

Individuals repeatedly beaten by police and military in Yangon and Mandalay

Report 3: Police and Military Harassment and Mistreatment of Individuals following the Coup

REPORT BY MYANMAR WITNESS, 7 March 2023

Key Event Details

- **Location of Incident:**
 - Kyauktada township (ကျောက်တံတား), Yangon city (ရန်ကုန်) [16.776670, 96.163171].
 - Chanayethazan township (ချမ်းအေးသာဇံ), Mandalay (မန္တလေး), [21.989303, 96.071360].
- **Date/Time of Incident:**
 - 7 March 2021
- **Alleged Perpetrator(s) and/or Involvement:**
 - Myanmar Police and military personnel
 - Yangon Division, Operation Command Headquarters No. 4
- **Summary of Investigation:**
 - Myanmar Witness has verified footage of events in both Yangon and Mandalay which show individuals being beaten repeatedly by men wearing police and military uniforms.
 - At the incident in Yangon, insignia worn by the military indicates that they were from the Yangon Division of Operation Command Headquarters No.4.
 - At the incident in Mandalay, Myanmar Witness has verified footage of a person being beaten, kicked, and dragged across the road by several men wearing police and military uniforms, including uniforms belonging to Lon Htein (Riot Police) battalion 4.

Executive Summary

In the months following the February 2021 military coup, Myanmar Witness documented and verified footage of police and military violence against individuals. This mini-series of spot reports documents five separate incidents in Yangon, Mandalay and Sagaing in February and March 2021.

The case studies show police and military personnel beating unarmed individuals, including those already in detention; harassment, intimidation and arrest of medical workers; and the infliction of degrading treatment. They also show evidence of coordination between police and violence by men in civilian clothes. Analysis of rank and insignia clearly visible in the footage enables attribution of responsibility for the violence to the Lon Htein (Riot Security Forces), soldiers from Myanmar military's Yangon Command, and the 101 Light Infantry Battalion. Additionally, ranking police officers were identified in two incidents.

In the third report of the series, Myanmar Witness has verified footage from two separate incidents showing individuals being beaten by men wearing police and military uniforms. At the incident in Yangon, insignia worn by the military indicates that they were from the Yangon Division of Operation Command Headquarters No.4. At the incident in Mandalay, Myanmar Witness has verified footage of a person being beaten, kicked, and dragged across the road by several men wearing police and military uniforms, including uniforms belonging to Lon Htein (Riot Police) battalion 4.

These examples of police and military brutality are being released to mark two years passing since their occurrence, but they are by no means exhaustive. Myanmar Witness has documented other instances of police and military harassment since the coup, which has been documented in several reports, including: Violence against protestors in [North Okkalapa](#), [Bago](#), and [Hlaing Tharyar](#); and, the deaths of multiple female protestors, including [Ma Kyal Sin \(Angel\)](#) and [Daw Tinnwe](#).

Kyauktada township, Yangon

The investigation walkthrough

Myanmar Witness has verified multiple pieces of user-generated content which show individuals being beaten repeatedly by a group of Myanmar police and military personnel. By analysing a number of allegations alongside these two disparate sources, it appears that these events took place on 7 March 2021.

In [footage](#) posted by Tachileik News, multiple people beat individuals who appear to be crouched down in a defensive stance (as seen in figure 1).

