

ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight



WHAT NOW?

As Suu Ky's health worsens, the battle for the soul of Myanmar intensifies

World focuses on Israel, US, Iran conflict

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DIGITAL MAGAZINE

Our relaunched magazine Mizzima Weekly provides readers with a more focused read on what matters in Myanmar and the wider region, with an emphasis on analysis, insight and providing key talking points.

ENDURING ICON

Aung San Suu Kyi's 80th birthday on June 19, 2025 serves as a poignant milestone. Nearly four years since her arrest following the February 2021 coup, she remains imprisoned, her health deteriorating, while Myanmar's resistance against the military junta intensifies around the country.

Suu Kyi's imprisonment under the junta has worsened over time. Initially held under house arrest or in shared facilities - including a transfer during the 2024 heatwave - the military later moved her into a specially-built, solitary cell in Naypyidaw in June 2022.

She is currently serving a 27-year sentence, down from an original 33 years, on trumped-up charges widely dismissed as politically motivated. Leaked footage and prison logs captured by the media reveal her monotonous routine - rising before sunrise, meditating, reading, and walking alone with minimal meals and scant medical attention. Her isolation is severe, with family contact halted since late 2022, as her son Kim Aris points out, adding that he is deeply concerned about her health reports.

Once revered globally, Suu Kyi's international reputation dimmed after 2017, when she defended the military's actions against the Rohingya, leading to nearly a million fleeing Myanmar. Yet inside Myanmar, she remains "The Lady" - a singular emblem of democracy and her father's legacy.

On her 80th birthday last week, supporters amassed over 103,000 birthday video messages, aiming to break the Guinness World Record and amplify her plight. The public and resistance forces - pro-democracy PDFs and ethnic armed groups - also held symbolic rallies in Kachin, Mandalay, Tanintharyi, and

beyond, under names like the "steel roses," honouring her resilience.

Advocates warn that Suu Kyi's death in custody - threatened by malnutrition, poor medical care, and heat - could spark nationwide unrest or even broaden the armed conflict

Though she remains a symbolic anchor, Myanmar's resistance movement carries its own momentum. Activists insist the struggle transcends one person - even as her plight remains central.

The birthday campaign drew international solidarity - from Western embassies to global media - renewing calls for her release. UN envoys and allies caution that unchecked violence risks plunging Myanmar into self-destruction.

At 80, Suu Kyi remains a figurehead and test case for Myanmar's fractured soul. Ensnared by a military regime determined to extinguish her influence, she persists as a symbol - her physical freedom stripped but her symbolic power intact. Meanwhile, across Myanmar, armed resistance surges amid tragic conflict, poverty and chaos.

Her survival may be vital: if she dies a martyr in custody, analysts predict it could ignite the fuse of unity among diverse opposition forces. Until then, she stands as a captive icon - her fate intertwined with the current of a country teetering between authoritarian grip and the fierce currents of resistance.

Suu Kyi remains an enduring icon as the battle for Myanmar continues.

EDITORIAL

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Cover photo of protest calling for the freeing of Aung San Suu Kyi by AFP





People around the world marked Aung San Suu Kyi's 80th birthday. Photo: AFP

WHAT NOW?

SUU KYI'S HEALTH

WORSENS AS BATTLE FOR

THE SOUL OF MYANMAR

CONTINUES

The Suu Foundation has renewed calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi, who turned 80 on 19 June, amid growing concern for her health and safety following a reported injury sustained during the recent powerful earthquake.

According to a statement issued by the foundation, Aung San Suu Kyi's left arm was injured during the 7.7-magnitude earthquake that struck the prison where she is being held on 28 March. She has reportedly not been allowed to meet with either her family or legal team since her detention began in 2021.

"We are deeply concerned about Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's health. The United Nations has made a special appeal for her release," said Jean Todt, President of the Suu Foundation, and Dr. Michael Marett-Crosby, the organization's CEO.

The foundation emphasized that her continued detention, especially at her advanced age and under reportedly harsh conditions, poses a serious threat to her life. Her lawyers, François Zimeray and Catalina De La Sota, warned: "There is real fear that she may die in prison while the world looks the other way. Given her age and the secrecy surrounding her detention since 2021, we are extremely worried about her well-being and the reported injury."

On 25 May 2022, the law firm Zimeray & Finelle submitted her case to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, citing serious concerns over her illegal arrest and continued isolation. Suu Kyi was jailed for 33 years under trumped up charges, a sentence reduced to 27 years.



Aung San Suu Kyi's son Kim Aris leads a run and event in London's Hyde Park to mark his mother's birthday, calling for her to be freed from custody. Photo: AFP

The Suu Foundation's statement also condemned the military junta's actions since the 2021 coup, including the arrests of President Win Myint, State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, thousands of National League for Democracy (NLD) members, civil servants, and journalists. The statement pointed to the regime's increasing violence, mass arrests, and disregard for democratic norms as evidence of the dismantling of Myanmar's democratic path.

In addition to Aung San Suu Kyi's case, the foundation and her legal team highlighted that over 100 civilians have been sentenced to death since the coup. They urged the international community to intensify pressure on the regime to uphold fundamental human rights and restore civilian rule.

The Suu Foundation marked her 80th birthday by framing her release as a vital step toward peace, justice, and national reconciliation in Myanmar.

CELEBRATION OF SUU KYI'S BIRTHDAY

Myanmar people marked Aung San Suu Kyi's 80th birthday as she remains isolated in prison in the country's capital.

On her 80th birthday, youth activists, resistance forces, and supporters across Myanmar and abroad staged symbolic tributes and protests, intensifying calls for her immediate release after 1,600 days in junta custody.

Despite tight surveillance, birthday vigils and spontaneous protests were held in Yangon, Mandalay, and Hpakant, where participants prayed for her health and freedom.

In Yangon, members of the Pyittinehtaung strike group staged a banner protest from a pedestrian bridge on Kabar Aye Pagoda Road with the message "80 Lo-

ves" to mark her 80th birthday.

"In Mandalay, we chanted for her release and for democracy. Armed struggle alone is not enough, we must mobilize through every channel," said a protest leader at the city's public gathering.

Similar prayers and protests were reported in Hpakant, with civilians gathering despite the heightened military presence.

The junta responded by deploying plainclothes officers and increasing vehicle patrols in central Yangon since 18 June, according to local witnesses.

In Mae Sot, Thailand, members of the NLD and pro-democracy groups held an alms-giving ceremony, released birds, and offered prayers at a local monastery. Meanwhile, 13 federal and state Hluttaw committees jointly issued a statement demanding the immediate and unconditional release of Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, citing her central role in Myanmar's democratic transition.

LONDON EVENT

Meanwhile, in London, Aung San Suu Kyi's son Kim Aris held a run and event in Hyde Park to celebrate his mother's birthday.

"It will be hard to be celebrating at the moment," said her 47-year-old son from the UK. "We've learned to endure when it's been going on so long."

He ran 80 kilometres (50 miles) over the eight days leading up to her birthday, and collected over 80,000 well-wishing video messages for his mother.

But Aung San Suu Kyi will not see them, sequestered in Myanmar's sprawling capital Naypyidaw from where the military directs a civil war against guerilla

fighters, many of whom took up arms in response to the toppling of her government.

Aris said he has heard from his mother only once via letter two years ago since she was imprisoned.

"We have no idea what condition she's in," he said, adding that he fears she is suffering from untreated medical problems with her heart, bones and gums.

Leaked logs of her daily routine indicate a sparse existence on limited food, one in which she gets up at 4:30, spends an hour meditating, walks around her cell for exercise, and punctuates this routine with reading.

EMBASSIES MARK THE EVENT

International embassies also marked Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday. The US, UK, and Norwegian embassies renewed their calls for her release and all unjustly detained individuals, urging the junta to cease violence and engage in dialogue. The embassies in Myanmar also changed their profile pictures to mark her 80th birthday and reiterated calls for her immediate release, along with all those unjustly detained.

The European Union, Germany, France, Italy, Finland, and Sweden changed their profile pictures to feature Aung San Suu Kyi and a rose in her honour, while the Indian Embassy sent a congratulatory letter and wreath to the shuttered NLD headquarters in Yangon. The Danish embassy posted a rose on social media in honour of the milestone.

This marks the fifth birthday that Aung San Suu Kyi has spent in detention since the February 2021 coup. Supporters at home and abroad continue to emphasize that her release is vital not only for justice but also for any future hope of national reconciliation and federal democracy in Myanmar.

Australian economic advisor Sean Turnell, who spent close to two years in junta custody, said the junta appears content to "wait it out" with Aung San Suu Kyi – but warned of consequences if she were to die in custody.

"There would be incredible anger in Burma," he said, adding that her death could push non-aligned people into resistance.

Her detention continues against a backdrop in which the National Unity Government (NUG) and a plethora of People's Defence Forces (PDF) and Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (ERO) continue to battle against the illegal military junta led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Myanmar's Spring Revolution seeks once and for all to oust the Myanmar military from power and bring in a federal democratic union, one in which the country's defence forces are subordinate to civilian government rule.

Aung San Suu Kyi remains an icon for freedom and democracy, even though the balance of power is shifting under the Spring Revolution.

Reporting: Mizzima, AFP, Guardian



KIA fighters. Photo: AFP

KACHIN STATE FEELS THE HEAT

The armed conflict in northern Myanmar's Kachin State has intensified in recent weeks, with mounting civilian casualties reported as junta troops advance into key resistance strongholds, particularly the jade-rich town of Hparkant.

According to local sources, a military column under the junta managed to enter Hparkant at the end of May. Since their arrival, at least 50 civilians have been killed and another 50 injured. Witnesses say troops are using civilians as human shields during their advance, and are reportedly executing anyone they suspect of supporting resistance forces.

"They're stationed at the monastery and shoot anyone they suspect," a Hparkant resident told the Kachin News Group, describing a recent killing in the town.

Most local residents have fled their homes, but those who remain — including some caretakers and individuals with no alternative shelter — face ongoing threats. Reports indicate that many who stayed behind, including drug users and vulnerable individuals, were arrested or shot by junta troops.

The military column has also begun targeting jade mining operations in the surrounding villages. Machinery has been torched and bodies of civilians with gunshot wounds have been found in the wake of the column's movements, local sources say.

Meanwhile, in Bhamo (Bhamaw), fighting between junta troops and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) has dragged on for over six months. Colonel Naw Bu, spokesperson for the KIA, told Mizzima that the majority of the town is now under their control. "Most of the civilian wards are in our hands — about two-thirds," he said. "Junta troops are confined to their compounds and unable to move around the town."

Resistance forces, led by the KIA, have seized several key military installations in the area, including armoured, artillery, and tank regiments. However, the junta still maintains control over the No. (21) Military Operations Command, the No. (47) Regiment, and four other battalions.

The KIA also reported that its forces shot down two MI-17 military helicopters on May 20 and 21, but no major offensives have taken place in Bhamo during June.



The junta prepares voting machines for their planned election. Photo: AFP

Fighting has also intensified in the Indawgyi region, where junta forces — supported by the pro-regime Shanni militia — are attempting to open a second front to retake Hparkant. However, the campaign has stalled.

A major confrontation took place near Sanwinkone village, where a junta column of approximately 400 troops has been pinned down by KIA-led resistance fighters for more than six weeks. The prolonged engagement underscores the military's difficulty in regaining lost territory amid coordinated resistance.

Election preparations underway

The junta-appointed Union Election Commission (UEC) has confirmed that preparations are underway for a general election, but has yet to announce a specific date. The planned vote, widely dismissed by opposition forces and pro-democracy groups as a sham, is being pushed forward despite the junta's limited territorial control and the absence of major political parties from the process.

Kyaw Kyaw Htwe, Secretary (1) of the People's Party (PP), told Mizzima that political parties permitted to compete in the election were recently instructed by the UEC to urgently collect membership data across townships. "They are planning to hold the election," he said. "But right now, our focus is on meeting our internal membership targets rather than the election itself."

