

Police, military and civilian clothed individuals beat protestors

Report 1: police and military harassment and mistreatment of individuals following the coup

REPORT BY MYANMAR WITNESS, 27 February 2023

Key Event Details

- **Location of Incident:** Monywa town (မုံရွာမြို့), Sagaing region (စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်းဒေသကြီး) [22.105255, 95.137446].
- **Date/Time of Incident:**
 - 27 February 2021
- **Alleged Perpetrator(s) and/or Involvement:**
 - Multiple armed police and military personnel
 - Several men in civilian clothing
- **Summary of Investigation:**
 - Myanmar Witness has verified footage showing multiple armed police and military personnel, as well as men dressed in civilian clothing, chasing and using sticks to beat two fleeing and unarmed individuals. One of the unarmed individuals is unable to walk from his injuries and is carried off in a stretcher.
 - The footage indicates potential coordination between the police and civilians in carrying out the beatings.
 - The footage also shows soldiers from the military's 101 Light Infantry Division pointing guns at the individuals who were filming the incident.

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 apprehended; harassment, intimidation and arrest of medical workers; and the infliction of degrading treatment. Additionally, ranking police officers were identified in two incidents.

In this first report of the series, Myanmar Witness has verified footage showing multiple armed police and military personnel, as well as several men dressed in civilian clothing, chasing and using sticks to beat two fleeing and unarmed individuals. The videos potentially reveal coordination between police and individuals dressed in civilian clothing. However, it cannot be ascertained from this case study whether the individuals were affiliated with, acting in coordination with, or undercover members of the security forces. Analysis of rank and insignia, clearly visible in the footage, attributes responsibility of this violence to the Lon Htein (Riot Security Forces), soldiers from Myanmar military's Yangon Command, and the 101 Light Infantry Division.

Sticks are used to beat the individuals' head, arms and torso to the extent that one of them appears unable to stand, and a stretcher is brought for him. It also shows soldiers from the military's 101 Light Infantry Division pointing guns at the individuals who were filming the incident.

These examples of police and military brutality are being released to mark two years passing since their occurrence; however, 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](#).

The Investigation walkthrough

Summary

Myanmar Witness has analysed two videos shared on [YouTube](#) on 27 February, and on Twitter on 28 February 2021 (the latter has been redacted due to privacy concerns, however stills from the video have been included within this report). Two unarmed individuals in civilian clothing, believed to be protestors or bystanders to a protest, are seen running away from a water cannon and security forces. Multiple men in civilian clothing catch up with the two individuals and use sticks to repeatedly beat them on their arms, torso and head. The men are then attacked by multiple uniformed police and military personnel at the scene, who also beat them with sticks. The videos could suggest that the individuals in civilian clothing were communicating and coordinating with the security forces, however, this cannot be confirmed.

The beatings continue after the individuals are lying on the ground, with one individual appearing unable to stand or walk. The footage also shows military personnel pointing their rifles at the individuals filming the incident. Myanmar Witness has identified both the unit involved (101 Light Infantry Division) and the weapons used. A more detailed description of the incident is provided in the timeline below.

The two videos occur subsequently, with the incident appearing to originate from a demonstration geolocated by Myanmar Witness to this location: 22.105255, 95.137446. Both videos are filmed from the same south-west side of the street, opposite to where the events unfold.



Figure 1: satellite imagery showing the location of the demonstration. Source: Google Earth.

Timeline of events

Part I: Attempted Escape

'Escapee one' (E1) - seen wearing a white t-shirt and long dark jeans (Figure 2 and 3) - is moving away from the crowd and the water canon, while being kicked in the back by someone in civilian clothing. 'Escapee two' (E2) - seen wearing a white t-shirt and shorts (Figure 4) - makes a break for it and starts running, losing his shoes. A chase ensues, with men in civilian clothing armed with sticks and at least one policeman running after them.



Figures 2, 3 and 4: These images are extracts from the YouTube video and depict two individuals running away from police and men armed with sticks who are beating them.

The person kicking E1 is 'Chaser one' (C1) - seen wearing long light jeans, a white shirt, a dark hat and carrying a dark backpack (image 21). C1 kicks E1 from the back while brandishing a stick in his right hand (Figure 2).

Part II: Capture

As E1 and E2 run south-east along the street, E2 enters a shop on the east side of the street, followed by E1. Some soldiers cut their way through, one of whom pointed his gun at E1 and E2. They are forced out of the shop. E1 grabs a woman in an unsuccessful attempt to shield his body from the blows and falls to the ground pulling down the woman with him (Figure 5). She is seen wearing a red top, a white blouse and brown pants in Figures 6-8 below.



Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8: These images are extracts from the first video and depict E1 being beaten while holding a passer-by.

