

ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

# mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight

## SAGAING STILL SUFFERING

Earthquake Recovery  
and Ongoing Attacks  
in Myanmar



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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.

# THE MYANMAR MILITARY JUNTA'S TRAP

The Myanmar junta's plan to hold elections at the end of this year is a calculated move designed to legitimize its rule and entrap the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) into accepting the military regime.

Rather than a step toward restoring democracy, the junta's proposed election is a political trap - crafted to appear as progress while entrenching military control and undermining regional pressure for real change.

Since seizing power in February 2021, the Myanmar military has ruled through violence and repression, imprisoning thousands, including elected officials from the ousted National League for Democracy (NLD), including democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi.

The junta's proposed elections, absent any meaningful political freedoms or inclusive participation, will be neither free nor fair - and is a slap in the face to the people of Myanmar, the majority of whom want to get rid of military rule. The NLD has been dismantled, its leaders jailed or forced into hiding, and independent media silenced. Any electoral process under these conditions will merely rubber-stamp military dominance under the guise of civilian rule. The aim appears to be to bring in rule by the pro-military party, the Union Solidarity and Development Party, which will do the military's bidding under the pro-military 2008 military-written Constitution.

The real danger lies in how the junta is positioning the election as a diplomatic tool. By staging an election—regardless of its legitimacy—the regime aims to present itself to ASEAN and the broader international community as taking steps toward constitutional order. This plays directly into ASEAN's long-standing principle of non-interference and consensus-based diplomacy. Some ASEAN members, wary of prolonged instability, might be tempted to accept the election as progress, thereby offering the junta de facto recognition.

Such recognition would undermine ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus, which includes cessation of violence and inclusive dialogue - a consensus that is effectively dead in the water. It would also alienate the Myanmar resistance and civil society, who see the election as a sham designed to crush the democratic movement rather than restore it. Worse still, if ASEAN acknowledges the junta's election, it sets a precedent for tolerating power seized through force elsewhere in the region.

In effect, the election is a strategic maneuver. It serves no democratic function, but rather aims to reframe the junta as a legitimate political actor and manipulate ASEAN into relaxing its limited pressure. For ASEAN to maintain credibility and play a constructive role, it must reject this trap. Any election that excludes genuine opposition, silences dissent, and is conducted under martial law is not a step forward - it is a further betrayal of the Myanmar people's democratic aspirations.

## EDITORIAL

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# CONTENTS **mizzima** WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight

## 3 EDITORIAL

### 6 SAGAING STILL SUFFERING - Earthquake Recovery and Ongoing Attacks in Myanmar - Antonio Graceffo

### 10 ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR Analysis & Insight

### 14 CORE DEVELOPMENTS China's Global Security Initiative and the Burma Junta's PSMS Surveillance

### 17 LABOUR RIGHTS ILO to take action against Myanmar junta for labour rights violations under Article 33

### 18 Myanmar junta says UN labour resolution 'politically motivated'

### 19 CORE DEVELOPMENTS Myanmar junta attacks kill 15 civilians, injure 45 in Kyaukkyi township over three months

### 20 Myanmar junta torches mining equipment in Hpakant

### 21 Myanmar junta artillery and drone strikes injure civilians, destroy monastery in Nawnghkio despite ceasefire

### 22 BWU says nearly 100 women killed by Myanmar junta forces in May

### 23 CRPH confirms death of Ywangan MP U Aung Soe Min in Myanmar junta custody

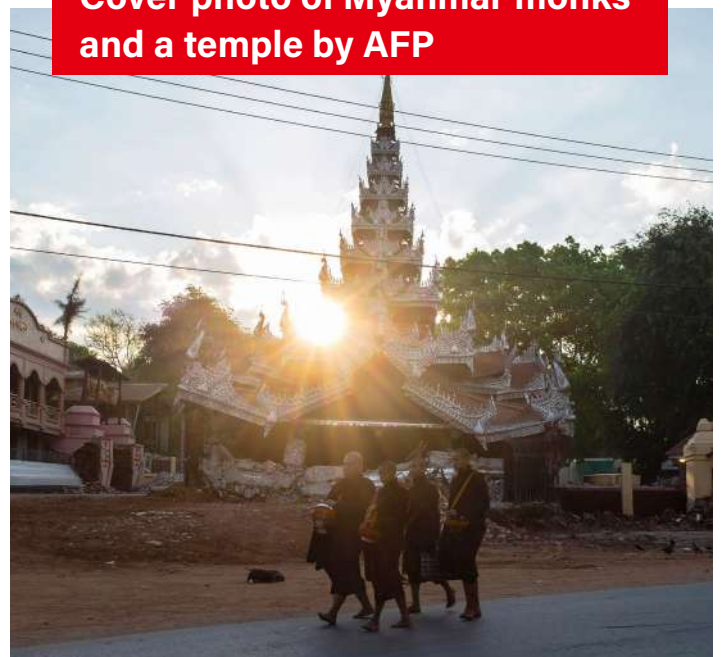
### 24 TNLA assures public that territorial tensions with KIA are being addressed internally



- 25** Myanmar arrests six-year-old girl over killing of general
- 26** Myanmar junta launches 26 airstrikes in Ta'ang areas of Shan State during may, killing eight civilians
- 26** Myanmar's resistance forces recapture strategic Thay Baw Boe camp in Karen State despite junta airstrikes
- 27** China lead mine plan weighs heavily on Myanmar tribe in Shan State
- 29** Myanmar's Three Brotherhood Alliance extends ceasefire until end of June
- 30** Pyu Saw Htee leader among 8 killed in Nyaung-U attack by resistance forces
- 31** Floodwaters linger in Myitkyina's low-lying areas, clean water and food urgently needed
- 32** Relentless monsoon rains flood Myanmar's Rakhine State, displacing hundreds
- 33** Refugee camp schools at risk in Bangladesh in aid crisis
- 34** Bangladesh says India pushes back 1,200 people
- 35** Trump slaps new travel ban on 12 countries, including Myanmar
- 37** UN rights chief voices legal concerns on US travel bans that include Myanmar
- 39** **JAILED LEADER**  
Aung San Suu Kyi: Enduring Relevance, Manipulation, and the Battle for Myanmar's Future

- 41** Aung San Suu Kyi's legal team objects to brother's attempt to sell part of historic University Avenue residence
- 42** **EARTHQUAKE UPDATE**  
EU provides €5 million in emergency food aid for Myanmar earthquake survivors
- 43** Aftershocks continue in Naypyidaw and Sagaing Region following 5 June earthquake
- 44** Burma Research Institute urges continued US aid amid mounting crisis in Myanmar
- 45** **ASIAN & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**  
Vietnam Feels the Heat as U.S. Targets Chinese Investments with Heavy Tariffs
- 47** Ukraine war 'existential', Russia says, launching revenge strikes
- 49** **COLUMNS**  
**INSIGHT MYANMAR** – Spring Awakening
- 50** **JUNTA WATCH**
- 51** **SOCIAL WATCH**

**Cover photo of Myanmar monks and a temple by AFP**





WFP provides humanitarian aid in Mandalay.  
Photo: AFP

# **SAGAING STILL SUFFERING: EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY AND ONGOING ATTACKS IN MYANMAR**

***ANTONIO GRACEFFO***

**T**wo months after the devastating March 28 earthquake, the people of Myanmar's Sagaing Region remain caught between the destruction left by the disaster and the continued threat of junta military attacks, making recovery nearly impossible.

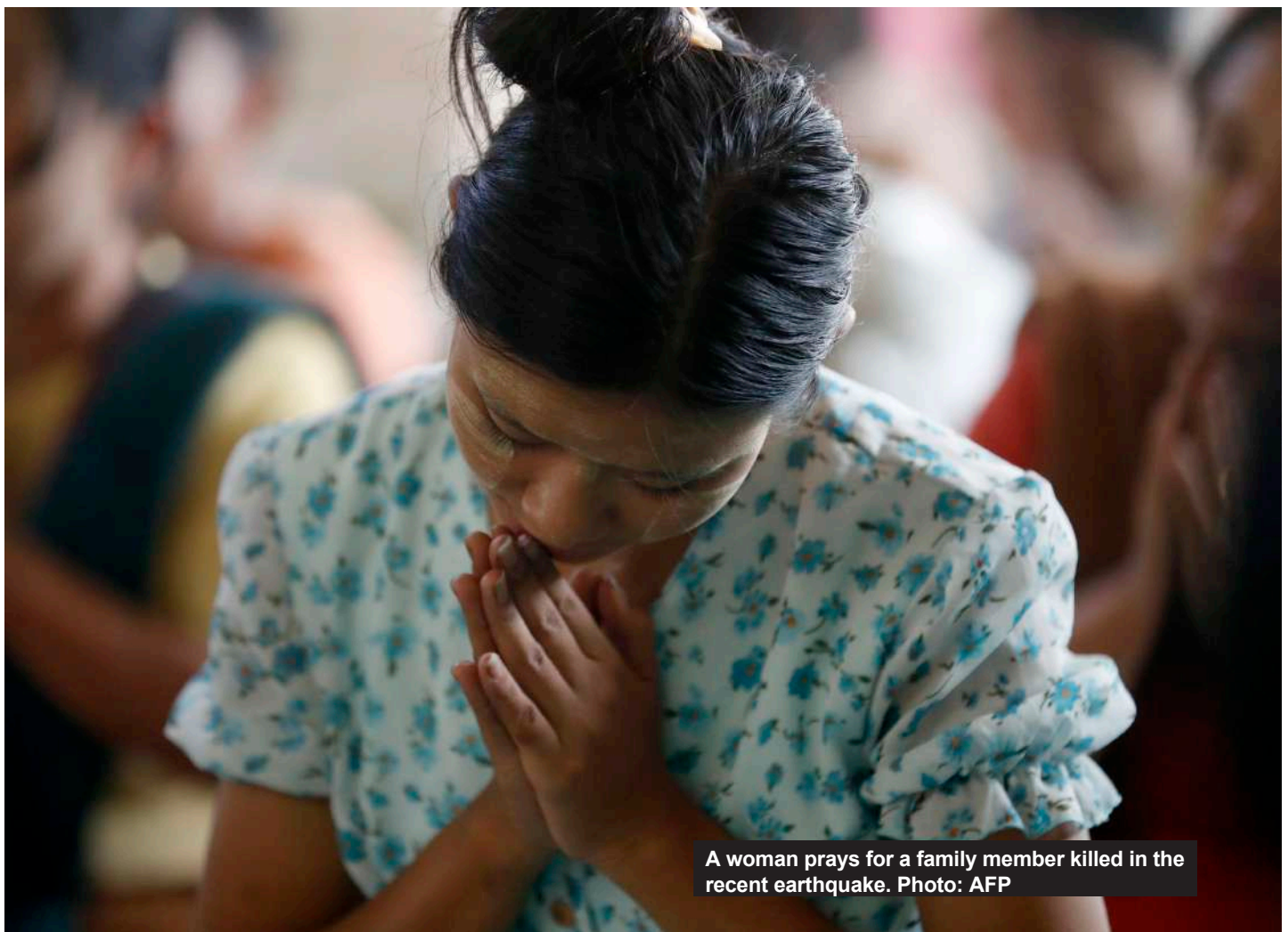
According to a May 23 report from the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), humanitarian needs in Myanmar have reached record levels. An estimated 19.9 million people require assistance, including 2 million in urgent need and 509,400 still in critical need of food following the quake.

Entire communities in Sagaing remain in makeshift shelters or tarpaulin tents along roadsides, too afraid to return to their damaged homes. Structural instability, the threat of aftershocks, and continued military violence have made recovery nearly impossible. With the monsoon season now underway, these temporary

shelters offer little protection from relentless rains and strong winds. Many families urgently need metal roofing to survive the coming floods.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reports that communities are still reeling from the devastating March earthquake, with many families now taking shelter in monasteries and religious compounds.

Terra Renaissance, a Japanese NGO founded in 2001 to support communities affected by conflict in Asia and Africa, has documented severe destruction across multiple districts. In District A, approximately 80% of structures have been reduced to rubble. Brick buildings in particular were devastated, leaving behind a landscape of shattered remnants. In District B, although fewer buildings collapsed, the destruction of key commercial centers has triggered a major economic



A woman prays for a family member killed in the recent earthquake. Photo: AFP

blow, leading to widespread unemployment and leaving many families without a means of support.

