

ISP နှင့်အတူ မိနစ် ၃၀

30 MINUTES with the ISP

Event Recap Memo No. 3 • Published on July 26, 2024.

ISP Series



BREATHLESS IN ADVERSITY

The Strangling Effects of Conscription Law on Socioeconomic Hardship

The recap memo of the *30 Minutes with the ISP* live event was held on July 14, 2024, highlighting the socioeconomic damages exacerbated by the SAC's Conscription Law.



30 Minutes with the ISP Event 3

BREATHLESS IN ADVERSITY

The Strangling Effects of Conscription Law on Socioeconomic Hardship

Concept Note

The State Administration Council (SAC) announced that the Conscription Law (enacted in 2010) would be effective on February 10, 2024. This announcement was abrupt and significantly stirred Myanmar society. Despite subsequent declarations about the regulations, procedures, and exemptions, the entire process remains unclear to the people of Myanmar, causing significant distress. After the enactment, the first batch of conscripts was called up starting in April 2024. This conscription has exacerbated the conflicts and socioeconomic hardships already present in Myanmar's communities. Ordinary people have no other choice but to comply with the conscription or flee. Some young people have already enlisted in the nearby People's Defense Forces and Local Defense Forces (PDFs/LDFs) and Ethnic Armed Organizations (EOs).

The impact on the rural community is significant, with the poor and marginalized primarily targeted to suffer. Young people with limited education and resources have no option but to comply with the law. Some families are forced to sell their assets and migrate to urban areas or neighboring countries as laborers to avoid conscription. The phrase "don't come back, we'll shoulder the burden" has become a common reassurance from elderly parents. For families, the increasing poverty results in a decline in their possessions and savings. In some places, when sons escape, the remaining parents face extortion, threats, and coercion. They are told that fathers will be forced to serve in the military if their sons are absent. This leads entire families to abandon their homes and escape together. Those with resources send their children abroad or relocate their assets, leading to noticeable increases in condo purchases and investments in countries like Thailand.

Meanwhile, EOs in conflict-ridden areas are also competing for recruits. The Conscription Law is also likely to exacerbate inter-ethnic conflicts. Tensions and conflicts among ethnic groups are likely to impact ethnic minorities, especially in the intense battles of Rakhine State, where the conflict between the Rohingya and Rakhine community groups is escalating due to recruitment. Some ethnic minorities are more likely to be affected by conscription. The battles in northern Shan State are pushing into cities like Lashio, Mogoke, and Madaya, displacing people and deepening community fractures. Using military force complicates future national reconciliation, peace, disarmament, and security sector reforms (SSR), making these efforts more challenging.

The Conscription Law could worsen hardships for Myanmar's populace. ISP-Myanmar's Research Network has been gathering data on socioeconomic issues in 110 townships for over a year, representing a third of Myanmar's towns. Join us for another episode of "30 Minutes with the ISP," focusing on the critical impact of the Conscription Law.

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30 MINUTES with the **ISP**

30 Minutes with the **ISP**: Breathless in Adversity

BREATHLESS IN ADVERSITY

The Strangling Effects of Conscription Law on
Socioeconomic Hardship
(Exclusive Event)



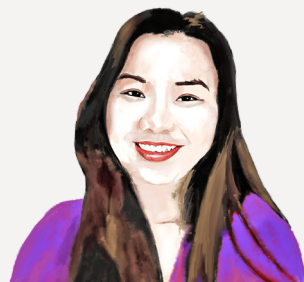
Thet Kyi Sin

Program Head
ISP Research Network Program
Lead panelist



Cindy

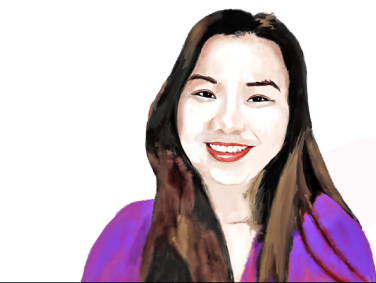
Program Assistant
ISP Research Network Program
Co-panelist



Ingyin May

Program Head
ISP Communications Department
Event host

This event was held on July 14, 2024, exclusively for ISP Gabyin Community members. This English translation of the event's recap memo was published on July 26, 2024. DVB broadcasts the recorded video with English subtitles of the live event on its channel regularly on Mondays and Wednesdays.



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30 MINUTES
with the **ISP**

Ingyin May
Program Head
ISP Communications Department
Event host

Greetings to all Gabyin community members who have come to attend today's program, *30 Minutes with the ISP*. I am Ingyin May, your host for today's program. Today's discussion topic is "Breathless in Adversity: The Strangling Effects of Conscription Law on Socioeconomic Hardship." Today's program will be organized in three parts. First, panelists will present their research findings. Then, advanced questions from Gabyin community members will be answered. Finally, we will invite a question and a remark from today's event participants. As per the event title, we'll adhere to the 30-minute time limit and try to wrap up the program on time.

