since the coup, 213 journalists and news workers have been arrested, 75 convicted, and 157 released under the military regime, according to the latest media monitoring data on the repression of journalists in Myanmar.

The intensification and spread of armed conflict have also been affecting the news environment in different ways, beyond the clampdown on media by the junta. As ethnic armed organisations gain ground on the battlefield, their administrative organisations are also laying down policies that impact news coverage in the areas they control.

Two such local authorities have issued directives that cover journalists working in their regions, drawing expressions of concern from Myanmar journalists who worry that these could restrict the space for independent reporting. Myanmar journalists say that thus far, since the coup, they have been able to have access to these ethnic regions.

In April, the Interim Executive Council of Karenni State– described as a provisional government administering parts of the eastern state that anti-junta forces have seized control of since the coup - released an eight-point set of media reporting guidelines to be followed by all journalists seeking to carry out coverage in its areas. In the same month, the Karen National Union issued a similar directive that requires journalists to register and present identification documents, citing security reasons.

Two groups of Myanmar journalists formed after the coup – the Independent Press Council of Myanmar (IPCM) and the Independent Myanmar Journalists Association – say that while ensuring journalists’ safety and accountability as essential, the media directives could undermine press freedom and impede journalists’ ability to report effectively.

On 3 May, World Press Freedom Day, IPCM released a draft Code of Code for Myanmar journalists that will be further discussed in consultations with news professionals from the country.

Meantime, some Myanmar journalists in Bangladesh, displaced by conflict in western Rakhine state, reported that Bangladesh government officials have been demanding evidence of their identities and checking professional credentials.

Exiled journalists continue to live with challenges around safety and livelihood issues in Thailand, mainly Mae Sot and Chiang Mai where many of them are based. In an environment of declining funds from development donors and the difficulty of generating market-based revenues, some large media houses in exile have had to cut the salaries of staff, including senior management ones, by 20%.

ARRESTS AND DETENTION

A former chief editor at Southern Myanmar News, Myo Aung (also known as Nay Min) was arrested on 10 April in Mawlamyine. He was among the persons with Dr Aung Naing Oo, a former deputy speaker of the Mon state parliament, as he led a group that was leaving Mawlamyine to bring [food and other items to help civilians](#) displaced by [clashes](#) in Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State. Myo Aung's arrest has not been previously covered in the news.

Myanmar Now [reported](#) that junta forces accused Dr Aung Naing Oo of funding resistance forces and detained him and the persons in his group. They were held at the Mawlamyine police station for five days, and then released (including Myo Aung).

In May, a journalist working with an international media organisation with offices in Myanmar was arrested in Yangon. Sources confirmed that he was released in less than a week, although the reason for his detention was unclear. The journalist's identity, background and other details are not being made public due to the sensitive nature of the situation.

Mrat Hein Tun, a former journalist from Narinjara and Border News Agency, was arrested by junta security forces on 31 May, along with a youth leader from the Arakan National Party, in Hlaing township in Yangon. Since Hlaing is among the 61 [townships](#) under martial law - areas where the military, not civilian administrators or judges, have full control - Mrat Hein Tun's case was sent to a military tribunal after his interrogation in Yangon.

CONVICTIONS AND A MID-YEAR SUMMARY OF PRISON SENTENCES

Myo Myint Oo, a journalist from Dawei Watch, was given a life sentence after being convicted under three provisions of the [Counter-terrorism Law](#) (sections 50(j), 52 (a) and (b)). He had been arrested with fellow reporter Aung San Oo in their homes in Myeik, Tanintharyi region on 11 December 2023. Aung San Oo had been sentenced to 20 years in prison, also under the Counter-terrorism Law, in February this year.

Two staffers from Development Media Group (DMG) were convicted this quarter. Reporter Htet Aung and night watchman Soe Win Aung were [sentenced](#) to five years of prison with hard labour under Section 52(a) of the Counter-Terrorism Law on 28 June 2024. Htet Aung had been arrested on 29 October 2023 while covering an arms donation ceremony, while Soe Win Aung was detained during a raid on DMG’s office on the same day.