In District C, the collapse of religious structures, especially temples, has deprived communities of vital places of spiritual solace. Residential buildings also suffered major damage, forcing large numbers of people into displacement and temporary shelters.

The earthquake has claimed many lives in the area. While the official death toll stands at 590, the real number is likely much higher. Conditions in the shelters are dire, with critical shortages of food, clean water, and medicine. Sanitation continues to deteriorate rapidly, placing the elderly and children at grave risk.

As monsoon rains begin to fall across central Myanmar, conditions in the displacement camps have gone from bad to worse. Families living under tarpaulins now face waterlogged grounds, overflowing latrines, and a surge in waterborne illnesses. Health workers report frequent cases of acute watery diarrhea and skin infections, and warn that the risk of dengue fever is rising, with mosquito breeding accelerated by stagnant water and poor sanitation in the overcrowded camps.

Medical needs remain overwhelming. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been mobilizing vaccine doses with Tetanus shots being administered to 120,000 people, and rabies vaccines are being used to address a spike in dog bite cases. However, only 87,000



School bags of children killed in a junta bombing attack on a school in Depayin. Photo: AFP

people, just 19% of the target population, have received health services so far. They also report a persistent demand for non-communicable disease medications, which are scarce in conflict zones.

A lesser-known danger has also emerged: the shifting earth has dislodged landmines and unexploded ordnance, resulting in injuries and deaths among displaced civilians. Many of the hardest-hit townships were already contaminated with landmines, and the earthquake has further exposed or relocated explosive remnants, dramatically increasing the risk for families fleeing their homes. This hidden threat now complicates both aid delivery and reconstruction, turning even the simple act of walking into a deadly gamble.

International aid efforts continue to be severely obstructed by military checkpoints, restricted access, and other barriers imposed by the junta. These restrictions are preventing vital humanitarian assistance from reaching those in greatest need, further deepening an already dire crisis. Despite international pledges, very little aid has reached affected communities.

Meanwhile, airstrikes and artillery fire continue to plague Sagaing and the surrounding region, compounding trauma and disrupting aid delivery. On May 12, the State Administration Council (SAC) launched an airstrike on a school in Tabayin Township, located in northwestern Sagaing Region. The attack killed more than 20 children and two teachers. The school was operated by the National Unity Government (NUG), formed by lawmakers ousted in the 2021 military coup.

The junta has denied responsibility, claiming through state-run media that "illegal anti-government media outlets have spread false news." However, the attack has been well-documented and independently verified by resistance groups and ethnic media reporting networks.

Mental health is a hidden crisis in Myanmar's earthquake-hit regions. Research shows that people displaced by conflict face heightened psychological risks and urgently need support systems that foster resilience and social safety. Children and adolescents are especially vulnerable, but no one is immune. A rapid assessment by humanitarian agencies found that 67% of survivors are experiencing emotional distress, while 84% lack access to any mental health services. Ongoing violence and continued aftershocks have triggered a surge in anxiety, disconnection, and untreated trauma, particularly among children.

UNICEF and youth volunteers warn that without proper support, these "invisible wounds" may persist long after physical recovery begins. Yet Myanmar is vastly unprepared to meet the need, with fewer than one mental health worker per 100,000 people and only two psychiatric hospitals nationwide. In Sagaing, almost no trained professionals are available to provide the care people urgently need.

This earthquake should be the wake-up call that finally spurs international action. The world must intervene to deliver lifesaving aid to desperate civilians across Burma and hold the junta accountable for its ongoing crimes.

*Antonio Graceffo is an economist and China expert who has reported extensively on Burma.*



Photo: AA

# ARAKAN ARMY TIGHTENS GRIP ON BELEAGUERED RAKHINE STATE

**T**he Arakan Army (AA) has seized control of 14 out of 17 original townships in Rakhine State, continuing its offensive to oust the Myanmar military. The remaining townships under junta control are Sittway, the state capital; Kyaukphyu, home to key Chinese investments; and Manaung.

Fighting has recently intensified in Kyaukphyu as the AA targets junta defensive positions guarding Chinese-backed infrastructure, including the deep-sea port and power station. According to local sources, junta troops have taken cover inside Chinese-operated facilities after sustaining losses, drawing concerns from Chinese nationals working in the area.

"When battles broke out, the junta troops were taking positions inside Chinese factories as reinforcement. Actually, they took them as cover," a resident told Narinjara News. "Because of this, both Chinese and Myanmar staff realized the danger and fled the factories."

Some Chinese workers were reported to have relocated to Made Island, a relatively secure site hosting China's core infrastructure projects. High-ranking Chinese personnel were flown out to Yangon as the situation deteriorated.

In recent fighting near Kyaukphyu, a strategic commander from the junta's No. (11) Light Infantry Division was reportedly killed by an AA sniper. His funeral invitation, which circulated on social media, confirmed his posthumous promotion from colonel to brigadier general. The AA also captured multiple prisoners of war (POWs), including a G1-level officer.

Meanwhile, AA forces are pressing toward the junta's strategic Natyekan post in Padang Township, which controls access to the crucial Ann-Padang highway. On June 4, the AA and its allies seized the MPT Tower Hill outpost, located just two kilometers from the main Natyekan position.



Military conscription continues apace.  
Photo: Supplied

"Natyekan is a strategic post for the junta," a military analyst told Narinjara. "Without it, the military cannot reclaim Ann, which fell to the AA last year. If the AA captures this post, they could potentially launch operations into Magway Region, especially the Padang military zone."

The AA's expanding territorial control and proximity to Chinese assets signal a deepening crisis in western Myanmar, with both geopolitical and humanitarian implications. The AA advances have prompted both China and India to expand direct talks with the resistance group as the junta loses ground.

## Myanmar junta military conscription steps up

The Myanmar military junta has intensified its forced conscription efforts in central Myanmar, targeting rural villages to replenish frontline manpower as it accelerates its military training programmes.

On June 6, junta troops conducted a series of patrols in Wundwin Township, forcibly detaining civilians for military service. Six workers loading watermelons onto a lorry near Pyarswe village were arrested and taken for conscription. Similar operations were reported along the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway, where columns of junta vehicles were seen combing through villages for eligible youth.

"Young people no longer feel safe in their own homes," a local resident told People's Spring. "They leave early for the farms and return only after dark to avoid being caught by the patrols."

In Daikaung Kone village, junta troops temporarily stationed at the village school went house to house checking household lists. Eight youths were reportedly arrested during the sweep and forcibly conscripted.

The junta's latest crackdown on civilians comes as it completes the training of its No. (11) conscription batch,



Flooding is worsening the humanitarian situation in a number of areas. Photo: AFP

which was conducted across various military divisions nationwide. According to a statement released by the junta, each batch aims to recruit 5,000 new soldiers. To date, over 50,000 conscripts have been absorbed into the military ranks under the controversial conscription law.

Preparations for the No. (12) batch are currently underway, and forced recruitment for the upcoming No. (13) batch has begun. Military analysts note that the junta's aggressive push to meet recruitment quotas highlights its growing desperation to sustain combat operations across multiple conflict zones in the country.

Rights groups and local communities continue to raise alarm over the arbitrary nature of the conscription drives and their devastating impact on rural youth, many of whom are now in hiding to evade forced military service.

## **Monsoon arrives and people displaced by the war and the earthquake suffer**

The arrival of monsoon rains has brought fresh hardship to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and residents in conflict-affected areas of Kachin State, where flash floods and surging currents have caused widespread destruction and loss.

On June 2, a sudden and powerful creek current swept through Sadon area in Waing Maw Township, drowning five people who remain missing. Among the victims were three women and a young boy. The torrent destroyed homes, a school, a clinic, a church, and nearby farmlands.

Colonel Naw Bu, spokesperson for the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), told Mizzima, "The creek is a small one. It was not a flood, but a sudden strong current caused this tragedy. The water has now returned to normal, and we [KIA] are conducting rescue operations."

In Chiphwe Township, located on the eastern bank of the N Mai Hka River, continuous heavy rainfall over

the past two weeks triggered major flooding on May 31. Over ten IDP camps were inundated as the river swelled more than 50 feet above its normal level. At least ten communal halls, each housing five families, were swept away. Although no deaths were reported, the floods destroyed most of the IDPs' belongings.

"This year's flood is worse than last year," said a local resident. "All of the IDP camps and temporary shelters were washed away. Thousands of displaced people are left with nothing and are in urgent need of shelter, clothing, and medicine."

The IDPs had been living in makeshift camps in Chiphwe since October last year, after the KIA seized territory previously controlled by the pro-junta Border Guard Force (BGF). According to local sources, more than 300 households were affected by the floods.

Residents attributed the severity of the disaster to unregulated gold and metal mining in the river's catchment areas, which they say has weakened the region's natural defenses against flooding.

As the monsoon season deepens, humanitarian needs in Kachin State are expected to rise sharply, with displaced communities facing renewed risks from both conflict and climate-related disasters.



Photo: Tasha Kostyuk

## CHINA'S GLOBAL SECURITY INITIATIVE AND THE BURMA JUNTA'S PSMS SURVEILLANCE

**ANTONIO GRACEFFO**

Since 2022, reports have indicated that regime police in Burma have been arresting people, more than a thousand people in just the first few months of this year, using the Person Scrutinization and Monitoring System (PSMS). Many of those released from prison are now placed on AI-powered watchlists. The junta claims its nationwide surveillance system integrating artificial intelligence with CCTV networks, is designed to distinguish between so-called "good" and "bad" people, according to junta official Lieutenant General Yar Pyae. While the regime insists the system supports criminal investigations, urban resistance groups say it's being used to track, monitor, and arrest anti-regime activists.

This growing surveillance apparatus is closely tied to China. Burma is one of several authoritarian governments that have signed onto Beijing's Global Security Initiative (GSI), a CCP-led framework promoting

state-centric models of governance and control. While framed as a commitment to peace, sovereignty, and non-interference, the GSI also advances China's doctrine of "cyber sovereignty," which encourages total state control over digital infrastructure, communication, and data. Through this lens, China provides allied regimes with the surveillance tools, technical training, and ideological justification to suppress dissent. In Burma, these exported technologies and doctrines manifest in systems like PSMS, which directly support the junta's efforts to neutralize resistance movements and preempt "color revolution" scenarios by tracking, detaining, and intimidating opposition figures under the guise of national security.

First announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2022, the GSI promotes a doctrine of "common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security," which extends to non-traditional domains

like cyberspace. In practice, this has emboldened the Burmese junta to expand its control over the internet and communication systems, drawing on Chinese technology and strategic support. Chinese-made tools have facilitated VPN bans across Burma, cutting off activists and journalists from the outside world. More recently, China proposed granting a forthcoming joint Burma–China security firm the authority to import and manage weapons and communications technologies inside Burma, marking a deeper fusion of Chinese security doctrine and Burma's internal repression. The junta's revised Cybersecurity Law closely mirrors China's own, embedding language about 'sovereignty and stability' that reinforces the legal basis for sweeping surveillance and digital censorship under the guise of national security.

The Burma junta already restricts internet access, information flow, and communication with the outside world. But its digital surveillance regime extends well beyond cyberspace, deeply embedding itself into everyday life through systems modeled on China's urban control strategies. Under "Safe City" initiatives, the junta has rolled out smart surveillance projects in major cities including Naypyidaw, Yangon, Taunggyi, Bago, Mawlamyine, and Myitkyina.

These areas now operate under dense networks of AI-powered CCTV cameras, facial recognition software, and predictive policing algorithms. The Person Scrutinization and Monitoring System (PSMS), reportedly developed with support from Huawei, uses artificial intelligence and facial recognition to monitor individuals in real time. Additional real-world tracking systems include the Guest List Management System (GLMS), which logs overnight stays at hotels and hostels, and the National Service Information Management System (NSIMS), used to monitor labor status and potentially conscription compliance. Together, these tools allow the regime to track people's

physical movements, monitor their affiliations, and apply pressure through surveillance-linked policing.

China pioneered this model of integrated urban surveillance through its own Safe City and Sharp Eyes programs, which blanket cities and rural areas with high-definition cameras linked to central command centers and police databases. In China, these systems are used to monitor public spaces, enforce political conformity, and track so-called "sensitive" individuals in real time. The Burma junta's adoption of this architecture, supported by Chinese companies and closely aligned in both design and function, reflects a broader export of Beijing's authoritarian technology and governance model. What began as a domestic tool for control in China is now a blueprint for state repression abroad.

