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FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2023

Myanmar

9

NOT FREE

/100

<u>Political Rights</u>	0/40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	9/60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

9/100

Not Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. [See the methodology.](#)

Overview

Myanmar's already-stalled democratic transition was derailed in February 2021, when the military seized control of the government, arresting dozens of senior civilian officials and preventing the newly elected parliament from convening. The National League for Democracy (NLD), which won a sweeping victory in the November 2020 elections, has led a broad-based opposition to the takeover, organizing a country-wide Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) as well as an armed resistance,



On Myanmar

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and serving as the backbone of a self-declared National Unity Government (NUG), which exercises partial or effective control over a growing swathe of territory outside major population centers. Protesters, journalists, activists, and ordinary people risk criminal charges, detention, and lethal violence for voicing dissent against the military. Millions of people remain displaced or have been newly displaced by violence, including hundreds of thousands of Rohingya, a mostly Muslim ethnic minority.

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Country Facts

Population

54,180,000

Region

Asia-Pacific

Global Freedom Score

8/100 **Not Free**

Internet Freedom Score

10/100
Not Free

In Other Reports

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Other Years

2024

Key Developments in 2022

- Military authorities employed an increasingly brutal range of tactics to quash resistance activities, including sentencing individuals to lengthy prison terms and executing several influential voices of dissent. By the end of the year, almost 16,800 people had been arrested, almost 2,700 had been killed by military forces, and more than 1,900 people had been sentenced since the coup.
- In August, army chief, coup leader, and prime minister of the military government Min Aung Hlaing extended the state of emergency for a further six months. The military had previously promised to hold new elections by August 2023, but Min Aung Hlaing also delayed those polls indefinitely, until the country was “stable and peaceful.”
- The army escalated attacks (including a large number of aerial strikes) both in the ethnic minority areas such as Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine, Kayah, and Shan States, as well as in the traditionally Bamar heartland of Sagaing and Magwe regions. On October 23 alone, at least 80 people were killed by a series of airstrikes on a village in Kachin State. Several hundred thousand additional civilians were newly displaced during the year.
- Aung San Suu Kyi, who was arrested by the military during the coup, was convicted in multiple trials on 19 different charges throughout the year. She was sentenced to a total of 33 years imprisonment by December. The

evidence presented against Suu Kyi has been spurious, and she has appealed her convictions.

Political Rights

A. Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?	0/4
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The constitutional order created in 2008 by the military was overturned by a February 2021 coup, which installed a military junta led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, head of the armed forces. President Win Myint and State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, de facto leader of the NLD, have remained in detention since the early hours of the coup and have both been convicted on far-reaching and spurious charges ranging from incitement against the military to violating pandemic restrictions, among others. By December 2022, Suu Kyi had been sentenced to 33 years in prison on a total of 19 different charges, designed to keep her detained indefinitely. Suu Kyi had previously been held by the former military junta under house arrest during three separate periods for a total of 15 years for her prodemocracy views.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?	0/4
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The bicameral Assembly of the Union consists of the 440-seat lower House of Representatives and the 224-seat upper House of Nationalities. Representatives serve five-year terms. A quarter

of the seats in both houses are reserved for the military and are filled through appointment by the head of the armed forces. The remainder are filled through direct elections in a first-past-the-post system.

Though the 2020 parliamentary elections were recognized as credible, they featured significant flaws, including the exclusion of many Muslim candidates and the disenfranchisement of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya; the cancelation by the Union Election Commission (UEC) of voting in conflict-affected districts; limited access of opposition parties to state-run media during the campaign period; and pandemic-related restrictions on in-person campaigning. The NLD won a convincing majority, but the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) refused to accept the election results, alleging widespread fraud.

In February 2021, hours before the new representatives were to be seated, the military seized control of the government, imposing a state of emergency, dissolving the parliament, and detaining or placing under house arrest hundreds of elected officials. The military's plans for future elections remain in doubt.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?	0 / 4
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Various features of the electoral framework undermined the democratic nature of recent elections before the 2021 coup. These include the military's role in presidential nominations and appointments to both chambers of parliament, the UEC's lack of independence, as well as rigid citizenship laws and excessive residency requirements that prevented large numbers of people from voting or standing for office.