While detained at No. 1 Police Station, their family members were denied visitation rights. The men were sent to a junta interrogation centre at least twice and were remanded under Section 65 of the Telecommunications Law before being sent to Sittwe Prison. Subsequently, they were held for another week on the fabricated charge of stealing a motorbike. On 1 December 2023, the regime changed the charge against them to Section 52(a) of the Counter-Terrorism Law, citing a DMG news story titled [‘Calls for justice on the sixth anniversary of Muslim genocide in Arakan State’](#) that was published on 25 August 2023.

Eighteen other DMG reporters, editors, and staff face charges under the same terrorism law and are currently in hiding. In May, Thura Aung, a journalist from The People’s Voice who has been behind bars since his arrest in Taunggyi, Shan state in November 2023, was convicted for incitement under Section 505A of the Penal Code and sentenced to three years in prison.

Earlier in March, Yan Naing Soe, a former journalist with the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) who was arrested in Monywa, Sagaing region on 22 October 2023, was convicted and received a four-year prison sentence under section 52(a) of the Counter-terrorism Law. His case had not been covered in the media earlier, and came to be known in June 2024.

Combined prison sentences of journalists, January to June 2024

LENGTH OF SENTENCES	NUMBER OF CONVICTED JOURNALISTS
0-3 years	1
4-10 years	3
11-15 years	-
15-20 years	1
Life sentence	2

The table above provides a look at the sentences handed down to Myanmar journalists this year, as of June.

While most of the journalists in the year after the coup were convicted for incitement under Section 505A of the Penal Code, which carries a prison sentence of up to three years, several of the more recent convictions have been under laws that carry longer imprisonment, such as the Counter-Terrorism Law. Four of the five convictions reported in this update were under this law.

Earlier in January this year, freelance filmmaker Shin Dawei was sentenced to life imprisonment for terrorism. She is the first female journalist and filmmaker to receive a life sentence since the Myanmar military seized power in 2021.

Jail sentences are combined when journalists are convicted for violations of a number of laws, most of which are security-related offences under legislation that the Junta has amended and tightened after the 2021 coup. Monitoring data shows that in the first half of the year, three convicted journalists received combined sentences ranging from 4 to 10 years, one was sentenced to 15-20 years and two to life sentences.

While a few journalists perceived to be supportive of the Junta or accredited by the junta have been detained after the coup, they have typically been held for only a few days and released without facing severe consequences.

RELEASES

A photojournalist and three journalists were released during the second quarter of 2024.

Photojournalist Zaw Zaw (also known as Zaw Zaw Aung) from The Irrawaddy was released on the first day of April after completing his three-year jail sentence in a Mandalay prison. In August 2022, he was convicted for incitement under Section 505A of the Penal Code, some months after his arrest on 10 April of that year.

Three journalists were among the prisoners granted an amnesty that was announced by the Junta during the Myanmar New Year in April. Red Hat news reporter Htet Aung Shine and Myat Ko Oo and Paing Phyo Thu, journalists from the Assistance Association for Myanmar-based Independent Journalists (AAMIJ), were released on 17 April, the first day of the new year. Htet Aung Shine had been arrested on 28 October 2022 and the two AAMIJ reporters on 13 September 2022, and all were serving sentences after being convicted for incitement under Section 505A of the Penal Code.

Monitoring media repression in Myanmar

	April to June 2024	2024	Since the 2021 coup until March 2024)		
Journalists and news workers			Total	Women	Men
Arrested	3	3	213	28	185
In detention/ serving jail sentences	3	4	57*	4	53
Released	5	7	157	23	134
Died	-	1	7	-	7
Convicted	5	8	75	13	62
News and other licences					
News licences cancelled	-	-	15		
Printing/ publishing permits revoked	2	2	11		

**This count includes one journalist who was arrested at the end of 2023. Information about his arrest was obtained only in June 2024, so this case has now been added to the total of those in detention for 2024.*

MEDIA DIRECTIVES IN LIBERATED AREAS

After the coup, most ethnic organisations including Karenni and Karen, have provided refuge as well as a friendly environment to journalists, activists, human right defenders, people who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement and others evading arrest orders from the Junta. In these anti-junta areas, journalists and media workers have been able to continue news work with some level of safety and support.