Digital education has also been targeted by the junta's repression. With 7.8 million children out of school since the coup, platforms like Burma Academy offer free, mobile-accessible education. However, these platforms are blocked by junta censors, forcing students to rely on VPNs, a now-criminalized act. Some resistance zones have deployed mesh networks and signal extenders to expand access, creating improvised digital infrastructure from bomb shelters to hillside relay points. These grassroots technologies form a key part of the broader resistance, sustaining communication, learning, and political organizing even under the junta's digital siege.

In October 2024, Burma's military junta conducted a nationwide census, officially to prepare voter rolls for a planned 2025 election. However, with opposition parties like the National Unity Government (NUG) and the National League for Democracy (NLD) barred from participating, many Burmese citizens and international observers view the census as a pretext for expanding state surveillance. The census employed Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) technology, with

42,000 enumerators using mobile tablets to collect data from over 13 million households. The 68-question survey covered personal and household details such as demographics, migration, education, and employment. The junta fed this data into a centralized system, using it to monitor citizens and identify dissenters, particularly those linked to the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). Several activists in Yangon were reportedly arrested during the data collection period.

Among the many areas where China's digital infrastructure is reinforcing the junta's grip on power is immigration, or more accurately, emigration. In a bid to tighten control over who can leave the country, the regime has made registration in the national Unique Identification (UID) system mandatory for all passport and border pass applicants. This move followed a September 2023 visit to Beijing by Burma's Minister for Immigration and Population, U Myint Kyaing, who met with Chinese officials to discuss integrating Chinese e-ID systems into Burma's immigration processes. With China's support, UID data is now linked to travel documentation, allowing the junta to track movement, deny exit to dissidents, and arrest flagged individuals at passport offices and border checkpoints.

Activists, journalists, and participants in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) can be digitally profiled and blocked from leaving. The system also makes it nearly impossible to flee using false identities, as biometric data, fingerprints, iris scans, and facial features, is now centrally stored and cross-referenced. The junta fears not only international exposure of its human rights abuses, but also mass flight as more citizens seek to escape forced conscription. Many Burmese attempt to leave the country for work in Thailand, Malaysia, or China. By tying travel permissions to UID registration, the regime can monitor these workers, track where they go, and potentially tax or seize remittances sent home.

This emigration control model closely mirrors China's surveillance-driven governance, where digital identity systems serve as instruments of political control. Through its Global Security Initiative, China promotes the notion that national security encompasses not just defense and diplomacy, but also population management, information control, and the suppression of dissent through digital means.

The Myanmar junta has publicly endorsed the GSI, with its Ministry of Foreign Affairs praising the initiative's emphasis on sovereignty and territorial integrity, which, in the Chinese context, signals that international actors should not interfere in what Beijing and Naypyidaw define as internal affairs, including the ongoing civil war. The Ministry's statement also references 'security in both traditional and non-traditional domains,' language that mirrors Beijing's own framing of the Global Security Initiative.

*Antonio Graceffo is an economist and China expert who has reported extensively on Burma.*



Garment workers in Yangon.  
Photo: AFP

# ILO TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST MYANMAR JUNTA FOR LABOUR RIGHTS VIOLATIONS UNDER ARTICLE 33

**T**he International Labour Organization (ILO) has decided to initiate action against Myanmar's military junta for widespread violations of labour rights, invoking Article 33 of the ILO Constitution — the organization's strongest measure for enforcement.

The decision was made during the 113th session of the International Labour Conference, held in Geneva, Switzerland on 5 June. Despite objections raised by China, Russia, Belarus, and Laos, the resolution was passed by consensus, according to Maung Maung, president of the Confederation of Trade Unions – Myanmar (CTUM), who was present at the session.

CTUM is one of a number of workers' groups, some of which are more low profile as they operate within Myanmar.

"We will make every effort to implement this decision before the Military Council holds its planned election. Our goal is to isolate the junta diplomatically and economically, leaving them with only China, Russia, Belarus, and Laos as allies," said Maung Maung.

Following the conference decision, the National Unity Government (NUG), Myanmar Labour Alliance (MLA), and business stakeholders are planning a tripartite meeting to form a working committee. This

group will coordinate efforts to identify and expose companies and investors still cooperating with the junta.

"This is a form of targeted, 'smart sanctions.' We'll investigate who is funding or investing in key military-linked businesses, and once identified, we will pressure those actors to divest and cut ties," said Maung Maung.

The ILO had previously issued a directive against Myanmar under Article 33 in 2000, but the latest action follows new and egregious violations committed by the junta since the February 2021 coup, including breaches of ILO Conventions 87 (freedom of association) and 29 (elimination of forced labour). The ILO Governing Body initiated the move to invoke Article 33 again in November 2024.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)-Asia Pacific called the enforcement of Article 33 "a moment of reckoning," highlighting that it marks only the third instance in the ILO's 100-year history where this powerful measure has been invoked. The ITUC also commended the resolution's demand to end all forms of violence, torture, and inhumane treatment against trade union leaders, as well as the immediate release of those imprisoned for exercising their trade union rights.

The Military Council, aware of the implications, had expressed concern earlier this year. In February, the junta's Minister for Labour and Social Affairs, Chit Swe, warned that ILO action could result in suspended investment, withdrawal of export privileges, and other economic repercussions.

Despite the junta's attempts to prevent the decision, the ILO's move marks a significant step toward increasing international pressure on the regime for its continued assault on labour and human rights. That said, the subject of workers rights and foreign investors is complex. A number of workers groups recognize that foreign investors effectively provide employment for thousands – such as in the case of garment workers, the majority of whom are women. There is a significant difference between companies and businesses that indirectly support the Myanmar junta's war machine and those, such as garment companies, that do little to contribute to the junta's coffers and offer employment.



Child labourer in Myanmar.  
Photo: AFP

## MYANMAR JUNTA SAYS UN LABOUR RESOLUTION 'POLITICALLY MOTIVATED'

**M**yanmar's ruling military on Saturday hit back at a UN resolution aimed at curbing labour violations in the war-torn nation, calling it "politically motivated".

The International Labour Organization (ILO) on Thursday invoked Article 33 of its constitution which could see sanctions imposed against the military authorities which seized power in a 2021 coup.

The United Nations' labour agency said countries should ensure their relations with Myanmar "in no way enable, facilitate or prolong the violations of workers' rights in respect of freedom of association and forced labour."

It called on international bodies to "report any activities... directly or indirectly enabling or abetting" labour violations under Myanmar's junta government.

On Saturday Myanmar's labour ministry released a statement saying the resolution had been adopted "without due partiality and fairness" and was based on "politically motivated approaches".

A UN investigation into Myanmar in October 2023 urged the country's military rulers to end forced

labour in the army and to halt all violence against trade unionists.

It found far-reaching violations of international forced labour and freedom of association conventions in the Southeast Asian nation.

The resolution adopted Thursday at the ILO's 113th International Labour Conference in Geneva said Myanmar's military authorities had not indicated "any sign of meaningful acknowledgement" of the 2023 report's recommendations.

Myanmar said it had been "actively implementing" the recommendations and had made "continuous progress" and accused the ILO of "turning a blind eye" to its efforts.

The International Trade Union Confederation -- Asia Pacific said it was the third time in the ILO's century-long history that Article 33 has been invoked.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military ousted the democratically-elected civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a February 2021 coup.

AFP



## MYANMAR JUNTA ATTACKS KILL 15 CIVILIANS, INJURE 45 IN KYAUKKYI TOWNSHIP OVER THREE MONTHS

**F**ifteen civilians were killed and at least 45 others injured over a three-month period in Kyaukkyi Township, Bago Region, due to sustained artillery shelling and airstrikes by junta forces, according to a statement released by the Karen Emergency Assistance and Rescue Committee from Lal Doh Township.

Between March and May, junta troops operating under the Southern Military Command reportedly carried out repeated assaults using heavy artillery, jet fighters, machine gun fire, and drone-dropped bombs. The attacks not only resulted in civilian casualties but also destroyed religious buildings, pagodas, homes, shops, vehicles, and other properties. Livestock were also killed or injured in the attacks, the group said.

The committee warned that junta forces are continuing their operations and arbitrary arrests in villages across Kyaukkyi Township, part of the Karen National Union (KNU)'s Brigade 3-controlled Kler Lwee Htoo District. Ongoing violence has forced residents to live in constant fear and insecurity, it added.

Calling for urgent intervention, the Karen Emergency Assistance and Rescue Committee urged

domestic and international civil society groups, revolutionary organizations, foreign governments, and human rights bodies to take effective action against the junta's deliberate targeting of civilians. The statement also called for an immediate halt to international support or encouragement of the regime's violence and appealed for humanitarian assistance to support displaced communities.

One of the deadliest incidents occurred on 25 May, when a junta jet fighter bombed a wedding ceremony in Kyunki village, Kyaukkyi Township. The strike killed 12 people including the bride and seriously injured 37 others, according to the KNU's central command.

While the junta has extended a temporary nationwide ceasefire through the end of June, citing plans to conduct elections and focus on recovery in earthquake-hit regions, civil society groups say that aerial and ground attacks on civilians continue unabated including in conflict zones and disaster-affected areas.



Photo: AFP

## MYANMAR JUNTA TORCHES MINING EQUIPMENT IN HPAKANT

**T**he Myanmar military regime has reportedly set fire to machinery and facilities at jade mining sites in Hpakant Township, Kachin State, between 1 and 6 June, according to local residents.

During the raids, junta forces destroyed a total of seven earthmoving trucks, 14 backhoes, and at least 10 workers' dormitories.

"They are burning old machines, not new ones. The junta is also extorting money from companies. I'm not sure if they're deliberately targeting the old ones, but even though they're aged, they're still worth hundreds of thousands of kyats," a local source told Mizzima on condition of anonymity.

Another local resident, Ko Nay Naw, said the military torched equipment near the mining blocks close to Sutaung Hill in Sankhar Village. "The locals haven't fled yet, but they are preparing to," he added.

Some locals claimed that the machinery set ablaze belonged to illegal mining companies, though this remains unverified.

In a related development, residents reported that gunfire was exchanged between junta forces and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Mazwutyang Village, Lone Khinn village tract, on the morning of 6 June. However, details regarding the scale of the clash and casualties on either side have not yet been confirmed.

Junta troops have been operating in the area since 27 May, when more than 100 soldiers entered Lone Khinn village and later moved toward Hpakant on 29 May. Some of the forces are reportedly stationed on Hmawsizar Pagoda Hill, where they have been extorting money from nearby mining operations while continuing to torch equipment.

The junta's actions in Hpakant already notorious for its chaotic and unregulated jade industry are stoking fears of further violence and displacement among local communities.



Photo: Supplied

## MYANMAR JUNTA ARTILLERY AND DRONE STRIKES INJURE CIVILIANS, DESTROY MONASTERY IN NAWNGHKIO DESPITE CEASEFIRE

**D**espite declaring a one-month ceasefire until the end of June, Myanmar's junta forces have continued launching artillery and drone attacks, with the latest strikes injuring civilians and destroying religious and residential buildings in Nawnghkio Township, northern Shan State, according to the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA).

On 4 June, a junta artillery shell hit a local market in Nawnghkio, injuring four civilians, two men and two women and damaging two homes along with the Kan Baw Za Monastery, the TNLA said in a statement.

Later that same day, the junta reportedly carried out drone strikes on Kant Kaw village in the morning and Kan Gyi village in the evening, escalating fears among residents in areas under TNLA control.

Both the junta and the Three Brotherhood Alliance comprised of the TNLA, Arakan Army (AA), and Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) had earlier declared parallel ceasefires, citing the need to support relief and reconstruction efforts following recent earthquakes.

However, the TNLA reports that junta forces violated the truce repeatedly in May alone, conducting 55 airstrikes and 310 drone strikes across Nawnghkio, Mogok, Monglon, Kyaukme, Mongngawt, and Mantong areas largely under TNLA control. TNLA spokesperson Lway Yay Oo revealed the figures at a press conference on 5 June.

Nawnghkio Township bore the brunt of the attacks, with 39 separate airstrike incidents recorded in May, according to the group.