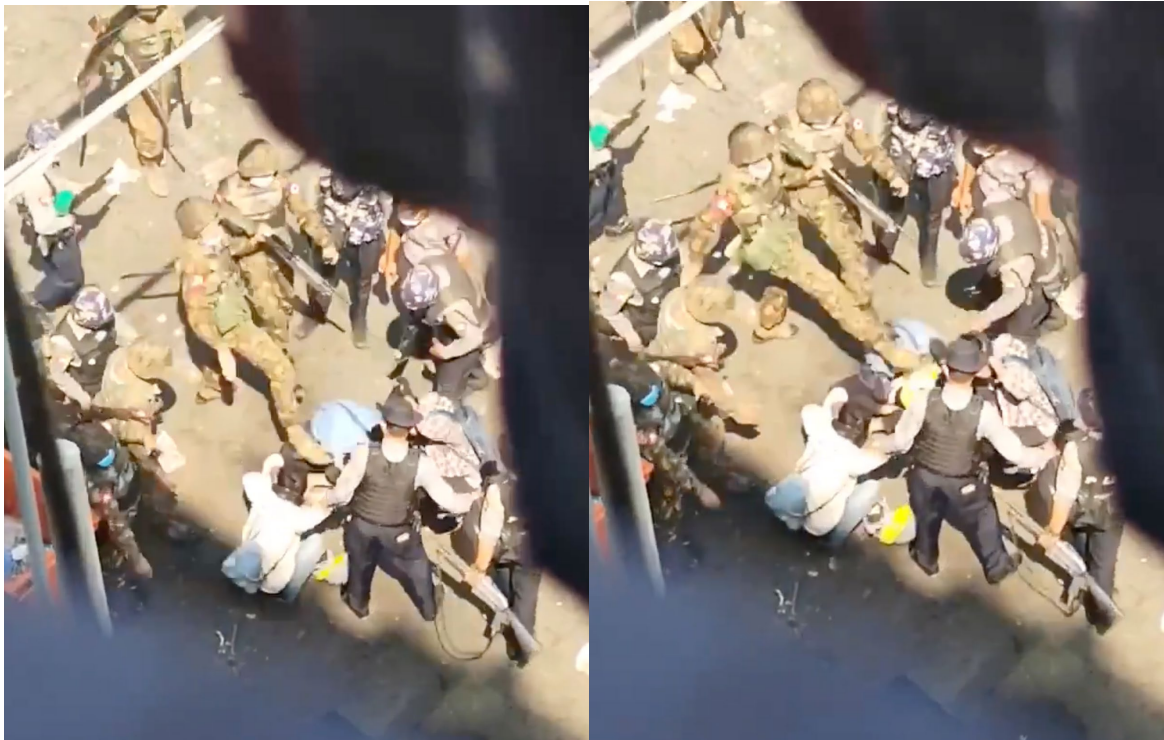


Figure 1: Stills from the video showing security forces beating detained individuals (source: [Tachileik News](#)).

Additional [footage](#) allegedly from the same day shows the same group of people from a different angle. Multiple protests did occur on this day in Yangon; however, Myanmar Witness cannot confirm that these individuals were protestors or engaged in protest. Below is a comparison of two stills from the two alternative videos showing the same people - identified within both images by coloured boxes.

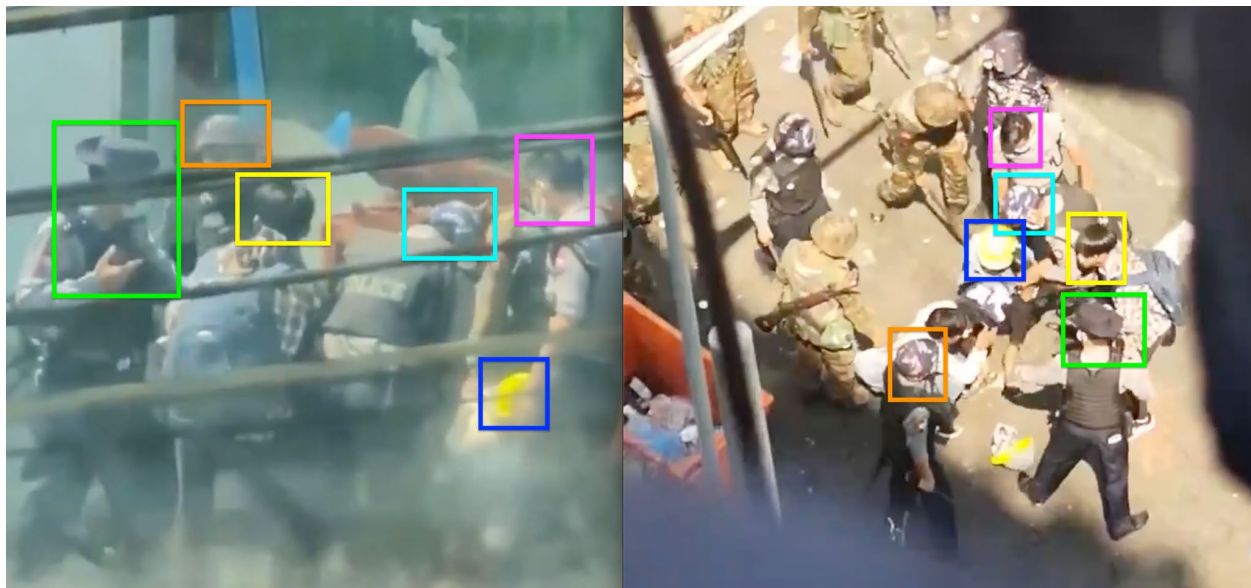


Figure 2: Verification of the incident by cross-referencing separate source videos.

