



## July 2021

Mass Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) protests have been taking place across Myanmar after the Myanmar armed forces (known as the Tatmadaw) seized control of the country on 1 February following a general election that the National League for Democracy (NLD) party won by a landslide and formed the State Administration Council (SAC) on 2 February.

The military have since declared a state of emergency that will last for at least a year. A number of countries have condemned the takeover and subsequent violent crackdown on protesters. Hundreds of people, including children, have been killed and many injured during the protests.

Over the past months violence by both state security forces and non-state armed groups has distinctly impacted teachers, schools and universities. Support for the opposition has traditionally been high among university and secondary school students and some of their teachers. This has drawn educational institutions into the conflict affecting many students including even those that may not be opposition supporters.

This document by Insecurity Insight highlights reported incidents affecting teachers, schools and universities in Myanmar between 01 February and 31 May 2021 to illustrate the impact of the conflict on education.

Threats and violence against education facilities and teachers affects the provision of education directly when education facilities are no safe places and teachers disappear or are fearful. Students participating in anti-junta protests have been equally touched by crack-down on the opposition. However, they are not the specific focus of this report. Incident monitoring is not well suited to identify students affected by conflict. Most teenagers are also students making it very difficult to identify affected students within the general population. As a consequence, the total numbers of affected students will remain vague. Educational institutions and individuals working as teachers, by contrast, are usually identified as distinct categories in event reports thus allowing for monitoring and reporting on specific events and changing trends on how schools, universities and teachers are affected by the conflict.

The incidents are based on the dataset [01 February and 31 May 2021 Attacks on Education in Myanmar Data](#), available on the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX).

## REPORTED INCIDENTS AND MOST COMMONLY REPORTED CONCERNS

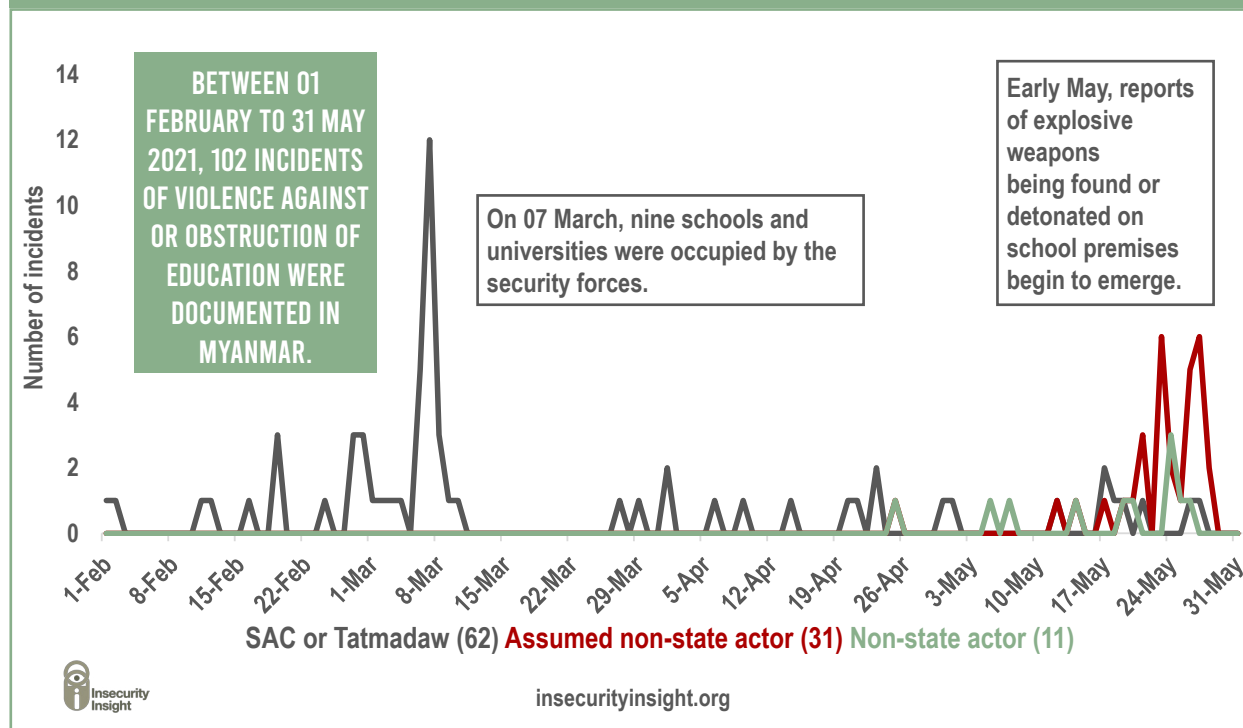
<b>102</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>
REPORTED INCIDENTS	TEACHERS ARRESTED	TEACHERS INJURED	INCIDENTS WHERE EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS WERE FOUND OR DETONATED ON SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY PREMISES	INCIDENTS OF SCHOOLS/ UNIVERSITIES BEING OCCUPIED FOR MILITARY USE