The UEC had previously announced in April that the election would be held by the end of 2025, requiring parties to register by May 9. However, junta leader Min Aung Hlaing later stated that the election could take place between the third and fourth weeks of December 2025 or the first two weeks of January 2026 — a timeline that remains unconfirmed.

According to the UEC, 54 political parties have been granted permission to register for the upcoming election. However, more than 40 other parties, including the National League for Democracy (NLD) and the Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD), have refused to register, rejecting the junta's electoral process as illegitimate.



Indonesia was one of the countries that provided emergency aid for earthquake victims. Photo: AFP

Independent analysts and revolutionary groups assert that the military regime controls only 40 to 50 per cent of the country's territory, raising serious doubts about the feasibility and credibility of any nationwide vote.

Despite this, the People's Party, led by veteran politician Ko Ko Gyi, has begun outlining its political and economic platform for the upcoming election. The party has called for a national convention to amend the 2008 Constitution, advocating for a transition to a federal democratic system.

Meanwhile, state-controlled media report that the UEC is preparing to use polling machines for the segmented election process. The commission plans to move the machines from one township to another in phases, as instructed by UEC Chair Ko Ko during a recent internal meeting.

The junta's continued efforts to hold elections are widely viewed as an attempt to gain domestic and international legitimacy following the 2021 coup, though analysts warn that without inclusive participation and credible conditions, the planned vote risks deepening Myanmar's political crisis.

Difficulties in delivering humanitarian aid

As monsoon rains sweep across Myanmar, internally displaced persons (IDPs) in conflict-affected regions are facing dire humanitarian conditions, with rising risks of disease, inadequate shelter, and limited access to food, education, and healthcare.

In Rakhine State, particularly in Ponnagyun Township, IDPs are grappling with flooding and a growing threat of malaria. Many lack essential prevention tools such as mosquito nets and medication. "No donor for mosquito nets. Some can buy mosquito coils, but many cannot afford them and have to sleep without any protection," one IDP told local media. Another noted that mobile clinics have ceased to operate, leaving people to depend on traditional remedies.

Since June 15, heavy rains have flooded low-lying areas of Ponnagyun, where many displaced families are sheltering. Aid from the Arakan Army (AA) has been limited, and there is virtually no assistance

from the military junta. Local organizations, including the Ponnagyun Youth Association, are stepping in to relocate people and provide emergency food aid. "The motorways are flooded, motorcycles and cars cannot pass. Many homes are underwater," a youth association member told Narinjara. "We moved the IDPs to dry areas, but they're facing difficulties with shelter, food, and cooking facilities."

In Karenni (Kayah) State, IDPs are facing a different challenge — reopening schools for the new academic year. Most schools are run by local donors and the displaced communities themselves, but lack critical supplies. Teachers are calling for basic items such as stationery, curriculum books, and teaching materials, as well as building materials for makeshift classrooms.

"First, we need stationery and teaching supplies — tarpaulins, bamboo, and benches," a teacher told DVB. "We also need bunkers or trenches to protect children during airstrikes." These makeshift schools often require urgent repairs to withstand the seasonal weather and provide a safe learning environment.

In Karen State, more than 50,000 civilians have fled their homes since mid-May as clashes intensified between Karen resistance forces and junta troops along the Kawkareik and Kyondoe areas. The onset of the monsoon has worsened conditions for the displaced, who now suffer from a lack of clean drinking water, outbreaks of flu, and malaria, with inadequate access to medicine.

Local civil society groups and volunteers are working to provide support. "Some donors are contributing through online platforms," a local helper told Mizzima. "Friends and community networks are doing what they can to deliver food and essential items."



Medic Naw Gay struggles to recover from the attack.
Photos: Free Burma Rangers

KILLED AND WOUNDED SO THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE: KAREN MEDIC NEEDS ASSISTANCE

ANTONIO GRACEFFO

Naw Gay lay motionless on a thin mattress, her arms stiff and swollen, raw flesh exposed where the skin had burned away. One of her hands had already been amputated; the other was wrapped in heavy gauze, its condition uncertain. Her face was unrecognizable, wrapped in bandages stained with blood and ointment, only her swollen eyes and teeth, no longer covered by lips, visible through the layers. Her legs were twisted in pain, covered in deep, peeling burns from thigh to ankle. The small, darkened room offered no relief, just bare metal bunks, folded blankets, and the faint smell of smoke and antiseptic. There was no medical equipment in sight, no air-conditioning, only the searing memory of fire and the slow, agonizing wait to see if she would survive.

On March 8, 2025, three female Karen medics were horribly burned when the Myanmar Air Force dropped a firebomb on the Casualty Collection Point (CCP) where they were treating wounded civilians and soldiers during a battle in northern Karen State. One KNU medic died instantly, while twenty-five-year-old Naw Say Moo Paw of Free Burma Rangers (FBR) hung on, fighting valiantly for her life, before finally succumbing to her wounds two painful days later, on June 10th.

"Now she's with Jesus in heaven, and we are mourning her loss," said David Eubank, founder and leader of FBR. "We will do our best to help her family."

Dr. Mitch Ryan of Earth Mission knew one of the medics who died, affectionately calling her Wa Wa. "She worked with our frontline teams quite a bit." Reflecting

on this loss, which was felt deeply among the Earth Mission team, he said, "So others may live," explaining that this is the organization's motto. He went on to say, "Most every healthcare worker in this conflict is risking their lives for this reason." Lightening the mood slightly, he jokingly added, "Certainly it's not for the pay." The vast majority of medics and doctors across the entire conflict are unpaid or receive only a small stipend.

The third medic, 26-year-old Naw Gay, suffered severe burns to her face, head, arms, and legs. It took five days and the coordination of several organizations, including both FBR and Earth Mission, among others, to get her from the jungle to a hospital in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Over the next ten weeks, she underwent multiple surgeries and skin grafts. Dr. Mitch, with the Earth Mission team heavily involved in Naw Gay's treatment, wrote: "Some of those grafts failed. She still cannot close her eyelids or her mouth, which will have serious implications until addressed. She still cannot eat or walk on her own." After the hospital in Chiang Mai had done all it could, she was transferred to Mae Sariang. "Our team is visiting her every day. Her care now requires advanced reconstructive surgery and long-term rehabilitation," wrote Dr. Mitch.

Just months ago, Naw Gay stood proudly in traditional Karen dress, smiling alongside her fellow medics as she graduated from community health worker training. Today, she fights for her life, her body shattered by fire, the sole survivor of a Myanmar junta airstrike that killed two of her colleagues. Her left hand was amputated below the elbow, she lost part of the

fingers on her right hand and suffered severe burns across her entire body. The damage to her face was so extensive that she lost her eyelids, lips, nose, and left ear. She cannot speak because of a tracheostomy, but her clear, quiet eyes—peering from behind a thick mask of bandages—communicate one plea: “Help me live.”

Dr. Mitch, writing on behalf of Earth Mission, reflected on the sacred calling of healing that Naw Gay had dedicated her life to: “She is one of us, a healthcare worker injured while serving others in Myanmar. If someone asked me, ‘Who is your neighbour, the one you’re called to love as yourself?’ I would have to include Naw Gay. She has walked our same path. Her need is undeniable.” With a gentle nod, she gave permission to share her story and photos. “If I’ve read Jesus right,” Dr. Mitch wrote, “when love demands a response, that’s when a neighbour is born.”

The March 8 attack on the Casualty Collection Point (CCP) marked a clear and deliberate targeting of medical personnel by the Myanmar military. Naw Gay, the sole survivor, now faces a long and costly road to recovery. Both Free Burma Rangers (FBR) and Earth Mission have called for continued prayers and donations to support her urgent medical needs, while also drawing attention to the broader suffering inflicted on civilians and humanitarian workers across Burma.

Dr. Mitch wrote that Naw Gay’s treatment would cost around \$50,000. Just six days later, Earth Mission reported that thanks to rapid generosity from supporters around the world, the initial treatment goal had already been met. However, her care is far from over. As of late June, Naw Gay is scheduled to be admitted to Chiang Mai’s top teaching hospital, where she will undergo multiple surgeries and long-term rehabilitation, expected to take at least a year. This next

phase will be very expensive, and her family is unable to cover the costs.

The priority will be restoring her eyelids to protect her vision, followed by reconstructive work on her mouth to allow her to eat again. Additional surgeries will address facial reconstruction and functional recovery. Any funds beyond the initial goal will be used to cover this next phase, often the most difficult to fund, yet just as essential.

On June 14, FBR issued a heartfelt update:

“Dear friends, thank you so much for your prayers and generous support of Naw Gay...Because of your generosity, she now has the funds needed for the next round of treatment. Additional donations designated for Naw Gay will go toward her long-term care. We are so thankful to be able to provide this update on her journey.”

Dr. Mitch added, “We’re reaching out to everyone we can—friends, organizations, anyone who might help us stand with Naw Gay in this struggle.” The help received so far has been lifesaving. But Naw Gay still faces more surgeries and an extended recovery. The next stage is just as vital.

The help received so far has been lifesaving. But Naw Gay still faces more surgeries and a long, painful recovery. The next stage is just as vital—and your support can make it possible.

To contribute or learn more:

Donate: <https://earthmission-bloom.kindful.com/?campaign=1365478>

Email Earth Mission: earth@earth-mission.org

Email Free Burma Rangers (FBR): info@freeburmarangers.org



Naw Gay before the attack.



Naw Say Moo Paw before the attack.



The body of Naw Say Moo Paw.



Photo: AFP

63 FEMINIST GROUPS STAND WITH MYANMAR WOMEN AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE

On 19 June, a coalition of 63 feminist organizations released a joint statement titled "Solidarity Statement with Myanmar Women" to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The text of the statement continues below.

We stand in steadfast solidarity with people across areas affected by conflict, colonial violence and genocide-Palestine, Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Belarus, Tibet, Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, particularly in the Northwest, the Central African Republic, Syria, Kashmir, Ukraine, Haiti. We highlight the reality of our sisters in Myanmar, who sparked the initiative for this global campaign. These women, girls, and LGBTQI+ individuals continue to bear the brunt of militarization, oppression, gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict.

In Myanmar, women have been at the forefront of a powerful feminist movement, reclaiming their voices, politics, lands, and resources amid a four-year-long revolution against tyranny. Despite immense risks, they have defied a militarized society intent on silencing and erasing them, continuing to organize, lead, and resist. Their fight is not only against sexual and gender-based violence in conflict but also against the root causes of conflict and of militarized violence itself, incl. patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism, and (neo)colonialism.

Women in Myanmar face a systematic campaign of sexual violence and abuse perpetrated by the military junta and its affiliates. According to a 2024 report by the U.N. independent human rights investigator, the junta has intensified attacks on villages held by opposition groups, committing atrocities including beheadings, gang rapes, and torture, with women, children, and the elderly among the victims. The Women's League of

Burma (WLB) documented 492 cases of sexual assault against women between February 1, 2021, and June 2024, including at least 13 cases where women were raped and subsequently killed. Survivor testimonies from Sagaing, Chin, and Karenni regions reveal sexual violence as a deliberate tool of terror and control—an assault on dignity, bodies, and communities. Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) is a heinous crime that remains enormously under-reported; for every case that reaches official channels and is verified, countless others go unrecorded. As UNFPA noted, "for every survivor who is able to tell their story, there are thousands who will be forever silent," underscoring how only a tiny fraction of CRSV ever comes to light.

We also acknowledge the ongoing suffering of Rohingya women, who have endured decades of persecution, displacement, and systematic sexual violence at the hands of Myanmar's military. During the 2017 "clearance operations," humanitarian organizations working in refugee camps in Bangladesh reported receiving dozens, sometimes hundreds, of cases of sexual violence.

These atrocities include gang rapes, sexual slavery, and the brutal killing of women and children likely representing only a fraction of the true scale of abuse.

On this day of global remembrance and action, we call on the international feminist community to:

1. Join our campaign by wearing red lipstick and speaking truth to power wherever you are. Together, let us confront all forms of discrimination and violence against women.

