

ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight

Life in Shan State

Forced Conscription, Check points, Failing Education,
and a Collapsing Economy



● How Myanmar Can Be Liberated from Poverty and Persecution
Nicholas Kong

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DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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

MYANMAR RESISTANCE DRIVE FOR UNITY

The formation of the Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union (SCEF) represents both a moment of opportunity and a test of political maturity for Myanmar's fractured resistance. Since the 2021 Myanmar coup led by Min Aung Hlaing, opposition to military rule has been widespread but decentralized. Ethnic armed organizations, People's Defense Forces, and the National Unity Government (NUG) have all pursued overlapping yet sometimes divergent strategies. The SCEF's emergence signals recognition that disunity is no longer sustainable if the resistance hopes to decisively challenge the junta's attempt to normalize its rule.

The junta's strategy is increasingly clear: consolidate territorial control where possible, fracture opposition alliances, and pursue a veneer of legitimacy through managed political processes and selective diplomacy, pretending to be a "civilian" authority. Against this backdrop, the SCEF's central challenge is not simply military coordination but political coherence. It must articulate a credible vision of a "federal democratic future" that resonates across Myanmar's diverse ethnic and political landscape while also reassuring international stakeholders that a post-junta transition would be viable.

This is easier said than done. Myanmar's resistance is rooted in decades of mistrust between ethnic groups and the central Bamar establishment. Even within the anti-junta movement, disagreements persist over command structures, resource allocation, and the sequencing of political versus military priorities. The SCEF risks becoming another layer of bureaucracy unless it can demonstrate tangible value - streamlining decision-making, reducing duplication, and

mediating disputes among key actors.

At the same time, the council's creation reflects a hard-earned lesson: the military cannot be outmaneuvered solely through localized firefights. The Myanmar military has historically thrived on divide-and-rule tactics, exploiting fragmentation among its opponents. A unified military front, even if imperfect, complicates that playbook. If the SCEF can coordinate military pressure with a unified diplomatic narrative, it could shift both domestic momentum and external perceptions of the viability of the Spring Revolution players - offering a viable future for Myanmar.

Timing also matters. War fatigue is setting in among civilians, and humanitarian conditions continue to deteriorate. The resistance cannot rely indefinitely on popular anger alone; it must convert that energy into structured governance alternatives in liberated areas. Here, the SCEF has an opportunity to move beyond rhetoric by supporting administrative organizations, humanitarian aid delivery, and rule-of-law mechanisms that prefigure a federal democratic system.

Ultimately, the SCEF is less a solution than a vehicle. Its success will depend on whether Myanmar's resistance leaders are willing to subordinate narrower interests to a collective strategy. The junta's drive for legitimacy may be fragile, but so too is the resistance's cohesion. The coming months and years will test whether unity can be forged not just in opposition to military rule, but in the shared construction of what comes next - ideally a real "federal democratic future" for the Golden Land.

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Cover photo of Kalay fighters in Shan State by AFP



Chinese backed mines are polluting many of the rivers in Shan State. Photo: Antonio Graceffo

LIFE IN SHAN STATE: FORCED CONSCRIPTION, CHECK POINTS, FAILING EDUCATION, AND A COLLAPSING ECONOMY

ANTONIO GRACEFFO

The lives of migrants from Burma living in Thailand are often very difficult. Many have no documents and must work sporadic jobs with low pay, a day here, two days there in construction or agriculture. They live in fear of being arrested or deported. Those with proper papers still do not earn very much and are separated from their families. In some cases, their families are in government-controlled areas, which they cannot enter because they would be conscripted. This means that many of the workers and students in Thailand may not see their parents again until after the war. If their families inside Burma are displaced, they may not hear from them for weeks or months at a time. And as difficult as things are for them as documented or undocumented aliens in Thailand, life in Burma is even worse.

Forty-two-year-old Sai Keng Kham, a Shan man from Pong Pa Khem Township in eastern Shan State, explained that he sent his two children to attend school in Thailand because of the worsening educational quality and safety situation in Burma. At the start of each school term, he incurs the costs and dangers associated with crossing the border to deliver his children to school.

Sai Keng Kham works primarily as a garlic farmer. However, rising fuel costs and the low market price of garlic have made it difficult for him to earn a profit this year, and he expects to face financial losses. He explained that his hometown is controlled by multiple armed groups, including the Burmese military, the Shan State Army-South, the Wa Army, and a local militia he referred to as the Lahu group. "In each township, there are more than five checkpoints, and each one demands payment," he said.

The claim of multiple checkpoints per township, each demanding payment, is corroborated by international observers. The International Crisis Group documented that on a 45-minute drive between two northern Shan towns, travelers must pay fees at four separate checkpoints controlled by different armed groups. The same report went on to say that armed groups also levy annual contributions on communities, vehicle registration taxes, and taxes on businesses. When transporting goods, including his agricultural produce, he must pay fees at these checkpoints. As a result, these additional costs often leave him with little to no profit.



A combination of factors has emptied many towns or reduced populations. Photo: Antonio Graceffo

In addition to arbitrary fees and taxes, Sai Keng Kham has been burdened by Myanmar's conscription law, which requires every household in his area to pay 300 baht per month to authorities. The junta activated the People's Military Service Law on February 10, 2024, mandating two to five years of military service for men aged 18–35 and women aged 18–27, with evasion punishable by three to five years in prison. In practice, cash payments in lieu of service have become widespread. Additionally, authorities in some areas, such as Namsang, Kunhing, and Karli townships issued notices ordering households to contribute 50,000 kyats (\$24) to fund substitute recruits.