We aim to share some food for thought within this time limit. In addition to this live discussion, we will also answer questions via email later. This program will be recorded and later aired on DVB broadcasts, ISP-Myanmar websites and social media.

Today's panelists are Miss Thet Kyi Sin, Program Head of ISP-Myanmar's Research Network Program, and Miss Cindy, Program Assistant of Research Network. The discussion will now begin. I'd like to invite Miss Thet and Miss Cindy to present their findings.



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Thet Kyi Sin
Program Head
ISP Research Network Program
Lead panelist

Greetings, everyone. First, thank you for taking the time to attend today's "30 Minutes with the ISP" program. Today, we would like to discuss one of the ISP-Myanmar research topics, the socioeconomic hardships worsened by the Conscription Law.

As the video showed earlier, over the three years since the coup, the higher tempo of warfare alongside the natural disasters and man-made crises have devastated the nation's all sectors including economy, education, and healthcare. The Ayeyarwady River's flooding submerged and ruined the stored paddies and crops resulting in widespread hardship. The return of Operation 1027 has spread to major cities like Lashio, Mogok, and Madaya, leading to chaos and suffering as

families are torn apart by death or displacement. People in cities like Yangon are living in fear of health issues like cholera breakouts. Goods are scarce. Commodity prices are skyrocketing.

We are hearing people's grumble about the hardship daily. In such a deteriorating scenario where depressed economy, volatile conflict conditions, extreme weather events and high criminal threats all converge, the SAC's policies failed to address the people's daily socioeconomic problems. The populace finds themselves in increasing physical and psychological distress at every step taken. Those affected the most are women, children, and the grassroot people, who are in dire straits. For them, rising prices turn every meal into a challenge. Stilling the rumbling ►

See the PowerPoint slides used during the event in the Appendix Section of this recap memo from page 17 to 19.

► belly becomes the goal as “when in need, any food is good food,” prioritizing survival over quality in dire circumstances.

Despite the mounting problems, we observed relatively fewer reports about them in the news media and research institutions' reports. A real gap of systematically documenting, studying and discussing people's everyday challenges. When we study the news and reports about Myanmar, most news and research reports focus on politics, military and conflict landscapes, humanitarian situations, and the revolution's conditions.

As described in the PowerPoint, we analyzed the content of over 3,700 news articles and reports covered by mainstream media and research institutions in Myanmar in the past year. Military and political coverage made up 65 percent. Only ten percent featured socioeconomic crises. This is just a comparison of content covered in the past year as the tempo of the revolution rises. This is important because news media and research organizations can influence policy communities, including policymakers. Moreover, they have the power to shape public discourse and narratives through their publications, shifting attention towards the issues they highlight. If media and research groups report them less, the daily socioeconomic struggle of the people may not be adequately discussed among the policymakers and could be left out of the policy agenda-setting.

Additionally, when these groups attempt to address socioeconomic issues, they focus more on leveraging people's

hardships for political ends rather than developing practical policies.

On the other hand, the junta leader frequently propagandized national prosperity and food security as primary political objectives in his speeches. However, the policies remain repressive rather than supportive. We are seeing cases like pressuring traders and business owners, arresting them, and practicing rationing systems for essentials like rice and oil. Reviewing speeches from the past year shows that the junta leader neither acknowledged the root causes of these socioeconomic issues are military and political, nor did he seek to address them. Instead, the responses consist of ineffective policies that miss the mark. This is reminiscent of earlier regimes like SLORC and SPDC but even harsher.

As you can see on the slide, while people suffer the relentless daily grind of socioeconomic hardships, the SAC fails to address the core of the crisis. Instead, they resort to denying and blaming others. On the other hand, media and research institutions' coverage of this issue were relatively few and far between compared to the other topics we analyzed earlier. In modern terms, reported news is basically propagandized motivational speeches laced with political agendas.

In this context, the SAC also started to enforce the Conscription Law, which added further burden, like pushing the community further down which is already drowning in socioeconomic challenges. This is the situation aggravated by the Conscription Law. Could Miss Cindy further elaborate on the consequences?



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Cindy
Program Assistant
ISP Research Network Program
Co-panelist

Regarding the Conscription Law, ISP-Myanmar has discussed five negative potential consequences in the preliminary analysis of the [ISP OnPoint No. 20](#).

To go back to the analysis, one of the significant repercussions of enforcing the Conscription Law has been the mass exodus of people migrating as laborers in neighboring countries. Those who have the financial means and opportunities migrate legally. Those without resort to any means possible, including illegal means, to leave the country permanently.