Source: [01 February and 31 May 2021 Attacks on Education in Myanmar Data](#)

## SUMMARY

- Monitoring by Insecurity Insight identified 102 incidents of violence against or obstruction of education in Myanmar between 1 February and 31 May 2021.
- Schools and universities were occupied, raided and targeted with explosive weapons.
- School teachers and university staff were arrested and sometimes beaten.
- Students have also reportedly been arrested and beaten but there is no information on the numbers affected.
- Reported incidents peaked on 7 March, when at least nine universities were occupied by Myanmar security forces.
- From the end of May the number of incidents increased again mainly because explosive devices were either detonated or found in schools, where security forces defused them.
- During the period between February and April 2021, 53 incidents were attributed to Tatmadaw soldiers or associated police forces. A third of these incidents took place in Mandalay and Yangon city, where the CDM protests originated.
- Since May 37 incidents have been attributed to unidentified groups. Over half of these incidents took place in Magway, Shan and Yangon city.

### PERPETRATORS OF REPORTED INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST OR OBSTRUCTION OF EDUCATION IN MYANMAR, 1 FEBRUARY-31 MAY 2021

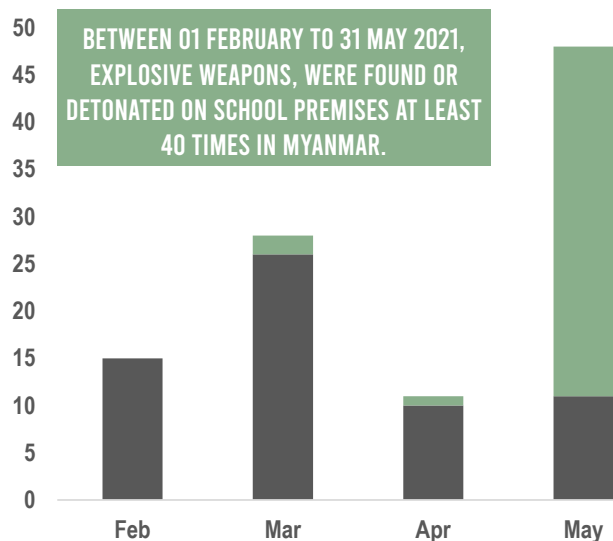


DOWNLOAD DATASET ON HDX

## SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

- Schools and universities were raided and used for military purposes on at least 15 occasions and were frequently reported in Magway and Mandalay.<sup>1</sup>
- Myanmar military forces used live rounds, stun grenades and rubber bullets during these occupations.
- On the night of 7 March at least nine schools and universities were occupied throughout the country.
- Occupations were frequently reported in March and April. Since May there have been reports of unidentified groups directly emplacing explosive weapons<sup>2</sup> on school premises posing a serious risk to children and teachers. In some cases, military personnel were stationed at the school suggesting they were the target and not the school or university.
- On 1 June 2021 the military ordered all schools to reopen. This has been met with resistance from parents who are reluctant to send their children to school over fears for their safety. The military has threatened some parents with arrest and torture if they do not return their children to school.

### EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS FOUND OR DETONATED ON SCHOOL PREMISES, FEBRUARY-MAY 2021



Incidents where explosive weapons were found or detonated on school premises: 40

Other incidents affecting schools or universities not involving explosive weapons: 62

- Directly emplaced explosive weapons, including homemade or crude bombs planted by unidentified groups were found or detonated on school premises at least 40 times.
- Incidents were most frequent in Magway, Shan and Yangon (seven incidents each).
- The Taunggyi People Defense Force claimed responsibility for a bombing at Taunggyi Technological University in Shan state on 14 May 2021.
- Myanmar military air-launched explosive weapons damaged two schools in Karen and Kayin state.
- During one incident on 27 March 2021, a high school in Karen state came under aerial bombing and sprayed with bullets by the military, causing severe damages to classrooms and learning materials.