As a result of the continued aerial assaults, at least seven civilians have been killed, 17 injured, and 58 homes destroyed in TNLA-controlled territories. The TNLA has urged residents in affected areas to remain vigilant and to follow airstrike safety protocols, given the junta's ongoing disregard for its own declared ceasefire.



Photo: AFP

## BWU SAYS NEARLY 100 WOMEN KILLED BY MYANMAR JUNTA FORCES IN MAY

**A**t least 92 women have died across Myanmar during May as a result of airstrikes, artillery bombardments, landmines, extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, and lack of medical care in prison, according to a new report released on 06 June by the Burmese Women's Union (BWU).

Among these tragic deaths, Sagaing Region recorded the highest number with 41 deaths, followed by Rakhine State with 16, Mandalay Region with 14, Bago Region with 10, Magway Region with 8, and one woman each from Chin State, Karen State, and Mon State, according to BWU's records.

Airstrikes were the leading cause of death, responsible for 81 of the fatalities. Four women died from artillery fire, four were executed, one died in prison due to lack of medical care, and two died as a result of sexual violence.

In addition, BWU reported that 81 women were injured during the same period due to airstrikes, artillery attacks, landmines, and sexual violence.

The report compiled information from verified news sources and data collected directly from the field. BWU also noted that the actual figures on the ground may be even higher.

The Burmese Women's Union regularly monitors the situation in conflict zones across Myanmar and publishes monthly reports documenting the impact on women.



## CRPH CONFIRMS DEATH OF YWANGAN MP U AUNG SOE MIN IN MYANMAR JUNTA CUSTODY

**U** Aung Soe Min, a Pyithu Hluttaw representative from Ywangan Township in the Danu Self-Administered Region of Shan State, has died while in military custody, according to a statement released by the Committee Representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH).

The former MP was arrested by the junta in December 2024 while in hiding in Pyin Oo Lwin. He reportedly died several months ago at an interrogation centre, although the exact date of his death remains unknown, the CRPH stated.

"He was arrested based on a tip-off by a ward administrator. At the time, the junta falsely claimed he had been transferred from the Pyin Oo Lwin interrogation centre to prison. But he never appeared at any prison, nor was he brought before a court. Our investigation confirms he was killed during interrogation," said CRPH Secretary U Tun Myint.

He added that the junta failed to notify the family of U Aung Soe Min's death and has not returned his body. The CRPH has not yet made contact with his family but is working to reach them in order to provide support, including financial assistance.

The CRPH strongly condemned the junta over the incident and expressed its deep sorrow over the loss of the elected MP.

According to the CRPH, U Aung Soe Min is the latest in a growing list of elected representatives who have died while in the junta's custody. Three regional parliamentarians have died in prison due to torture, mistreatment, and lack of medical care. In June 2022, Mon State MP U Kyaw Myo Min was also killed after being arrested, with his body found on a roadside.

As of the latest CRPH data, 11 Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives and 13 regional/state MPs who were forced to flee their homes have died due to lack of access to healthcare. Many others remain in hiding across Myanmar and abroad, with their homes and properties seized by the junta.

The CRPH noted that at least 18 Union-level MPs and 41 regional/state MPs have been arrested since the 2021 military coup. In its statement, the CRPH expressed grave concern for President U Win Myint, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and other detained lawmakers, calling for international attention to their safety and well-being.



Photo: AFP

## TNLA ASSURES PUBLIC THAT TERRITORIAL TENSIONS WITH KIA ARE BEING ADDRESSED INTERNALLY

The Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (PSLF/TNLA) has sought to reassure the public that ongoing territorial disputes with its ally, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), are being addressed within the framework of their alliance and should not be a cause for concern.

Lway Yay Oo, Information Officer for the PSLF/TNLA, made the statement during a press conference on 5 June, in response to a Mizzima question regarding recent friction between the two groups.

"Disputes between the KIA and TNLA do occur from time to time, but they are being resolved through direct communication and regular coordination via the Alliance Relations Department. A central-level meeting is also being arranged. So, I believe the public need not worry about tensions between allied forces," said Lway Yay Oo.

The Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (KIO/KIA) and the PSLF/TNLA have already formed a joint coordination body to address ongoing land disputes and have commenced preliminary discussions. However, according to KIA

Information Officer Colonel Naw Bu, a central-level meeting has yet to be held due to scheduling difficulties.

"We are still negotiating the time and location for the meeting. When one side is available, the other isn't. To be honest, no one has had the time yet, so we haven't met," said Colonel Naw Bu.

In the first five months of 2025, territorial tensions between the two allied forces have flared in several parts of northern Shan State, including Namhkam, Momeik, and Man Tong, as well as Nam Phe Ka in Kutkai Township and Mong Wee in Namtu Township.

According to local sources, TNLA troops have dismantled KIA checkpoints and liaison offices in TNLA-controlled areas such as Man Tong, Namhkam, and Mong Wee, escalating tensions and triggering a series of confrontations.

Observers and local residents are urging both sides to expedite high-level negotiations to de-escalate the situation and prevent further conflict over territorial claims.



Photo: AFP

## MYANMAR ARRESTS SIX-YEAR-OLD GIRL OVER KILLING OF GENERAL AND FORMER AMBASSADOR

**M**yanmar authorities have arrested 16 people including a six-year-old girl over the assassination of a retired general shot dead in Yangon last month, state media said.

Cho Tun Aung, a former ambassador to Cambodia, was gunned down outside his home on May 22 in an attack claimed by an anti-junta group calling itself the "Golden Valley Warriors".

Myanmar's military seized power in a 2021 coup, plunging the country into a complex, multi-sided civil war involving pro-democracy guerrillas and resurgent ethnic minority armed groups.

Most fighting is confined to the countryside and smaller towns but grenade and gun attacks on junta-linked targets are regularly reported in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city and commercial hub.

The Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper said 16 members of the Golden Valley Warriors -- 13

men and three females -- had been arrested in various locations.

Those held include the wife and six-year-old daughter of the suspected shooter, identified as Myo Ko Ko, the state-run newspaper said, without explaining what the girl is accused of.

The report said Myo Ko Ko and another suspect rode to the general's home on bicycles and shot him before fleeing to a safe house.

The junta has suffered significant territorial setbacks in recent months but analysts say it is far from defeat, with a powerful air force supplied with Russian jets and military backing from China.

AFP

## MYANMAR JUNTA LAUNCHES 26 AIRSTRIKES IN TA'ANG AREAS OF SHAN STATE DURING MAY, KILLING EIGHT CIVILIANS

Despite a declared ceasefire, the Myanmar junta carried out widespread attacks across Nawngkhio, Mogok, Kyaukme, Mongngawt, Mong Lon, and Man Tong townships in Ta'ang areas of Shan State throughout May, killing eight civilians and injuring 18 others, according to a 4 June statement from the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (PSLF/TNLA).

The TNLA reported that the military conducted 26 airstrikes, launched 329 drone attacks, fired 776 artillery shells, and deployed 114 poison gas bombs during the period.

In Nawngkhio Township alone, 12 airstrikes were carried out alongside extensive drone and artillery attacks, resulting in six civilian deaths, 14 injuries, and damage to eight houses, the statement said.

In Mogok Township, six airstrikes targeted civilian areas, killing one person and injuring another. A monastery and 18 houses were reportedly damaged.

Two more airstrikes in Man Tong Township killed one person, injured three others, and damaged 27 homes.

Additional strikes were reported in Mongngawt (1 airstrike), Mong Lon (3 airstrikes), and Kyaukme (2 airstrikes) townships, where two houses were destroyed.

These attacks came despite the junta's announcement of a ceasefire following the powerful 28 March earthquake. A new ceasefire, announced by the junta on 31 May, is scheduled to run from 1 to 30 June.

## MYANMAR'S RESISTANCE FORCES RECAPTURE STRATEGIC THAY BAW BOE CAMP IN KAREN STATE DESPITE JUNTA AIRSTRIKES

Resistance forces have recaptured the strategic Thay Baw Boe hill camp in southern Myawaddy Township, Karen State, despite sustained air and artillery support from the Myanmar's military junta.

The coordinated ground assault was launched at around 6:30 pm on 3 June by joint resistance forces, including units under the Karen National Union (KNU). The attack following an extended siege that began on 21 May.

"Since 2 June, we have been attacking with heavy weapons and drones. On 3 June, we launched a ground assault and captured the strategic hill. We are currently clearing the area," a resistance fighter told Mizzima from the frontline.

The junta reportedly carried out at least five aerial bombings during the fighting and provided artillery support from its bases in Wawlay and Ukarihta. Casualty figures and details of weapons seized have not yet been confirmed.

Artillery shells fired by junta forces reportedly landed near Mawlichai village in Thailand, triggering explosions. Fighter jets from Myanmar briefly entered Thai airspace, prompting the Royal Thai Air Force to deploy two aircraft to patrol the border.

The Thay Baw Boe camp is situated along the Myawaddy-Wawlay road, where resistance forces have recently captured several key hill posts, including Bale Doh, Maw Khee, Bayinnaung, Kanele, and Shwe Aye Myaing.

A junta reinforcement column of around 100 troops sent from Wawlay was intercepted and reportedly destroyed near the headquarters of the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), according to resistance sources.

Thay Baw Boe hill camp was previously captured by resistance forces in 2022 but was retaken by junta troops four months later. This latest operation marks the second time the site has fallen under resistance control.



Photo: Supplied

## CHINA LEAD MINE PLAN WEIGHS HEAVILY ON MYANMAR TRIBE IN SHAN STATE

**H**undreds of protesting Myanmar tribespeople march up a hillside to a cavernous facility where a Chinese joint venture's giant milling machines stand ready to grind up the rocks of their ancestral homeland for lead ore.

Demand for the heavy metal is forecast to rise, driven by its use in the batteries needed for the global energy transition.

But its extraction can pollute the environment and the Pradawng tribespeople carry banners reading: "No transparency, no responsibility".

"We don't have any plan to exchange this inheritance from our ancestors for money or riches," said 24-year-old protest leader Khun Khine Min Naing.

"This land is the dignity of our tribe."

Since a 2021 coup, Myanmar has been riven by civil war and shattered into a patchwork of loosely governed territories ripe for exploitation by unregulated miners.

And neighbouring China is keen to scoop up the minerals and metals Myanmar can supply.

The Pradawng -- a little-known subtribe of the Kayan ethnic group -- claim around 3,000 members and a 381-year lineage in Shan state, in Myanmar's east.

They say Myanmar firm Four Star Company and a Chinese partner have planned a mega-project mining lead upriver from their village, Thi Kyeik, in Pekon township.

Heavy machinery began to be installed in February, but the tribe say they were not consulted on the scheme and fear it will taint the area with hazardous chemicals.

Locals have blockaded roads to turn back vehicles, and threatened to seize mining equipment, defying possible violent backlash in a country where the right to assemble often depends on the whims of armed guards.

"We are only asking for Indigenous rights that we should own," Khun Khine Min Naing told AFP, demanding mine plans are rolled back until the war is over and they can be scrutinised by a civilian government.

### Natural resources

Lead is a toxic metal, most commonly mined for use in lead-acid batteries.

Extracting it can pollute local soil and water supplies, with children particularly vulnerable to exposure, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

"We don't want to leave this land environmentally damaged for the next generation," said Khun Khine Min Naing. "We don't want to be regarded as historical criminals."

The Pradawng say Four Star Company has been active locally for two decades and is linked to the local ruling Kayan New Land Party, whose armed wing maintains a ceasefire with Myanmar's military.

The firm could not be reached for comment.

Their Chinese partner company is harder to identify, and locals say its involvement was only revealed when its representatives attended a joint event with Four Star Company intended to address community backlash.

China shares a 2,100-kilometre (1,300-mile) border with Myanmar and has long been a lucrative market for the country's natural resources, including jade, gemstones, teak logs and metal ores.

It accounts for nearly 98 percent of Myanmar's lead ore and concentrate exports, according to 2023 World Bank data.

The figures say 49,000 tonnes worth \$20 million were exported to China that year, but that is likely far short of the true amount.

The lack of a central authority means tracking the real scale of mining operations across Myanmar is difficult.

But satellite imagery analysis of one hotspot on the Myanmar-China border by the Britain-based Centre for Information Resilience showed the expanse of mining operations there nearly doubled in size between 2018 and 2024.