At the same time, the spread of armed conflict across Myanmar between the Junta's military and ethnic resistance and other forces has been impacting the environment around journalism work in these liberated areas.

In the second quarter of 2024, the local authorities of two ethnic groups released media directives for journalists working in their areas.

The Interim Executive Council of Karenni State (IEC) was first to issue media reporting guidelines that it says would ensure responsible journalism on 16 April. On 21 April, the Public Relations and Information Committee of the Karen National Union (KNU) issued its directives for the media. Likewise, the KNU released similar (but stricter) regulations for journalists who come to KNU-controlled areas for news reporting.

The Interim Executive Council of Karenni State’s [‘Directive on the Media Code of Conduct No 08/2024’](#) (applicable to “all freelance journalists visiting Karenni State, including local and foreign news media”)

1. Any news media agency that travels to Karenni State to cover news must notify the Karenni State Interim Executive Council, along with a recommendation letter from the appropriate news agency.
2. If permission is granted to stay, they must notify the relevant village/ward, village tract, and township administrations.
3. To ensure the safety of media personnel, they shall travel to the location where they intend to cover the news with the approval of the necessary commanders and commanding forces.
4. When they go in the field to gather information and cover news, they will wear the uniform of the appropriate news media organisation and present their journalist ID to request access to news or information.
5. Karenni State’s Interim Executive Council will not control the media; any media outlet will have unrestricted access to information. However, it interdicts acts that impair the Karenni State’s military operations and governance and actions that support an illegitimate military junta during the revolution.
6. Because this is a revolution-affected territory, if any activities violate the media code of conduct, the Interim Executive Council of Karenni State will assemble the appropriate news media agencies and conduct a mediation/negotiation process.
7. The media must respect the culture, traditions, and customs of the ethnic groups and ethnicities in Karenni State.

“Freelance journalists, both domestic and foreign, who arrive in Karenni State will be allowed to cover news if they follow the media code of conduct,” the IEC said.

Karen National Union's [Policy and Regulations for Conducting Tasks Relating to Information](#)

Procedures that external news agencies must follow -

(A) Requesting permission to collect information

1. External media agencies which are coming inside the administrative areas of Karen National Union (KNU) must request permission from the headquarters in advance.
2. In requesting permission, the name of the news agency, the ID of the journalist, the intended place of collecting information, the content of the news must be attached.

(B) The regulations that external media agencies must adhere

1. When the news agencies undertake information inquiries, textual reporting, video recording that are relating to Karen National Union (KNU), they must base their reporting on the reliable information and the response of spokespersons.
2. The news agencies must not report the information, photographs, and videos that are related to Karen National Union (KNU), in the misleading news and the news which are out of proposed content.
3. The news agencies that are permitted by the headquarters of Karen National Union (KNU) must proceed in accordance with the permission for content, place, and duration.
4. The news agencies are not allowed to record video in the places limited by every level (village, township, district, and central) of the Karen National Union (KNU) due to security concerns, video recording prohibited areas, and the content out of the permission.
5. The news agencies must avoid activities that could impact the security, dignity and image of the Karen National Union (KNU).
6. The news agencies are responsible to show the recorded videos and photographs to the person-in-charge if it is in necessary condition.
7. If the news agencies want to use the released information, photographs, and videos that KNU has shared in public, they must ask permission from the Karen National Union (KNU). They must credit KNU.

(C) Taking action on the external news agencies

1. To apologise and describe the correction for the false news.
2. If any news agencies break the regulations listed above, KNU will take actions such as adding the responsible journalists and the news agencies in blacklist and reporting to the news media council.
3. Permission Request Form

(D) Permission Request Form

The information to fill in permission request form for collecting information in the permitted areas

1. News Content
2. Name, Journalist's ID
3. Phone Number, Email
4. Name of News Agency
5. Address of News Agency
6. Proposed areas for collecting information-
7. Duration - From..... To



In sum, the KNU [established](#) guidelines for journalists and news organisations operating under its permission, emphasising adherence to specified content, locations and duration. Agencies must base their reporting on reliable information and official responses, it said. Recording is prohibited due to security concerns in restricted areas and designated no-video zones. It also prohibits news agencies from reporting misleading information or deviating from approved content, and need to show recorded videos and photographs to the persons in charge if necessary.