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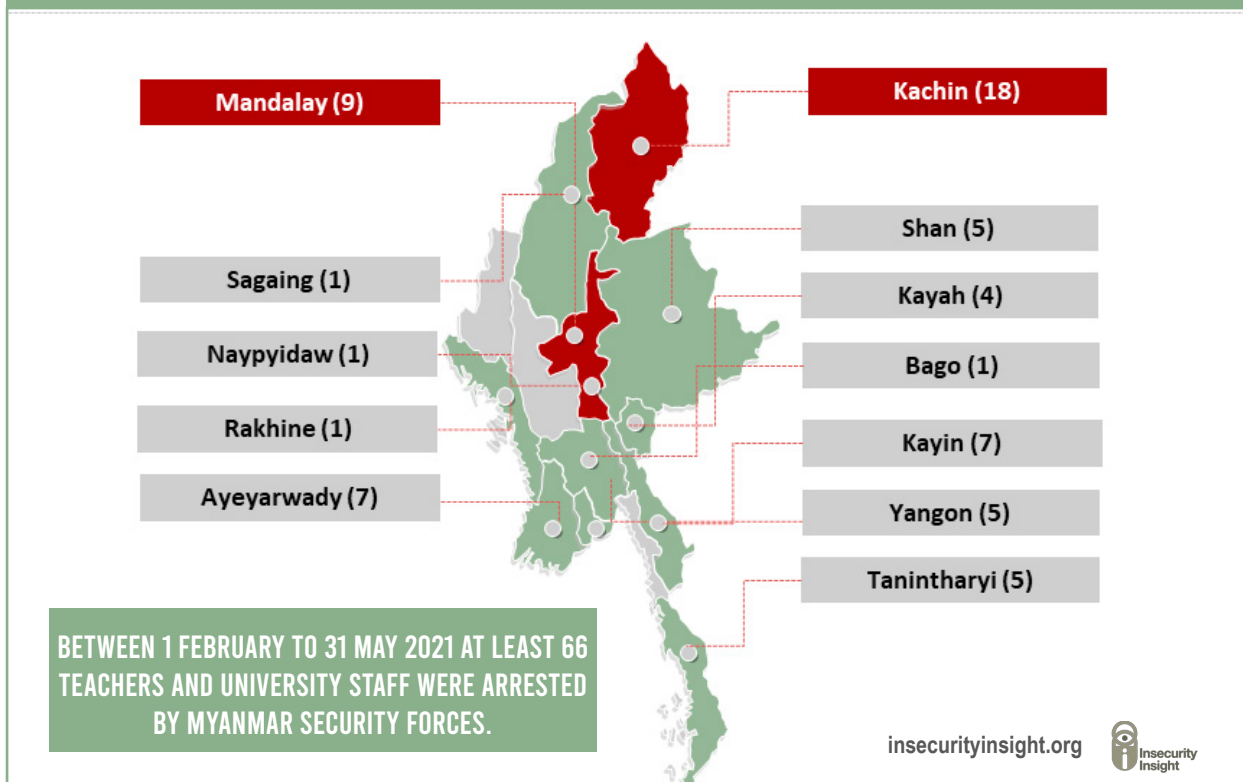
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## TEACHERS AND UNIVERSITY STAFF

- Between 1 February to 31 May 2021 at least 66 teachers and university staff were arrested by Myanmar security forces. Over a third of those reported to have been arrested were assaulted with batons, baseball bats, rubber balls, rifle butts and slingshot iron balls.
- A high number of arrests took place in Kachin (18 arrested), followed by Mandalay (nine).
- Teachers were arrested for participating in the CDM protests, for refusing to return to work or because a relative was a member of the NLD.
- Teachers have been forced into hiding for fear of being arrested or after having arrest warrants issued against them. In some cases their family members were arrested instead.
- Around 125,900 school teachers and 19,500 university staff have been suspended for joining the CDM. Myanmar had 430,000 school teachers according to the most recent data from two years ago.
- The absence of teachers will profoundly impact the provision of education.