Looking at our ISP-Myanmar's socioeconomic survey data, even before, all townships had shown migrations, but since the enforcement of the Conscription Law, the number has risen. As shown here, a mass exodus was seen only in six townships in January before the law.

In February, the data showed 19 townships experienced an exodus. To triangulate with the World Bank's reports, a similar trend is present. The report pointed that the number of workers leaving their jobs in Myanmar's key sectors, agriculture and manufacturing, has doubled from April 2023 to April 2024.

How do they migrate? What methods do they use? Families without extra cash often sell off their land, property, homes, and gold to support their loved ones.

Usually, brokers and middlemen agencies mediate this process. Cases of fraud and scams from these middlemen are also numerous. Some families without anything to sell off, in their desperation, ended up borrowing money to send their children abroad, leaving them up to their necks in debt. Regardless, **"don't come back, we'll shoulder the burden"**

has become a common phrase among families and parents left behind. Even after migrating, families in Myanmar sell the remaining possessions to continue to support loved ones in foreign countries. Challenges continue for both migrated and family members who remained.

Additionally, lives in Myanmar continue to embroil with other crises. Some of them are the unstable and rapid increase in basic commodity prices and insecurities in daily life, which have worsened to the most extreme state. Could Miss Thet discuss these conditions further?



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Thet Kyi Sin
Program Head
ISP Research Network Program
Lead panelist

It's fair to say that prices are going up with every tick of the clock. Research Network data shows that around 91 percent of the 110 townships we studied have been facing severely high inflation since last year. This situation took a worse turn after the Conscription Law came into effect. For instance, the price of a bag of ordinary rice has skyrocketed from around 27,000 kyats before the coup to over 72,000 kyats by now (June 2024). On average, it means an increase of 160 to 600 percent. Situations are much more severe in epicenters of armed clashes. For example, our findings indicated that an ordinary rice bag in Rakhine State cost over 190,000 kyats during June 2024.

Another critical concern is about the insecurity feelings. As shown in the slide, 90 percent of residents in 110 townships felt insecure. Amidst socioeconomic crises, people have to worry about the personal security of their family members as well as themselves daily. On the other hand, people face basic utility disruptions such as electricity and internet outages, lately, the need to use VPN. Some city and

village residents are displaced to flee from the armed clashes and some even experienced famine. Consequently, we are observing an increase in coerced taxation and extortions.

We found that 70 percent are facing this in the 110 townships surveyed. Since the Conscription Law took effect, in various neighborhoods, families have to bribe, or they have been asked to bribe large sums of money to keep their children off the conscription lists. We observed instances where sons fled to avoid the conscription and parents remaining at home face extortion and threats of asking fathers to enlist in place of their absent sons, which forces the entire family to abandon their home and flee. At the same time, the need to bribe local authorities has also increased. At township-level offices, most of the bribes are paid to the Immigration Office, Municipal Office, and GAD Office. People also pay various taxes to both offices under the SAC and other armed groups for internal border crossing fees and agricultural land tax among others. In this scenario, folks are grappling with a ►

► myriad of issues. On the other hand, job opportunities are scarce, and finding a job has become more difficult. Miss Cindy will further discuss this issue.



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Cindy
Program Assistant
ISP Research Network Program
Co-panelist

Since the day of the coup, people have been struggling to make ends meet. Unstable environment for running businesses, as well as scarce job opportunities increasingly push people towards easy money and illegal activities, like gambling and drug trafficking, as a means of survival instead of an honest job. Looking at our survey, the data shows that in about 97% of the 110 surveyed townships, there is a significant reliance on illegal businesses like two- and three-digit lotteries, commercial gambling rings, cockfighting, etc. People are becoming addicted to gambling. Especially among the low-income families, there is an alarming increase of selling two-digit tickets and online gambling as a day job. The problem is spreading viral— as jobs that promise quick and easy money. Consequently, the negative social consequences are becoming more

apparent, with more people losing their livelihoods, falling into debt, and breaking up families. The most obvious consequence of gambling is the loss of personal property. The rise of domestic violence is also alarming.

This concludes our discussion on the socioeconomic damages caused by the Conscription Law. Miss Thet, would you like to add any final thoughts?



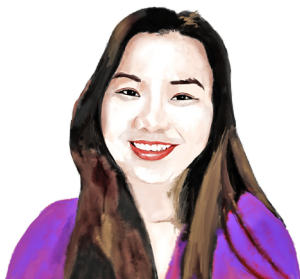
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Thet Kyi Sin
Program Head
ISP Research Network Program
Lead panelist

To sum up, there are two common questions we frequently come across in our surveys. People asked, *"How long must we endure this [daily struggle for survival]?"* and *"When will this revolution end?"* During this revolutionary period, there were significant military advances from the EAOs and resistance's side, with urban warfare operations and the establishment of various forms of governance in seized areas. At the same time, the persistent question of *"How long must we endure more?"* requires a trustworthy and hopeful response.