Regulations for journalists' collecting of information have also been laid down in areas controlled by other ethnic revolutionary forces. In Rakhine state, local sources confirm that journalists must request permission from the United League of Arakan (ULA)/ Arakan Army (AA) to get field information. They are also required to present their journalist's identity card to these groups' authorities.

After the IEC and KNU issued their guidelines, two media groups – the Independent Myanmar Journalists Association (IMJA) and Independent Press Council Myanmar (IPCM) – expressed concern that these could pose a significant threat to the safety and freedom of journalists.

While regulations to ensure journalist safety and accountability are necessary, “there is apprehension that these directives may pose threats to the safety of journalists and the freedom of the press,” the IPCM said in a [statement](#). IPCM chairman Nan Pawt Gay told [DVB](#) that such guidelines may lead to a “delay in the flow of news”.

KNU officials have said the news policy is needed because they “bear responsibility” for journalists while they are in their areas. “Every news agency must be held accountable according to the ethical standards of their respective organizations. We publish these restrictions out of necessity. We must prioritize security,” [DVB](#) quoted KNU spokesperson Padoh Saw Taw Nee as saying.

“It is acceptable in principle that regulations are needed to ensure the safety and accountability of journalists reporting in Karenni [State]. However, we believe that the provisions outlined in the directive issued now pose a significant threat to the safety and freedom of journalists,” the IMJA said, according to DVB. It also issued a [statement](#) responding to the IEC’s news policies.

Of particular concern is the requirement for journalists to obtain permission from the IEC and KNU before reporting information gathered in their areas. There is a potential for misinterpretation of the ethical requirements stipulated by these two groups. The requirement for journalists to wear uniforms while reporting on the ground raises significant even more security concerns. In areas of intense conflict, such as Karenni State, the use of visible identification by journalists can make them targets for violence, arrests, torture and killings.

For many journalists, these restrictions could mirror aspects of the long-standing media control exercised by Myanmar’s military regime.

In an interview with [Myanmar Pressphoto Agency](#), IMJA President Kyaw Kyaw Min pointed out:

“This (KNU) statement is worse than the IEC’s. Freedom of the press has been completely controlled. They see that they (journalists) must write only the news they want.”

“The concern will be that situation may get worse, like not allowing journalists anymore”, said a local Myanmar editor. But he also said that showing ID cards does help facilitate access.

“I think it could put difficulties and burdens on those who need to travel through military-controlled areas. But for local journalists and news outlets, it is convenient for us to work with an identification card because in some areas, the authorities check and we just present our cards to help make our work smoother,” he explained. (*See full interview in the ‘Voices’ section below.*)

Moreover, the approach to handling violations of guidelines number 5 and 6 of the IEC directives, including the banning of access to information, raises serious questions about freedom of information. Ethical disputes should be resolved through consultation with media experts and news outlets rather than arbitrary decisions by administrative bodies.

Given these concerns, meaningful dialogue among the ethnic administrations and professional journalists and news is recommended. Revisiting or withdrawing the news guidelines' contentious provisions would help address journalists' concerns. As [highlighted](#) by IPCM and IMJA, there is an urgent need for dedicated organisations to safeguard journalists' lives and ensure their safety.

IEC second secretary U Banya [said](#) that he was ready to meet media groups. In an interview with Kantarawaddy Times, he added:

“ We understand that there is concern based on the current IEC's statement about the news media. Regarding that, we found criticism and attacks in various forms. We have no complaints about these criticisms. At the same time, we are ready to meet with a relevant media group or news media council in order to bring about the best possible solution. ”

On May 3, Press Freedom Day, an [IEC spokesperson said](#),

“ We understand that some of our terms have weaknesses. But how are we going to solve the problem with this system? We have thoughts on how to overcome this, whether we are a group of media or not. Either with individual media organisations, or with the representative of each media council, we are ready to meet ”

For its part, the KNU [said](#):

“We aim to make the flow of news more systematic, and the message we want to give to the people through the media is also aimed at gaining more understanding and strength. We are not banning the freedom of the news media, and as I just said, we need to be systematic in order to show the right messages to the people.”