### 'Only stones for our children'

Rechargeable lead-acid batteries are widely used in vehicles, including EVs where they provide auxiliary power, as well as for storing power generated by renewable technologies such as wind and solar.

The metal -- identified by the WHO as "one of 10 chemicals of major public health concern" -- sells for around \$2,000 per refined tonne on the global market.

But the Pradawng people suspect they will see none of the profits.

Along with health risks, locals fear environmental damage, with villagers saying increased mining in recent years has led to more flooding and mudslides that carried off entire homes.

Mu Ju July, 19, ekes out a living picking through mine slag heaps for scraps of lead to sell.

A flurry of prospecting could be a windfall for her, but she worries it will squander the livelihoods and homes of future generations.

"If we allow them, we will be okay for only one or two years," she said.

"It will leave only stones when the time comes for our children."

AFP



## MYANMAR'S THREE BROTHERHOOD ALLIANCE EXTENDS CEASEFIRE UNTIL END OF JUNE

Myanmar's Three Brotherhood Alliance, comprising the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and the Arakan Army (AA), has announced it will extend its unilateral ceasefire for the third time, until the end of June. The decision aims to support post-earthquake humanitarian relief efforts across affected regions.

In a statement issued on 2 June, the alliance said the ceasefire extension from 2 June to 30 June was necessary to allow more time for ongoing relief activities. The region has faced considerable challenges following the earthquake, and heavy rains have exacerbated the damage, causing additional structural collapses and delaying relief operations. Despite two months of effort, aid teams have not been able to complete their work.

"More time is needed for the humanitarian efforts," said the statement, referencing the continuing need for aid despite prior ceasefires. The Three Brotherhood Alliance previously declared one-month ceasefires in April and May to allow for relief work, but due to the scale of the devastation, this third extension was seen as essential.

The ceasefire extension came on the heels of a similar move by the military junta. On 1 June, the junta announced a one-month extension of its own ceasefire, lasting from 1 June to 30 June.

In its statement, the junta emphasized the need to facilitate post-earthquake reconstruction and to create a conducive environment for upcoming elections.

However, tensions remain high despite the ceasefires. On the very day after the junta's ceasefire extension announcement, 1 June, the military conducted airstrikes in Singu Township, Mandalay Region. In addition, a school in Thabeikkyin Township was also hit, resulting in the injury of three women and the destruction of the school building and nearby structures.

These military actions have raised concerns that the ceasefires may be more symbolic than substantive, as hostilities continue to flare in various regions despite efforts to create temporary ceasefire zones for humanitarian aid.



Photo: supplied

## PYU SAW HTEE LEADER AMONG 8 KILLED IN NYAUNG-U ATTACK BY RESISTANCE FORCES

A coordinated attack by the Htanaung Myay military column and the Bagan & Nyaung-U Special Task Force in Nyaung-U Township of Mandalay Region, left eight people dead and one injured, including a local Pyu Saw Htee leader, according to a statement released by the resistance group on 3 June.

The incident occurred on the evening of 1 June at a community rest house near the entrance of Gantgaw ward in Bagan Myothit, where Pyu Saw Htee leader Zaw Zaw and his men were reportedly collecting money from local residents.

"We received a tip-off about the extortion activities and went in by car. We opened fire on Zaw Zaw and his group. On our way back, we heard an explosion and saw people lying on the ground. It's unclear whether one of our bullets triggered a grenade or if they had unpinning it themselves," said Ko Mu Tu, spokesperson for the Htanaung Myay military column.

The resistance group claims that eight individuals, including Zaw Zaw, were killed in the operation, with

one more person injured. However, the junta's Myanmar Alin newspaper reported a different toll, stating that seven were killed and six injured.

During the attack, the Htanaung Myay military column reportedly seized several weapons and materials, including one handmade gun, one handmade carbine, one hand grenade, 10 carbine bullets, six other bullets, two motorcycles, and other evidence.

In the aftermath, the junta deployed around 100 troops to conduct clearance operations in Gantgaw village and nearby forest areas, according to Ko Mu Tu.

The resistance statement emphasized that the operation specifically targeted Zaw Zaw due to his alleged involvement in extortion and collaboration with the junta.



## FLOODWATERS LINGER IN MYITKYINA'S LOW-LYING AREAS, CLEAN WATER AND FOOD URGENTLY NEEDED

**F**loodwaters have not fully receded in three low-lying neighbourhoods of Myitkyina Township, Kachin State, and flood-affected residents are in urgent need of clean drinking water and dry food, according to local relief groups and residents.

"The floods have largely subsided, but water remains in Myint Nyein Aye, Mya Zedi, and Lae Kone wards," said an official from the Myo Sett Thit social relief group.

The flooding began on 31 May following a sharp rise in the Ayeyarwady River due to heavy rainfall in Kachin State's upper region. Even urban parts of Myitkyina were inundated, with one death reported and many affected.

By the afternoon of 2 June, water levels began to recede across the township, leaving behind mud and debris. However, areas near the river remain submerged, forcing many residents to take shelter in monasteries, even as most official relief camps have closed.

"Some have returned, but cooking and daily life are still difficult due to the lingering floodwaters. We are

planning to distribute clean water and other essentials. Drinking water is the most urgent need," the Myo Sett Thit official said.

The junta's Kachin State government reported on 2 June that 10,375 people had been affected and that 30 temporary shelters had been opened during the floods.

The flooding was triggered by the aftermath of Cyclone Remal and unusually intense monsoon rains, which caused the Ayeyarwady River to rise over six feet above danger levels, affecting central and lower Myanmar.

However, this year's low-pressure system during the early monsoon is expected to bring less severe flooding compared to 2024, meteorologist U Win Naing stated on social media.

On 2 June, the National Unity Government's Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MOHADMD) issued a weekly forecast warning of rainfall across most of Myanmar. It urged the public to prepare for natural disasters such as flooding, landslides, and heavy rains.



## RELENTLESS MONSOON RAINS FLOOD MYANMAR'S RAKHINE STATE, **DISPLACING HUNDREDS**

**D**ays of unrelenting heavy rain have unleashed widespread flooding across multiple townships in Myanmar's Rakhine State, forcing families to flee and leaving entire villages underwater, local residents and volunteers say.

Severe flooding has inundated Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Minbya, and Taungup townships, with reports of rapidly rising water levels since the night of 1 June. Particularly hard-hit are the villages of Thayet Tabin, Sapa Seik, Tharyar Kone, Nyaung Chaung, and Ywa U Mapyin in Kyauktaw; Zedi Taung and the area surrounding Kyaukkap village in Mrauk-U; and Min Phu, Myin Kap Seik, and Kap Pe in Minbya Township.

"The rain hasn't stopped. Water from the mountains is pouring in, and it's not draining quickly enough. People are fleeing to higher ground, leaving only middle-aged residents behind to guard their homes. These areas flood almost every year when heavy rains hit Rakhine," said Ko Wai Hin Aung, a local volunteer assisting displaced families.

As waters continue to rise, residents in Taungup Township are beginning to see flooding, while nearby Thandwe Township is already affected. Authorities and residents alike remain on high alert, bracing for further deterioration in conditions.

Elsewhere in the country, persistent rains have caused the Ayeyarwady River to swell, triggering floods in Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin State, and in the surrounding areas of Chipwi, Waingmaw, and Putao.

The junta's Meteorology and Hydrology Department (MCD) issued a warning at 4 pm, 2 June, forecasting continued heavy rainfall across wide swaths of the country through 3 June. The warning covers Rakhine, Kachin, Karen, Chin, and Mon states and Naypyidaw, Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, Magway, and Ayeyarwady regions, with scattered showers expected in the lower Sagaing Region and Karenni State.

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MOHADM) under the National Unity Government (NUG) also released a separate forecast for 2 to 8 June, cautioning that heavy rain may be accompanied by thunderstorms, flash floods, and landslides.

As floodwaters show little sign of receding, humanitarian groups warn of an escalating crisis in low-lying and mountainous regions already prone to seasonal disasters.

## REFUGEE CAMP SCHOOLS AT RISK IN BANGLADESH IN AID CRISIS

Photo: AFP

**G**lobal aid cuts have forced the UN children's agency to sack more than 1,000 teachers in Bangladesh camps for Rohingya refugees, with more jobs at risk without funding.

Around a million members of the persecuted and mostly Muslim Rohingya live in squalid relief camps in Bangladesh, most of them after fleeing a 2017 military crackdown in neighbouring Myanmar.

The teacher firings come in the wake of dramatic US funding cuts.

"Due to the global aid funding crisis, UNICEF has had to make difficult decisions impacting early education services for Rohingya refugee children," the agency said in a statement late Tuesday.

UNICEF said that the contracts of 1,179 people -- working on kindergarten and primary schools -- were terminated.

Before the cuts, there were an estimated 4,000 teachers in the camps, according to Bangladeshi senior government aid official, Md Shamsud Douza.

Schools have closed for the Muslim holiday of Eid, but if fresh funding is not secured by the time term resumes at the end of June, more teachers could lose their jobs.

"The return of the rest of the workers...depends on new funding being secured," UNICEF added.

"We remain committed and hopeful that increased support will restore what every child deserves: a future."

Humanitarian organisations worldwide have been reeling since US President Donald Trump returned to office in January, freezing most foreign aid funding.

The United States has traditionally been by far the top donor to a number of agencies, which have been left scrambling to fill sudden budget gaps.

"We are deeply aware of the urgent needs faced by Rohingya refugee children, many of whom have already endured significant trauma and disruptions to their education, health, nutrition and protection," UNICEF added.

"Our goal is to ensure they have essential skills, that they have basic qualifications that give them confidence to contribute to their communities when the time is safe for them to return."

AFP



## BANGLADESH SAYS INDIA PUSHES BACK 1,200 PEOPLE

**B**angladesh said 4 June that neighbouring India has pushed more than 1,270 people across its border in the past month, mainly Bangladeshis, but also Indian citizens and Rohingya refugees.

Bangladesh, largely encircled by land by India, has seen relations with New Delhi turn icy since a mass uprising toppled Dhaka's previous government last year.

"Between May 7 and June 3, Indian authorities pushed in 1,272 individuals, including a few Indian citizens and Rohingya, through 19 bordering districts", Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) officials said.

"Only yesterday, they pushed 50 individuals."

India's Hindu nationalist government has often described undocumented immigrants as "Muslim infiltrators", accusing them of posing a security threat.

India has not commented on the recent returns across their shared border.

Bangladeshi Jahidul Molla, 21, said he was among those sent back, saying he had been living in India's western state of Gujarat since he was 14.

"They picked us up from home and put us on a plane," Molla told AFP, adding that after two weeks in a camp, he was then taken onboard a ship, along with more than 50 others, almost all men.

"For the next three days, they kept beating us, and we were starving", reporting that they were then dropped overboard in the mangrove swamps of the Sundarbans, which straddle the border between the nations.

"They dropped us... the coast guard rescued us and handed us over to the police".

AFP could not independently verify his account.

India shares a long and porous border with neighbouring Muslim-majority Bangladesh.

The mostly Muslim Rohingya have been persecuted in Myanmar for decades, with many fleeing a 2017 military crackdown.

More than a million escaped to Bangladesh, but others fled to India.

The BGB official said "some of the Rohingya" were registered with the UN refugee agency in India.

Md Touhid Hossain, who heads the foreign ministry in the caretaker government, said Dhaka was "putting all our efforts" into resolving the issue through dialogue.

Indian media report that, since a four-day conflict with Pakistan last month, authorities have pushed back more than 2,000 alleged illegal Bangladeshi immigrants.

In February, Amit Shah, India's interior minister said "the issue of illegal intruders is also related to national security, and it should be dealt with strictly", adding that "they should be identified and deported".

AFP



Photo: AFP



## TRUMP SLAPS NEW TRAVEL BAN ON 12 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING MYANMAR

**U**S President Donald Trump signed a new travel ban 4 June targeting 12 countries including Afghanistan, Iran, Myanmar and Yemen, reviving one of the most controversial measures from his first term.

Trump said the measure was spurred by a makeshift flamethrower attack on a Jewish protest in Colorado that US authorities blamed on a man they said was in the country illegally.

The ban targets nationals of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

Trump also imposed a partial ban on travelers from seven countries: Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela.

Both go into effect on Monday, the White House said.

"The recent terror attack in Boulder, Colorado has underscored the extreme dangers posed to our country by the entry of foreign nationals who are not properly vetted," Trump said in a video message from the Oval Office posted on X.