Conscription has fueled a cottage industry of graft where families pay administrators the equivalent of hundreds or even thousands of dollars to avoid the draft, with recruits typically coming from poor families unable to pay off officials.

In Sai Keng Kham's town, there is no access to electricity or a public water system. The World Bank's Myanmar Economic Monitor and other assessments confirm severe electricity and service shortages outside urban centers, worsened since the 2021 coup. Most households rely on solar panels, but poorer fami-

lies cannot afford them and instead depend on candles and firewood for light. Daily wages in the area range from 200 to 250 baht (between \$6 and \$7.50 USD per day), depending on the type of work. So even buying wood for cooking and candles for light reduces the amount of money available for people to buy food.

Deeper in eastern Shan State, local people commonly use Thai currency because it is more stable. Most goods in the area are also imported from Thailand, which adds to the cost. For those earning in Myanmar kyat, the falling exchange rate makes it harder and harder to buy daily necessities.

The education system under the junta has deteriorated. In resistance-controlled areas, schools are often targeted by airstrikes, leaving many villages without a proper school building. Teacher shortages are acute, and many teachers have fled the country. Those who remain often neglect their classroom teaching duties, prioritizing instead private tuition in homes as a means of supplementing their incomes. Schools have increasingly engaged in corruption, charging higher fees under the guise of hidden educational costs. Parents who have the option, like Sai Keng Kham, send their children to school in Thailand. Other families rely more



Life is tough for many in Shan State.
Photo: Antonio Graceffo

on supplementary tuition to compensate for declining school quality. World Bank survey data shows that household spending on private tutoring increased substantially after the coup. For those who can afford neither option, education often stops after middle school, with the school dropout rate increasing significantly since the coup.

Similar to the situation described by Sai Keng Kham, a 38-year-old Shan man Sai Payti spoke about the difficulties he faced living in Mong Ton Township in eastern Shan State. He is a father of two children and works as a garlic and soybean farmer.

Sai Payti explained that Mong Ton is under the control of the junta, the UWSA, and the RCSS, and that over the past three years these armed groups have increased pressure on villagers by demanding both money and new recruits. His name was included on a list for military service with the junta, but he refused to go, saying, "I knew that if I joined, I might never return home or see my family again."

He said many of his friends who went to serve in the army have disappeared and never returned. When families ask for information, he explained, the junta claims they are fine but does not allow any contact. Sai Payti added that even families of those who serve are still forced to pay 300 baht per month to the junta. He

also noted that while the demand for new recruits has decreased somewhat this year, the authorities continue to demand money from villagers, requiring every family to contribute.

Sai Payti said that when he received the junta's letter ordering him to report for military service, he hid for several days until the soldiers left the village, after which he returned home.

Speaking about his family, he said, "I worry about my children." He explained that they are growing up in an environment with widespread problems, including drugs, gambling, and young people frequenting KTVs. He wants to send his children to school in Thailand but cannot afford it. He fears that if they remain in his hometown, "they may fall into bad habits," adding that he is afraid they could become addicted to drugs or be taken by the military.

Drug addiction, forced conscription, lack of education, and underemployment are the fate of many young people inside Burma. For some parents, sending their children alone to Thailand is like a mother on a sinking ship tossing her baby into a lifeboat. At least there is hope. For those who remain in Burma, the situation is just getting worse and worse.

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



A town in Shan State. Photo: Antonio Graceffo

ANALYSIS & INSIGHT



MYANMAR AND THAILAND SEE LIMITED CROSS-BORDER TRADE

The junta-backed administration, led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, reopened the Asia Highway route on April 2, a key artery for cross-border trade with Thailand. The road, linking Myawaddy in Kayin State to Yangon has long been a vital artery for the movement of goods across Myanmar and onward to Thailand through Mae Sot. While the Myanmar side of the route has resumed operations, the No. 2 Friendship Bridge connecting the two border towns remains closed.

Before the closure, between 300 and 500 cargo trucks crossed the bridge daily, facilitating significant bilateral trade. Recent meetings between Myanmar authorities and Thai officials have raised expectations among local traders that discussions are underway to reopen the crossing. In the meantime, security along the reopened route is being maintained by Border Guard Force (BGF) units alongside junta troops.

Despite the partial reopening, trade remains tightly controlled. Import companies in Myawaddy have begun applying for permits from junta authorities, expressing limited satisfaction that transport routes are operational again. However, strict foreign currency controls have constrained trade flows. The junta is prioritizing exports of six agricultural commodities - corn, chili, betel nut, onion, beans, and cashew - in an apparent effort to generate foreign exchange.

Imports, by contrast, remain heavily restricted. Only previously approved import

licenses are being honoured, while hundreds of new applications reportedly remain pending. On April 4, authorities began seizing Thai goods transported along the Asia Highway, allowing only small quantities deemed for local consumption.

“They are allowing exports to earn foreign currency but blocking imports to prevent currency outflows,” a local trader told the media. “So the reopening is more about securing foreign exchange for the regime than meeting people’s needs.”