Vague answers like "The revolution will end when everyone participates" is not enough.

As for research institutions like us and the media, we do have responsibilities. We can support people in three main areas. First, we need to systematically document people's daily socioeconomic challenges based on what's happening on the ground. Second, we must analyze the collected data and publish sound analyses based on relevant and sound academic theories. This will help mainstream the issue to become a crucial part of policymakers' discussions and policy agenda. Finally, by addressing these challenges through informed policy measures, we can find practical solutions to alleviate the suffering of the people and highlight how the international community can support these efforts. With this, I'd like to conclude our discussion.



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Ingyin May
Program Head
ISP Communications Department
Event host

Thank you, Miss Thet and Miss Cindy, for the insightful discussion. Next, we'd like to continue with the Q&A session.

We've selected three common advanced questions received through email from our Gabyin community members.

The first question here asks,
"ISP named the event 'Breathless in Adversity'. I logged in online with difficulty via a VPN, but news are much disheartening. It's also annoying to see places like Naypyitaw and Yangon still bustling as if everything is fine. I'm baffled about what's happening. Could you please help make sense of these ironic situations?"

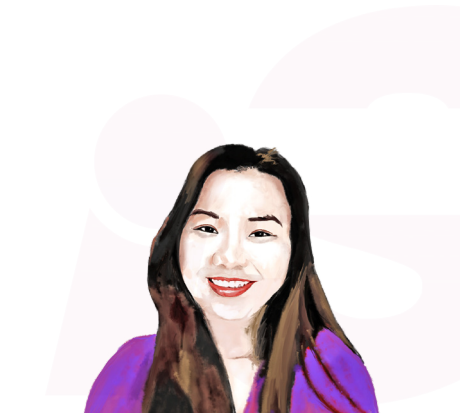


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Thet Kyi Sin
Program Head
ISP Research Network Program
Lead panelist

Thank you for the question. This situation can indeed be seen as a direct result of the junta's methods. For instance, in major cities like Yangon, Naypyitaw, and Mandalay, we still see concerts and bars still bustling and full of people. However, ordinary people face daily hardships such as power outages, internet disruptions, and constant worries like pickpocketing ➤

► and other crimes. People in rural areas face life disrupting challenges, like having to flee their family homes and relocate to major cities due to armed clashes. As mass exodus migrates to cities, transportation costs shoot up. The wealth gap is widening, which fuels social tensions and could spark social conflicts rooted in hatred and jealousy.



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Ingyin May
Program Head
ISP Communications Department
Event host

Thank you for your answer, Miss Thet. We would like to continue with the second question. The second question here says, *"Recently, there have been reports of bank officials being arrested and interrogated, consequently causing public panic and leading to bank runs as people rush to withdraw money from banks. Then, prices of goods have skyrocketed. What is the likely situation concerning this bank issue?"* Could one of the panelists discuss this question?



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Thet Kyi Sin
Program Head
ISP Research Network Program
Lead panelist

A banking expert's answer would be more appropriate, but we will answer from a socioeconomic perspective. Banking problems can have significant adverse effects. The more drastic and harsh measures the SAC takes the more public trust in banks will decline. This, in turn, could exacerbate the losses for these institutions. As Myanmar Kyat loses its value against foreign currencies, people may increasingly purchase gold, foreign currencies, or capital flight may occur. As a result, the financial market can become more chaotic, and it'll be increasingly difficult for businesses to continue at an operation level. At this moment, the most crucial step is to restore and increase public trust in the banks.



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Ingyin May
Program Head
ISP Communications Department
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Thank you once again for your answer, Miss Thet. Let's move to the third question.

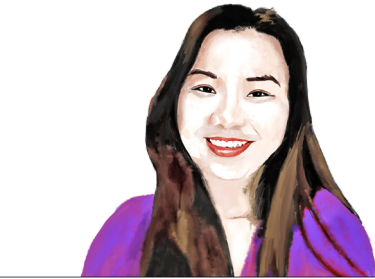
"I would like to understand more about the research methodology you used. The concept note did not mention any details about it. Since the entire nation is in precarious state with gunshots everywhere, I am curious how the ISP Research Network collects data. Can you explain the methodology used for data collection?"
Could one of the panelists discuss this as well?



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Cindy
Program Assistant
ISP Research Network Program
Co-panelist

To study socioeconomics, we selected 110 out of the 330 townships, which is one-third of the total townships to examine their socioeconomic conditions. Of the 110, we selected 75 district townships because most of the administrative offices under the junta locate there, and we wanted to study their service provision conditions. The remaining 35 townships were selected based on population density and economic significance. Since May 2023, we have used the observation method to survey data on the 110 townships. If you'd like to know more about the methodologies, stayed tuned for our upcoming comprehensive survey reports which will feature detailed methodologies.