"We don't want them."

Trump compared the new measures to the "powerful" ban he imposed on a number of mainly Muslim countries in his first term, which caused huge travel disruption across the world.

The US leader said that 2017 ban had stopped the United States suffering terror attacks that happened in Europe.

"We will not let what happened in Europe happen in America," Trump said.

"We cannot have open migration from any country where we cannot safely and reliably vet and screen. That is why today I am signing a new executive order placing travel restrictions on countries including Yemen, Somalia, Haiti, Libya, and numerous others."

"Being in the United States is a great risk for anyone, not just for Venezuelans," Venezuela's Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello said after the announcement, warning citizens against travel there.

Trump's new travel ban could however face legal challenges, as have many of the drastic measures he has taken in his whirlwind return to office.

### 'Dangerous foreign actors'

The White House unveiled the new ban with virtually no warning, minutes after Trump had addressed some 3,000 political appointees from his balcony at a celebratory "summer soiree."

Trump also unusually made the announcement with no reporters present. He has unveiled many of his most headline-grabbing policy announcements at signing ceremonies in front of journalists in the Oval Office.

Rumors of a new Trump travel ban had circulated following the attack in Colorado, with his administration vowing to pursue "terrorists" living in the US on visas.

Suspect Mohammed Sabry Soliman is alleged to have thrown fire bombs and sprayed burning gasoline at a group of people who had gathered on Sunday in support of Israeli hostages held by Hamas.

US Homeland Security officials said Soliman was in the country illegally, having overstayed a tourist visa, but that he had applied for asylum in September 2022.

"President Trump is fulfilling his promise to protect Americans from dangerous foreign actors that want to come to our country and cause us harm," White House Deputy Press Secretary Abigail Jackson said on X.

"These commonsense restrictions are country-specific and include places that lack proper vetting, exhibit high visa overstay rates, or fail to share identity and threat information."

Trump's proclamation gave specific reasons for each country in his proclamation, which says it is aimed at protecting the United States from "foreign terrorists and other national security" threats.

For Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and war-torn Libya, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen, it said they lacked "competent" central authorities for processing passports and vetting.

Yemen, where American forces have struck Iranian-backed Huthi rebels, was also the "site of active US military operations," it said.

Iran, with which the United States is in negotiations on a possible nuclear deal, was included as it is a "state sponsor of terrorism," the order said.

For most of the other countries, Trump's order cited an above average likelihood that people would overstay their visas.

Trump separately on Wednesday announced a ban on visas for foreign students who are set to begin attending Harvard University, ramping up his crackdown on what he regards as a bastion of liberalism.

AFP



## UN RIGHTS CHIEF VOICES LEGAL CONCERNS ON US TRAVEL BANS THAT INCLUDE MYANMAR

**P**resident Donald Trump's decision to ban citizens of 12 countries from visiting the United States has potential legal implications, the UN's human rights chief said on Thursday.

"The broad and sweeping nature of the new travel ban raises concerns from the perspective of international law," Volker Turk said in a statement.

That included "the principle of non-discrimination and of the necessity and proportionality of the measures deployed to meet the security concerns stated", he added.

Trump on Wednesday announced a travel ban on 12 countries and restrictions on seven others in the wake of an attack on a Jewish protest in Colorado that the authorities blamed on an Egyptian man they said was in the country illegally.

Turk cautioned about the language used to announce the move, saying the world body was "concerned" about "deeply regrettable official public statements disparaging the people affected by this measure".

They risked stigmatising those nationals both in the United States and elsewhere, and increased the chances of them facing "xenophobic hostility and abuse", he added.

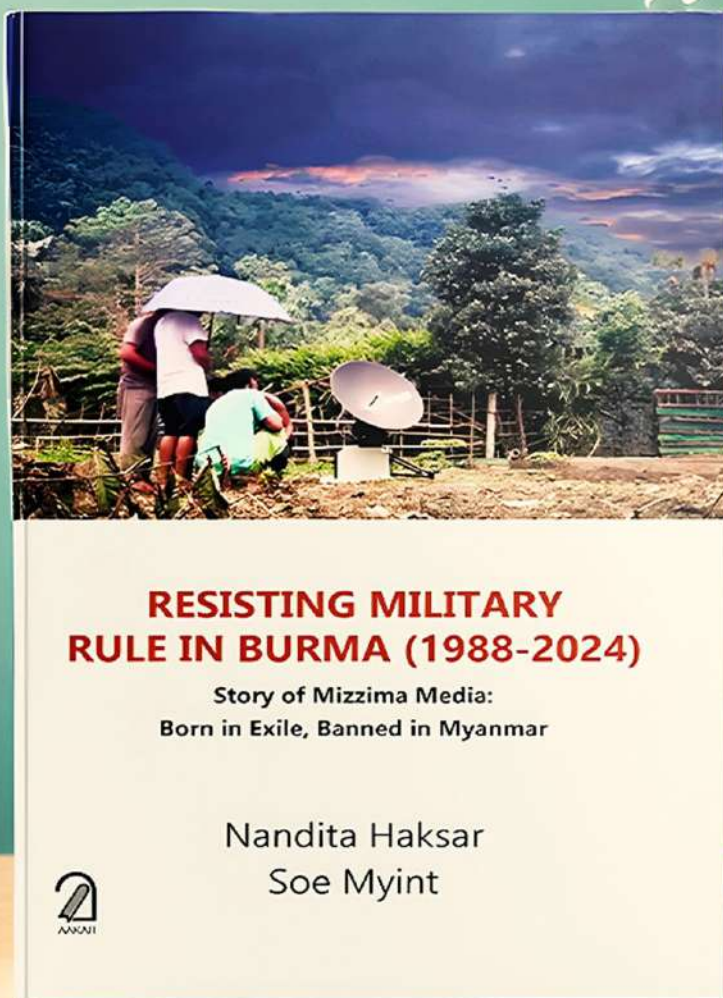
The ban comes into force on Monday and affects citizens from Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen, the White House has said.

People from Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela are facing visa restrictions.

RESISTING MILITARY RULE IN BURMA (1988-2024)

# **STORY OF MIZZIMA MEDIA: BORN IN EXILE, BANNED IN MYANMAR**

*by Nandita Haksar and Soe Myint*



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# AUNG SAN SUU KYI: ENDURING RELEVANCE, MANIPULATION, AND THE BATTLE FOR MYANMAR'S FUTURE

JAMES SWE



Photo: AFP

June 19 is Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 80th birthday. She remains an iconic figure in Myanmar's ongoing struggle for democracy, even as she endures her fourth year of solitary confinement under the military junta. Her symbolic power, the complexity of her legacy, and the ways in which a wide range of actors—both inside and outside Myanmar—continue to invoke her name, underscore her enduring relevance in the country's political and diplomatic landscape. Yet, as her image is wielded by various groups to advance their own agendas, Myanmar's pro-democracy movement must remain vigilant against manipulation, including the calculated use of her name in international legal proceedings.

## Suu Kyi's Symbolic Power and Political Utility

For many in Myanmar, Suu Kyi is the embodiment of hope, resilience, and the dream of a democratic future. Her leadership of the National League for Democracy (NLD), her Nobel Peace Prize, and her decades-long resistance to military rule have cemented her as a revered figure. Even as new actors, such as the National Unity Government (NUG) and People's Defense Forces

(PDFs), take on more direct roles in resistance, Suu Kyi's legacy continues to inspire unity and resolve.

However, her symbolic power is a double-edged sword. The State Administration Council (SAC)—Myanmar's military junta—has repeatedly sought to exploit Suu Kyi's status. By occasionally shifting her from prison to house arrest or hinting at negotiations involving her, the SAC attempts to project an image of humanitarian concern and openness to dialogue, especially to ASEAN and the international community. These gestures, however, are often superficial, designed to legitimize the regime while maintaining a firm grip on power.

## Kim Aris: Family as a Political Tool

Kim Aris's advocacy for his mother is both heartfelt and important. However, the SAC has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to manipulate even the most genuine efforts for its own ends. The pro-democracy movement should remain vigilant, ensuring that family appeals do not inadvertently serve the junta's propaganda or diplomatic strategies.

## **The Rohingya Issue: Shifting Perceptions and Political Calculations**

Suu Kyi's international reputation suffered greatly due to her defense of the military against genocide allegations at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2019. However, some Rohingya leaders now see her as another victim of the military's brutality, hoping that her eventual release might lead to a reckoning with the truth and possibly even advocacy for their rights. The evolving perceptions among the Rohingya and their supporters reflect the complexity of Suu Kyi's legacy and the broader struggle for justice in Myanmar.

## **International Justice: The ICC and the Argentine Court**

On the legal front, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has requested an arrest warrant for junta leader Min Aung Hlaing for crimes against humanity. In the meantime, an Argentine court has issued warrants for both military and civilian leaders, including Suu Kyi, under universal jurisdiction. While the legal action in ICC is a due process, the inclusion of Suu Kyi's name in the Argentine verdict is either a calculated move—a ploy to invoke international attention by naming Suu Kyi, a globally recognized icon or a misstep of the prosecutor against the intent of the defendants intent to seek accountability for crimes against the Rohingya committed by the military as claimed by the plaintiffs.

This tactic tarnished conflating Suu Kyi's contested role with the true perpetrators directly responsible for atrocities. It also inadvertently served the SAC's interests by muddying the waters of international opinion. Myanmar's democracy advocates must remain alert to how such legal maneuvers can be used to manipulate perceptions and distract from the core issues of justice and accountability.

## **ASEAN's Push for Negotiated Solutions and the "Soft Landing" for the Junta**

ASEAN's efforts to broker a negotiated solution have been hamstrung by internal divisions and the junta's intransigence. Some member states and international actors advocate for a "soft landing" for the SAC—an exit strategy that would avoid holding the regime fully accountable. This approach, while pragmatic for some, risks legitimizing the junta and undermining the pursuit of justice for Myanmar's people.

## **Conclusion: Vigilance in the Face of Manipulation**

Aung San Suu Kyi's enduring relevance is both a source of strength and a potential vulnerability for Myanmar's democracy movement. Her image—and now her son's advocacy—can be weaponized by the junta to distract, divide, or legitimize its rule. Even international legal actions, such as the Argentine court verdict, may use her name to draw attention in ways that complicate the struggle for justice. The resistance and its allies must therefore balance the powerful symbolism of Suu Kyi's legacy with a clear-eyed understanding of the junta's tactics, ensuring that neither her plight nor her family's appeals are used to undermine the broader struggle for justice and genuine democratic change.

As Myanmar's crisis continues, Suu Kyi's fate remains intertwined with the nation's future. The international community and domestic actors alike must remain steadfast in demanding not just her release, but the dismantling of military impunity and a true return to democratic governance.

Photo: AFP

## AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S LEGAL TEAM OBJECTS TO BROTHER'S ATTEMPT TO SELL PART OF HISTORIC UNIVERSITY AVENUE RESIDENCE

The legal team representing detained State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi has formally objected to a petition filed by her elder brother, U Aung San Oo, seeking permission to sell a portion of the historic Plot No. 54 on University Avenue Road in Yangon. The objection was submitted at Yangon's Kamayut District Court on 5 June, according to sources close to the court.

The court has scheduled a hearing on the matter for 12 June, a source told Mizzima.

During a previous court session held on 29 May, U Aung San Oo submitted a request to sell one acre of the 1.923-acre plot, excluding the 0.923 acres where Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's iconic lakeside residence is located.

Plot No. 54 has been put up for auction four times by U Aung San Oo, but has failed to attract any buyers. Past auction attempts listed the land at prices of 315 billion, 300 billion, 297 billion, and 270 billion kyats.

At one-point, U Aung San Oo proposed that Aung San Suu Kyi be allowed to set the floor price for the auction, but the court rejected the suggestion. He has since submitted an alternative proposal to sell only part of the land.

Aung San Suu Kyi's legal team has consistently objected to the sale of the property, citing her inability

to communicate with her legal counsel or participate in legal proceedings.

In 2016, the Western Yangon District Court ruled that the two-story house and half of the land on Plot No. 54 be granted to Aung San Suu Kyi, while the remaining land and a one-story building be given to U Aung San Oo. However, U Aung San Oo later appealed for the entire property to be sold, with the proceeds split equally between the two.