Elsewhere along the border, Thai authorities have taken a different approach. Trade has resumed at the Sinkhon crossing, opposite Mawtaung in Myanmar’s Tanintharyi Region, an area currently under the control of the Karen National Union (KNU). Thai provincial officials cited economic pressure from local businesses and relative stability in the area as reasons for reopening the checkpoint.

At the same time, Thai authorities have stepped up enforcement against illegal fuel exports into

Myanmar. While legal fuel sales are permitted, officials have increased arrests targeting smuggling networks operating along the border.

Diplomatic engagement between the two countries continues. On April 22, Thailand’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sihasak Phuangketkeow, met with junta leader Min Aung Hlaing in Naypyidaw. Their discussions covered a wide range of issues, including border security, investment, energy cooperation, development initiatives, anti-narcotics efforts, online scam operations, environmental concerns such as cross-border haze and water pollution, and the potential expansion of bilateral trade.

Although the reopening of key routes signals a shift toward restoring trade, ongoing restrictions and political considerations continue to limit its full recovery.

Battle for Rakhine in decisive phase

Fighting between the Arakan Army (AA) and Myanmar’s military junta has intensified across Rakhine State and its bordering regions, as both sides escalate



operations in what appears to be a decisive phase of the conflict.

Recent clashes have centred around the strategically important Natyekan outpost, a key entry point to northern Rakhine State. The junta has been attempting to reinforce its positions there, dispatching military columns that have come under repeated attack by AA forces. Interceptions have been particularly fierce near Padan town in Ngaphe Township, Magway Region, where advancing troops have reportedly faced coordinated resistance. Despite relying on airstrikes and artillery support, junta columns are struggling to maintain forward momentum as they push toward Pazi village.

Naval movements have also signaled a possible expansion of the conflict. During the third week of April, six junta warships shelled AA-controlled islands off the coast of Taunggok Township. The attacks, widely interpreted by local observers as preparatory fire for a potential amphibious landing, coincided with

increased naval presence between Taunggok and Ramree townships starting April 18. However, one vessel attempting to approach shore was reportedly hit by AA artillery fire, forcing the flotilla to withdraw back to open sea.

A local military source suggested that a large-scale naval landing in Rakhine remains unlikely. Instead, the maneuvers may be intended to divert AA forces from other key areas where fighting has intensified, including Kyaukphyu and Sittwe – two key areas – as well as border zones linking Rakhine with Magway, Bago, and Ayeyarwady regions.

Air power continues to play a central role in the junta's campaign. On April 23 and 24, a major airstrike operation involving six fighter jets and two Y-12 transport aircraft targeted Thandwe and Ngapali – an area once known as a major tourist destination. The strikes lasted for approximately 90 minutes across two days. Despite the scale of the assault, properties reportedly owned by families linked to senior junta



Fuel shortages are worsening. Photo: AFP

figures were left undamaged, raising questions among local residents.

Amid mounting battlefield setbacks, the junta has reshuffled its military leadership. Brigadier General Soe Kyaw Htet, commander of the Southwest Military Command, has been replaced following his inability to repel AA offensives into the Ayeyarwady Region. According to local media and sources close to the command, more than 400 junta troops were killed and over 250 defected during his tenure.

"The primary reason for the losses was the failure to defend against revolutionary offensives into Ayeyarwady," a source told DVB. AA and allied forces have reportedly overrun multiple military positions across the region, with ongoing clashes in townships including Pathein, Laymyatna, Tharbaung, Hinthada, Kyangin, and Yekyi.

Further south, along the Rakhine-Bago border, both sides are engaged in offensives near the junta's No. (16) Military Weapons Factory, locally known as "KaPaSa 16." AA forces have launched attacks on a key outpost referred to as Point 500, even as the junta reinforced the site with approximately 200 troops on April 25. In parallel, junta forces are preparing a counteroffensive against the AA's Nyaukyoe strategic base, deploying around 100 personnel.

With active military movements unfolding simultaneously across multiple fronts, the conflict shows no sign of easing. Instead, the intensification of battles across Rakhine State and adjoining regions underscores the growing scale and complexity of the war between the AA and junta forces.

Challenges of water supply and electricity during hot season in Myanmar

Residents across central Myanmar are grappling with worsening shortages of both water and electricity as the country endures the peak of the dry season, exposing deep vulnerabilities in infrastructure and governance.

In villages in Myaing Township, located in the dry zone, communities are facing an acute lack of water for

drinking and daily use. Wells and ponds - traditionally relied upon throughout the hot months - have run dry, leaving villagers with limited options. The crisis is more severe than in previous years, according to a local member of a resistance group.

"In past years, the situation was not this serious," the source told local media. "But last year's drought, combined with the earthquake in Sagaing, appears to have shifted underground water flows. The impact is being felt now. On top of that, this year's first rains have been delayed."

Revolutionary groups operating in the area have begun transporting water by tanker trucks to affected communities. However, these efforts carry significant risks. Large gatherings of villagers collecting water could draw attention from the military, raising fears of potential airstrikes.

At the same time, residents in major cities report deteriorating electricity reliability despite official assurances of improvement. On April 22, junta-controlled electricity authorities announced extended daily power availability: 20 hours in Yangon, 18 hours in Mandalay, and 14 hours in other urban areas. Yet many residents say the reality falls far short.