2. Stand in solidarity with survivors of the sexual violence in Myanmar and all conflict-affected countries by emphasizing the importance of investing adequate

resources in holistic programs that extend beyond what official data suggests, and by adopting a survivor centered approach to rehabilitation.

3. Reject the Myanmar junta's sham election plans, designed to entrench military power under the illegitimate 2008 constitution. Do not legitimize the State Administration Council (SAC) or allow the military to weaponize aid by channeling humanitarian assistance through the SAC.

4. Demand justice and accountability by imposing consequences for human rights violations across Myanmar. Urge your governments to refer Myanmar's situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and support universal jurisdiction cases against perpetrators of sexual violence and other crimes.

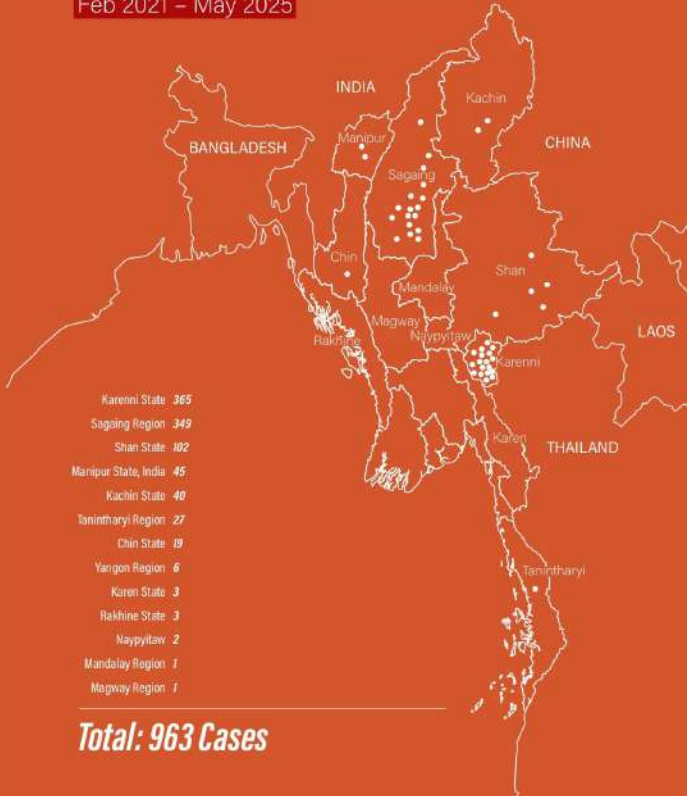
5. Support the resilience of Myanmar's women workers, farmers, feminist allies, young girls, LGBTQIA+ communities, and all youth who continue fighting the junta's brutality to end decades of impunity.

Today, we, the 63 undersigned organizations—including 6 individuals or groups who remain anonymous for security reasons—honor the sisters lost to violence and pledge to forge a safer path for all. We refuse to let sexual violence go unchallenged. United, we demand justice, dignity, and freedom for all women living in conflict-affected areas.

Speaking Truth to Power: Ending Military Impunity in Burma/Myanmar

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence & Gender Based Violence Data Mapping

Feb 2021 – May 2025



WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF BURMA REPORT CONDEMNS ONGOING MILITARY IMPUNITY

The Women's League of Burma (WLB) has released a powerful new report on 18 June titled *Speaking Truth to Power: Ending Military Impunity in Burma/Myanmar*, detailing the pervasive violence, sexual abuse, and systematic impunity perpetuated by the Myanmar military across decades of conflict.

The report draws from over 25 years of documentation and advocacy by WLB and its member organizations, highlighting persistent patterns of war crimes and crimes against humanity, particularly

against ethnic minority women. It traces atrocities not only to the post-coup period following the February 2021 military takeover but also to earlier military campaigns in ethnic regions such as Kachin, Shan, Karen, and Rakhine States.

WLB condemns the international community's failure to hold Myanmar's military accountable, pointing to repeated cycles of atrocity enabled by international inaction and lack of meaningful sanctions. The report makes clear that until there is justice and accountability, there will be no sustainable peace in Myanmar.

The document underscores the need to dismantle the military's grip on political power and to reform Myanmar's deeply flawed institutions. WLB calls for the complete removal of the military from governance, disbanding of the 2008 Constitution, and establishment of a federal democratic union based on ethnic equality and gender justice.

Importantly, the report also emphasizes women's leadership in resistance movements and calls for their meaningful inclusion in all levels of decision-making. The future of Myanmar requires truth, justice, and gender equality.

The report ends with a firm call to the international community: support grassroots justice efforts, apply coordinated sanctions, and refer Myanmar's situation to the International Criminal Court. Without concrete steps to end military impunity, WLB warns, the country risks further cycles of violence and instability.

Speaking Truth to Power serves as both an indictment of impunity and a vision for an inclusive and just future for all communities in Myanmar.

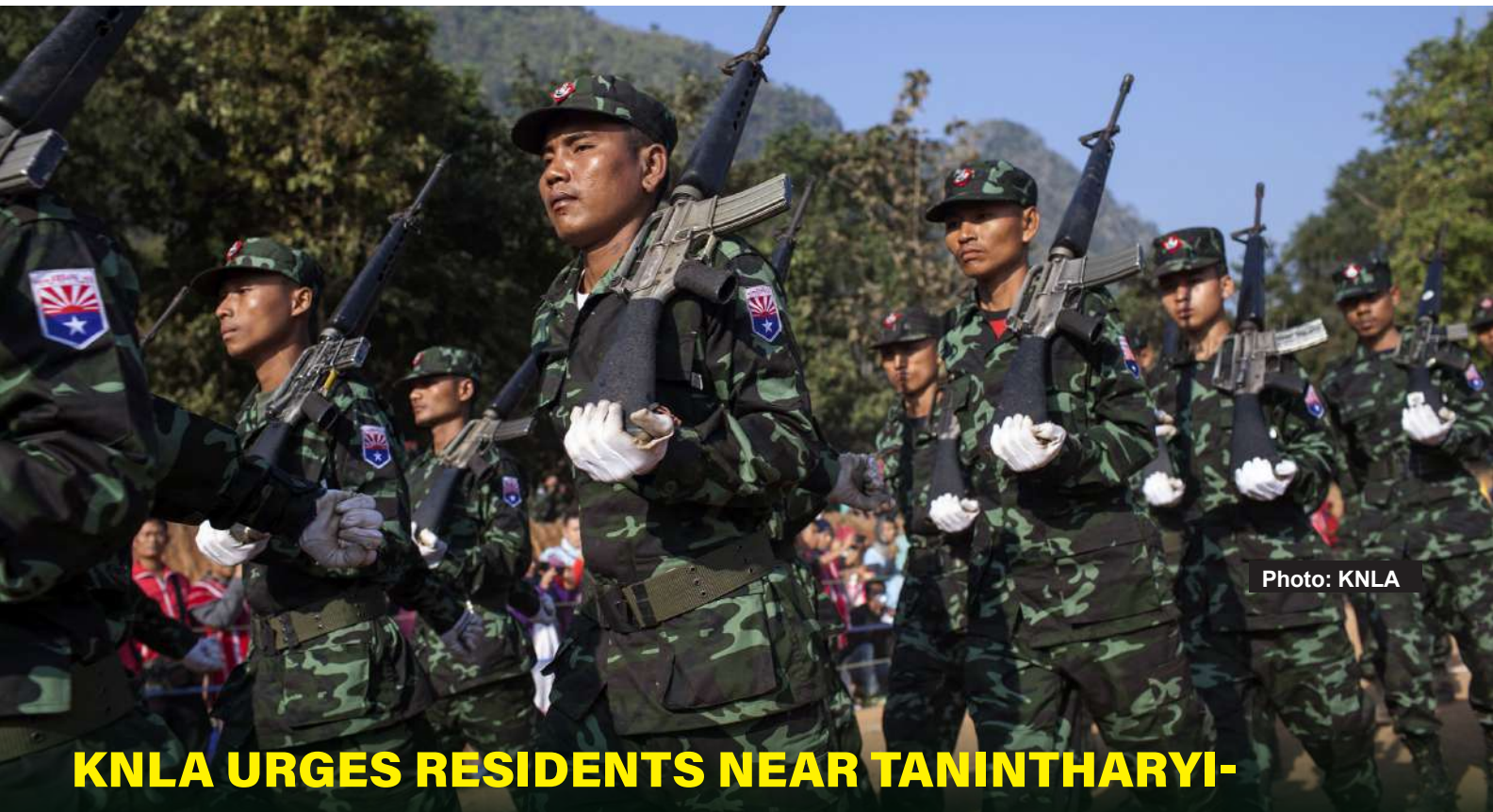


Photo: KNLA

KNLA URGES RESIDENTS NEAR TANINTHARYI-MAWTAUNG ROAD TO BUILD BOMB SHELTERS AS CONFLICT INTENSIFIES IN SOUTHERN MYANMAR

The Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) joint forces have urged civilians living along the Tanintharyi–Mawtaung border road to construct bomb shelters and take safety precautions, citing ongoing clashes and increased aerial assaults by the military junta.

According to a statement released on 18 June by the Black Cobra Column, the armed conflict between KNLA joint forces and junta troops has persisted for six months along this strategic route, which connects Myanmar and Thailand and serves as a major trade corridor.

The KNLA reported that junta forces have repeatedly shelled villages and launched airstrikes, targeting areas such as Chaung Hnit Pauk and Thein Khun. The bombings have displaced local populations, leaving communities in worsening humanitarian conditions, including limited access to healthcare, education, and livelihoods. While the statement confirmed civilian casualties, it did not provide specific numbers.

Black Cobra Column noted that junta aircraft carried out bombing raids on 17 and 18 June, despite no active clashes occurring on those days. In response, KNLA officials renewed their calls for residents to build shelters and remain alert.

“We’ve said this many times. If you must use the road, listen carefully for military updates before traveling, prepare safety gear, and dig bomb shelters. There were civilian casualties around Thein Khun, and some were previously even used as human shields,” an officer from the KNLA joint forces told Mizzima.

Fighting began in December 2024 when KNLA forces launched operations against junta movements aimed at rotating personnel at the Mawtaung border post, securing the Mawtaung–Thone Kha road, and arming Pyu Saw Htee militias in the region.

“The military column is still there. The situation is slightly calm today, but the war has dragged on and the people suffering are just locals,” the officer added.

During the months-long battle, the KNLA has reported ten of its troops killed and several wounded. The junta has also suffered losses, though no figures have been independently verified.

Junta forces are currently occupying schools, monasteries, and reinforced buildings in Chaung Hnit Pauk and Thein Khun, structures where civilians are no longer living and have converted them into temporary camps.



Photo: PLA

PLA SEIZES KANDAUNG POLICE STATION AFTER 17-DAY ASSAULT IN SAGAING REGION

Resistance fighters from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) captured the strategically located Kandaung police station at 6:40 am on 19 June, concluding more than two weeks of heavy combat along the Pale–Gangaw road.

The offensive began on 2 June and unfolded under near-daily airstrikes by military junta aircraft, according to a PLA press officer.

“We fought fiercely and secured victory despite being bombed every day,” the officer told Mizzima.

The police station sits about 14 miles from Pale town and guards the main route to villages such as Inmahtee and Zeephyukone, where the pro-regime Pyu Saw Htee militia maintains a presence. The PLA believes the outpost's fall will open access to those militia-held villages and weaken junta control in the area.

Throughout the battle, the junta launched at least 30 airstrikes but ultimately withdrew its roughly 100 troops from the base, the PLA said. The resistance group added that clearance teams are dismantling extensive minefields left behind.

“We have now captured the camp, which was heavily protected by landmines. The clearance work

is nearly complete,” said a PLA press and information officer.

On 11 June, during the assault, the PLA claimed to have shot down an F-7 fighter jet that attempted to bomb its positions. The junta disputed the account, attributing the crash to mechanical failure on a training flight.