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Ingyin May
Program Head
ISP Communications Department
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Thank you for the answer, Miss Cindy. Now, we will start taking one question and one remark live from our Gabyin community members who are in attendance. We will start with one question first. Please use the raise hand button to ask one question.



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Gabyin Audience

Mingalarbar, my connection is terrible, so my voice could be distorted. As said earlier, the Conscription Law has a tremendous negative impact, especially the youth. What possible solutions are available for the youth as going abroad is also quite difficult? I would like you to discuss this.



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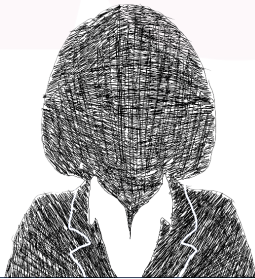
Thank you for the question. According to the findings from the Research Network program, the negative consequences of the Conscription Law significantly outweigh any potential positive ones. Based on the information we've gathered, the SAC has openly stated its goal to conscript 60,000 recruits per year. They have already begun training three batches so far, each undergoing a 45-day training period. The coming fifth batch will also include female recruits, this means a particularly concerning situation for women. In response to the question, there are no positive impacts expected from this Conscription Law, only negative ones.



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Ingyin May
Program Head
ISP Communications Department
Event host

Thank you, Miss Thet. Now, we will invite one remark. If anyone would like to make a remark, please use the raise hand button. This time, I will prioritize a remark rather than a question.



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Gabyin Audience

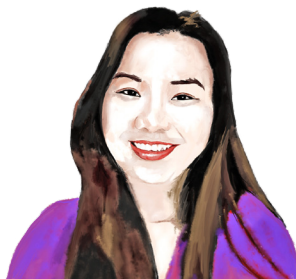
Firstly, who stands to lose more due to the Conscription Law: the SAC or armed resistance forces? And secondly, how did ISP-Myanmar view the mass exodus following the implementation of conscription?



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Program Head
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Lead panelist

We can say with confidence that eventually the public will bear the brunt of all of the consequences. Because of the Conscription Law, some have to abandon their homes, a lot more difficulties in all aspects. In addition, we fear that one of the consequences like the likelihood of inter-ethnic conflicts is higher as well.



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Ingyin May
Program Head
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Special thanks to our panelists for answering the questions. Our event today is about to conclude. Would the panelists like to add any takeaway to conclude?



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As discussed previously, the people's socioeconomic conditions are deteriorating. While people are struggling to survive natural disasters and armed conflict, the SAC's Conscription Law added extra burdens. Amidst various calamities, economic gaps, like those in urban and rural areas are widening. Thus, economic inequality may grow more prominent. With that being said, in a country where everything is falling apart, achieving social justice seems like a distant dream. On this note, I would like to conclude our discussion.



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Ingyin May
Program Head
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A special thanks to all the Gabyin community members in attendance. The research discussed today, as well as other ISP's research data and publications, can be accessed for free at our websites, www.ispmyanmar.com, and our social media channels. With this, we would like to conclude today's program.

Connect with us across all platforms to stay in the loop
with the latest developments. Scan Here!