"Yesterday, the power went out even during the scheduled 'on' period," a Yangon resident said. "When it came back, it lasted only a few minutes before cutting again, especially in residential neighbourhoods. Children and vulnerable people are suffering the most."

Similar complaints have emerged from Mandalay, where outages have reportedly become more erratic since the announcement. From small households to business owners, people describe daily disruptions that undermine livelihoods and basic routines.

With indoor temperatures rising and power supply unreliable, many Yangon residents have begun seeking relief in public spaces such as parks, shopping centres, and riverbanks. For millions, access to both clean water and consistent electricity has become increasingly uncertain, compounding the hardship of life in Myanmar's central plains.



Photo: AFP

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED AMID DEEPENING CONCERNS FOR AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S WELLBEING AND WHEREABOUTS

The "Proof of Life" campaign officially launched on 21 April, as an international effort to demand verified evidence of the health and safety of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who has remained incommunicado since December 2022.

The initiative comes as concerns deepen over her condition, after she completely disappeared from public view.

Speaking to Mizzima on 19 April, Nay Phone Latt, spokesperson for the Prime Minister's Office of the National Unity Government (NUG), said there are serious worries about her health and safety.

The 'Proof of Life' campaign is being led by the human rights advocacy group All in One Piece Movement, which has also called for participation in collaboration with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's son, Ko Htein Lin (also known as Kim Aris).

It includes two main activities: encouraging people to express support on social media and urging governments around the world to pressure the military authorities to provide proof that she is still alive.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was detained during the 2021 Myanmar coup d'état on 1 February 2021. She has been held incommunicado since 30 December 2022, when her legal cases concluded.

According to sources close to her lawyers, prison parcels can only be sent to Naypyidaw Prison.

"We have not been able to reach anyone during

this time. This situation is extremely worrying for our leader's health and life," U Nay Phone Latt said on the morning of 19 April.

He also noted that although some political prisoners including President U Win Myint, were released during the Myanmar New Year amnesty on 17 April, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was not among them.

He further accused the military authorities of spreading misinformation, including claims that she had been moved to house arrest.

Nay Phone Latt criticized the military junta for using political prisoners as leverage in negotiations.

On 18 April, the NUG reiterated that the goal of the Spring Revolution is the unconditional release of all those unjustly detained, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and the complete end of military rule. The NUG reaffirmed its commitment to its six core positions.

According to the Political Prisoners Network - Myanmar (PPNM), as of 18 April, junta authorities had announced pardons for 4,335 prisoners. However, only 1,686 were actually released, including 292 political detainees.

Meanwhile, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) reported on 20 April that since the coup, 30,875 people have been arrested. Of those, 22,131 remain in detention, and 14,247 have been sentenced to prison.



Kim Aris with his mother in better times. Photo: AFP

KIM ARIS CALLS FOR UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND ALL PRISONERS

Kim Aris, the son of detained democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, issued a statement on 21 April, describing recent prisoner amnesties in Myanmar as a strategy to gain international legitimacy rather than a sign of genuine reform.

The statement is as follows.

In light of recent developments in Burma, including the reported release of President U Win Myint, I would like to share my perspective as the son of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who remains unlawfully detained and cut off from the world.

While any release is welcomed, selective releases of a few individuals, while key elected leaders and thousands of political prisoners remain detained, do not represent meaningful progress.

This is a strategy by the military leadership under Min Aung Hlaing to ease international pressure and seek legitimacy without real change.

There is still no confirmed information about my mother's situation. Reports that she may have been moved to house arrest remain unverified, and no official communication has been made to her family.

As a son, I ask for something simple.

If she is alive, please provide proof of life.

Key Quote

"This is not reform. It is a calculated attempt to gain international legitimacy while the reality in Burma remains unchanged. Releasing a few while thousands, including the true elected leaders, remain behind bars is an attempt to mislead the world."

The reality in Burma has not changed. Many political prisoners remain behind bars.

Civilians continue to suffer.

World leaders must not mistake these actions for progress. Engagement without accountability risks legitimising ongoing repression.

What is needed is clear:

- The unconditional release of all political prisoners
- Verified information on those detained
- An end to violence against civilians

My appeal is simple. I want to know my mother is still alive and safe. I want to see her free.

MYANMAR 'CONSIDERING GOOD THINGS' FOR DETAINED AUNG SAN SUU KYI: THAI FM

Myanmar's leader is "considering good things" for detained Aung San Suu Kyi, Thailand's top diplomat said, after meeting the country's coup leader for the first time since he took over as civilian president.

Myanmar has been led by Min Aung Hlaing since 2021, who as armed forces chief deposed Suu Kyi's elected government, detained the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and sparked civil war.

This month he took over the role of civilian president after an election democracy watchdogs dismissed as a choreographed affair designed to rebrand military rule.

Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuanketkeow said he raised the issue of Suu Kyi when he met Myanmar's leader in the capital Naypyidaw on 22 April.

"The president said that she is being well taken care of and the Myanmar government is considering good things, without giving any further details," Sihasak said in a video message before returning to Thailand Wednesday night.

"This should be a good sign," he added.

Min Aung Hlaing last week pardoned Suu Kyi's top aide Win Myint, who served as the ceremonial president of her administration and was also swept into custody in the coup.

