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# U.N. Report Finds 31 Killed in Myanmar Crackdown

By [WARREN HOGE](#)

[UNITED NATIONS](#), Dec. 7 — At least 31 people were killed in [Myanmar](#) during the military government's crackdown on protests this fall, and arrests of and nighttime raids on suspected demonstrators are continuing, a United Nations human rights expert who visited the country last month said on Friday.

In a report released in Geneva, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, a special rapporteur to the United Nations Human Rights Council, said that the death toll was twice what the government had reported, that 500 to 1,000 people were still detained and that 1,150 political prisoners held before the demonstrations had not been released.

In addition, 74 people are listed as missing in the aftermath of the clashes, which occurred in August and September, when monks and thousands of civilians took to the streets to protest rising fuel prices and falling standards of living.

“The figures provided by different sources may underestimate the reality, as not all family members reported missing persons, fearing reprisal and severe punishment,” the report said.

The ruling junta has acknowledged the deaths of 15 people, but Mr. Pinheiro said he had uncovered evidence that at least 16 others had been killed.

The arsenal of weapons that the army and the riot police used in attacking civilians included live ammunition, rubber bullets, tear gas and smoke grenades, bamboo and wooden sticks, rubber batons and slingshots, the report said. The resort to lethal force, the report said, was “unnecessary and disproportionate.”

In a section attributed to “various reports and testimonies,” the report related episodes where soldiers drove a truck into a row of protesters and then fired directly into the crowd; a boy was shot fatally in the back as he climbed a wall to escape onrushing troops; and another boy was “shot in the head in cold blood in front of his mother.”

Mr. Pinheiro gathered the information during a five-day visit to Myanmar, formerly Burma, in mid-November and meetings on two following days in Bangkok with diplomats, United Nations agency officials and civil society organizations.

In Myanmar, he met with a number of government officials and law enforcement officers, senior abbots from the Buddhist clergy, leaders of nongovernmental groups, 20 ambassadors based in Yangon, the main city, and five detainees at the Insein Prison there.

He said in the report that he had been kept from seeing the military officers directly involved in putting down the protests and from visiting a crematory where he was told a large number of bodies, some of them with shaved heads — suggesting that they were monks — were burned during three nights in late September by special teams that replaced the normal work force.

He was also not permitted to see [Daw Aung San Suu Kyi](#), the pro-democracy leader who has been under house arrest on and off for the past 18 years, but the report said he “was reassured by the authorities that this option will remain on the agenda of his follow-up missions.”

Mr. Pinheiro said he had “numerous reports” of secret, large-capacity, informal detention centers where children and pregnant women were among those being held.

He said he was told that many detainees were held in tiny isolation cells lacking ventilation and toilets and were guarded by packs of dogs. Monks, he said, were

deliberately offered food only in the afternoon, at an hour when they are forbidden by their religion to eat.

According to one monk who was imprisoned, many people died not solely from injuries they received in the streets, but also because of the harsh conditions of confinement and torture.

“The special rapporteur is therefore urgently calling upon the government of Myanmar to release all those detained or imprisoned merely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression, assembly and association, including both long-term and recent prisoners of conscience, as well as in the context of the peaceful demonstrations, and to stop making further arrests,” the report said.

Mr. Pinheiro said that monks in Myanmar had a tradition of political activism, particularly during the country’s colonial period, but that they had never before been joined by so many students, politicians and members of civil society groups.