### TEACHERS ARRESTED BETWEEN 11 FEBRUARY AND 11 MAY 2021, BY LOCATION



## THE INCIDENTS DOCUMENTED HERE HIGHLIGHT CONCERNS OVER:

- **Military use of educational institutions**
- **Placing and detonation of improvised explosive devices in schools by non-state actors**
- **Arrests of and violence against teachers**

Such acts endanger the lives and safety of students and teachers and imperil students' right to education. During times of upheaval access to schooling can provide important protection for students. Safe schools provide life-saving information, mitigate the psycho-social impact of conflict and can protect children from violence. But perhaps more importantly, access to a safe space to learn offers a sense of normalcy, routine and calm amid the chaos of conflict.

- Attacks on students, teachers, schools and universities, as well as the military use of educational infrastructure, have received increased attention in recent years. In 2015 the governments of Norway and Argentina led a process among United Nations member states to develop the **Safe Schools Declaration**, which is the only international agreement dedicated to the protection of education in armed conflict.
- The Declaration is an intergovernmental political agreement that outlines a set of commitments to strengthen the protection of education from attack and restrict the use of schools and universities for military purposes. It seeks to ensure the continuity of safe education during armed conflict. Since it was opened for endorsement at the First International Conference on Safe Schools in Oslo, Norway, in 2015, 109 states have signed on.

For further information on the Safe Schools Declarations, please see: [www.ssd.protectingeducation.org](http://www.ssd.protectingeducation.org)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### The State Administration Council (SAC) and Tatmadaw (take out the opposition groups):

- **Adhere to International Law:** All parties to an armed conflict should take all feasible precautions to protect the civilian population and civilian objects, including schools and universities, against the effects of attacks, and to respect and ensure students' security and right to education under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. At a minimum, this means prohibiting the military use of schools and universities while they continue to be used as education institutions.

### Non-state actors within Myanmar

- Ensure students' security and right to education.
- Avoid the use of schools or premises primarily used by children for military purposes.
- Sign up and adhere to the Deed of Commitment under Geneva Call for the **Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict**.

### Monitor and Report:

- Local organisations, states, and relevant international agencies and mechanisms should give greater attention to monitoring and reporting on attacks on education and the military use of schools and education institutions, including higher education campuses, whenever it occurs.

## Donors

- Prioritise and fund measures to prevent, mitigate, and respond to attacks on education such as the development of risk assessments, education continuity plans, and comprehensive safety and security plans, within humanitarian response and development plans and programs;
- Strengthen and support the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration to better protect the civilian character of schools and universities and cease attacks and threats of attacks against students, teachers, and educational facilities in the region, including by implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict;

For further information, please see [www.protectingeducation.org](http://www.protectingeducation.org)

## DATA COLLECTION

- This document is published by Insecurity Insight. It is prepared from information compiled by Insecurity Insight available in local, national, and international news outlets, online databases, and social media reports. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) contributed research for this report.
- The incidents reported are neither a complete nor a representative list of all incidents. Most incidents have not been independently verified and have not undergone verification by Insecurity Insight. All decisions made on the basis of or in light of such information remain the responsibility of the organisations making such decisions. Data collection is ongoing and data may change as more information is made available.

To share further incidents or report additional information or corrections, please contact: [info@insecurityinsight.org](mailto:info@insecurityinsight.org)

## YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN

- Myanmar [Country Page](#).
- Education in Danger Monthly News Brief: [June 2021](#).
- Myanmar [Situation Report](#): Analysis, prediction and mitigations for aid organisations.
- Myanmar [Data](#). Available on the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX).
- Violence Against Health Care in Myanmar: [11 February and 11 May 2021](#).
- Violence Against or the Obstruction of Health Care in Myanmar in [2020](#).

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Insecurity Insight. 2021. 'Violence Against or Obstruction of Education in Myanmar v. August 2021.' Geneva, Switzerland: Insecurity Insight. <https://bit.ly/MyanmarEducationJuly2021>

<sup>1</sup> UNICEF reported that 82 schools and universities were used for military purposes by the end of April 2021. Further information, including who the perpetrators were, the weapons used and the location of the incidents, is not available.

<sup>2</sup> Directly emplaced explosive weapons include: Anti-personnel mine, anti-vehicle mine, car bomb, non-specified IED, roadside bomb.