He also sought to include an additional house and parcel of land previously left to Daw Khin Kyi's nephew, U Khin Maung Aye in the division of the inheritance. His appeals were initially rejected at every level of the judicial system.

However, in a controversial decision following the military coup, the Union Supreme Court upheld his appeal in 2022.

Meanwhile, the National Unity Government (NUG) has declared No. 54 University Avenue an interim national cultural heritage site. The NUG has also announced that the sale, ownership transfer, or demolition of the property is illegal and warned of severe consequences for any violations.



## EU PROVIDES €5 MILLION IN EMERGENCY FOOD AID FOR MYANMAR EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS

On 4th June, the World Food Programme (WFP) in Myanmar issued a statement welcoming a €5 million humanitarian contribution by the European Union (EU). The donation goes towards addressing food security for communities affected by the devastating 28 March earthquake in Myanmar.

The text of the statement is as follows.

Through this funding from the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), WFP will provide food or cash for food to those most impacted by the earthquake, as well as specialized nutrition support for children and mothers. WFP will deliver the assistance directly to people in need, working with local partners and non-governmental organisations.

The contribution follows a recent joint EU and WFP field visit to earthquake-hit Mandalay, where officials observed the ongoing struggle of affected communities. Nearly 2.8 million food insecure people were affected by the earthquake in the hardest hit townships.

"Even before the devastating earthquake struck Myanmar, humanitarian aid was a lifeline for its people amid ongoing conflict. In the face of this tragedy, the EU remains steadfast in its commitment. Together with trusted partners like the World Food Programme, we are delivering life-saving assistance, and we will continue to do so," said Mr. Luc Verna, who oversees

EU humanitarian programmes in Myanmar.

WFP reached 400,000 people with emergency food, cash for food, and nutrition support in the worst affected regions including Mandalay, Sagaing, southern Shan and Nay Pyi Taw, during its initial response. Starting from early June, WFP will provide two months of targeted support and recovery initiatives for 150,000 people.

"The earthquake was a disaster on top of an ongoing crisis that has existed since 2021," said Michael Dunford, WFP Representative and Country Director in Myanmar. "The monsoon will make things even tougher, and this crucial humanitarian funding from the EU will allow WFP to meet the needs of the people who find themselves in a desperate situation."

While addressing needs in earthquake-hit areas, the EU and WFP urge the international community to act on the immense needs of millions affected by conflict across the country. Due to severe funding gaps, WFP was forced to cut lifesaving assistance to more than one million people in Myanmar since April. Before the earthquake, 20 million people already needed humanitarian assistance.

This latest contribution brings EU support for WFP Myanmar to EUR 8.9 million (USD 10 million) in 2025; the largest contributor to WFP's efforts to address hunger in the crisis hit country.



Photo: AFP

# AFTERSHOCKS CONTINUE IN NAYPYIDAW AND SAGAING REGION FOLLOWING 5 JUNE EARTHQUAKE

A magnitude 3.8 aftershock struck near Lewe, Naypyidaw, at 8:11 am on 5 June, according to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology. The tremor occurred approximately 12 miles southwest of Lewe at a depth of 10 kilometres.

In the immediate aftermath, social media footage showed students evacuating school buildings and concerned parents gathering outside educational institutions.

Later the same day, a separate magnitude 3.8 earthquake occurred near Sinnga village in Sagaing Region at 7:19 pm, with a recorded depth of 115 kilometres. Another quake, measuring 4.4 on the Richter scale, also struck near Sinlung Ga town, Kachin State at a depth of 105 kilometres.

According to the Myanmar Earthquake Alert Group, no significant damage was reported from either of the events in Sagaing Region.

Meteorologists and experts have advised the public to remain cautious, avoid structurally compromised buildings, and stay alert to official earthquake warnings and potential signs of further seismic activity.

The Department reported that a total of 187 aftershocks has been recorded since the initial 4.5 magnitude earthquake near Aung Pan, southern Shan State earlier on 5 June.



## BURMA RESEARCH INSTITUTE URGES CONTINUED US AID AMID MOUNTING CRISIS IN MYANMAR

The Burma Research Institute (BRI) has released a comprehensive analysis warning of severe humanitarian and geopolitical consequences should US funding for Myanmar be reduced in the upcoming fiscal year. The report highlights the deepening crisis following four years of civil war, compounded by a devastating March earthquake and ongoing military violence.

According to BRI's report, 3.5 million people are internally displaced and 15 million face acute food insecurity. A magnitude 7.7 earthquake in March further exacerbated the situation, killing at least 3,800 people and leaving over 6 million in urgent need of aid.

Despite a declared ceasefire, the junta has launched over 740 airstrikes in the weeks following the disaster, including attacks on schools and churches, killing dozens of civilians.

The military junta now controls only 21% of the country, BRI says, while resistance forces – despite Chinese and Russian support for the junta – continue to gain ground. The report warns that if the U.S. withdraws support, China could consolidate influence

over Myanmar, gaining access to critical minerals and maritime routes in the Indian Ocean.

The Trump administration's FY2026 budget proposal reduces funding for the State Department and USAID by \$2.46 billion and eliminates key foreign assistance programs traditionally used to support Myanmar. Burma is notably absent from the budget text and recent testimony from senior officials.

The Burma Research Institute urges Congress to maintain at least \$121 million in aid for FY2026, in line with previous years. The proposed allocation includes \$75 million for humanitarian and cross-border relief, \$25 million for non-lethal support to resistance forces, and additional funding for justice, governance, and deserter reintegration programs.

The report notes this is a pivotal moment for Myanmar in which sustained US support could help stabilize Myanmar and advance democratic governance. The alternative is to cede the future of the region to authoritarian influence.

# VIETNAM FEELS THE HEAT AS U.S. TARGETS CHINESE INVESTMENTS WITH HEAVY TARIFFS

**SUN LEE**



Photo: AFP

The China Plus One strategy, which encouraged manufacturers to diversify supply chains beyond China, is now facing serious challenges. Vietnam, once a leading destination for Chinese firms seeking alternative production hubs, is now at the center of the escalating trade conflict between the United States and China. The imposition of a 46% punitive tariff by the U.S. on Vietnamese imports has disrupted economic stability in the region, forcing business owners to rethink their operations. Many Chinese-Vietnamese entrepreneurs, who had invested heavily in factories and infrastructure, are now grappling with uncertainty and financial strain. The tariff shock has frozen investments, halted expansion plans, and created hesitation among foreign investors. Vietnam's role as a manufacturing hub now hangs in the balance amid geopolitical turbulence.

Vietnam has long been a key destination for Chinese manufacturers seeking to diversify their supply chains, offering lower labour costs, strategic location, and favourable trade policies. However, Washington's latest tariff measures have dramatically altered this landscape. The United States has long regarded Southeast Asia as an indirect conduit for Chinese goods, suspecting that some manufacturers were using countries like Vietnam to bypass tariffs imposed

on mainland China. Now, with Vietnam absorbing the largest influx of Chinese industrial investment, it finds itself under intense geopolitical pressure.

The announcement of a 46% tariff on Vietnamese imports on April 2 sent shockwaves through the business community, causing widespread uncertainty. Many factory owners who had recently established operations in Vietnam are facing unexpected financial strain and re-evaluating their plans. A business consultant based in Hanoi, shared that multiple investment contracts have been abruptly frozen due to the tariff. He explained that investors had anticipated an increase closer to 15%, but the steep 46% hike caught them off guard, forcing businesses into a state of caution and hesitation.

The recent tariff increase has caused a significant disruption in factory investments across Vietnam. Many manufacturers, particularly those in the textile and electronics sectors, had been expanding their operations, anticipating stable trade conditions. However, the sudden imposition of a 46% tariff on Vietnamese imports by the United States has forced investors to reconsider their commitments. Several large-scale projects, including an 80,000-square-meter

facility, have been halted, with only partial construction completed. Investors are now hesitant to proceed, fearing further economic instability.

Vietnam's economy relies heavily on exports, with the U.S. being its largest trading partner. In response to the tariff hike, Hanoi swiftly engaged in negotiations with Washington. On April 9, the U.S. granted Vietnam a temporary 90-day reprieve, reducing the tariff to 10%. This adjustment triggered a surge in production, as factories rushed to fulfill orders before the deadline. Export volumes from key ports increased significantly, with some manufacturers reporting a backlog of shipments due to heightened demand. Despite this temporary relief, long-term concerns about Vietnam's trade future remain.

Following the temporary reduction in tariffs imposed by the United States, manufacturers in Vietnam experienced an unexpected surge in demand. Exporters rushed to fulfill orders as businesses sought to take advantage of the 90-day reprieve, leading to a significant increase in outbound shipments. Reports indicated that container volumes at key ports initially dropped by 30% but later rebounded, surpassing previous levels by 20%. Some American buyers placed bulk orders, requesting hundreds of containers at once, reflecting heightened demand for Vietnamese goods.

Vietnam has repeatedly found itself entangled in the ongoing U.S.-China trade conflict. When tariffs were first imposed on Chinese exports in 2018, many manufacturers sought refuge in Vietnam, shifting production to circumvent rising costs. The China Plus One strategy gained traction, and by 2019, Vietnam had approved hundreds of new Chinese investment projects totalling billions of dollars. This influx fuelled the rapid growth of Vietnam's industrial sectors, particularly in textiles, electronics, and energy. More recently, automobile giants have expanded into Vietnam. However, evolving U.S. trade policies now threaten these investments, aiming to tighten regulations and limit Chinese industry's global reach, creating uncertainty for businesses operating in the region.

Vietnam's position as a manufacturing hub faces growing uncertainty due to shifting trade policies and geopolitical tensions. The latest U.S. trade measures aim to reduce Chinese industry links with

other countries, potentially affecting Vietnam's role in global supply chains. Future trade agreements may impose restrictions on goods containing Chinese-origin materials, further complicating Vietnam's export landscape.

While the 90-day tariff reprieve has provided temporary relief, long-term risks persist. If trade tensions between the U.S. and China continue, Vietnam may struggle to maintain its competitive edge as a preferred alternative to Chinese manufacturing. Meanwhile, other regional players like Thailand and Malaysia are actively negotiating trade agreements, and Mexico, which has avoided similar tariffs, is working to lower import duties to attract investment.

Vietnam's economic outlook remains uncertain as shifting geopolitical dynamics continue to impact global trade. Once a leading destination for manufacturers seeking alternatives to China, the country now faces disruptions due to the latest U.S. tariffs. The China Plus One strategy initially strengthened Vietnam's role in supply chains, but recent policy changes have created instability. Business owners are now reassessing investments and searching for alternatives, aware that further trade shifts could significantly affect their operations. The unpredictability of international trade policies has forced entrepreneurs to adapt quickly to maintain stability.