Some analysts have dismissed the clemency measure as part of a rebranding effort for Min Aung Hlaing's new administration as it grasps for legitimacy.

The announcement of Win Myint's pardon has nonetheless renewed diplomatic calls for Suu Kyi's release.

The 80-year-old has now been detained for a half-decade -- with even her close family saying they have been permitted scant communication with her.

Diplomats and media have persistently queried her status, but Myanmar authorities have insisted her detention on a host of criminal convictions is a matter for the courts.

Win Myint's pardon on Friday, however, came directly from the office of Min Aung Hlaing as part of a mass amnesty to mark Myanmar's new year.

That blanket order also shaved some time off Suu Kyi's 27-year sentence, a source close to her legal case told AFP, although it was not clear how much.

Rights groups say charges against Suu Kyi were concocted in order to sideline her and allow the military to return to power, ending the country's tentative decade-long experiment with democracy.

Min Aung Hlaing was sworn in as Myanmar's civilian president two weeks ago by lawmakers installed in an election which barred Suu Kyi's party and punished protest or criticism with up to a decade in jail.

The election did not take place in huge tracts of Myanmar now controlled by rebels in the civil war, and many armed factions have openly dismissed the vote, saying they will continue fighting.

AFP



U Win Myint and his wife. Photo: Supplied

U WIN MYINT PLACED UNDER TIGHT SURVEILLANCE AS NLD SPOKESPERSON INTERROGATED OVER "PRESIDENT" TITLE

President U Win Myint, who was released from prison on parole on 17 April has reportedly been placed under heavy military surveillance at his residence in Naypyidaw.

Sources indicate that the conditions resemble house arrest, with military intelligence officers closely monitoring the property and interrogating visitors.

Dr. Myo Nyunt, a member of the National League for Democracy (NLD) central executive committee and party spokesperson, was also reportedly summoned for questioning by authorities after midnight on 18 April.

"He was taken away at 1:00 am on 19 April and returned home at 11:00 am the same day," a source familiar with the matter, speaking to Mizzima on condition of anonymity at around 12:00 pm on 19 April, said.

Mizzima has not yet been able to reach Dr. Myo Nyunt for comment.

The NLD community believes Dr. Myo Nyunt was summoned for questioning after he visited President U Win Myint to pay his respects and referred to him as "the President" in a media interview regarding his release.

"Military intelligence followed the others and came to the house, asking whether we had visited the president. We confirmed that we had, but they

did not return afterward," another source told Mizzima yesterday evening.

President U Win Myint has been residing with his family in a rented house in Ottarathiri Township, Naypyidaw.

In 2026, former commander-in-chief Min Aung Hlaing issued pardons for 4,335 prisoners, though only 1,686 were actually released, according to the latest figures compiled by the Political Prisoners Network–Myanmar (PPNM) on 18 April. The group said that among those released, just 292 were political prisoners.

The National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) issued a welcoming message on 17 April to President U Win Myint following his release from what it described as unjust detention.

The National Unity Government (NUG) also released a statement on 18 April, expressing its firm view that his reunion with family attributed to revolutionary pressure both domestically and internationally marks an important milestone in what it calls the people's revolutionary victory.

In addition, the Committee Representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) issued a statement on 20 April expressing its satisfaction alongside the public over President U Win Myint's opportunity to reunite with his family.

MYANMAR JUNTA FORCES USE PSMS TECHNOLOGY TO SCREEN VISITORS MEETING PRESIDENT U WIN MYINT

Mizzima has learned that junta forces are not only checking the national registration cards (NRC) of those visiting President U Win Myint but are also utilizing Passenger Screening/Security Management System (PSMS) technology for inspections.

"Visitors coming to see President U Win Myint are having both their IDs and phones checked. Since they are elderly, they don't quite understand these technologies," a source told Mizzima on the night of 20 April.

The Spring Revolution Database (SRD) urged caution on 25 February, warning that the junta might resume arrests using PSMS technology.

PSMS technology is implemented by the Chinese tech company Huawei, while the PSMS application is primarily developed by Russia. It integrates AI facial recognition, CCTV analysis, and biometric data to easily monitor individuals' private information.

According to an SRD report, the military junta is currently using PSMS Application Version 1.2, which contains the personal data of approximately 50,000 individuals wanted by the junta.

Security measures and interrogations have been ramped up by military authorities following visits to President U Win Myint by former President U Htin Kyaw and several top leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD).

"I met the President on the morning of 18 April. Upon entering, the President requested that phones be turned off and no photos be taken. He advised us to stay healthy and focus on religious practice before we left," said a source who visited President U Win Myint.

The source added that military intelligence has been monitoring them since the visit, and the ward administrator's office has also inquired about them.

"The neighbourhood knows about us from before, but now people have started keeping their distance from us following our visit to the President," the source explained further.

Furthermore, Dr. Myo Nyunt, a member of the NLD Central Executive Committee (CEC) and party spokesperson, was taken by the Ministry of Home Affairs for interrogation at 1:00 a.m. on 19 April and released at 11:00 a.m. that same day.

NLD circles think that Dr. Myo Nyunt was interrogated because he paid respects to President U Win Myint and referred to him as "The President" during media interviews regarding his release.

