

# BURMA

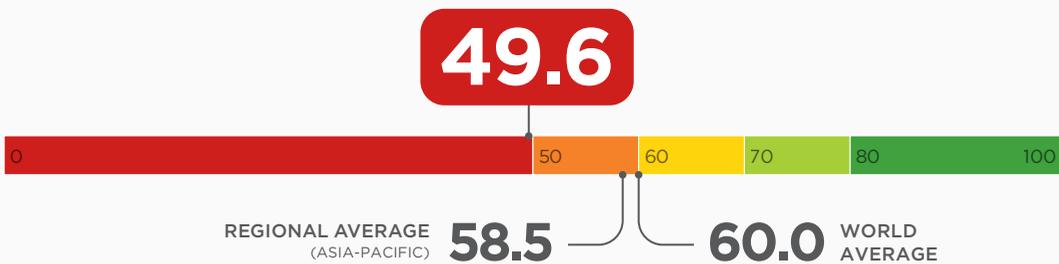
Burma's economic freedom score is 49.6, making its economy the 149th freest in the 2022 *Index*. Burma is ranked 32nd among 39 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and its overall score is below the regional and world averages.

Over the past five years, Burma has enjoyed economic growth averaging well over 5 percent annually, though growth has slowed recently. A five-year trend of growing economic freedom has been broken. Led by score decreases in **fiscal health** and **business freedom**, Burma has recorded a 2.9-point overall loss of economic freedom since 2017 and has fallen from the "Mostly Unfree" category into the "Repressed" category. Monetary freedom is relatively strong, but **investment freedom** and **financial freedom** are very poor.

**IMPACT OF COVID-19:** As of December 1, 2021, 19,111 deaths had been attributed to the pandemic in Burma, and the government's response to the crisis ranked 14th among the countries included in this *Index* in terms of its stringency. The economy grew by just 3.2 percent in 2020.

WORLD RANK: **149** | REGIONAL RANK: **32**  
ECONOMIC FREEDOM STATUS: **REPRESSED**

## ECONOMIC FREEDOM SCORE



HISTORICAL *INDEX* SCORE CHANGE (SINCE 1996): +4.5

## RECENT FREEDOM TREND



## QUICK FACTS

**POPULATION:**  
54.4 million

**GDP (PPP):**  
\$278.8 billion  
3.2% growth in 2020  
5-year compound annual growth 5.7%  
\$5,242 per capita

**UNEMPLOYMENT:**  
1.8%

**INFLATION (CPI):**  
5.7%

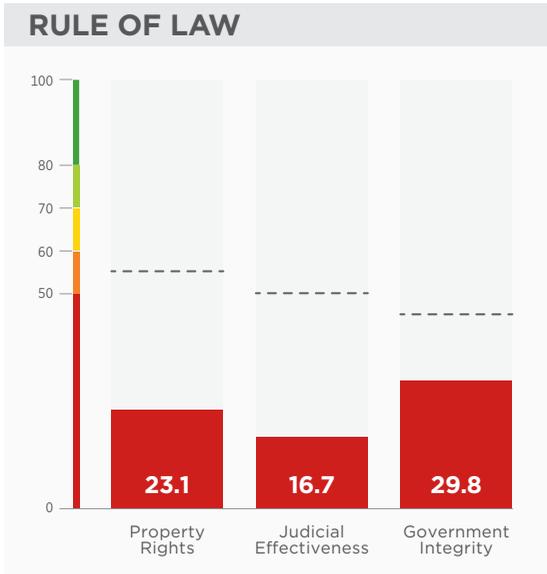
**FDI INFLOW:**  
\$1.8 billion

**PUBLIC DEBT:**  
39.3% of GDP

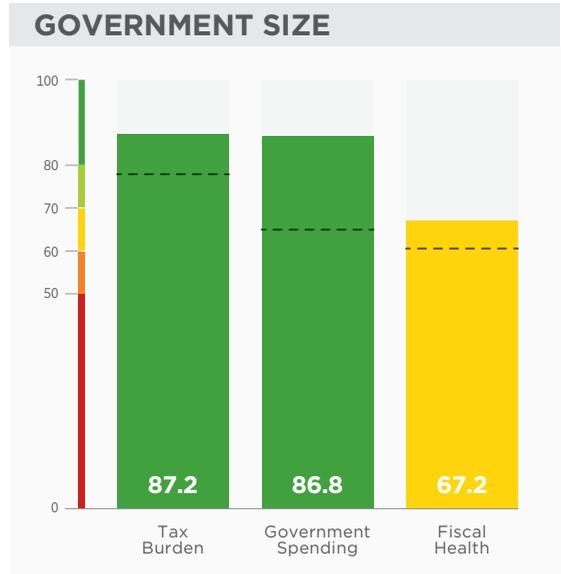
2020 data unless otherwise noted. Data compiled as of September 2021