The recognition by the two ethnic organisations that there are “**weaknesses**” in the directives suggest potential for collaborative refinement of these media policies so that they achieve a better balance in the safety of journalists and the principle of press freedom.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

On World Press Freedom Day, IPCM introduced the first draft of a comprehensive Code of Conduct for independent Myanmar journalists. This code, to be discussed in wider consultations this year, represents the self-regulation approach that the council promotes for the Myanmar news community. “We need to ensure our media and journalists are professional especially in reporting the country’s military conflict,” Nan Pawt Gay, IPCM chairperson, [said in Chiang Mai](#). To do this, they need safety and access to reliable information, she added.

In its statement for World Press Freedom Day, the National Unity Government (NUG) reaffirmed its staunch opposition to any measures that restrict freedom of the press. It [emphasised](#) the pivotal role of press freedom in upholding people’s right to information, underscoring that unimpeded access to information is fundamental for a functioning democracy and for the promotion of an informed public.

CHALLENGES IN EXILE - BANGLADESH AND THAILAND

Significant challenges around the safety and security are a persistent concern for exiled Myanmar journalists in Bangladesh, who have crossed the border to this neighbouring country in the wake of violent encounters in recent months in Rakhine state.

Reliable sources confirmed that Rakhine journalists who arrived in Bangladesh since early 2024 have been the subject of security checks by Bangladeshi government officials, who have also demanded evidence of their identity and professional credentials. These repeated investigations highlight the precarious position of exiled journalists, who often lack the necessary documentation to satisfy these demands. This situation and their inability to show documents for staying on in Bangladesh hampers their ability to live and work safely in the country.

In May 2024, Bangladeshi authorities raided the location where journalists were working and detained for a couple of days. They were questioned about their news reporting and use of Starlink internet services in relation to their work, the same sources said.

Meantime, Myanmar journalists in Thailand report continue to report challenges in safety, job security as well as financial income in an environment where external funding for the country's independent media has been falling in the years after the coup.

Most exiled journalists are based in Mae Sot and Chiang Mai. In its survey of 79 exiled women journalists in a [February 2024 report](#), Exile Hub found that 84.8% of them said they left out of concerns about their personal safety after the 2021 coup.

Given the trend of declining donor funds and the difficulty of generating revenues from the market, some large media houses in exile have had to cut the salaries of their staff, including senior management, by 20%. These cutbacks add to the pressures on many exiled journalists who are struggling to support their families. Economic challenges and the uncertainty around earning decent income from the news profession are compelling some journalists to consider returning to Myanmar, despite the inherent risks associated with such a move.

The cost of living in the border town of Mae Sot has been rising through 2023, journalists say. This is due to higher demand for housing given the continuing influx of Myanmar nationals crossing the border to Thailand and more recently, a rise in arrivals following the junta's announcement in February that it was implementing the conscription law.

Myanmar journalists' life in exile typically entails concerns about security, not least around documentation issues and worries about informants. But journalists based in Mae Sot have been worrying about a different kind of security risk recently, after an editor colleague - who naturally knows their identities, news contacts and the workings of exiled media - crossed over to the side of the military junta. Exiled journalists and their newsrooms, along with news sources, felt vulnerable and exposed to potential risk in the wake of this incident.

VOICES

‘We can freely collect news’, but there is concern

Below is a conversation with an editor who discusses the situation around reporting in Karenni state, in the wake of the IEC’s issuance of directives for journalists.

01 | How was the situation for news gathering in Karenni state before the media guidelines were released?

I would say that we can freely go and do our media work and it’s way more free [there] compared with news reporting in Junta-controlled areas. This may be due to the fact that we are a local news outlet. The experience might be different with other media outlets and journalists.

02 | Do you have to notify the Karenni authorities when doing coverage? How?

As a local news media outlet, we don’t really have to inform or register for news reporting. Even after the release of the directives, we don’t have that experience of informing [them]. We can freely collect news. Also, those who come from outside already linked up with local forces, so I don’t hear that they officially informed the IEC. So I would say there is no significant difference in news work before and after the statement was released.

03 | Have you heard anything about journalists from outside having to ask permission?

It might be a bit complicated, but I have not heard journalists officially asking for permission to stay in the Karenni region.