Following his release on 17 April, President U Win Myint has been residing at a house rented by his family in Ottarathiri Township, Naypyidaw. Currently, military intelligence is maintaining strict surveillance not only in front of his home but also at the residences of other top NLD leaders.

Although the junta's president Min Aung Hlaing announced an amnesty for 4,335 prisoners, data collected by PPNM as of 18 April shows that only 1,686 individuals were actually released. The Political Prisoners Network Myanmar (PPNM) stated that only 292 of those released were political prisoners.

The Committee Representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) issued a statement on 20 April, expressing its joy alongside the public regarding President U Win Myint's reunion with his family. Additionally, the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) sent a welcoming message to President U Win Myint on 17 April. The National Unity Government (NUG) also stated on 18 April that the President's reunion with his family, driven by domestic and international revolutionary pressure, is firmly viewed as a part of the people's revolutionary victory.



REPORT SAYS MYANMAR'S 'CIVILIAN' GOVERNMENT REMAINS DOMINATED BY MILITARY FIGURES

Myanmar's newly installed government remains overwhelmingly dominated by military figures and allies despite its civilian rebranding, according to a report entitled *Burma's Rebranded Military Regime* released by Burma Campaign UK on 22 April.

The report said the administration formed after the 2025–2026 junta-organised election leaves real power firmly in the hands of the armed forces and its proxy political network.

It shows that President Min Aung Hlaing and one of the two vice presidents are serving or former military officers, while the second vice president is a longtime member of the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).

According to the report, 26 of 30 union ministers – about 86 percent – are either former military officers or members of the USDP. Ten ministers have been sanctioned by foreign governments for alleged roles in human rights violations or the 2021 coup.

The report also said military influence extends across parliament. In the two national legislatures, 505 of 586 seats are held by serving military appointees or USDP lawmakers, giving the bloc about 86 percent of all seats.

Under Myanmar's 2008 constitution, the military is guaranteed 25 percent of parliamentary seats. The

2026 election outcome delivered additional seats to military-aligned parties in an electoral environment wherein voting was not held in many constituencies affected by conflict.

Burma Campaign UK said the new political system should be seen as a continuation of military rule rather than a democratic transition. It argued that the reshuffle was designed to ease international pressure while preserving the armed forces' control over the state.

The findings add to criticism of the junta's post-election roadmap, which opponents and rights groups have dismissed as lacking credibility amid widespread conflict, mass displacement, and the detention of political opponents.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military overthrew the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021, triggering nationwide resistance and a deepening humanitarian crisis.

Military authorities have defended the election and subsequent transfer to a constitutional government as a return to normal democratic governance.

But the report concluded that the latest administration represents a rebranding exercise in which the military “never reforms”, warning that cosmetic institutional change has not altered the concentration of power.



Photo: Supplied

OVER 5,000 PEOPLE JOIN THE BLUE SHIRT CAMPAIGN HONOURING MYANMAR JOURNALIST WIN TIN

More than 5,000 participants from across Myanmar and around the world concluded a 12-day "Blue Shirt Campaign" on 21 April, honouring the legacy of veteran journalist Hanthawaddy U Win Tin on the 12th anniversary of his passing.

The 12-day campaign is being held from 10 to 21 April, calling for the release of all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and the success of the revolution.

The final day – 21 April – marks the 12th anniversary of Hanthawaddy U Win Tin's death and is also the final day of the Blue Shirt Campaign movement.

"On this final day, which coincides with the 12th anniversary of Grandpa U Win Tin's passing, public participation has surged. We see respected figures like Sean Turnell and other artists joining in.

Around 5,000 people have participated, and thousands of photos have been posted," said Ko Thaik Tun Oo, an official from the Political Prisoners Network Myanmar (PPNM).

He added that since his release from prison in 2008, Hanthawaddy U Win Tin consistently worked for

the release of political prisoners still behind bars.

He further explained that the current Blue Shirt Campaign aims to grab the attention of international governments through public mobilization to apply effective pressure on the military junta for the immediate release of political prisoners.

"Through these blue shirts, we are highlighting the fact that many political prisoners remain in jail. I believe this conviction will be held beyond the campaign period until all political prisoners are freed, and until the entire country and its people are liberated," Ko Thaik Tun Oo said.

Strike leaders, officials from various revolutionary groups, revolutionary comrades, protest columns, artists, and citizens residing in various countries are participating in the 12-day campaign.

Campaign organizers have urged the public to participate by sharing photos or videos of themselves wearing blue clothing on social media platforms to join the movement.



Photo: AFP

MIN AUNG HLAING SETS JULY DEADLINE FOR PDF MEMBERS TO SURRENDER AS PART OF 100-DAY PEACE INITIATIVE

During a 20 April Union Government meeting in Naypyidaw, Min Aung Hlaing issued a formal invitation for members of the People's Defence Forces (PDF) to return to the legal fold by 31 July, a date marking the 100th day of his new administration.

He claimed that various groups and individuals within the resistance have already surrendered or are currently requesting negotiations to do so, prompting him to designate this specific timeframe for their return to achieve national peace.

The meeting, which included vice presidents, union ministers, and regional chief ministers, focused on the administration's strategy to dismantle resistance movements by encouraging surrenders during this transition period.

This latest call for the legal return of opposition forces follows his transition into a civilian presidential role and emphasizes his quasi-government's intent to consolidate control under the newly formed administration.