The PLA has not yet released detailed casualty figures, or an inventory of weapons seized. However, the spokesperson acknowledged that several PLA fighters were killed or wounded, including some who triggered explosive devices. The junta is believed to have suffered heavier losses.

Clashes forced residents from about 20 nearby villages including Mintaingpin and Saparsayt to flee their homes.

Junta troops remain entrenched in Inmahtee and Zeephyukone, where fighting with National Unity Government (NUG) district battalions continues.

The PLA says it will publish a full report on casualties and captured armaments once post-battle clearance operations are complete.



Photo: Supplied

RIGHTS GROUPS WELCOME AIRBUS DIVESTMENT FROM CHINESE ARMS COMPANY LINKED TO SUPPLYING MYANMAR'S MILITARY

On 19 June, Justice for Myanmar and Info Birmanie issued a statement welcoming a decision by Airbus to divest from AviChina Industry & Technology Company Limited (AviChina). Airbus was the single largest international shareholder at 5.03% with its investment values at US\$140 million on 30 June 2024.

AviChina has been accused by rights groups of supplying the Myanmar military and abetting its campaign of air strikes against civilian targets across Myanmar since the February 2021 coup. The decision by Airbus marks a clear victory for rights groups in Myanmar.

The text of the statement continues below.

The divestment follows a broad-based campaign involving civil society organisations, strike groups, trade unions, protesters and individuals all over the world who pressured Airbus to use its leverage on Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) to end its business with the Myanmar military, or divest.

A September 2024 report by Justice For Myanmar and Info Birmanie exposed Airbus' significant investment in the AVIC publicly listed subsidiary, AviChina Industry & Technology Company Limited.

AviChina's products include the K-8 trainer/light attack aircraft and the Y-12 multi-purpose aircraft, both of which continue to be used by the Myanmar Air Force for indiscriminate airstrikes across the country.

Airbus completed its divestment from AviChina on April 1, 2025, and acknowledged it in financial information published for the three-month period ending 31 March. In an email response to Justice For Myanmar and Info Birmanie, a spokesperson of Airbus confirmed, "Airbus SE completed the sale of the entirety of its shares in AviChina Industry & Technology Company Limited, a subsidiary of Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC). Airbus does not have any equity investments in AVIC."

The company refused to comment further, citing a complaint currently pending at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the Netherlands regarding Airbus' business relationship with AVIC, filed by a Myanmar civil society organisation.

Airbus remains a significant investor in the Chinese aviation industry, despite China's well-documented strategy of military-civil fusion. As detailed in the Airbusted report, Airbus operates multiple legal entities in China, including joint ventures, in large part with AVIC and its subsidiaries.

Airbus' partnerships with AVIC-controlled companies are inconsistent with Airbus' human rights due diligence responsibilities, as companies operating under the oversight of AVIC continue to supply weapons – including military aircraft – to the Myanmar military. In doing so, AVIC risks aiding and abetting international crimes committed by the Myanmar military. It remains unclear to what extent, if any, Airbus has used its leverage over AVIC to challenge continued exports of weapons to the Myanmar junta.

Yet, under international standards on business and human rights – including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises – Airbus is expected to use its leverage to pressure AVIC to cease all business with the Myanmar military, or, if this is unsuccessful, to responsibly disengage from its partnerships with AVIC.

In Myanmar, indiscriminate aerial attacks have continued even as rescue workers searched for survivors following the devastating Sagaing earthquake that struck Myanmar in March 2025.

The Myanmar Air Force can wage its aerial campaign of terror only through the continued supply of aircraft and associated weapons, essential consumables and maintenance, repair and overhaul from foreign partners.

By investing in AviChina, Airbus was financially supporting and profiting from AviChina's continued development and marketing of military aircraft and the export of these aircraft to the Myanmar military.



Photo: Global Witness

SATELLITE IMAGES REVEAL ALARMING RARE EARTH MINING EXPANSION IN MYANMAR'S UWSA TERRITORY

Satellite imagery obtained by the Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) shows an eightfold increase in rare earth mining sites in the Mong Bawk area of northern Shan State, raising major environmental and geopolitical concerns.

Only three rare earth mines existed in the Mong Bawk region in 2015. By February 2025, SHRF reports that 26 sites now dot the hills south of the town, with some operations just 3–4 kilometres from populated areas.

These mines operate under the control of the United Wa State Army (UWSA) and reportedly employ the hazardous “in situ leaching” technique, involving chemical solutions to extract minerals directly from the earth, posing serious risks to local water sources.

Mong Bawk’s Pai stream, which runs through agricultural areas and alongside the town, is believed to be contaminated, affecting thousands of residents.

During September 2024 flooding triggered by Typhoon Yagi, runoff from mine sites inundated the town, with toxic floodwaters taking days to recede.

SHRF notes that the mining activity straddles both the Salween and Mekong River basins, meaning water pollution spreads within Myanmar and Laos, but not into China. The mines do not appear in any official permit lists released by Myanmar’s military junta, suggesting they operate under a bilateral agreement between the UWSA and Chinese interests, bypassing national authorities.

Mong Bawk, once a small farming village, has been transformed into a Special Development Zone by Chinese investment and was previously a hub for cyber scams before a 2023 crackdown.

The SHRF urges international attention to the unregulated mining boom and its devastating human and environmental impact.



DEVASTATION AND RESILIENCE: EYEWITNESS REPORT FROM QUAKE-HIT MYANMAR

A powerful earthquake that struck central Myanmar in late March has left a trail of destruction, grief, and heroic civilian effort in its wake. Reporting from the heart of the disaster zone, a Mohinga Matters journalist chronicles the chaos, loss, and resilience encountered on a perilous journey from Yangon to the quake-ravaged cities of Mandalay and Sagaing.

The report titled Myanmar Earthquake Reporting Diary details the devastation as well as local responses.

The quake caused widespread devastation across Mandalay and Naypyidaw, toppling buildings, damaging bridges, and overwhelming the already fragile infrastructure. The control tower at Naypyidaw airport collapsed, killing all inside, and major highways became impassable beyond mile 138. Local residents responded by improvised road warnings with branches and debris.

In Mandalay, rescue efforts unfolded under harrowing conditions. The collapse of the Sky Villa condominium became a symbol of both despair and hope. While Myanmar volunteers dug feverishly by hand, an international Chinese team provided technical support. One dramatic rescue saved a maid trapped under rubble, although the building's wealthy owner was not as fortunate.

Night after night, survivors and journalists alike slept in open fields, fearful of aftershocks. Aid efforts were led overwhelmingly by civilians, as the military remained conspicuously inactive or focused on restricting movement. A poignant scene unfolded in Sagaing, where a mother pleaded with foreign rescue teams to continue searching for her husband and children despite the danger.

Disaster compounded disaster when a violent thunderstorm destroyed makeshift shelters of quake victims. In its aftermath, military forces moved in—not to assist—but to clear the remnants, taking advantage of the storm to erase public encampments.

The journalist's final reflections are chilling: in Myanmar, survival depends less on official guidance and more on instinct and community. "We have every piece of equipment to kill people, but zero equipment to save lives," one social media post grimly summarized.

While the world's attention fades, survivors remain in ruin. Their endurance amid loss, fear, and neglect is a quiet but resolute act of defiance in a nation where the people, not the regime, continue to show up when it matters most.



Wai Moe Naing

MYANMAR POLITICAL PRISONERS, INCLUDING WAI MOE NAING, HELD IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AT OBO PRISON WITHOUT MEDICAL CARE

At least ten political prisoners including prominent Monywa strike leader and Monywa University Students' Union chair Ko Wai Moe Naing, have been placed in solitary cells inside Mandalay's Obo Prison and denied medical attention, according to the Political Prisoners Network-Myanmar (PPNM).

"The authorities deliberately separated them after beating them and have provided no treatment," PPNM spokesperson Ko Thaik Htun Oo told Mizzima on 17 June.

Wai Moe Naing and roughly 200 other detainees were moved from Monywa Prison before dawn on 12 June. Prison-monitoring groups say two armoured trucks, three vans and six 12-wheelers escorted the convoy out of Sagaing Region at about 5 am. The prisoners reached Obo Prison around midday and were reportedly assaulted at the gate.

PPNM believes the transfers are part of a wider military junta effort to isolate high-profile activists and quash growing resistance inside jails.

"They are picking out strike leaders, well-known political figures and anyone who has challenged prison

officers," Ko Thaik Htun Oo said, adding that the real number in isolation may be higher.

Family members and lawyers have so far been denied visits, and rights groups fear the lack of treatment could prove life-threatening. Wai Moe Naing, 29, is already serving a combined 74-year sentence on treason, murder and other charges handed down by junta courts.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners reports that, as of 17 June, 29,287 people have been arrested since the 2021 coup; 22,134 remain behind bars and 10,849 have been sentenced.

Activists are urging international bodies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, to demand immediate access to Myanmar's prisons and independent medical care for detainees.

Mizzima sought comment from the Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee on conditions inside Obo Prison but received no reply by 7 pm on 18 June.



Photo: Supplied

MYANMAR FLOOD SUBMERGES PONNGYUN IDP CAMP, DISPLACING OVER 1,000 AND TRIGGERING URGENT NEED FOR AID

Hheavy monsoon rains and runoff from nearby hills have submerged an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp with more than 200 households in Ponngyun Township, Rakhine State, displacing over 1,000 people and prompting urgent appeals for emergency assistance.

Flooding began on 16 June following continuous rain, and by 18 June, water levels had risen significantly in the camp area, which is located along a natural waterway.

A representative from the Ponngyun Youth Organization said the camp was overwhelmed by floodwaters coming down from the mountain, forcing families to flee without their belongings. The camp's residents have been living there for more than one and a half years after fleeing fighting between the Arakan Army and the military junta.

"When we went to inspect this morning, everything was gone—pots, bowls, blankets, bedding. People are now left with nothing," said a volunteer who visited the site. The displaced people are now in urgent need of shelter, food, clean water, and basic supplies.

As of the afternoon of 18 June, rain continued to fall in Ponngyun Township. The situation is still being monitored by local youth organizations, including Pauktaw Youth Organization.

According to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH), strong monsoon winds are

prevailing in the Bay of Bengal, with a low-pressure system developing near southwestern Bangladesh. Rainfall is expected to continue across Myanmar through the evening of 18 June, with heavy downpours likely in parts of Bago, upper Sagaing, and Tanintharyi Regions, as well as Rakhine, Kachin, Karen, Chin, and Mon States.

The DMH also warned that cumulonimbus clouds are forming in several regions and states, including Rakhine, bringing risks of strong winds, thunderstorms, lightning, and hail. Residents were advised to take necessary precautions.

The National Unity Government's Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management also issued a weather alert, stating that heavy rain is likely in Sagaing Region and Kachin, Shan, Rakhine, Karen, and Mon States on 21 and 22 June. It urged people living near rivers, dams, and reservoirs to closely monitor forecasts and remain alert to the dangers of flash floods or sudden inundation caused by dam releases or breaches.

Local humanitarian organizations say the affected families are currently sheltering in nearby elevated areas and require immediate assistance. They have called on humanitarian groups to respond swiftly before the weather worsens and access becomes more difficult.



MYANMAR JUNTA TROOP MOVEMENT IN SALIN TOWNSHIP SPARKS MASS DISPLACEMENT

Thousands of villagers in Salin Township, Sagaing Region, have fled their homes following the arrival of a junta column consisting of around 100 troops at Nyaung Pin Gyi village police station, according to local revolutionary forces.

The column entered the area via the Chindwin River from the Monywa side on the evening of 15 June, a member of the revolutionary forces reported. After disembarking, the troops inspected locals traveling to and from work at the Zin Yaw jetty in Nyaung Pin Gyi village before occupying a monastery overnight, according to the Young People Force (YPF).

On 16 June, the troops advanced into nearby Aung Chan Si village before returning to Nyaung Pin Gyi later that evening. By nightfall, the same forces were seen entering the premises of the Chinese-owned Wanbao company, reports said.