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

# UKRAINE WAR 'EXISTENTIAL', RUSSIA SAYS, LAUNCHING REVENGE STRIKES

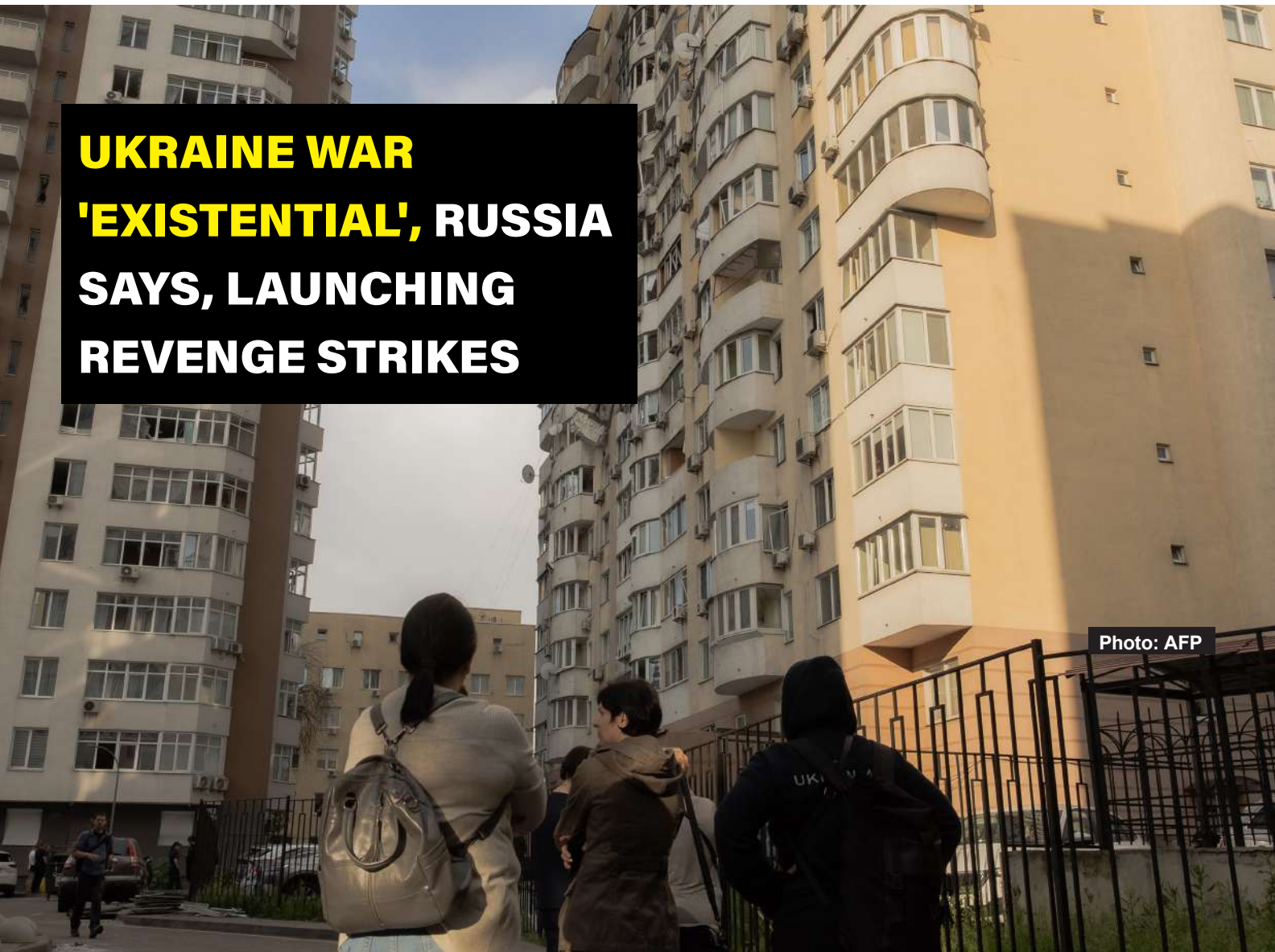


Photo: AFP

**T**he Kremlin said on 6 June that the Ukraine war was "existential" for Russia, after it launched a wave of retaliatory drone and missile strikes that killed three rescue workers in Kyiv, following Ukrainian drone attacks deep into Russian territory.

The comments are Moscow's latest to dampen hopes for a breakthrough amid a flurry of meetings between Russian and Ukrainian delegations, as well as telephone calls between President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump, aimed at stopping the fighting.

On Friday - days after the second round of Ukrainian-Russian ceasefire negotiations in Turkey ended without meaningful progress - the Kremlin cast its three-year invasion as nothing short of a battle for the "future" of Russia.

"For us it is an existential issue, an issue on our national interest, safety, on our future and the future of our children, of our country," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, responding to remarks by Trump on Thursday comparing Moscow and Kyiv to brawling children.

Peskov's comments came shortly after the Russian defence ministry said its forces had launched the "massive" missile and drone strike in "response" to recent attacks by Kyiv on its territory.

Ahead of the talks this week in Istanbul, an audacious Ukrainian drone attack damaged nuclear-capable military planes at Russian air bases, including thousands of kilometres behind the front lines in Siberia.

Putin had told Trump he would retaliate for the brazen operation, 18 months in the planning, in which Ukraine smuggled more than 100 small drones into Russia, parked them near Russian air bases and unleashed them in a coordinated attack – an operation that likely involved CIA, MI6 and possibly Mossad planning, according to some analysts.

### 'A farce'

Despite recent rounds of peace talks, Putin has repeatedly rejected a ceasefire, and has instead issued a host of sweeping demands on Ukraine if it wants to halt the fighting.

They include completely pulling troops out of four regions claimed by Russia, but which its army does not fully control, an end to Western military support, and a ban on Ukraine joining NATO.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has dismissed the demands as old ultimatums, questioned the purpose of more such talks and called for a summit to be attended by him, Putin and Trump.

Kyiv said the retaliatory Russian barrage overnight consisted of 45 missiles and 407 drones.

AFP journalists heard air raid sirens and explosions ring out over the capital throughout the night.

Zelensky, who has repeatedly said Russia wants the war to continue, responded with a call for allies to "decisively" ramp up pressure on Russia.

"Are we supposed to believe in a ceasefire after today?" Alicia, a Kyiv resident and marketing specialist, told AFP near one of the strike sites in Kyiv.

"I think it's a farce, and it was clear from the very beginning that there would be no truce. Our enemies are not interested in this at all," she added.

Zelensky said at least three people had been killed in the capital, and that Russia had targeted nine regions of Ukraine, including Lviv and Volyn in the west, which border EU and NATO member Poland.

In the western city of Lutsk, rescuers in the afternoon pulled the body of a dead man from the rubble of a nine-storey building hit overnight, the interior ministry said.

### Airfield strikes

Deadly attacks have escalated in recent weeks.

Cities and villages have been destroyed across eastern Ukraine and millions forced to flee their homes, with Russia's forces controlling around one-fifth of Ukraine's territory.

The interior ministry said the three people killed in Kyiv were first responders, while Zelensky said 49 were wounded in the capital and across Ukraine.

Moscow meanwhile said Ukrainian strikes overnight on Russia wounded three people in the western Tula region, while Kyiv claimed to have staged successful attacks on two air fields deep inside Russian territory.

Footage shared on social media showed a large fire and smoke billowing into the air at an oil facility that serves a military site in Russia's Saratov region, which has been frequently targeted.

The Russian defence ministry said it downed 174 Ukrainian drones overnight. Ten downed drones were headed for the Russian capital, according to Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin.

AFP, Mizzima



## SPRING AWAKENING

**"T**he Spring Revolution has to be understood as a distinct revolutionary episode in Myanmar's history, but it [also] is the latest in a long line of revolutionary uprisings and struggles to ground Myanmar's political order, in principles that would be considered legitimate to most of those who are subject to it," says Charlie Thame, speaking to the Insight Myanmar Podcast on the topic of his recent essay, Myanmar's Redemptive Revolution: Constituent Power and the Struggle for Sovereignty in the Nwe Oo (Spring) Revolution. "That, of course, includes the 1988 Uprising. It includes the Saffron Revolution, but it also includes anti-colonial struggles, the Saya San Rebellion, and ethnic struggles for autonomy, for liberation, and for an inclusive political order for the state of Myanmar. So, the Karen, the Kachin, the Shan, and numerous others that we will all be familiar with."

Charlie Thame is an Assistant Professor of International Relations at Thammasat University in Bangkok, with a focus on political economy and regional integration in Southeast Asia. His experiences on the Myanmar-Thai border, along with his academic work on resistance and socio-political dynamics, afford him unique insights into the current revolutionary efforts in Myanmar.

The discussion opens with the topic of the Myanmar revolution that came in the wake of 2021 coup. Thame describes it as an undertaking that aims to fulfill the

promises of earlier such movements, striving for a political order grounded in popular sovereignty and inclusion; it is also one that directly reflects the Myanmar's people's aspirations for a just and equitable society. Thus, Thame calls it a "redemptive revolution," drawing on a concept developed by political theorist and cultural critic, Walter Benjamin, to refer a revolution that redeems or completes the work of past revolutionary efforts.

Thame highlights the grassroots nature of Myanmar's recent uprising, emphasizing its goal of dismantling the military's entrenched power, which has exerted control over every aspect of governance and posed a formidable barrier to progress since at least the 1962 coup. Thame emphasizes that the current revolution is about both political reform as well as achieving rights and inclusion for the country's marginalized groups within a federal democratic state.

Thame contrasts the current uprising with "passive" and "negotiated" revolutions. Drawing on Marxist theory, particularly the work of Antonio Gramsci, Thame describes these types of revolutions as being when significant social changes are initiated by the ruling class to preserve their power, as opposed to their being grassroots mobilization. The outcome of such revolutions is not a political order that truly reflects the people's will. Thame stresses that the revolution in Myanmar is committed to fully dismantling military power, rather than settling for power-sharing arrangements.

### CATCH THE PODCAST

Read more or listen to Insight Myanmar Podcast here:

<https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2025/5/17/episode-348-spring-awakening>

## JUNTA TO SHOWCASE 'CITY OF CHARM' AT CHINA-ASEAN EXPO DESPITE GROWING INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION



The Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization announced plans to participate in the 22nd China-ASEAN Expo in Nanning, China, from September 17-21, where Myanmar will serve as the "Country of Honour" and operate a "City of Charm" pavilion alongside displays of gemstones and agricultural products, reported junta-controlled newspapers.

The junta-backed trade body held a promotional roadshow on May 30 at Yangon's Wyndham Grand Hotel, featuring Chinese Embassy Minister Counsellor Zheng Zhihong and MyanTrade officials. Representatives discussed market access opportunities for small enterprises and cooperation channels with Chinese counterparts.

However, Myanmar's participation comes amid unprecedented international isolation.

As of January, even ASEAN has barred the ruling Myanmar junta from attending its meetings over their failure to comply with the bloc's Five-Point Consensus peace plan.

However, following the devastating March 28 earthquake, which epicenter located in central Myanmar's Sagaing, the Myanmar junta has experienced a slight return to international engagement. Using earthquake relief efforts as justification, the Myanmar junta could open diplomatic channels with India, Pakistan, China, Russia, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and other countries, marking a rare moment of international cooperation despite ongoing western

sanctions and isolation.

Western nations have imposed various types of sanctions against Myanmar following the 2021 military coup. The military junta faces extensive international sanctions targeting its revenue sources. Canada, Australia, the UK, and EU have imposed arms embargoes and asset freezes on Myanmar military-linked entities, while the US has prohibited financial services to state-owned Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE). Some sanctions target military enterprises like Myanmar Economic Holdings and Myanmar Economic Corporation.

Despite these restrictions, Myanmar's growing dependence on China remains evident. More than 95 percent of Myanmar's refined petroleum oils come from regional trading partners including China, Thailand, and Singapore, enabling continued military operations despite Western jet fuel embargoes, reported The Conversation.

The expo represents another attempt by the isolated junta to project international legitimacy while sanctions have not encouraged the ruling Myanmar generals back toward a democratic path or tipped the war in favor of resistance groups after three years of military rule.

Critics argue such trade promotion primarily benefits military-linked businesses rather than genuine small enterprises struggling under deteriorating economic conditions and ongoing civil war.



Photo: Facebook

## **SOCIAL MEDIA BUZZES WITH MIXED REACTIONS AS MYANMAR'S TUN MIN AUNG DELIVERS KNOCKOUT VICTORY AT ONE FRIDAY FIGHTS 110 IN THAILAND**

**M**yanmar fight fans flooded social media with passionate commentary following Tun Min Aung's explosive knockout win and Super Yay Chan's points defeat at ONE Friday Fights 110 in Bangkok on May 30, with users praising the young fighter Tun Min Aung's punching power while expressing concerns about his defensive gaps and offering encouragement for future development.

The 20-year-old Tun Min Aung delivered a spectacular second-round knockout against Thailand's Chatpet in their 160-pound catchweight Muay Thai clash, earning him a substantial 350,000 baht bonus from ONE Championship's CEO.

After a competitive opening round, Tun Min Aung dominated the second frame with a series of powerful left hooks that dropped his opponent twice before the referee stopped the contest at 2:49.

However, it wasn't all celebration among Myanmar's online fighting community. Social media users noted tactical concerns about the young prospect's performance, with one fan observing that Tun Min Aung appeared vulnerable to his opponent's leg kicks early in the fight and suggesting he might struggle against more technically sound opponents.

Another supporter acknowledged these defensive shortcomings while still congratulating the fighter on maximizing his strengths, writing that despite having weaknesses, The same user highlighted how the vocal support from Myanmar fans in attendance provided additional motivation for their compatriot.

Meanwhile, Super Yay Chan faced disappointment in his 138-pound bout against Japan's Muga Seto, losing a unanimous decision after three rounds despite controlling the early stages of their encounter.

# mizzima WEEKLY

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.