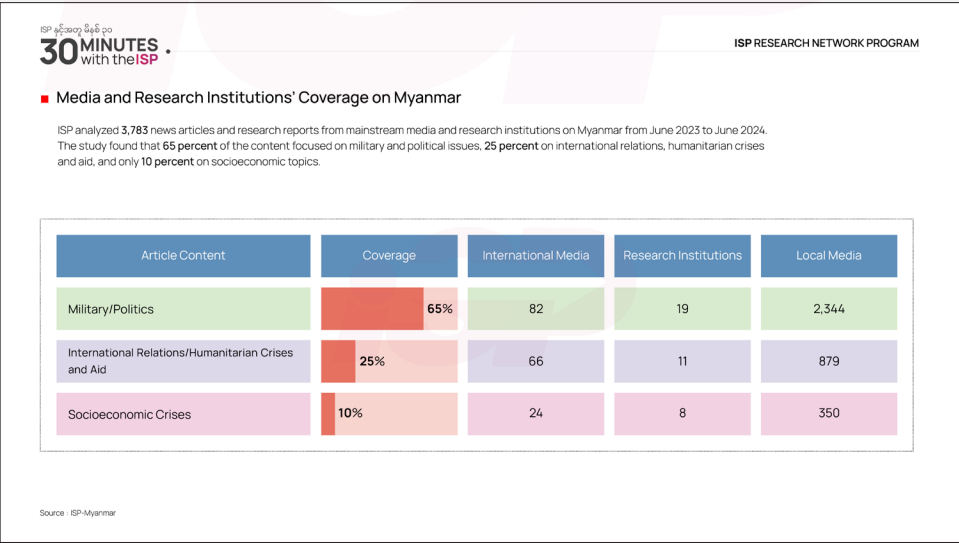
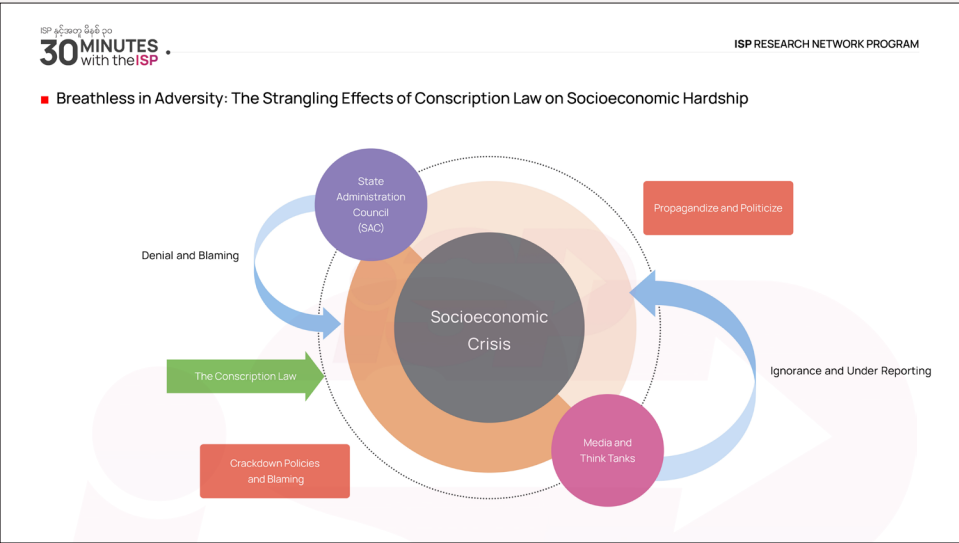
Appendix 1

This appendix includes responses to the questions we collected in advance of the event and the questions received via chat and Q&A buttons during the event.

- Q** In light of Operation 1027, conscripted young people under the Conscription Law are now being deployed in military operations. Given the SAC's unreliability and the increasing territorial control by ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), is it possible that the SAC's Conscription Law will be ineffective in these areas?
- A** As the territorial control by EAOs increases, it is likely to be difficult for the SAC to enforce the Conscription Law in those areas. According to the SAC's announcements, they aim to gather 5,000 recruits per batch, with a target of 60,000 recruits per year. They seem to continue recruiting around 5,000 individuals per month. The implementation of recruitment largely occurs in the Ayeyarwaddy, Bago, Magway, and Yangon Regions—areas with large populations and relative stability. This indicates that the SAC is recruiting soldiers from regions under its territorial control. It is challenging for the SAC to recruit in areas controlled by EAOs. However, various EAOs are also replenishing their troops, and these recruitments can even impact underage children and teenagers.
- Q** Does the Conscription Law violate the Forced Labor Convention of the International Labour Organization (ILO)? I think the United Nations (UN) could take action.
- A** The International Labour Organization (ILO) has long criticized Myanmar for forced labor and the use of child soldiers. The ILO had organized a special investigative commission on Myanmar and reported its findings on March 11, 2024, particularly on the issues of violations of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). If the State Administration Council (SAC) cannot effectively address such claims of the findings, there will be heavy consequences. Despite this, the SAC decided to enforce the Conscription Law. In times of conflict, it is unlikely that any parties involved will prioritize adherence to international laws and conventions. Therefore, our course of action should be to systematically document every violation committed by any party to use as evidence for future action. Current data reveals that extortions and threats using the Conscription Law are increasing.
- Q** Considering the extreme brutality of the SAC with an all-or-nothing mentality, will the people respond with similar sentiments? Are there signs that the brutality of the SAC or the resistance forces is causing the people to become increasingly agitated and unstable?
- A** At the moment, people will definitely experience more physical and emotional insecurities despite their determination to stay resilient. On the other hand, increased tensions and clashes among armed actors have led to more negativities in people's lives, including internal displacement, acts of arson, difficulty in transportation, and emotional insecurities. Such civilian-targeted attacks can be considered 'collective punishments', which is unacceptable while fighting a war. The use of inappropriate forces against civilians, violence and human rights violations in armed conflict can eventually lead to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Those responsible for such violations must be held accountable.

