

Burma

Myanmar Junta Leaked Memo Shows Resistance Growing Beyond Control

Sunday 29 January 2023, by [The Irrawaddy](#) (Date first published: 18 January 2023).

Leaked minutes from a top-level “counterterrorism” meeting led by Home Affairs Minister Lieutenant-General Soe Htut show the junta is at its wit’s end after failing to drum up public support to crush the shadow National Unity Government (NUG).

Contents

- [Generals ignorant of public](#)
- [Failures across the country](#)
- [Regime vents anger on strikers](#)

The leaked document, which comes from a December meeting of the Central Committee for Counter-Terrorism, was shared online by Khit Thit Media.

The meeting was joined by more than 50 senior regime officials including deputy ministers for home affairs, defense, and border affairs, senior police officers, military intelligence officials, and security and border affairs officials at the regional and state levels.

The meeting arrived at the conclusion that resistance forces known collectively as People’s Defense Forces (PDFs) had expanded beyond control, and PDF attacks are expected to intensify this year.

None of the officials present at the meeting was confident the regime will be able to successfully hold the election planned in August.

Generals ignorant of public fury

The home affairs minister and his deputies expressed concern that PDFs had escalated from sneak attacks to artillery assaults using makeshift 107mm rocket launchers.

Some 75 percent of weapons and explosive material used by PDFs to attack junta targets had passed through junta security checkpoints, said the home affairs minister.

“Keep in mind that all checkpoints [where weapons] have passed through must be held responsible in the future,” Lt-Gen Soe Htut warned.

Generals present expressed consternation that Myanmar people as well as the international community were supporting the NUG and PDF, whom they consider to be terrorists.

“They can commit terrorist acts because they are favored by the international community for being elected [in the 2020 general election]. They also have an upper hand in media warfare,” said deputy

home affairs minister Major General Zin Min Htet, who is also the police chief.

Lt-Gen Soe Htut, a former military intelligence chief, lamented that the military had failed to extract information from the people about the NUG, its parliamentary body the CRPH, and the PDF.

“We still can’t get the information we need despite offering rewards and promising secrecy. We are not doing enough to gain information in areas that we control,” he said.

He also called for deployment of technology to collect intelligence. Deputy home affairs minister Major-General Soe Tint Naing said a budget was granted last year to recruit a network of informants, but much of the fund remained unspent indicating people are reluctant to take the job.

Generals insisted the NUG, its parliament and PDFs would collapse if their flow of finances could be cut off.

The regime had frozen more than 18,000 accounts in 18 months, a police brigadier-general told the meeting. It had also imposed restrictions on mobile payment services in a bid to stem the flow of donations to resistance forces.

Police Brigadier-General Kyaw Lin of the Crime Department said that more than 17,000 cases of violence had been logged since the February 2021 coup, but only 7,000 had resulted in prosecutions. Perpetrators could not be identified in the other 10,000 cases, he said.

Failures across the country

The junta’s security and border affairs ministers, reporting on the situation in their respective regions and states, indicated that the resistance movement was growing beyond control.

Kachin State’s security and border minister reported that the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) is training PDFs at its headquarters in Laiza, where it is also manufacturing weapons to supply resistance forces in Sagaing, Magwe and Mandalay regions.

The security and border minister for Sagaing, a resistance stronghold in central Myanmar, said PDFs were growing from a small armed organization into a large fighting force.

They were also using social media to implement new initiatives to drum up public support, he added.

Neighboring Magwe Region had seen 87 attacks on police stations since the coup, said its security and border affairs minister. Resistance fighters would use large forces to attack police stations and security outposts this year, he forecast.

His counterpart in Mandalay, the capital of Upper Myanmar, said the region was now home to more than 50 PDF groups whose network was spreading to Sagaing and Magwe regions and Shan State.

Frequent power outages had eroded the ability of the city’s [CCTV surveillance system](#) to spot PDFs, the minister lamented. Apparently alarmed by the threat of PDFs, he asked for bulletproof vests to protect security forces in the town.

Kayah’s security and border affairs minister said PDFs were fighting alongside local ethnic armed groups in the eastern border region. Forested terrain was causing logistical and operational problems for junta troops in Kayah, he said, with regime forces increasingly forced to rely on air transport.

Resistance forces were also targeting government offices in neighboring Karen State, said its security and border affairs minister. Junta troops were facing difficulties because they don't know the terrain and local language, he added. Myanmar's oldest ethnic armed group, the Karen National Union, is fighting alongside PDFs in Karen State.

Myanmar's military is also finding it difficult to quell PDFs in KNU-controlled areas in Bago, adjacent to Karen State, said Bago Region's security and border affairs minister.

Regime forces were also being restricted in the west by the Arakan Army in Rakhine State, said its security and border affairs minister.

His counterpart in neighboring Chin State said locals were refusing to cooperate with junta authorities for fear of retaliation by "terrorist" organizations, meaning PDFs.

Elsewhere, Yangon's security minister said the commercial capital had seen more than 900 bomb attacks despite tightened security.

Regime vents anger on strikers, migrant workers

The home affairs minister also warned attendees that hundreds of government employees made jobless and barred from leaving the country could resort to attacking the regime.

Lt-Gen Soe Htut also mentioned tight surveillance had been imposed on some 500 Myanmar migrant workers denied entry by their destination countries over the past two months.

The meeting also discussed using surveillance technology to get more information on the resistance. Criminal Investigation Department (CID) police chief Nyunt Wai said his department had put in a request to the Transportation and Communications Ministry for "high-end technological gadgets."

Another participant, deputy border affairs minister Lt-Gen Khun Thant Zaw Htoo, proposed intercepting phone calls and hacking social media accounts to get resistance intelligence.

"If CID and military intelligence could form a team to hack them, we could get more information," he said.

Deputy transport and communications minister U Aung Kyaw Tun confirmed "we will collaborate" but said he could not discuss all the details as some technology was still being procured.

Deputy home affairs minister Maj-Gen Soe Tint Naing proposed using community policing to combat "terrorism", apparently ignorant of the fact that regime officials can't even bribe people to give information.

The home affairs minister also instructed participants to exploit the ongoing census to gather information about the NUG, its parliament, and PDFs. Junta-appointed election officials and immigration department employees have been visiting wards to count voters ahead of the regime's planned poll.

The NUG has warned administrative officials not to cooperate in the census. There have already been several [blasts and attacks targeting census teams](#). The leak of the home affairs minister's plan is likely to make census takers an even bigger target.

P.S.

• THE IRRAWADDY 18 January 2023:

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-leaked-memo-shows-resistance-growing-beyond-control.html>