

The Myanmar Judiciary's Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduction

1. Since the first wave of Covid-19 hit Myanmar around March 2020, the Government has taken all necessary measures to prevent pandemic effectively. The Supreme Court of the Union and all the lower courts in the country have also been following and taking prompt actions in line with the Orders, Directives and Announcements issued by the Government and relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Judicial Measures

2. The Supreme Court of the Union issued the instructions to be followed by the lower courts during the Covid-19 pandemic, relating to accessing the court services and raising public awareness by utilizing official social media page; and administering juvenile cases during the pandemic.
3. By issuing public announcement by the Supreme Court of the Union, during the time of uprising serious transmission of the pandemic, all the trials of the court were suspended for a certain period. Adjournments of the hearings are made via telephone and cause-lists for the adjournments are announced on their respective social media pages of the courts.

4. The accused persons in prison were remanded by the respective courts via video conferencing.
5. With the prior notice, the Supreme Court of the Union conducted its hearings via video conferencing and the judgments are remotely passed for appellate cases.
6. Certificates issued to the Advocates were conferred via video conferencing by the Supreme Court of the Union.

Administrative Measures

7. The Supreme Court of the Union circulated the Directives and Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports and relevant ministries in timely manner. In line with them, the Courts in Myanmar installed the prevention materials at their court houses and benches, so as to keep social distancing, to wear mask systematically in public spaces, to wash hands, etc. The public and court users were to be strictly followed the preventive measures when they entered the Court compound.
8. At the time of serious transmissions of the pandemic, all judges and court staff were assigned to go work with 'shift' system.
9. Quarantine processes were strictly followed by the Judges and court staff if they had to travel to and returned from restricted areas.
10. All the regular meetings and ceremonies, including inspection to lower courts, were restricted and some important events were conducted via video conferencing. All outsiders and officials from

other workplaces were not allowed to enter the courthouses and most of the businesses were conducted through dispatch counter by taking attentive precautions.

11. All workers including court staff were to be strictly followed the Covid-19 related Guidance for Workplaces and Businesses issued by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.
12. Disciplinary bodies were formed in all respective courts so as to monitor the preventive measures.
13. All judges and court staff were arranged in priority to take corona virus vaccines according to their different positions and ranks.