As the column moved through the area, thousands of residents from Nyaung Pin Gyi and surrounding villages including Ywar Shay, Thein Taw, Aung Chan Si, and Tan Taw Gyi—fled to safer locations to avoid potential violence.

“Some villagers have already left, and many others are preparing to flee if the situation escalates,” said a representative from the Anya Pa Taing Htaung Lay Myar group, a local humanitarian network.

The troops were observed again on the morning of 17 June moving between the police outpost in Htan Taw village and the Wanbao company compound.

According to Ko Lat Yar, a leader from the Young People Force, the operation may be part of a broader territorial clearance campaign in Salingyi Township.

“There have been no reports of arrests, killings, or arson so far. But if the column moves toward other areas, clashes could break out,” he warned.

Just over a month earlier, on 14 May, revolutionary forces clashed with junta troops stationed at the Nyaung Pin Gyi police station. The confrontation occurred after the junta soldiers were accused of extorting money from passing cargo trucks. The incident left one soldier and one resistance fighter dead.



OVER 800 STUDENTS MISS MATRICULATION EXAM RETAKE HELD AFTER MYANMAR EARTHQUAKE DESTROYS PREVIOUS ANSWER PAPERS

Students whose matriculation exam answer papers were destroyed in a fire triggered by the powerful 28 March earthquake are currently retaking the test across Naypyidaw, Mandalay, and Sagaing regions, and Kachin State. However, more than 800 students were unable to re-sit the exam, according to junta-released figures.

State-run newspapers reported on 17 June that 62,824 students sat for the retake held on 16 June—accounting for 98.67% of the total eligible candidates. The data indicates that of the 63,670 students registered to re-sit the exam, 846 students were unable to participate.

In Mandalay Region alone, 33,788 out of 34,241 students took the exam, leaving 453 students unable to re-sit, according to the junta's statistics.

Authorities previously announced on 22 April that only those who had completed all subjects in the original March exam would be allowed to re-sit. The list of eligible students was to be posted at relevant education offices and exam centres.

The devastating 6.0-magnitude earthquake on 28 March led to the collapse of Mandalay University's main building and triggered a fire that destroyed the answer sheets of 62,954 students from Mandalay, Sagaing, and Kachin State. Government offices and departmental buildings in Naypyidaw were also damaged or destroyed.

As a result, the re-examinations are being held from 16 to 21 June for affected students in the four regions.

However, student unions and civil society groups have criticized the junta's handling of the crisis. The Yangon University Students' Union (YUSU) stated on 14 April that forcing students from disaster-hit areas to retake the exam shows disregard for their hardships and living conditions.

Instead of pushing them to re-sit, YUSU argued that the education authorities should implement a more flexible approach, such as basing results on students' subject choices and intended university placements.



Photo: AFP

AMBASSADOR KYAW MOE TUN CALLS FOR GLOBAL ACTION ON HIV/AIDS IN MYANMAR

Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun, the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations, released a statement on 16 June at the UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on the Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS.

The text of the Ambassador's statement is as follows.

I also express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the "AIDS at a crossroads – progress report on the 2025 targets and strategic directions for future".

The "Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Ending Inequalities and Getting on Track to End AIDS by 2030", adopted on 8 June 2021, serves as a global political commitment which reaffirms international resolve to end HIV infections around the world. It identifies areas

of concern and offers platforms and means to provide international assistance, as well as to strengthen communities impacted by the infectious disease.

In the case of Myanmar, HIV has been recognized as one of the priority public health issues, alongside other issues such as tuberculosis and malaria.

Myanmar is one of the 35 countries that account for 90% of new HIV infections globally. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) had identified Myanmar as one of the six countries in Asia as a priority for the Global Fast Track Strategy to End the AIDS Epidemic by 2030.

The context of HIV/AIDS epidemic in Myanmar is highly based on development and poverty issues, and criminalization of sex work, homosexuality and drug usage are severe obstacles to its full elimination.

In this light, the elected civilian government of Myanmar adopted the National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS in 2016. The plan served as a guidance to respond to HIV at the national, state/regional and local levels, and articulated a strategy to optimize investments and building sustainable partnerships. Efforts then maintained to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS and prevent new infections.

However, deeper challenges in the implementation of HIV programmes have prevailed since the unlawful military coup attempt in February 2021.

Over past four years, the military junta's indiscriminate attacks including aerial and artillery attacks against civilians have heavily destroyed the medical and health care sector including health care facilities.

The country's health care system has been hollowed. People with HIV infections are extensively struggling for access to medication and vaccines.

Moreover, the recent devastating earthquake in March this year has further compounded the developmental, financial, economic and social regressions the people of Myanmar have been suffering since the coup.

According to the UNDP's latest report on Myanmar, even nearly half of the economic capital, Yangon, now lives in poverty.

Now, over 3.5 million people across Myanmar have been displaced. Over 20 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

For a fragile and a LDC like Myanmar, many patients including the people with HIV infections hugely rely on assistance from our development partners. Funding cuts have caused big impact on them.

Therefore, the shutdown of services and facilities, disrupted supply chain and suspension of civil society organizations in their work for advocacy and services

due to funding cuts also triggered immediate risks to the implementation of HIV programmes in Myanmar.

Therefore, hardships are visible in both delivery and receiving ends.

Mr. President,

To simply put, Myanmar saw hope to ending HIV/AIDS under the elected civilian government. Plans were laid out strategically and holistically. Coordination was managed to take place at all levels.

As much as these positive results were yield, it is regrettable to witness the current downward trend.

Based on the country's experience, we are of the view that good governance and a government that serves for the interest of its people are key requirements to an effective public health sector.

Clearly, to end HIV/AIDS as a public health threat in Myanmar, we must first stop the military junta from weaponizing humanitarian assistance and medical aids. In the same vein, we must end the military dictatorship and the unlawful military coup in Myanmar in its entirety for it is the root cause to Myanmar's crisis.

This can be done so by the international community taking concrete actions on the military junta. These include stop flow of weapons and jet fuel to the military junta, and meaningfully engage with right partners to implement the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report.

The Ministry of Health of the National Unity Government of Myanmar together with the ethnic resistance organizations and other relevant stakeholders have been working together in eliminating HIV/AIDS in Myanmar, including through raising public awareness.

Therefore, let us work hand in hand to let communities lead, end inequalities, end AIDS.



Junta soldiers taken prisoner by the Arakan Army.
Photo: AA

ARAKAN ARMY SNIPER KILLS MAJOR IN KYAUKPHYU; MYANMAR JUNTA LOSES CONTACT WITH 100 SOLDIERS

A mid-ranking officer from the junta was shot dead by an Arakan Army (AA) sniper shortly after arriving in Kyaukphyu, Rakhine State, on 9 June, according to a former army officer now aligned with the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM).

Major Win Thant, deputy battalion commander of Light Infantry Battalion 211, had just returned from delivering a report to his superior when he was targeted, said CDM Captain Zin Yaw.

"He was hit by a sniper on the same day he arrived. He had barely set foot in Kyaukphyu. He belonged to Batch 48 of the military academy and previously served at the Northern Regional Military Command under the Military Operations Department," Zin Yaw told Mizzima on 15 June.

His funeral took place at the battalion's base in Hlegu Township, Yangon, on 15 June. Major Win Thant, 39, was married to Police Sub-Inspector Daisy Win, who is stationed at Myitkyina Airport in Kachin State. Zin Yaw alleged she was notorious for using her husband's rank to extort money.

The major travelled to Kyaukphyu on 7 June from Yangon aboard a naval vessel carrying over 200 troops, six military trucks, and a large cache of weapons and ammunition.

Zin Yaw also reported that the junta has lost contact with a military column of around 100 soldiers operating in the area.

"There's been no communication with the column

for several days. We can't confirm if they've been killed or captured. Some intercepted communications suggest the troops may have surrendered, but the AA hasn't released any statement," he said.

According to military insiders and local informants, a growing number of junta soldiers have recently surrendered in Kyaukphyu amid escalating clashes. Entire battalions are reportedly laying down their arms, with many of the surrendering troops believed to be reinforcements sent from central Myanmar.

Heavy casualties have been reported near Min Tat Taung village close to Police Battalion 32, including the death of a battalion commander. The AA had earlier captured a deputy battalion commander (G1 level) along with other troops on 30 May.

Fighting flared again on 14 June near Pyaingsaykay village and along the road to Danyawaddy Naval Headquarters, particularly around Thitpottaung Junction.

In response to these setbacks, the junta has deployed over 1,000 additional reinforcements to Kyaukphyu via naval routes, according to local sources.

The Arakan Army now holds control over 14 towns in Rakhine State, including Ann, the site of the strategic Western Regional Military Command headquarters. AA forces are advancing on the final junta-controlled coastal towns – Sittwe, Kyaukphyu, and Manaung – in what appears to be a push to take full control of Rakhine.



KARENNI INTERIM COUNCIL CALLS FOR URGENT HUMANITARIAN AID AMID DISPLACEMENT CRISIS

On 16 June, the Department of Humanitarian and Rehabilitation under the Karenni Interim Executive Council released a statement appealing to the international community for urgent humanitarian relief and resettlement support.

The text of the urgent appeal is continued below.

Since early June 2025, the SAC (Military) has launched a major offensive in southern Shan State, heading towards Loikaw and Demoso towns in Karenni State through Moebye and Loipaw village tracts from the eastern side of Pekhon township. On this offensive, the airstrikes and artillery fire have resulted in civilian casualties, deaths, repeated human rights violations by the terrorist army, and have led to repeated forced displacement of civilians. Under the Karenni Interim Executive Council, the Department of Humanitarian and Rehabilitation and the Sub-Emergency Response Department of Home Affairs, in cooperation with civil society organizations and township administrations, are providing initial humanitarian response and relief support to civilians displaced by the conflict.

Even though the responses are carried out on time, the humanitarian assistance needs remain extremely high. On the other hand, the military has obstructed and controlled the delivery of humanitarian aid to the people, using conflict as a reason.

Therefore, the Department of Humanitarian and Rehabilitation sincerely urges the international community to recognize and empathize with the challenges faced by war-affected civilians and to extend further humanitarian support in ensuring the safety and food security of the people who are now in urgent need.

Information on civilians affected by the recent armed conflict

Since early June 2025, an estimated 40,000 people, comprising 7,000 households in (5) village tracts, have been facing armed conflict due to the offensive conducted by SAC in Moebye and the Eastern side of Pekhon Township, southern Shan State.

Basic Needs

Basic Food items

One month's food items for (40,000) displaced families affected by the war - USD (454,545)

Non-food items: Shelter

Tarpaulins (water-resistant or waterproof material) for temporary shelter construction - USD (331,439)

Personal Hygiene Items

For 40,000 people, Personal hygiene items such as soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, and feminine hygiene items- USD (248,091).



RIISING RISKS OF ROHINGYA INSURGENCY COULD UNDERMINE REGIONAL STABILITY, ICG WARNS

A new report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) warns that an emerging Rohingya insurgency targeting the Arakan Army (AA) could further destabilize Rakhine State, derail refugee repatriation efforts, and inflame communal tensions across the region.

The report, "Bangladesh/Myanmar: The Dangers of a Rohingya Insurgency," released on 18 June, outlines how Rohingya armed groups in Bangladesh's refugee camps have united and increased recruitment, framing their struggle as a religious "jihad" against the Arakan Army, which now controls nearly all of Rakhine State.

Following the AA's 2024 battlefield victories over Myanmar's military, Rohingya groups including Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) and the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) agreed to a truce in November and launched a campaign work together against the AA. Large rallies in refugee camps have attracted thousands, with religious leaders and local influencers encouraging youth to join the fight. Though violence in the camps has declined, the groups have grown in strength and popular support.

The report notes that unification of Rohingya armed groups and their growing legitimacy among desperate refugees could be a dangerous turning point. The development of a full-blown insurgency, even if militarily ineffective, would worsen conditions for Rohingya civilians caught in the crossfire.