After seizing power in February 2021, military leadership justified

their rejection of the 2020 elections by citing the USDP's fraud allegations, flaws in electoral administration, and the NLD's "failure" to address alleged voter list discrepancies. The military regime also dissolved the UEC before reinstating the body with all new members, later charging a number of former UEC commissioners with electoral fraud. In October 2021, the reconstituted UEC announced plans to replace the current first-past-the-post system with a proportional representation system prior to the country's next elections, a move that was endorsed by Min Aung Hlaing in January 2022. Opposition parties claim the plan is an attempt to keep the military in power. Though the military regime previously pledged to hold new elections in August 2023, in an August 2022 speech extending the country's state of emergency, Min Aung Hlaing said that elections can only be held when Myanmar is "stable and peaceful," raising further doubts over the military's commitments to swiftly hold elections.

B. Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?	1/4
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Party competition in the lead-up to the 2020 elections was robust, with 7,000 candidates from more than 90 parties participating, including the NLD, the USDP, and regionally based ethnic parties. Political parties continued to function after the February 2021 coup, though prominent political leaders have been arrested by the military regime, and some have been charged with and convicted of spurious criminal offenses.

The constitution contains a requirement that political parties be loyal to the state, which carries the potential for abuse. Laws allow penalties, including deregistration, for political parties that accept support from foreign governments or religious bodies, or that are deemed to have abused religion for political purposes or disrespected the constitution.

B2 0-4 pts

<p>Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?</p>	<p>1 / 4</p>
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The military's constitutional prerogatives, as well as its close ties to the USDP, limit the degree to which any other force can secure control over the executive or the legislature through elections. The military may have decided to stage a coup in February 2021 because the NLD won a convincing majority in the November 2020 elections.

Min Aung Hlaing's August 2022 announcement that elections would be delayed beyond the originally planned August 2023 dates until the country is "peaceful," a condition critics say is designed to stall any transfer of power back to civilian rule. However, the NUG and its ethnic allies, despite most of their being in exile or hiding, continued to gain strength as an alternative power base.

B3 0-4 pts

<p>Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?</p>	<p>0 / 4</p>
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The people's choice in the November 2020 elections—the NLD—was not honored by the military, which refused to accept the election results, and seized control of the government in February 2021. Since the coup, the junta has consistently used harsh tactics to contain the widespread and ongoing protests

against military rule and secure its takeover—including the arrest and sentencing of political leaders and civilian protestors, excessive violence and mass killings, and custodial abuse. In July 2022, the NLD’s Human Rights Record Group estimated that nearly 50 NLD members (including 3 former legislators) had been killed, and more than 900 NLD lawmakers had been arrested, of whom 109 remained in custody at the end of 2022.

B4 0-4 pts

<p>Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?</p>	<p>1/4</p>
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Members of Myanmar’s Buddhist and ethnic Bamar majority hold most senior leadership positions in the country, including in major national political parties, the pre-2021 civilian government, and the military. Members of ethnic and religious minority groups face restrictions on their political rights and electoral opportunities, including through discriminatory citizenship, residency, and party registration laws.

The 1982 Citizenship Law does not allow for anyone who entered the country or is descended from someone who entered the country after 1948 to become a full citizen with political rights. Naturalization of spouses is only allowed if the spouse holds a Foreigner’s Registration Certificate from before the law’s enactment. The majority of the mainly Muslim Rohingya were rendered stateless by the 1982 Citizenship Law, which also dictates that only those who are descended from ethnic groups deemed to be native to the country prior to 1823 are considered full citizens. A 2015 presidential decree revoked the temporary identification cards that had allowed Rohingya to vote, and most of the 600,000 Rohingya remaining in Myanmar were unable to vote in the 2020 elections.

Women remain underrepresented in the government and civil service, due largely to societal biases that discourage their

political participation. Notwithstanding the prominence of Aung San Suu Kyi, whose father led Myanmar's independence struggle, few women have achieved ministerial-level appointments.

The NUG and the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), a group of elected officials unseated by the military regime that claims to represent a legitimate parliament and perform the duties of an elected government, have made a concerted effort to include members of Myanmar's various ethnic groups in their leadership structures and to address the goals and demands of these constituencies. They have also formed alliances with many of the country's ethnic armed groups in opposition to military rule.

C. Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?	0 / 4
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In February 2021, the military prevented newly elected parliamentary representatives from taking office, utilizing a provision in the 2008 constitution that allows the military to dissolve the civilian government and rule directly if the president declares a state of emergency. The state of emergency was renewed in August 2022 for a further six months.

The junta's takeover of the state apparatus has led to a breakdown in governance, including education, healthcare, local administration, and tax collection. Effective control over territory also remained elusive, and slipped further out of the military's grasp in 2022. A detailed briefing paper produced in

September 2022 by the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar, an independent group of international experts supporting human rights in Myanmar in response to the 2021 coup, estimated that the junta exercised full stable control in only 22 percent of townships in the country.

