

# A nation at the crossroads

## *Shooting a good Samaritan*



"Shooting a good Samaritan in the head" is a gruesome but accurate description of what happened last month to Wai Yan Htun, a 16-year-old boy from Mandalay. He was on his way from his place to a nearby market to work as a porter when he saw peaceful protesters and rescue workers being bullet-sprayed by the Burmese military. Instead of running away for his own safety, he ran towards the killing zone and carried the wounded on his pushcart for emergency treatment. In the process of doing so, he was shot in the head by a military sniper who had a real intent to kill him. Surrounded by strangers in the ongoing chaos, he said he could not hold his life any longer and, with his eyes still open wide, died on the spot.



Tragically, the military's use of live ammunitions and aiming for the heads of peaceful protesters were very frequent and, in some cases, well documented. A 19-year-old girl, Angel, from the same city, and another girl of the same age, Myat Twe Twe Khaing, from the country's capital city, were both shot in the head – proving the military's intention to kill peaceful protestors and to turn the nation into a slaughter ground. Within 36 days of their coup d'état, according to a media tally, they have killed at least 55 innocent people and arrested thousands of people just for refusing to acknowledge the military's coup.

These sad stories are just a few samples of the situations all over the whole country where people have to helplessly bear the brutal oppression of the military regime. In the regions of the country's ethnic minorities, the military's brutalities have been happening on a regular basis for so long, but now people from the whole nation have to suffer together in similar ways – arbitrary arrests, nightly raids of homes, tortures, and killings. Moreover, the regime has shut down most of the private media companies and restricted the internet services severely without providing any logical reasons for doing so.

Against such ruthless military regime, the youth are leading street protests and online campaigns. Learning unbearably painful lessons from the miserable lives under six-decades-long oppression by the consecutive military regimes, they are convinced that they should never let this current regime steal their future away. They are risking their lives to stop the regime from enslaving the nation and to restore human dignity. At the same time, their protests have a crucial aim to help government employees do the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), an indefinite refusal to work for the regime.