The report highlights the complex role of Bangladeshi security agencies, which maintain ties with both Rohingya groups and the Arakan Army. Although Bangladesh's interim government under Muhammad Yunus has opened tentative talks with the AA, security forces appear to tacitly back armed Rohingya factions, seeing them as leverage to pressure the group into accepting repatriation.

Such a strategy, the ICG warns, could backfire. Any Rohingya insurgency would likely provoke a harsh response from the AA, damage prospects for dialogue, and deepen Rohingya isolation within Myanmar's Buddhist-majority society. It would also complicate international diplomacy and undercut refugee protection.

The report urges Bangladesh to curb militant activities in the camps and expand cross-border trade and aid to stabilize Rakhine State. The Arakan Army, meanwhile, must govern inclusively and begin meaningful dialogue with Rohingya communities. International donors are also urged to sustain humanitarian support amid growing aid cuts, especially from the U.S., to prevent despair from fuelling radicalization.

"Building trust among the three sides – the Arakan Army, the Rohingya and Bangladesh – will be crucial to averting a drift into further conflict," the report concludes.



STUDENT UNIONS DENOUNCE CRPH'S CIVIL SERVICE LAW TARGETING NON-CDM WORKERS

The All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) issued a strong rebuke on 15 June, rejecting the newly enacted Civil Service Law introduced by the Committee Representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), which targets government employees who did not participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM).

In its statement, the ABFSU argued that the law falls short of international standards and undermines both democratic values and revolutionary strategy. It also warned of the law's long-term political consequences.

The Civil Service Law, passed by the CRPH on 13 June, is part of its broader effort to establish a parallel administration opposing the military junta. The law aims to prosecute non-CDM personnel while honouring and compensating those who joined the CDM. It also nullifies promotions and civil service exam results granted during the coup and delegitimizes appointments made under the junta.

However, the ABFSU contends that the law misinterprets the core principles of the CDM, which it defines as a non-violent, voluntary movement born out of personal and moral conviction.

"Punishing those who didn't join the CDM disrespects the sacrifice of those who did," the statement said. "True CDM participants should be honoured not by punishing others, but by recognizing their courage and commitment."

The student union acknowledged that many civil servants have acted as instruments of oppression under

the junta. Still, it stressed that legal accountability must be based on specific actions or crimes committed—not on the mere failure to join the CDM.

The group further warned that the new law risks alienating those who might otherwise be persuaded to defect from the regime.

"A successful revolution depends on inclusive political strategy, building alliances, engaging neutrals, and even winning over former adversaries," the statement read. "This law contradicts those strategic imperatives."

The ABFSU also noted that even before the law's enactment, incidents of discrimination and retaliation against non-CDM civil servants and students were already widespread in revolutionary areas. Formalizing punitive measures through legislation, they warned, would escalate tensions and lead to further division.

While the CRPH claims the law aims to deliver justice and recognition for CDM participants, the ABFSU urged the revolutionary government to focus instead on unifying forces and adhering to democratic principles in its policies.

The CDM emerged in the wake of the 2021 military coup as thousands of civil servants, teachers, doctors, and other public sector employees walked off the job in protest. Many have faced arrest, dismissal, or death for their involvement.



CNF URGES CHIN RESISTANCE GROUPS TO SETTLE TERRITORIAL DISPUTES AND STAY UNITED AGAINST THE MYANMAR JUNTA

The Chin National Front/Army (CNF/CNA) has called on all revolutionary forces in Chin State to resolve territorial disputes peacefully and focus on the shared goal of overthrowing the Military Council.

“Our goal is to overthrow the Military Council, not to fight over land. During this period, groups should move freely in and out of each other’s areas without encroachment or clashes,” CNF/CNA spokesperson Salai Htet Ni told Mizzima on 19 June.

His remarks came in response to a joint statement issued the same day by 18 Chin organizations, urging armed groups to preserve unity and rebuild Chin State together after the revolution. The statement warned that frequent clashes between Chin resistance groups, and efforts to settle disputes through violence, could delay or even derail the success of the revolution.

The signatory groups urged Chin revolutionary organizations to avoid misunderstandings, reject misconduct, and focus on the common enemy. They emphasized that territorial and ethnic issues in Chin State should be addressed politically after the fall of the junta.

Tensions have already escalated in several areas. In Falam Township, a dispute between the Chin National Organization/Chin National Defense Force (CNO/CNDF) and the CDF-Hualngoram faction has created military strain. Clashes have also erupted between the Chin National Army (CNA) and the Chin Defense Force – Kanpetlet (CDF-Kanpetlet) in Kanpetlet Township.

Salai Htet Ni acknowledged that township-based, local, and administrative groups formed during the

Spring Revolution have played important roles but also contributed to disputes over authority and territorial recognition.

Across Chin State, groups such as the Zanniatram CDF and CDF-Hualngoram have been formed to protect ancestral lands. In Thantlang Township, groups like the Chin Defense Group – Thantlang and the Sethang Army operate alongside others. Hakha Township is home to the CDF-Hakha and local defense groups including Mara, Lauk Tu, and Zofei.

Without any functioning constitution such as the suspended 2008 charter, Chin State has reverted to a pre-independence state. The original nine-township system has proven inadequate, with some ethnic groups divided across multiple jurisdictions. Many now seek reunification and a new administrative structure that better represents their identities.

Chin revolutionary leaders point out that in Falam Township alone, twelve different ethnic groups reside, making past township borders impractical for modern governance.

Despite differences, the CNA spokesperson noted that both the Chin Brotherhood (CB) and Chinland Council (CC) remain committed to the same objective. He said the groups differ only in strategy and continue to work together in the fight against the Military Council.

He emphasized that any territorial disputes must be resolved through political dialogue, mutual trust, and a roundtable approach - not through conflict.

Salai Htet Ni also stressed the importance of striking a balance between military strength and political legitimacy, reminding all groups to stay rooted in the people’s needs and aspirations.

To help mediate tensions, a negotiation team led by the Chief Minister of Mizoram, India, has been facilitating dialogue between the Chin Brotherhood and the Chinland Council. While initial agreements have been reached and on-ground tensions eased, discussions are still ongoing.

The joint statement from the 18 groups affirmed that the Military Council, having seized power from the people, must be dismantled. It pledged support for all Chin forces working to establish a genuine federal democratic union, protect the Chin homeland, and achieve full self-determination.

Mizzima has not yet received a response from the Chin Brotherhood regarding the joint statement.

Among the 18 signatories such as Zotung Federal Council, CDF Zotung, CDF – Matupi, CDF – Kalay, CDF – Hakha Central Council, CDF – Thangtlang, Lautu Region People Administration (CDF – Lautu), Zopheiram Council (CDF – Zophei), Maraland Council (CDF – Mara), Paletwa Council (CDF – Paletwa), Mindat Council, Senthang Central Council – SRF, Tedim Township Council (PDA), Thado Council (CDF – Thado), Tonzang Township Council (CDF – Tonzang), Siyin Regional Council (CDF – Siyin), Kanpetlet Council, CDF – Zanniatram, and CDF – Hualngoram. All are current members of the Chinland Council.



HRW SAYS MYANMAR JUNTA SENDING CHILD RECRUITS TO MILITARY TRAINING AND THE FRONTLINES

On 20 June, Human Rights Watch (HRW) issued a press release calling attention to the recruitment and training of children as part of the Myanmar junta's drive to recoup military losses. Many have already been sent to the frontlines of the ongoing conflict. The use of child soldiers by the junta's military is part of a pattern of violations of children in armed conflict in Myanmar.

The text of HRW's press release continues below.

The Myanmar military's recruitment and use of child soldiers has surged since the 2021 coup, including a significant number recruited after the junta enacted a conscription law in February 2024, Human Rights Watch said today. On June 19, 2025, the United Nations Secretary-General reported that the UN had verified 2,138 grave violations against children in armed conflict in Myanmar in 2024, including recruitment of children, with about 1,200 additional violations pending verification.

Since the coup, the UN has verified over 1,800 cases of recruitment of children as young as 12 by junta and affiliated forces, though noting that "cases are likely significantly underreported due to monitoring challenges and the fear of retaliation." Local civil society groups and opposition activists told Human Rights Watch that child soldiers have been found among captured combatants and military defectors. Military recruiters have abducted or opportunistically recruited children when unaccompanied, displaced, or working,

and then concealed or failed to verify their ages. The military has sent children to the front lines and used them as guides, porters, and at times as human shields.

"The Myanmar military has a long and appalling history of using children as porters, guides, and in combat roles," said Shayna Bauchner, Asia researcher at Human Rights Watch. "The junta should immediately stop using child soldiers and cooperate with UN officials to release all child recruits from their forces."

The Myanmar junta is the sole state actor listed by the UN Secretary-General for five grave violations against children in armed conflict: recruiting and using child soldiers, killing and maiming, sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, and abduction. This annual listing of state forces and non-state armed groups is commonly known as the "list of shame."

"I'm shocked at the level of violence endured by the children of Myanmar and by the sharp increase in grave violations committed by all parties to the conflict, in particular by the Myanmar Armed Forces," Virginia Gamba, the UN special representative of the secretary-general for children and armed conflict, said in April.

Fighting between Myanmar junta forces and alliances of anti-junta and ethnic armed groups has escalated throughout the country since late 2023. In February 2024, the junta activated the 2010 People's Military Service Law, enabling the conscription of men ages 18 to 35 and women ages 18 to 27 for up to five years during the current state of emergency. Although

excluded under the law, children have been increasingly swept up in conscription drives as the junta has faced growing losses of troops and territory.

The military has reportedly recruited 14 batches of conscripts since April 2024, totaling an estimated 70,000 based on its plans for 5,000 per batch. The Myanmar Defense and Security Institute, an independent research group run by military defectors, reported that underage recruitment has increased since the seventh batch, along with abusive conscription tactics such as abducting young men and boys and detaining family members of missing conscripts as hostages.

Two recent military defectors told Human Rights Watch that children have been recruited in growing numbers due to rising pressure from senior leaders to meet conscription quotas, as well as a lack of clear instructions and oversight across the chain of command. An unknown number of young men have fled the country to escape conscription.

The Myanmar Defense and Security Institute documented 23 child recruits, including some as young as 15, from among three rounds of conscription being trained at four separate camps, based on camp rosters and accounts from military trainers.

Military recruiters have deliberately falsified or ignored children's ages. In some cases, children lacked identity documents or were taken when adult relatives on conscription lists were not found.

A 17-year-old boy told local media that he was abducted late at night in September 2024 on his way home from work in Yangon. He was taken to an immigration office where officials issued him a National Registration Card stating that he was 19, despite his insistence on his correct age and date of birth. He trained for three months and was sent to Brigade 101 before managing to desert.

The military's recruitment methods have disproportionately targeted the urban poor, displaced people, people without documentation, and ethnic and religious minorities, including Rohingya Muslims. The junta has unlawfully recruited thousands of stateless Rohingya, who cannot be conscripted under Myanmar law because they are denied citizenship.

Since the coup, the military has recruited children across all 14 states and regions, compared with only 4 previously. Junta forces have also abducted and tortured children for alleged association with opposition forces.

Children have been among the combatants captured by anti-junta and ethnic armed groups.

An official from the Karenni Interim Executive Council, which governs opposition-controlled Karenni State, said that they captured at least three soldiers who were 17 when they were recruited by the junta. One had been abducted, while the other two were recruited when separated from their families – one had run away from home and the other was working.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) reported in September 2024 that families in Myanmar increasingly resort to child labor to keep their children from being recruited. "Children who are near or of recruitment age live in fear, not only of being forced into military service but also of being used in violent actions against those opposing the military," the ILO reported in March 2025.

In June, the ILO invoked the rarely used article 33 of its constitution in response to Myanmar's failure to comply with its recommendations, including "to end any forced recruitment into the military, including the forced recruitment of children."

In 2012, the Myanmar military signed a joint action plan with the UN to end recruitment and use of children. On February 6, 2025, the junta defense minister said the military had released 1,057 child soldiers to their families since the plan was signed. On March 19, the UN announced that the Myanmar military had released 93 people recruited as children.