In April 2021, the CRPH established the NUG, a resistance government largely made up of ousted NLD politicians. Since then, the NUG has operated as an alternate power structure with influence or effective control over a growing swathe of the country, though the Special Advisory Council estimated they controlled approximately 2 percent of townships. Shortly after the NUG was formed, Myanmar's military leadership classified the NUG, its armed People's Defense Forces (PDFs), and the CRPH as terrorist organizations, which could result in prosecution and detention for anyone who communicates with the groups' members. In partnership with ethnic organizations and newer local-level structures, it engaged in a broader range of service delivery and revenue collection in 2022, though financial and logistical limitations remain.

C2 0-4 pts

<p>Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?</p>	<p>1/4</p>
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Despite government initiatives aimed at curbing official corruption, it remains rampant at both the national and local levels. An Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), established in 2014, had brought several cases against high-ranking officials. Following the 2021 coup, the military brought multiple illegitimate corruption charges against several high profile leaders, including former president Win Myint. Aung San Suu Kyi, who was arrested by the military during the coup, was convicted on a range of charges, including corruption, in multiple trials in 2022. She was sentenced to a total of 33 years imprisonment by December. The evidence presented against Suu Kyi has been spurious, and she has denied the charges and

asked her lawyers to appeal her convictions.

Privatization of state-owned companies and other economic reforms in recent years have allegedly benefited family members and associates of military and government officials. After the February 2021 coup, the children of high-ranking military leaders allegedly attempted to use their connections to secure lucrative supply contracts and other kickbacks.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?	0/4
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After the Tatmadaw took power in 2021, the already limited transparency mechanisms of the previous government were dismantled; oversight by civil society groups and the media has been completely suppressed under military rule.

The military also owns an extensive network of “crony companies” whose revenues enable it to avoid accountability and public oversight and engage in human rights violations with impunity, according to a United Nations report released in 2019.

Add Q

Is the government or occupying power deliberately changing the ethnic composition of a country or territory so as to destroy a culture or tip the political balance in favor of another group?	-4
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The central authorities have long used violence, displacement, and other tactics to alter the demographics of states with ethnic unrest or insurgencies. The Rohingya in Rakhine State have faced particularly harsh restrictions for decades, including limits on family size and the ability and right to marry, the denial

of legal status and social services, and disenfranchisement and loss of citizenship. Human rights experts and the United Nations have labeled the abuses against the Rohingya as crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, and many critics—including the US government in March 2022—have argued that they constitute either genocide or a precursor to genocide. The February 2021 coup and subsequent closure of the country has limited international observers' access to Myanmar, further frustrating efforts to hold perpetrators accountable.

In 2017, repression against the Rohingya escalated; military operations across the northern part of the state led to reports of torture, rape, indiscriminate killings, and the burning of villages, worsening already dire humanitarian conditions and causing 740,000 Rohingya refugees to join the 200,000 others already in Bangladesh. Suu Kyi has not explicitly acknowledged or condemned such organized official violence against Rohingya civilians; there has been little meaningful accountability for the atrocities.

Civil Liberties

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media?	1/4
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Following the coup, the military seized control of state-owned broadcast media, took private broadcasters off the air, and severely restricted internet access, including access to social media platforms and news outlets. Licenses for several independent media organizations were rescinded in March 2021. However, several independent media outlets continued to

provide news coverage, operating in hiding and in exile.

Since the February 2021 coup, dozens of journalists have been forced to flee following the military's crackdown on press freedoms, and most independent outlets now operate underground or from exile. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), at least 42 journalists were behind bars in Myanmar as of December 2022, the third-highest number of imprisoned journalists in the world, after Iran and China. Several journalists have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms, including Japanese journalist Toru Kubota, who was released in November 2022 following intervention from Japanese officials.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?

1 / 4

The constitution provides for freedom of religion. It distinguishes Buddhism as the majority religion, but also recognizes Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and animism. The government occasionally interferes with religious assemblies and attempts to control the Buddhist clergy. Authorities discriminate against minority religious groups—particularly Muslims—in practice, refusing them permission to hold gatherings and restricting educational activities, proselytization, and construction and repair of houses of worship.

Muslims face systematic discrimination in obtaining identity cards, and “Muslim-free” villages have been established with the complicity of the authorities, who have at times amplified hate speech. The officially illegal Buddha Dhamma Parahita Foundation, formerly known as Ma Ba Tha, urges boycotts against Muslim-run businesses and disseminates anti-Muslim propaganda.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?

0 / 4

Political activity on university campuses is restricted, and universities are not autonomous. Student unions—which have historically been important advocates for human rights—are discouraged, have no formal registration mechanisms, and are viewed with suspicion by authorities.