Geolocating the incident

By analysing identifiable features in the two videos, Myanmar Witness was able to identify where these individuals were beaten to the corner where Anawrahta Road and Seikkantha Street meet, in Yangon.

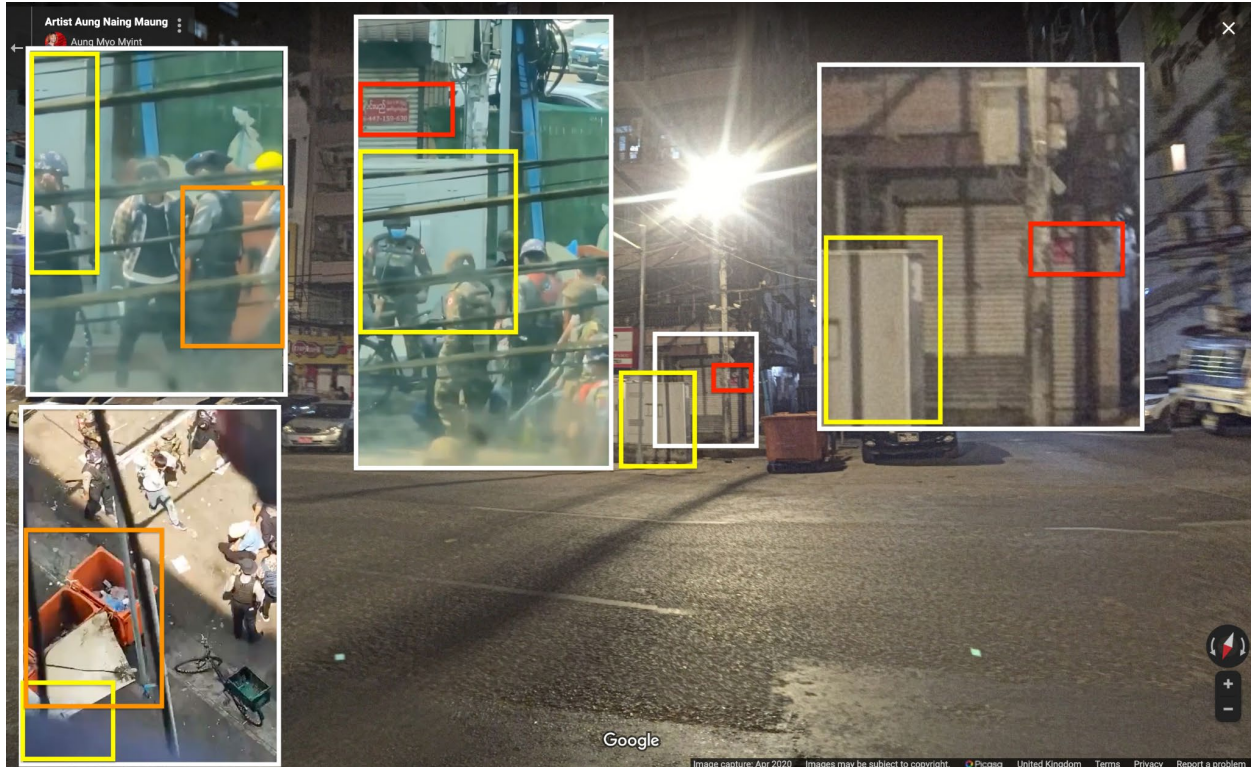


Figure 3: Features used to verify location of video footage [16.776639, 96.163167]

Attribution: Myanmar Police and Myanmar military

As seen in the video stills above, there were several police and military personnel involved. By analysing the uniform of the personnel involved in this event, Myanmar Witness was able to identify a high-ranking police officer present at the scene, and the command of the military personnel.

The police officer is wearing a vest and there are clear signs that he has at least two stars on his shoulder rank slide, indicating that he is either a police lieutenant, or a police captain.



Figure 4: Enlargement of police officer rank as seen on his shoulder. [Right] image identified from [Wikipedia images](#).

The military personnel involved in the incident are wearing a patch on their left arms. Myanmar Witness has been able to identify this as the Yangon Division of Operation Command Headquarters No. 4. Visual confirmation of the match can be seen in Figure 5.