**BACKGROUND:** Despite some efforts at democratization in recent years, the military remains the dominant force in Burmese politics. In February 2021, the military executed a coup that installed Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing as head of state. The military's action thwarted any possibility of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party's building on its landslide victory in 2020 elections. Since the coup, the military has undermined freedom, targeted protestors, and imprisoned at least 5,000 people, including NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Burma now faces escalating international sanctions because of the coup. Wages in Burma remain low compared to wages in other Asian countries, and more than a quarter of the population lives in poverty.

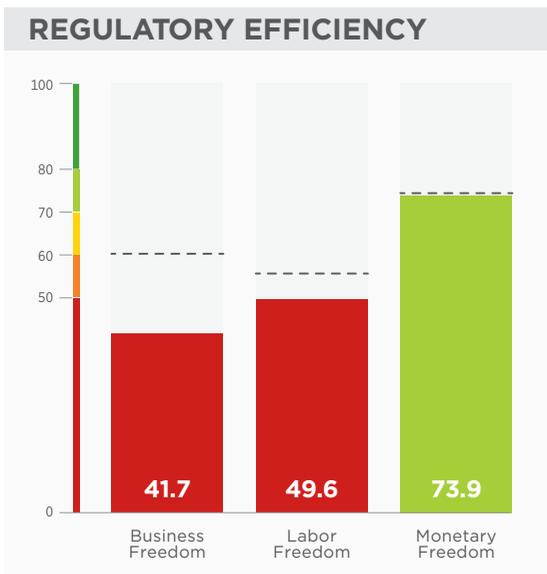
# 12 ECONOMIC FREEDOMS | BURMA



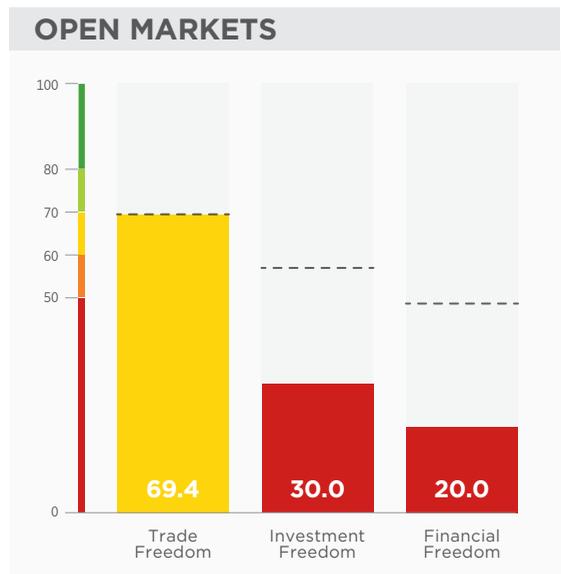
Enforcement of property rights and interests is not consistent. Land disputes involving foreign investments are common, and land titling is opaque. Mortgages and liens exist, but the recording system is unreliable. The judiciary is not independent, and courts at times fail to rule impartially. Corruption is endemic, and despite government initiatives aimed at curbing it, official corruption remains rampant at both the national and local levels.



The top individual income and corporate tax rates are 25 percent. Other taxes include commercial and capital gains taxes. The overall tax burden equals 5.9 percent of total domestic income. Government spending has amounted to 21.0 percent of total output (GDP) over the past three years, and budget deficits have averaged 4.3 percent of GDP. Public debt is equivalent to 39.3 percent of GDP.



Business freedom has deteriorated as a result of the military's incompetence and suspension of Internet and other telecommunications. As of April 2021, services upon which many businesses rely such as customs, ports, and banks were not fully operating. Child labor and forced labor continue. A steep contraction of the economy after the February 2021 military coup has strained the government's ability to fund subsidies.



Burma has eight preferential trade agreements in force. The trade-weighted average tariff rate is 5.3 percent. One formal nontariff measure is in effect, and other barriers to trade persist. Foreign and domestic private investment is restricted with key sectors reserved for government-controlled activity. Banking is dominated by state-owned banks, although several private banks have been in operation. Most loans are directed to government projects.