The UN Secretary-General also listed seven non-state armed groups in Myanmar for recruiting and using child soldiers. An adviser to the opposition National Unity Government said that there are many child soldiers within resistance-controlled areas, some of whom volunteered to join the opposition.

In September 2019, Myanmar ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which establishes 18 as the minimum age for direct participation in hostilities and prohibits any forced recruitment or conscription of children under 18. The 2007 Paris Principles, which Myanmar has endorsed, prohibits the use of children as porters, cooks, messengers, or for sexual purposes. Myanmar's 2019 Child Rights Law also forbids recruiting anyone under 18 into the armed forces or non-state armed groups.

"Concerned governments with influence over the junta or opposition forces in Myanmar should urge the end of this harrowing exploitation of children," Bauchner said. "Donors should work with local groups to provide support and rehabilitation for all child victims in Myanmar."



Photo: AFP

UNICEF WARNS OF ONGOING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS OVER 2 MONTHS AFTER DEADLY EARTHQUAKE

On 16 June, UNICEF Myanmar released Flash Update No. 15 to provide an overview of the humanitarian situation in the more than two months since the 28 March 2025 earthquake. The update outlines the continued humanitarian needs of over 500,000 affected people, including those displaced and living in unsafe shelters.

The following is the text of the UNICEF Flash Update.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

More than two months after the devastating M7.7 earthquake struck Myanmar on 28 March 2025, humanitarian conditions remain dire. As of 13 June, official figures indicate at least 3,745 fatalities, 61 missing persons, and 5,104 injuries. More than 506,000 people have been affected, including 18,200 displaced persons in 103 evacuation centres and over 265,000 sheltering with relatives. The earthquake damaged or destroyed nearly 52,000 homes, 2,604 schools, 789 hospitals, and thousands of religious and public buildings. Economic losses are estimated at US\$1.7 billion, with further assessments ongoing.

In Mandalay and Sagaing, the epicenters of the disaster, thousands of families remain in overcrowded and unsafe shelters with limited protection from extreme heat, heavy rains, and strong winds. Inadequate drainage and sanitation have already resulted in outbreaks of acute watery diarrhoea and skin infections, increasing concerns of cholera, malaria, and dengue, particularly with the early onset of the monsoon season. Returnee communities continue to rely on damaged or non-functional infrastructure.

Despite ongoing humanitarian efforts, approximately 74 per cent of the most severely affected townships have yet to receive adequate shelter assistance, hindered by access challenges, funding shortfalls, and constrained operational capacity. Gaps persist across key sectors—WASH, health, child protection, nutrition, and education—underscoring the need for urgent, sustained, and flexible funding to restore basic services and protect the dignity and well-being of earthquake-affected communities.



ADB President Masato Kanda

ADB APPROVES \$100 MILLION HUMANITARIAN AID PACKAGE FOR MYANMAR

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced on 17 June that it has approved a US\$100 million grant to provide humanitarian assistance in Myanmar, marking the largest such aid package ever allocated by the bank for the country.

“This \$100 million aid package, the largest grant for Myanmar people, will support long-term livelihoods, jobs, and community resilience while providing food, water, shelter, and medical care to families in need,” said ADB President Masato Kanda in the statement.

The assistance will be distributed through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the World Food Programme (WFP), in collaboration with regional partners, according to the ADB.

The bank also noted it had earlier provided \$3 million in emergency relief assistance following the devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck

central Myanmar on 28 March, killing at least 3,770 people and affecting hundreds of thousands more.

According to ADB estimates, humanitarian needs in Myanmar have increased significantly from 4.3 million people requiring aid before the earthquake to approximately 6.3 million afterward.

The newly approved \$100 million package will support the provision of emergency shelter, water and sanitation services, food, critical health supplies for women, and trauma counselling to address the country’s urgent needs.

Myanmar continues to face mounting humanitarian challenges, with an estimated 3.5 million people displaced nationwide due to ongoing conflict and frequent natural disasters, according to a 23 May statement by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).



BIRTHDAY WISHES FOR AUNG SAN SUU KYI SURPASS 80,000 AS CAMPAIGN EYES GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

Birthday greetings for State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who remains in detention under the military junta, have surpassed 80,000 submissions, according to Ko Klo Say Htoo, a participant in the "Suu 80 Birthday Campaign," speaking to Mizzima.

"The required number of video messages has now been reached. However, they may be rejected if there are duplicates or if they don't meet the requirements such as the inclusion of the words 'Happy Birthday Suu' or the correct duration, so we will continue accepting submissions," he said.

The campaign marks Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 80th birthday on 19 June, with video submissions being accepted until 11 pm British Standard Time on 19 June, and until 4 am Myanmar time on 20 June. Despite one day left before the deadline, the number of messages has already reached the campaign's target.

"At this rate, we expect to receive over 100,000 birthday messages in total," Ko Klo Say Htoo added.

The campaign team also urged participants not to wait until the last minute to submit their videos. The Guinness World Records is expected to announce in the coming days whether the campaign will officially

set the world record for the largest collection of birthday greetings.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's son Kim Aris, along with revolutionary artists and activists, has played a central role in gathering the video messages. The current record stands at over 32,000 greetings, set in 2016 by an Indian religious leader. The "Suu 80 Birthday Campaign" has already exceeded that total.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former head of Myanmar's civilian government, has been sentenced to multiple long-term prison sentences under a range of charges filed by the military junta, including under the Anti-Corruption Law, Telecommunications Law, Natural Disaster Management Law, and the Official Secrets Act.

On 14 June, the Myanmar Bar Council released a statement calling for her immediate release, calling her continued detention a violation of the 2008 Constitution.

Since the 2021 military coup, 29,287 people have been arrested, with 22,134 currently in detention and 10,849 sentenced, according to data from the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) as of 17 June.



Photo: AFP

13 FEDERAL AND STATE HLUTTAWs IN MYANMAR CALL FOR AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S RELEASE AHEAD OF 80TH BIRTHDAY

Thirteen committees representing federal and state Hluttaws have issued a joint statement demanding the immediate release of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, emphasizing her vital role in the country's democratic transition and the establishment of a future federal union.

The statement, released on 17 June to mark Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's upcoming 80th birthday on 19 June, was signed by the Sagaing Federal Unit Hluttaw, Tanintharyi Region Hluttaw, Magway Federal Unit Hluttaw, Yangon Region Hluttaw, Ayeyarwady Region Hluttaw, and representative committees of the Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, and Shan State Hluttaws, as well as Bago and Mandalay Region Hluttaws.

"Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is the most fundamental person who plays a key role when it comes to the coordination of agreements. In other words, she is a vital person," said U Kyaw Zin Oo, a representative from the Yangon Region Hluttaw.

The joint statement underlined that implementing the people's aspirations for a democratic federal union requires the inclusive participation of all ethnic groups,

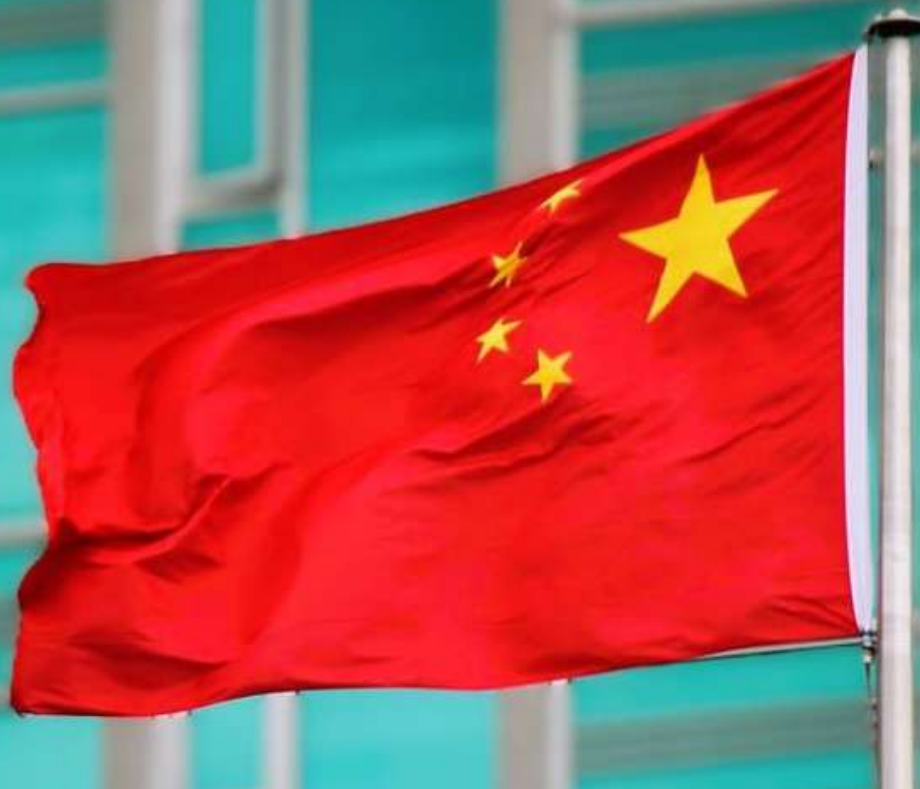
organizations, and relevant stakeholders. It emphasized that progress toward these political goals is impossible without a process approved by key players, including ethnic leaders.

Central to achieving that goal, the statement said, is the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a figure widely trusted and respected by the public.

The 13 Hluttaw committees also expressed concern over the deteriorating situation in the country since the 2021 military coup, stating that people across the nation are facing severe hardships due to the junta's unlawful actions. They warned that the future of the Union is now in a state of deep uncertainty.

Echoing this call, the National League for Democracy (NLD) issued a statement on 10 June marking Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 80th birthday, declaring her release as a crucial agenda item for the nation's future.

Following the February 2021 military coup, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was convicted on 19 charges and sentenced to a total of 33 years in prison. A partial pardon issued in August 2023 reduced her sentence to 27 years.



CHINA'S STRATEGIC GAME IN MYANMAR: BENEFITING FROM CHAOS

SUN LEE

China has been playing a calculated double game in Myanmar, supporting both the military junta and several armed rebel groups to safeguard its long-term strategic interests. This approach ensures that Beijing retains influence over Myanmar's evolving political landscape while securing its critical infrastructure projects, particularly those related to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). At the heart of China's ambitions lies its desire to access the Indian Ocean through Myanmar, reducing reliance on the Strait of Malacca, a vital but vulnerable trade route.

Since Myanmar's military seized power in the 2021 coup, China has maintained close ties with the junta, despite widespread international condemnation. Beijing has offered diplomatic and economic support to General Min Aung Hlaing's regime, ensuring that Myanmar remains within its sphere of influence. This relationship is driven by several strategic considerations, with border security being one of the most significant.

Myanmar shares a long border with China's Yunnan province, and Beijing prioritizes stability in the region to prevent unrest from spilling over into Chinese territory. By cooperating with the junta, China minimizes the risk of cross-border conflicts and refugee influxes that could destabilize its south-western frontier.

Economic interests also play a key role in Beijing's engagement with the junta. China has invested heavily in Myanmar's infrastructure, particularly through the Belt and Road Initiative, with key projects such as the Kyaukphyu deep-sea port and the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. These investments are crucial for China's trade routes and its broader geopolitical ambitions. Furthermore, Beijing's support ensures that Western powers struggle to gain influence in Myanmar, allowing China to shape the country's political and economic landscape without external interference. By backing the junta, China consolidates its presence in the region while maintaining control over Myanmar's future trajectory.

China has strategically engaged with various ethnic armed groups in Myanmar's border regions, ensuring it maintains significant influence over the country's political landscape. Many of these militias have historical ties to China, particularly those that originated as communist factions. While Beijing officially presents itself as neutral, its involvement with these groups allows it to counterbalance the military junta's dominance and reinforce its own geopolitical leverage. One major aspect of China's influence is its alleged facilitation of arms and trade for rebel factions. Reports indicate that China supplies weapons to certain ethnic militias, enabling them to sustain their operations and exert pressure on the junta. By doing so, Beijing ensures Myanmar remains embroiled in conflict, preventing the central government from consolidating power in a manner that could threaten China's interests.