04 | Why do you think the IEC issued these guidelines for news coverage?

They were released after security information from local forces was leaked. Local authorities also claimed that there were some cases of people pretending to be journalists. This might be correct but no specific case was exposed, even though we asked them about it. I think this is also a consequence of the conflict between the commander-in-chief of KNDF (Karenni National Defence Forces) and a journalist that happened online.

05 | How has the requirement for journalists to get prior approval from commanders been implemented?

That is actually what we had to do even before the release of the statement. As there are many forces in the Karenni state, we must meet and introduce ourselves to them before covering news. It is also about our safety and security, as they help us reach the intended locations through the right routes and give us general geographic information about the area.

06 | The fourth point in the guidelines requires journalists to present press IDs and wear the ‘uniform’ of their news outlet. Journalists are worried about the safety implications of this. What’s your opinion?

I think it could put difficulties and burdens on those who need to travel through military-controlled areas. But for local journalists and news outlets, it is convenient for us to work with an identification card because in some areas, the authorities check and we just present our cards to help make our work smoother.

07 | Has your work been impacted by the IEC’s policy that it will ‘interdict acts that impair the Karenni State’s military operations and governance and actions that support an illegitimate military junta during the revolution’?

Generally, yes. They set restrictions on reporting about operations as they are concerned about security and prohibit disclosure of the location and names of villages. Local people also request that journalists avoid using their real names due to their fear of the military’s airstrikes. So we can only include township names, especially if the news concerns conflict and military affairs. Sometimes, they (IEC) request to omit information (about the locations and names of villages) in the news.

08 | Have you heard of cases where the IEC saw a violation of their media code and conducted a mediation/negotiation process with news outlets?

Our news outlet has not had that kind of case so far, and I’ve not heard about cases with other media outlets yet. There might be some consequences if journalists do not follow these guidelines and restrictions. So, it depends on the areas and local principles.

09 | How do you see the future of the media landscape in the Karenni state?

The concern will be that the situation may get worse, like not allowing journalists anymore, based on the trends in the conflict.

About this brief

This is an update on the challenges and threats to press freedom and media independence in Myanmar, safety issues around journalists and individuals in the news profession, and relevant events and issues in the country's news and information environment since the military coup of 1 February 2021. This brief is produced using verified information, including the tracking of incidents and discussions with journalists and media professionals, to document and provide context for a better understanding of the country's news and information situation.

Some definitions

- In the monitoring work for this series of updates, an incident is a verified event that involves action against a journalist due to his or her journalistic activities or background, such as arrest, detention, prosecution, death, torture and acts of violence, surveillance, harassment and/or threats.
- Incidents include similar actions against other individuals working in independent newsrooms and news- related operations, such as news management and other administrative, creative and support personnel who are part of the production and distribution of journalistic products. They are called “news workers” in these monitoring updates.
- Also included in incidents are actions taken against newsrooms, news organisations and their websites and online spaces, independent associations of professional journalists and press clubs. These include the cancellation of publishing licences, raids on news outlets' premises and their prosecution and the blocking of websites.
- In this series of updates, a journalist is an individual who is engaged in gathering and reporting, taking photographs or video footage, editing or publishing and presenting news that has been produced using professional and independent journalistic standards and methods.
- A journalist may be in news work as a livelihood, whether paid or not, in different types of media and platforms, and have different types of professional arrangements, such as being full-time staff, freelance, a stringer or occasional contributor.
- Included in the journalists covered by the monitoring work are individuals who have been described as being former journalists, or who have left their news organisations. This is for two reasons: first, being or having been a journalist in Myanmar by itself is a risk, and persons have been targeted or arrested because of a past affiliation with a news outlet; second, safety considerations can require an individual's description as a former journalist.

- “Journalist” in this monitoring work likewise includes citizen journalists, given that many news organisations in Myanmar work with them on a regular basis. In the Myanmar context, the term “citizen journalist” typically refers to a person who contributes news – whether in the form of raw content, including photographs or video, or full stories. He or she may or may not be paid for contributions and may or may not have had some news training.
- After the 2021 coup, news outlets began using material sent voluntarily by citizen journalists after restrictions and arrests made news-related activities dangerous for professional journalists.