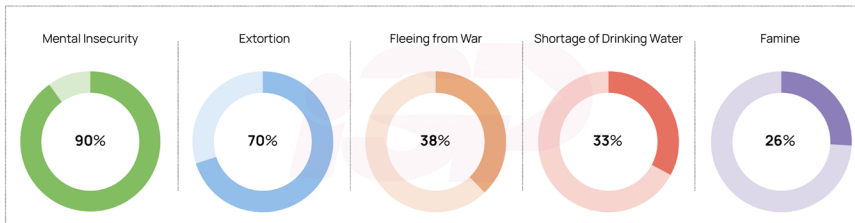
Appendix 2

This is a collection of the PowerPoint slides shown during the event. Access the high resolution PowerPoint slides on the ISP-Myanmar website's [Data Gallery](#) Section.



■ Crisis of the Mind: Widespread Psychological Insecurity on the Rise

A study conducted by the ISP Research Network for 13-months in **110 townships** revealed that psychological insecurity has become one of the top daily challenges for people in Myanmar. Among these townships, **90 percent** of the 110 townships experience psychological insecurities, and **70 percent** face extortion as part of their daily socioeconomic struggles.

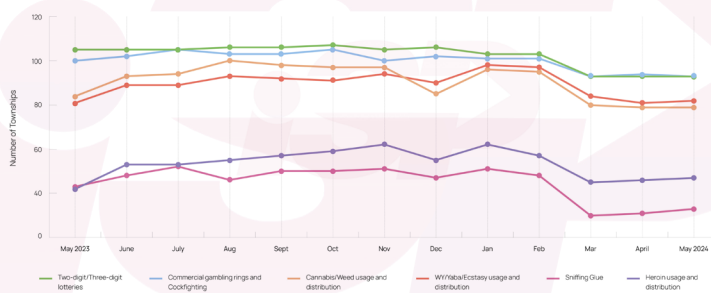


• Methodology

Since May 2023, ISP-Myanmar has been using an observational method to collect data from 110 townships—one-third of the 330 total townships in Myanmar—to analyze the socioeconomic situation. This includes 75 district townships, with the remaining 35 chosen based on their large population size and economic significance.

■ High Rates of Gambling and Drug Use

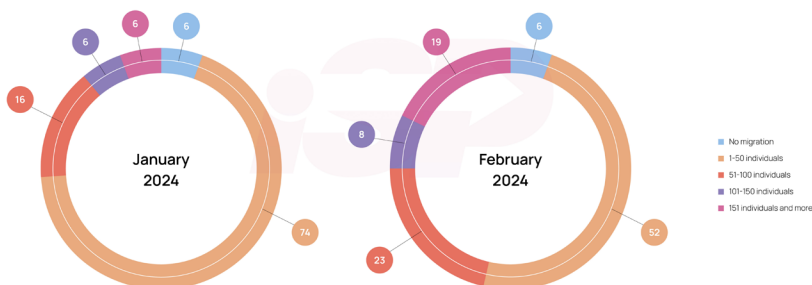
ISP Research Network's 13-month findings indicate that high rates of two- and three-digit lotteries, commercial gambling rings, and cockfighting are present in the majority of **110 townships**. On average, gambling and illicit businesses are prevalent in over **95 percent** of the 110 townships. Additionally, the distribution and use of cannabis, as well as WY/Yaba/Ecstasy, exceed **73 percent**.



Note: The data collected from May 2023 to February 2024 is based on 110 townships. However, the data collected from March 2024 to May 2024 is based on only 96 townships. It's important to note that the numbers of the 14 townships from the last three months are not included in the data.

■ Mass Exodus Following Conscription Enforcement

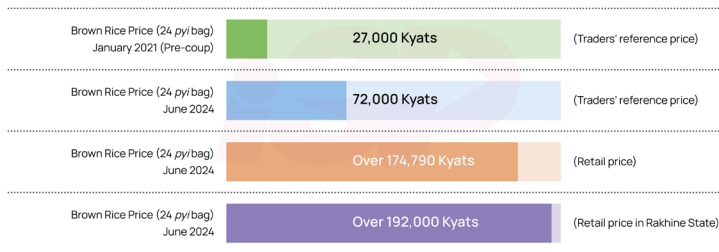
ISP Research Network's findings reveal a significant increase in migration and exodus following the enforcement of the Conscription Law. In January 2024, before the law's enforcement, **six townships** experienced the migration of **151 individuals or more**. However, after the law was enforced in February, this number surged to **19 townships**.



Note: Although the ISP Research Network is surveying 110 townships, the data here is based on 108 townships due to data limitations.