Beyond military support, China's backing of these groups also secures its economic ambitions. Many ethnic militias control critical border territories that serve as essential transit routes for trade and infrastructure projects linked to the Belt and Road Initiative. Maintaining influence over these regions allows China to dictate terms of economic access, ensuring that its trade routes remain functional without external interference. Additionally, Beijing has played a significant role in Myanmar's conflict dynamics, encouraging ceasefires when advantageous. China exerts diplomatic pressure on both sides, halting fighting when necessary to protect its own assets and investments in the region. This calculated interference enables China to shape Myanmar's internal power structure, ensuring the country remains aligned with Beijing's broader strategic goals. By playing both sides, China strengthens its grip on Myanmar while keeping Western influence at bay.

A primary motive behind China's manoeuvres in Myanmar is its need for a reliable route to the Indian Ocean. Currently, China's maritime trade heavily depends on the Strait of Malacca, a narrow passage between Malaysia and Indonesia. This route is strategically vulnerable, as it is monitored by the U.S. and allied naval forces, making China's trade flow susceptible to geopolitical disruptions.

Myanmar offers an alternative. The Kyaukphyu port project in Rakhine State provides China with a direct route to the Indian Ocean, enabling it to bypass the

Malacca chokepoint. Additionally, the Sino-Myanmar pipelines transporting oil and gas from the Bay of Bengal to Yunnan province underscore China's determination to secure a land-based corridor for energy imports.

While China advances its interests, Western nations have largely been preoccupied with crises elsewhere, such as Ukraine and Gaza. This lack of sustained engagement has allowed Beijing to cement its position in Myanmar unchallenged. International humanitarian aid has been insufficient, leaving Myanmar's pro-democracy forces at a disadvantage.

Moreover, China's efforts to shape Myanmar's future extend to influencing political outcomes. It has pushed for elections under the junta's rule, which would effectively legitimize General Min Aung Hlaing's leadership while maintaining Chinese influence over Myanmar's governance.

Rather than seeking outright victory for any faction, Beijing benefits from Myanmar remaining in a state of prolonged instability. A frozen conflict ensures that Myanmar remains reliant on China for mediation, trade, and security arrangements. This strategy solidifies Beijing's grip on Myanmar, allowing it to dictate the terms of economic and political engagement.

China did not create Myanmar's civil war, but it is certainly benefiting from it. By playing both sides, Beijing safeguards its ambitions while preventing Myanmar from becoming a Western-aligned democracy. As long as global attention remains elsewhere, China's double game in Myanmar will continue, shaping the future of the region in ways that favour Beijing's geopolitical designs.

Sun Lee is the pseudonym for a writer who covers Asia and geopolitical affairs.



Adversaries US President Trump and Iranian leader Ali Khamenei. Photos: AFP

CHINA HOSTS IRAN, RUSSIA DEFENCE MINISTERS AGAINST BACKDROP OF 'TURMOIL'

China hosted defence ministers from Iran and Russia for a meeting in its eastern seaside city of Qingdao on Thursday against the backdrop of war in the Middle East and a summit of NATO countries in Europe that agreed to boost military spending.

Beijing has long sought to present the 10-member Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) as a counterweight to Western-led power blocs and has pushed to strengthen collaboration between its member countries in politics, security, trade and science.

The Qingdao meeting of the organisation's top defence officials comes as a fledgling ceasefire

between Israel and Iran holds after 12 days of fighting between the arch-foes.

It is also being held the day after a summit of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) leaders in The Hague, where members agreed to ramp up their defence spending to satisfy US President Donald Trump.

Beijing's ties with Moscow are also in the spotlight.

China has portrayed itself as a neutral party in Russia's war with Ukraine, although Western governments say its close ties have given Moscow crucial economic and diplomatic support.

Russian Defence Minister Andrei Belousov painted a bleak picture of a world seeing "worsening geopolitical tensions" when he addressed his counterparts at the meeting.

"The current military and political situation in the world remains difficult and shows signs of further deterioration," he said, according to a Russian defence ministry statement.

His Chinese counterpart Dong Jun also framed Thursday's meeting in Qingdao, home to a major Chinese naval base, as a counterweight to a world "marked by intertwined turmoil and changes".

"It is all the more important for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to play its role as an anchor of stability," he said, according to state news agency Xinhua.

Backing for Iran?

Recent fighting between Israel, Iran and the United States was also likely discussed in Qingdao.

Beijing refrained from offering anything more than diplomatic support to its close partner Tehran throughout that conflict, reflecting its limited leverage in the region and reluctance to worsen relations with the United States.

"Public backing for Iran will come in the form of words, rather than deeds," James Char, an expert on the Chinese army at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, told AFP.

"Other than condemning the US strikes on Iran, Beijing can be expected to continue treading cautiously

in the Middle East's security issues and would not want to be dragged into the region's security challenges," he said.

Iran's defence minister will likely "discuss with China the supply of weapons but I doubt China would agree", said Andrea Ghiselli, an expert in China foreign policy and a lecturer at Exeter University.

"It would be seen as provocative by both Israel... and, even more important for China, the US, with which Beijing is trying to stabilise relations," Ghiselli said.

India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, also in attendance in Qingdao, said SCO members should "collectively aspire to fulfil the aspirations and expectations of our people as well as tackle today's challenges".

"The world we live in is undergoing a drastic transformation. Globalisation, which once brought us closer together, has been losing momentum," he said in comments his office posted on social media.

AFP



A NATION INTERRUPTED

“Change will come,” Nicholas Coppel tells the Insight Myanmar Podcast. “We don’t know when, we don’t know how, but it will come eventually, and I hope that there are enough people around the world with that interest and passion for Myanmar that will help it re-engage with the international community and re-engage with the country so that it can rebuild itself in better times in the future.”

Nicholas Coppel’s experiences and insights regarding his diplomatic service in Myanmar offer a unique perspective on the complex interplay of governance, military influence, and international engagement during pivotal moments in the country’s modern history. Serving as Australia’s ambassador to Myanmar from 2015 to 2018, his tenure coincided with significant events, including the historic 2015 elections, the subsequent transfer of power to the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi, and the evolving challenges posed by Myanmar’s military apparatus.

From the outset, Coppel’s diplomatic role was involved with the political climate surrounding Myanmar’s elections. The 2015 elections marked a very optimistic time for the Burmese people; the NLD secured a landslide victory, raising hopes for democratic reform. However, skepticism had lingered, both within and outside the country. Aung San Suu Kyi herself was reportedly apprehensive about the integrity of the elections beforehand, holding meetings with diplomatic missions to express her concerns. Despite reassurances from international observers about the fairness of the

electoral process, her trepidation stemmed from her extensive history of persecution under the military regime, including years of house arrest and a failed assassination attempt. So this historical weight and skepticism made the NLD’s electoral success in 2015 all the more momentous: it was the country’s first democratic transfer of power in decades.

The NLD’s rise to power introduced a new era, albeit one tempered by the constraints of Myanmar’s 2008 Constitution. That document, crafted by the military, institutionalized a dyadic system of governance that divided authority between civilian and military entities. The military retained significant control, appointing 25% of parliamentary seats and key ministers overseeing defense, home affairs, and border affairs. This ensured that all the “coercive instruments of the State” as he calls them—the police, the military and the prison system—remained under military control, creating an enduring power imbalance. Coppel’s engagement with the Myanmar government was very much skewed toward the civilian side, with limited access to military officials. In his four years as ambassador, he managed only a handful of meetings with the Commander-in-Chief and regional commanders, underscoring the insular nature of the military establishment.

Australia’s diplomatic objectives in Myanmar during that period prioritized support for the country’s peaceful transition and regional stability. Unlike other nations with strategic or economic stakes in the country’s future, Australia’s interests were relatively modest, centered on development assistance, irregular migration, and combating the narcotics trade. Development programs sought to bolster Myanmar’s reform agenda, while cooperation with the Myanmar police focused on disrupting drug trafficking routes. However, the effectiveness of this latter effort was undermined by the military’s own entanglement in the narcotics trade, either through tacit endorsement or direct involvement.

CATCH THE PODCAST

Read more and listen to the Insight Myanmar Podcast here:

<https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2025/5/29/episode-352-a-nation-interrupted>



**MYANMAR JUNTA
TOUTS ROAD
PROJECTS WHILE
SYSTEMATICALLY
DESTROYING
VILLAGES**

While Myanmar's military regime announces Kyat 19 billion for infrastructure, they have simultaneously burned more than 100,000 homes and displaced over three million people through systematic destruction.

The Myanmar junta's Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development recently announced plans to allocate Kyat 19 billion for constructing 116 miles of roads and 305 bridges during 2025-2026 across 115 villages, according to the junta-controlled The Global New Light of Myanmar.

This performative infrastructure promise rings hollow against documented systematic destruction.

While marketing itself as development-focused, evidence reveals a different reality. From May 2021 to August 2024, the military burned more than 100,000 homes, predominantly in Sagaing Region, according to Human Rights Watch.

The civil war in Myanmar has internally displaced at least three million people, with displacement increasing 50 percent in recent months. This stems from junta's terror tactics including burnings, beheadings, mutilations, torching villages, and through a massive aerial bombing campaign

In 2024, at least 1,824 people were killed, including 531 women and 248 children, sharply up from 1,639 deaths in 2023, according to Amnesty International. Air strikes increased five-fold in 2024's first half. Even during the earthquake ceasefire, the junta conducted an average of 7.6 attacks daily using aircraft or drones.

The road construction excludes Kachin, Kayah (Karenni), Chin, Rakhine states, and northern Shan—precisely where resistance forces control territory. This geographic exclusion reveals the hollow nature of development promises.



JUNTA ARRESTS STATE-CONTROLLED MRTV EMPLOYEE OVER AUNG SAN SUU KYI BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE AS SOCIAL MEDIA USERS SLAM JUNTA

A Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) employee has been arrested by the military junta for participating in a "flower strike" to commemorate detained leader Aung San Suu Kyi's 80th birthday, sparking fierce criticism on social media.

Hnin Yin Phyu, also known as Hnaung Hnaung, was detained on June 21 at around 8 pm from MRTV staff housing in Naypyidaw's Tatkon Township. The arrest came two days after she participated in the flower strike marking Suu Kyi's birthday on June 19.

According to MRTV staff sources and official announcements, Hnin Yin Phyu had posted birthday wishes for the detained Nobel laureate on social media, writing, "Happy Birthday Amay (Mother) Suu, may you live long and healthy." She also shared photos of flowers as part of the flower strike.

The arrest has triggered a wave of condemnation from Myanmar social media users, who criticized the junta's heavy-handed response to what they viewed as a peaceful gesture.

A Facebook user wrote, "To some of the so-called leaders of the military council (junta) - your mindset is

extremely narrow. If they had pretended not to notice people making birthday wishes for Amay Suu, they would at least avoid being hated by the people. Now that you're arresting people like this, have you solved the current problems?"

Another user mocked the junta's fears, posting, "The fascist dictators are even afraid of flowers. How funny. How much do you fear Mother Suu that you're even scared of flowers, which are part of Mother Suu's characteristics?"

A third commenter highlighted the junta's paranoia, "Extreme jealousy is very frightening and only exists among the most despicable people."

The flower strike has become a popular form of peaceful resistance in Myanmar, with citizens sharing images of flowers on social media to show solidarity with the detained leader and opposition to military rule.

Aung San Suu Kyi has been in detention since the February 2021 coup and was sentenced to prison under multiple charges that rights groups consider politically motivated.

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Analysis & Insight



DIGITAL MAGAZINE

Our relaunched magazine Mizzima Weekly provides readers with a more focused read on what matters in Myanmar and the wider region, with an emphasis on analysis, insight and providing key talking points.