When she stands up, the woman is blocked by one of the civilians carrying the sticks. She stands with her hands up (Figure 7) and is confronted by a police officer (Figure 8).

This sequence is clearer in the second video, where E1 is clearly seen lifting the woman and ducking behind her (Figure 9). E1 does not let her go even when he falls to the ground. The blows from both the armed civilians and the police continue and the woman is likely also hit (Figure 10).



Figures 9 and 10: Extracts from the second video and show one of the two escaping civilians being beaten while holding and pulling down a passer-by.

Part III: Punishment

At this point, E1 and E2 are trapped and outnumbered. In the first video, once the woman is out of the way, E1 is repeatedly beaten with sticks (starting from 00:26 seconds onwards in the video). He receives blows to the torso, arms, abdomen and head. The footage shows another man in civilian clothes - 'Chaser 2' (C2) - who had chased the two escapees, also holding a stick. C2 is seen in the first video following E1's movements (Figure 11), chasing him (Figure 12) and interacting with a soldier when the two escapees are trapped (Figure 13). He wears a light green unbuttoned shirt over a black t-shirt, a backwards black baseball hat, black sneakers, light long jeans and carries a dark blue backpack.



Figures 11, 12 and 13: Image extracts from the first video and shows C2 chasing E1 and possibly communicating with military personnel.

The same scene is visible in the second video, when C2 is seemingly pointing in the direction of E2 and the soldiers, while E1 is being beaten behind him (Figure 14).



Figure 14: An extract from the second video and shows C2 possibly communicating with, or signalling, military personnel.

After this, military and police personnel are seen approaching E2. E2 covers his face while he is being beaten by military and police personnel, with sticks, rifle butts and boots (Figure 15). He soon falls to the ground (Figure 16).



Figure 15: An extract from the second video and shows E2 being beaten by police and military personnel.



Figure 16: An extract from the second video showing E2 on the ground while being beaten by police and military personnel.

While this is ongoing, C2 is visible on the left side. Between 00:11 and 00:14 seconds of the second video, C2 and a soldier hug and playfully jump together (Figure 17). Also in the first video, at 00:38 seconds, C2 is seen holding hands amicably with a soldier (Figure 18).



Figure 17 [left]: An extract from the second video. Figure 18 [right]: An extract from the first video. These scenes both show the playful interactions between a soldier and one of the armed individuals in civilian clothing.

E2 is later taken away by a man in civilian clothing (Figure 19); E1 is lying on the floor and is beaten again. He cannot be lifted (by C2, among others) nor pulled, and a stretcher is finally brought (Figure 20).



Figures 19 and 20: Extracts from the first video which show E2 being taken away and E1 lying on the asphalt.

At the end of the second video, the woman in the red shirt and white blouse can be seen running away (Figure 21).



Figure 21: Still from the second video showing the woman fleeing.

Identification of weaponry and military personnel

In the second video, while the beating of E2 and the hug of C2 are being filmed, two soldiers point their weapons at eye level against the person filming the video. The soldier on the left carries a 18.4mm locally produced shotgun (Figures 22 and 23), while the one on the right carries a MDI/DDI-manufactured (Myanmar Defense Industries/Directorate of Defense Industries) MA-3 Mk. II assault rifle (Figures 23-27). These weapons are manufactured in Myanmar and typically used by Myanmar military forces. In pointing their guns both soldiers show their right arm patches to the camera, allowing Myanmar Witness to identify the insignia of the 101 Light Infantry Division (LID) (images 48-50).



Figure 22 and 23: Extracts from the second video and show the shotgun carried by one of the two soldiers threatening the person filming the scene.



Figure 24: A [Chinese blog post](#) analysing the weapons employed by Myanmar's Police Special Task Force shows the same model of shotgun.



Figures 25, 26 and 27: Extracts from the second video and show the assault rifle carried by one of the two soldiers threatening the person filming the scene.



Figure 28: [Military Today](#) website shows a right-side view of an MA-3 Mk. II assault rifle. Notice the skeletonized side-folding stock and the short gas block which are a match with images 42-44 above and distinctive features of this model.



Figures 29 and 30: Extracts from the second video showing the left arm patches of the two soldiers threatening the person filming the scene. Figure 31: Sourced from [Wikipedia](#) and a Myanmar military-aligned [VK account](#), shows a matching insignia for the 101 Light Infantry Division.

Conclusion and future monitoring

This example has revealed the use of violence against individuals in Monywa town, Sagaing, following an anti-coup demonstration. Water cannons were used to disperse demonstrators, before two individuals were captured on film being chased and beaten by individuals in civilian clothing, police, and members of the Myanmar military 101 LID. The videos potentially reveal coordination between security forces and individuals dressed in civilian clothing.

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.