Photo: Supplied

ANTI-JUNTA GROUPS DISMISS MIN AUNG HLAING'S 100-DAY PEACE TALK PROPOSAL AS 'UNBELIEVABLE'

Resistance leaders and analysts have sharply criticized the proposal for peace talks to take place within the next 100 days put forward by President Min Aung Hlaing, nearly five years after the military coup.

They say his call for political dialogue and for armed groups to lay down their weapons is merely an attempt to gain legitimacy in the eyes of both the international community and the public.

Speaking at the first meeting of his five-year term under the newly formed semi-civilian military administration in Naypyidaw on 20 April, Min Aung Hlaing stated that he was open to political discussions with Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) by 31 July.

He specifically invited groups that had signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), including the Karen National Union (KNU), the Chin National Front (CNF) and the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF). None of these groups have engaged in talks over the past five years. He also warned against making what he described as "unreasonable demands."

However, ABSDF Chairman Comrade Than Khe told Mizzima that the military leadership is pursuing

legitimacy through two main strategies: staging what he described as a sham election and attempting to revive the NCA peace process under false pretences.

"There is no genuine intention to resolve the country's problems through this invitation," he said.

He further pointed out that ongoing military actions – including daily airstrikes, village burnings, and the detention of political leaders – undermine any credibility of the proposed dialogue.

"As long as such actions continue, this so-called dialogue is nothing more than a tool for the regime. There is no reason to believe it," he added, emphasizing that the initiative serves Min Aung Hlaing's personal legitimacy rather than the country's interests.

He also noted that the relevance of the NCA effectively ended following the 2021 military coup. Although the KNU, CNF, and ABSDF signed the agreement in 2015, they have since joined broader resistance efforts against the military regime.

Ko Aung San Shar, a regional commander from a special operations unit within the People's Defence

Force (PDF), also rejected the military's statements, particularly accusations that PDF members lack knowledge.

"This claim is baseless. Even at the battalion level, the PDF includes doctors, educators, engineers, and many highly capable individuals," he said.

He went on to criticize Min Aung Hlaing directly, arguing that it is the military leadership not the resistance that lacks understanding.

"The real question is who lacks knowledge. The so-called president should reflect on that. Military leaders have been shaped by authoritarian ideologies and are disconnected from the realities of the country," he said.

He also emphasized that the PDF operates under the legal framework of the National Unity Government (NUG) and the Committee Representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), which were formed based on the results of the 2020 election.

"There is no need for us to prove our legitimacy. It is Min Aung Hlaing and his military, who seized power illegally and continue to harm civilians, who are "in the wrong";" he added.

Regarding the 100-day period proposed by the quasi-civilian government, Ko Aung San Shar stated that resistance forces would instead intensify their operations.

"These 100 days will be a period of escalation. We will accelerate our military activities and respond with a well-coordinated strategy to achieve greater success," he said.

He also said that previous promises by the military such as development programs and job creation have consistently failed to materialize, and therefore lack credibility among major resistance groups, including the NUG, CRPH, KNU, Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), and CNF.

Political and military analyst Ko Soe Win Swe observed that while transitions from military to civilian rule are not unprecedented in Myanmar, Min Aung Hlaing's approach is particularly concerning.

He compared the current situation to the transition under former President Thein Sein, noting that earlier reforms included some degree of institutional balance. In contrast, he argued that Min Aung Hlaing has already consolidated control over civilian administrative structures through loyalists, increasing the likelihood of deeper authoritarian rule.

"If he truly intended to become a civilian president, he would have prepared systematically placing trusted individuals in key legislative and administrative positions before orchestrating an electoral victory. What we are seeing now suggests a more repressive and tightly controlled system than before," he said.

Ko Soe Win Swe also described the regime's peace strategy as a classic "divide and rule" approach, combining coercion with incentives.

"In these first 100 days, the government appears to be targeting war-weary communities with offers such as loans, education, jobs, and infrastructure development to weaken resistance support," he said.

He urged revolutionary groups to focus on improving the socio-economic conditions of people in resistance-controlled areas in order to counter these tactics. He further warned that the resistance movement is in a critical position.

"They are fighting on the edge of a cliff. Retreat is not an option. It would mean falling into an abyss," he said.

Mizzima had contacted spokespersons from the KNU and CNF for comment but had not received a response at the time of publication.



Photo: AFP

JUNTA LEADER MIN AUNG HLAING IMPOSES MARTIAL LAW ACROSS 60 TOWNSHIPS FOLLOWING PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

On the night of 23 April, Min Aung Hlaing acting in his new role as president issued Ordinance 2/2026, placing 60 townships under martial law for a period of 90 days.

This move significantly expands military rule over territories currently held by the Three Brotherhood Alliance, including the Arakan Army (AA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA).

Political analyst Dr. Sai Kyi Zin Soe noted that the military junta appears to be attempting to seize an advantage and regain territorial control during a time of internal territorial conflicts within the Alliance, as well as pressure from China.

Commenting on the inclusion of areas controlled by the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) which had previously welcomed a quasi-civilian military

administration, he stated: "It remains to be seen whether the junta intends to expand its administrative presence in northern Shan State or is moving to decisively suppress the TNLA so they can no longer rise up."