University students and staff played a key role in antimilitary protests and strikes following the February 2021 coup; in response, the military stormed dozens of universities, seizing control of the campuses and detaining or suspending thousands of students and faculty members. Arrests of students and teachers continued in 2022; by July, at least 24 teachers had been killed and more than 200 detained since the start of the coup, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP). The NUG estimated that approximately 200,000 out of a total of 450,000 teachers had joined the CDM at some point following the coup. While some returned to work in regime-administered schools out of necessity, others have turned to teaching children in areas outside of the junta's control, where a robust network of CDM schools has been set up.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?

1 / 4

Private discussion and personal expression—already constrained by state surveillance and laws inhibiting online speech—became more difficult following the 2021 coup. Upon taking power, the regime enacted sweeping revisions of existing legal code, removing several key human rights protections against arbitrary surveillance and banning online circumvention

tools to evade surveillance.

The regime's legal reforms also severely curtailed freedom of expression. Hundreds of people were arrested and prosecuted under the revised legal code, usually for comments made online; hundreds of others have been forced into hiding or exile to avoid arrest; and many have been killed in protests, targeted by attack, or killed by military execution. In July 2022 the regime executed four pro-democracy activists, including writer-activist Ko Jimmy and singer and former lawmaker Phyo Zeyar Thaw, after convicting them in a sham trial by military tribunal. Capital punishment had not been used in decades.

E. Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly?	0 / 4
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Unauthorized demonstrations are punishable with up to six months in prison under the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law; a variety of other vaguely defined violations can draw lesser penalties. Within a week of taking power, the military banned all gatherings of more than five people, imposed a strict curfew, and began using lethal and indiscriminate force against peaceful protesters. Widespread internet restrictions also hindered the CDM's organization of protests. Military violence in response to sustained and widespread protests continued throughout 2022, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of protesters and the arrest of thousands more.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?	1/4
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The ability of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to engage in human rights– and governance-related work significantly decreased after the coup. NGO staff face arrest and prosecution, many prominent activists have been forced into hiding or exile, and registration and banking restrictions increased; as a result, many NGOs effectively disbanded. Despite such limitations, several organizations and individuals (many of whom are operating either in hiding or in exile) continued to monitor and document human rights abuses and engage in advocacy with international stakeholders. The Organization Registration Law, introduced in October 2022, tightened registration and operating requirements and provided for severe penalties for operating outside these rules, making it increasingly difficult for international NGOs to engage in development or humanitarian aid work.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?	1/4
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In 2021, unions took on a lead role in organizing antimilitary protests and strikes immediately following the coup; in response, military authorities declared most unions illegal, conducted violent raids and mass arrests in areas populated by striking union workers, and threatened dozens of key leaders with arrest, causing many to flee. By June 2021, thousands of civil servants and private sector employees had been fired for their participation in the widespread CDM. In 2022, many workers were stuck in exploitative working conditions or subject to unjust termination due to the military's ban of most unions.

F. Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?	0 / 4
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The judiciary is not independent. Before the military coup, the courts generally adjudicated cases in accordance with the government's interests, particularly in major cases with political implications. Following the coup, the military regime forcibly took complete control of Myanmar's judicial system, which ruled in their favor in several politically motivated cases in 2022.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?	0 / 4
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Following the 2021 coup, revisions to the criminal code and the imposition of a state of emergency (which has been extended several times) have allowed the regime to disregard existing safeguards against arbitrary arrest and detention. In March 2021, the army enabled military tribunals to impose death sentences on civilians; by December 2022, closed-door tribunals had sentenced more than 130 people to death, according to the UN Human Rights Office. Four executions were carried out in July 2022.

The number of political prisoners rose dramatically in 2021; most were arrested while protesting, although dozens of prominent political leaders and some cultural figures were specifically targeted. According to the AAPP, 16,704 individuals had been arrested (of whom around 13,200 were still detained) and over 1,900 had received prison sentences by the end of 2022.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and	0 / 4
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insurgencies?	
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The military coup resulted in a sharp increase in civilian exposure to violence, armed conflict, and the illegitimate use of force. Indiscriminate shelling and aerial attacks, the destruction of villages, extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, torture, rape, and other abuses by the military continued to escalate during 2022. On October 23 alone, at least 80 people were killed by a series of airstrikes on a village in Kachin State.