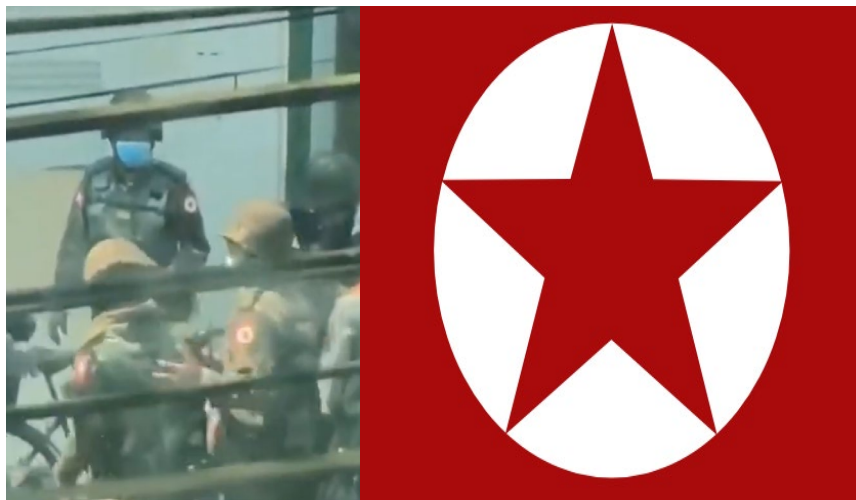


Figure 5: Verification of the military patch worn by the personnel in the video. [Left] still from the video [Right] image identified from [Wikipedia images](#).

Chanayethazan township, Mandalay

The investigation walkthrough

Footage emerged on social media on 7 March 2021 showing a person dressed in white being beaten, kicked and then dragged across a road by men in Myanmar military uniforms. The events allegedly took place at a 'multi-school strike' and led to the arrests and beating of multiple students. Khit Thit media [claims](#) that the individual depicted was a second year paramedical student.

Myanmar Witness identified multiple videos and images showing several angles of this specific incident. In the first video, the group of Myanmar military personnel and police are seen kicking the body (source redacted due to privacy concerns), and in the second [video](#) they are seen dragging the body away.



Figure 6: Stills from the video footage showing the police and military personnel kicking and stomping on the body (source: [Khit Thit Media](#)).

This specific case is concerning given the level of violence inflicted on the person already in police custody. The individual is clearly injured and after being dragged, one police member continued to strike the individual, who was lying motionless, with a stick (as seen in figure 7).



Figure 7: Stills from the video footage showing the detainee being beaten further (source: [Khit Thit Media](#))

Additional images [shared](#) by the Voice of Myanmar show the same individual on the floor as the Myanmar police beat him.



Figure 8: Additional images of the same individual on the ground, being beaten by military personnel (source: [Voice of Myanmar](#))

By comparing the Khit Thit Media video with the images released by the Voice of Myanmar, it is possible to determine that this is the same incident. They show the same individual being beaten, the same security forces, and it is in the same location (as seen by figure 9).



Figure 9: Visual confirmation showing that the individual shown in the Voice of Myanmar images and the Khit Thit Media video is the same. [Left] Voice of Myanmar image, [Right] Khit Thit Media video.

Other images shared on the same day show students from Mandalay's Technology University protesting, wearing similar white outfits and helmets as the individual being beaten in the figures above.



Figure 10: Students from Mandalay's Technology University, allegedly at the multi-school strike in Mandalay on 7 March 2021 (source: [Voice of Myanmar](#)).

Geolocating and chronolocating the incident

Myanmar Witness geolocated the footage to Pinya Street, using features seen in the background of the video, such as the small black sign indicating “Love House” and Hotel Iceland, in front of which the violence took place. The location of the shadows cast by the men and the utility poles indicates that the footage was filmed around noon.



Figure 11: The coloured boxes indicate the features used to verify the location of the video footage [21.989361, 96.071361], Mandalay

Attribution: Myanmar military, police and Riot Police

Members of the Myanmar military, police and Lon Htein (Riot police) are visible within the footage analysed. While the specific units of the military personnel cannot be determined, Lon Htein personnel can be identified by the red scarves tied around their necks. The blue circle on the red scarf states the battalion number; in this case the individuals appear to be from battalion 4.



Figure 12: Additional imagery uploaded alongside images of the protest and the individual being beaten (source: [Voice of Myanmar](#)).

Conclusion and future monitoring

The Myanmar Police and military were accused of widespread brutality against protestors and civilians following the coup. The excessive violence shown towards individuals as shown in this report signals a culture within both the Myanmar military and the police. Similar acts of brutality occurred in multiple locations on the same day.



This mini-series of spot reports documents five separate incidents in February and March 2021 where the police and military have harassed or mistreated individuals. While these examples are by no means exhaustive, they capture a number of violent tactics employed by the Myanmar security forces to quell rebellion against the coup.