■ **Regular Rice Price Increased by 166 Percent to Over 500 Percent on Average**

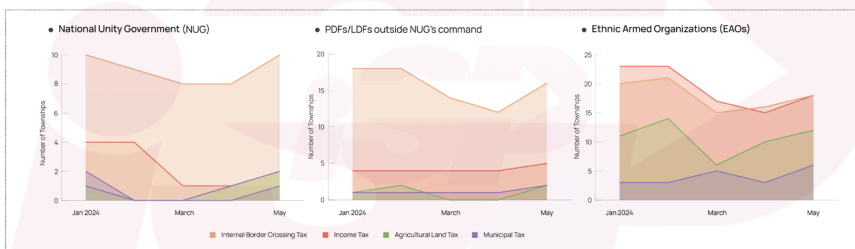
ISP Research Network's findings indicate a dramatic surge in the price of a regular rice bag, surged by **166 percent to almost 550 percent** on average over the three years since the coup. In areas with intense armed conflicts, such as Rakhine State, the price increased by **over 600 percent**.



Note: Py is the Myanmar unit of measure. 1 Py of rice = 2.24 kg.
 Source: ISP Research Network, Myanmar Rice and Paddy Association

■ **Internal Border Crossing Fees and Taxation**

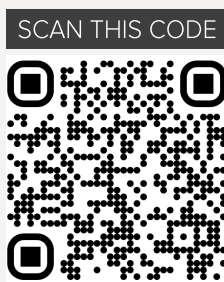
ISP Research Network findings indicate that **over 25 out of 110 townships** pay different taxes to the National Unity Government (NUG), PDFs/LDFs outside NUG's command, and EAOs. Additionally, **over 20 townships** experience internal border crossing taxation by the NUG and PDFs/LDFs, while **over 23 townships** are subject to income taxation by the EAOs.



● **Methodology**

Since May 2023, ISP-Myanmar has been using an observational method to collect data from 110 townships—one-third of the 330 total townships in Myanmar—to analyze the socioeconomic situation. This includes 75 district townships, with the remaining 35 chosen based on their large population size and economic significance.

Explore our Data Gallery to view or download
 ready-made PowerPoint slides for your convenience!



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30 MINUTES with the ISP

Welcome to the "30 Minutes with the ISP" program!

We are excited to launch this new TV show to provide a platform for all members of the ISP's Gabyin community to participate and discuss various topics. After three years of the military coup in Myanmar, discussions among politicians, activists, and citizens have primarily been focused on 'emergency' to address life-saving needs and 'solidarity' to show unity among the forces struggling against injustice in Myanmar politics. These are all for good reasons. Nevertheless, the discussions often lack robust analysis and deliberation. With freedom of expression suppressed by the junta, the State Administration Council (SAC), and ongoing conflict, hunger, and countless crises, the opportunities for Myanmar citizens to receive evidence-based information and nurture critical thinking are limited. Unfortunately, labeling opposing views as "enemy's informers (dalan)" and imposing "self-censorship" due to the growing "cancel culture" has become the norm, discouraging free thinkers and people with different opinions. This has resulted in many people choosing to preference falsification, while many 'taboos' continue to add to the politics.

When people live in oppressive conditions, experience extreme poverty, and cannot express their opinions freely, diversity of thought and perspectives struggle to thrive. This makes it challenging to analyze and deliberate on important subjects. As a result, people tend to stick to their entrenched perspectives and fail to find alternatives. Many online discussions today tend to drag on without presenting new information or insights, which can bore and disengage listeners. It's evident that discussions are receiving less attention with a dwindling audience despite the need for Sannipata (dialogue or deliberation) to foster more engagement.

Against this backdrop, ISP-Myanmar is pleased to introduce the '30 Minutes with the ISP' TV show. The program's purpose is to create a community that values public interests, encourages research-based conversations, and promotes freedom of expression and tolerance of diverse perspectives. The program seeks to share rather than persuade, aiming to present research findings honestly and stimulate the audience's curiosity. The goal is to incubate an epistemic community where people can have informed, evidence-based discussions. We are committed to building a tower of knowledge with a strong foundation of deliberative culture. Our approach to intellectual integrity is not about staying consistent but about examining evidence, rectifying errors, filling the gaps, and incorporating new findings into our existing knowledge base. Ultimately, this approach to open-minded learning will help us gain deeper insights that benefit Myanmar.

Content-wise, ISP-Myanmar envisions this program to be a must-watch show to exercise and exemplify our intellectual approach and deliberative culture. In style, the program is designed to present research-based information in a concise manner without wasting time on lengthy discussions that may strain audience attention spans. The primary focus is delivering valuable content within a 30-minute timeframe rather than sensationalization or popularity. The first 15 minutes will be devoted to presenting research-based information, while the remaining 15 minutes will be an open forum for Q&A and discussion. The program is intended to be a must-watch show that viewers' time is well-spent and helps them evolve their thinking beyond the program's conclusion.

We invite you to join '30 minutes with the ISP'.



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