Long-standing armed conflicts between ethnic rebel groups and the central government continued in 2022 in Shan, Kachin, Kayin, Chin, Kayah, and Rakhine States. Even ethnically Bamar areas, particularly the Sagaing and Magwe Regions and major urban centers including Yangon and Mandalay, experienced high levels of violent conflict between junta forces and antimilitary protesters. Lethal and indiscriminate military attacks on peaceful protesters took place across the country; in response, civilian youth across the country formed armed People's Defense Forces (PDFs) that carried out guerilla attacks against military targets. After the NUG declared a "people's war" against the military in September 2021, it engaged in efforts to with the PDFs and ethnic rebel groups.

The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) increased throughout the year, with those displaced by earlier rounds of fighting in ethnic areas joined by those fleeing the newly installed military regime. By December 2022, the UN estimated that an additional 1.1 million people had been displaced since February 2021, bringing the total number of IDPs to 1.5 million.

Prisons in Myanmar are severely overcrowded, and conditions for inmates are extremely unsanitary, sometimes life-threateningly so. Following the coup, the numbers of detainees rapidly increased; grave abuses that had been prevalent during previous periods of military rule were regularly reported. Authorities have reportedly taken few measures to curb the

spread of COVID-19 among prison populations.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?	0 / 4
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Some of the country's worst human rights abuses, commonly committed by federal military troops, are against ethnic and religious minority populations. The government's failure to protect victims, conduct investigations, and punish perpetrators is well documented. The post-coup period has been characterized by further deterioration in the country's human rights situation and a lack of accountability for offenders.

Ethnic minority groups such as the Shan, Mon, Chin, Karen, and Kachin, as well as non-Rohingya Muslims, also face some societal discrimination, while the ethnic Bamar, Buddhist majority retains a privileged position.

In addition to conflict-related violence, women are subject to discrimination in employment, against which there are no explicit legal protections. Several laws create a hostile environment for LGBT+ residents. Same-sex sexual activity is criminalized, and police reportedly harass, extort, and physically and sexually abuse LGBT+ people.

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?	1 / 4
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Following the 2021 coup, movement has been increasingly

restricted across the country. The military erected roadblocks and checkpoints; enforced exit controls, curfews, and residency rules for private dwellings that require reporting overnight guests; and engaged in violent raids of neighborhoods and villages. Some high-profile dissidents have been arrested as they attempted to leave Myanmar by air, while thousands more have fled to neighboring countries by land despite the dangers posed by military forces. Restrictions were further tightened by an April 2022 decree requiring a national registration card to travel or stay somewhere outside one's home.

Additionally, Myanmar's large population of stateless residents remain subject to significant restrictions on their movement, particularly the 600,000 Rohingya who remain in Rakhine State and are confined to designated camps and villages; those who attempt to travel outside these areas are regularly detained.

G2 0-4 pts

<p>Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?</p>	<p>1/4</p>
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Disputes over land-grabbing and business projects that violate human rights are common. Myanmar's property-transfer laws prohibit transfers to or from a foreigner except in certain state-approved cases of inheritance and require registration of foreign-owned property. Stateless residents, including the Rohingya, cannot legally buy or sell property or set up a business.

Instances of forced eviction and displacement, confiscation, lack of sufficient compensation, and direct violence against landholders by state security officials abound. Court cases are frequently brought against farmers for trespassing on land that was taken from them. The resumption of armed hostilities following the coup involved military attacks and arbitrary destruction of property in 2022, including the leveling of entire

villages.

Rohingya land and property are consistently razed, confiscated, appropriated, or built on, often with the direct involvement of the military, and sometimes under the guise of development assistance.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?	1/4
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Legal restrictions require Buddhist women submit an application to marry non-Buddhist men. Laws that might protect women from domestic abuse and rape are weak and poorly enforced, and such violence is an acute and persistent problem. The army has a record of using rape as a weapon of war against ethnic minority women, and security personnel typically enjoy impunity for sexual violence. Following the 2021 coup, numerous instances of gender-based violence were reported by detainees.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?	1/4
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Human trafficking, forced labor, child labor, and the recruitment of child soldiers are serious problems in Myanmar. Child soldiers are enlisted by the military and ethnic rebel groups, which also recruit civilians for forced labor. Various commercial and other interests continue to use forced labor despite a formal ban on the practice. Trafficking victims include women and girls subjected to forced sex work and domestic servitude, as well as women who are sold as brides to men in China—an expanding practice in some ethnic minority states. People displaced by ongoing conflicts are especially vulnerable, and such forms of

sexual and labor exploitation increased following the coup. In July 2022, the World Bank estimated that the coup had caused 40 percent of the country's population to live in poverty, wiping out the previous decade's improvements in economic growth and poverty reduction amid worsening economic inequality.

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