The townships placed under martial law also include areas controlled by the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) and the People's Defense Force (PDF).

Previously, 63 townships had been designated under martial law. However, three townships recently retaken by the military junta - Htigyaing in Sagaing Region, and Mogok and Singu in Mandalay Region - were omitted from the updated list.

"This shows that Min Aung Hlaing does not even trust the armed groups that claimed to welcome him. For those who do not, the situation will be even worse.

The ceasefire and peace they speak of appear to be just for show, and building mutual trust will be extremely difficult," said a CDM Major.

Since martial law was first imposed in these townships, the military junta has continued to renew it every three months, with the most recent extension on 29 January 2026, set to expire on 29 April.

However, after the establishment of a quasi-civilian military administration, a new martial law order has been issued, reportedly valid for 90 days.

Following the announcement, residents in the affected areas have expressed growing concern that airstrikes, military offensives, and arson attacks may escalate.

In response, a member of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) urged civilians to remain vigilant, saying, "We want to advise people to exercise extreme caution in all aspects of their daily lives."

The Three Brotherhood Alliance launched 'Operation 1027' in October 2023, opening a new front against the military junta in northern Shan State and Rakhine State. During the offensive, the alliance seized control of key towns and major border trade routes.

The military junta has also announced that administrative and judicial authority in these townships has been handed over to the new Commander-in-Chief, Ye Win Oo.

Under the imposed martial law, military tribunals in these areas will have jurisdiction over more than 20 types of offenses, including violations of the Arms Act, sedition under Section 124-A of the Penal Code, Sections 505 and 505-A, as well as serious crimes such as murder, manslaughter, and rape.

The townships where the current quasi-civilian military administration has extended martial law include:

In Kachin State — Sumprabum, Shwegu, Injangyang, Sawlaw, and Chipwi townships.

In Kayah State (Karenni) — Shadaw, Pasawng, and Mese townships.

In Kayin State — Kawkareik and Kyainseikgyi townships.

Other affected areas include:

In Chin State — Kanpetlet, Thantlang, Paletwa, Tonzang, Mindat, Matupi, and Falam townships.

In Sagaing Region — Kawlin, Pinlebu, Khin-U, Wetlet, Kani, Depayin, Pale, and Indaw townships.

In Magway Region — Pauk, Myaing, Saw, Htilin, and Yesagyo townships.

In Mandalay Region — Ngazun township.

In Rakhine State — Ramree, Pauktaw, Ponnagyun, Rathedaung, Gwa, Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Minbya, Myebon, Mrauk-U, Thandwe, Ann, and Toungup townships.

In Shan State — Namtu, Mabein, Kutkai, Namkham, Hsenwi, Kunlong, Namhsan, Mantong, Hopang, Laukkaing, Konkyan, Momeik, Kyaukme, Hsipaw, and Mong La townships.



MYANMAR JUNTA REVOKES LICENSES FOR KHONUMTHUNG, CHIN WORLD, AND MYATMAUKKHIT NEWS AGENCIES

The quasi-civilian military administration in Myanmar announced the revocation of publication licenses for three news agencies, including two primary outlets reporting on Chin State.

The ban, effective from 9 April, was officially announced on 24 April against the Khonumthung Media Group led by J. Mein Htan Sang Nga, Chin World led by Salai Yan Lin Mann, and the Myatmaukkhith News Agency led by Min Htet Aung.

The quasi-civilian military administration stated that the ban was imposed because the outlets published and broadcasted content detrimental to national security, the rule of law, and public peace, failing to comply with the regulations under Section 8(b) of the Printing and Publishing Enterprise Law.

"The coup military continues to arrest, imprison, and revoke the licenses of individuals, organizations, and news agencies they perceive as obstacles or opponents, using these same allegations. Many major news agencies have been shut down before, and this is just a continuation of that pattern," Salai Robert, editor of Khonumthung Media, told Mizzima.

It is reported that the license for Khonumthung Media, obtained during the National League for Democracy (NLD) government prior to the military coup, was set to expire in 2025, and a notice for renewal had recently been received.

However, he noted that the revocation likely occurred because they chose not to renew the license under a quasi-civilian military administration that views independent media as enemies.

Salai Robert further stated that they will continue to stand on the side of truth and the public, striving to deliver accurate news to the community in accordance with media ethics.

The ban notice includes a prohibition against the news agencies publishing or broadcasting through any type of media or technology.

Following the military coup, on 8 March 2021, the publication licenses of several domestic news outlets, including 7Day, television channels Mizzima and DVB, and online media platforms Myanmar Now and Khit Thit, were also revoked.



Falam. Photo: Supplied

MYANMAR JUNTA BATTALION COMMANDER KILLED IN FIERCE FALAM TOWNSHIP CLASHES

Chin National Army (CNA) officials stated that Lieutenant Colonel Thant Zaw Oo from the junta forces was killed during intense fighting in Falam Township, Chin State.

The Lieutenant Colonel was reportedly killed on 23 April during a clash near Tsum Hrim Village between a junta column advancing to capture Falam and Chin revolutionary forces.

"Battalion Commander Thant Zaw Oo fell in yesterday's battle. We understand he was a Lieutenant Colonel. Although the enemy suffered heavy casualties, detailed circumstances are not yet known," Salai Htet Ni, spokesperson for the CNA, told Mizzima.

A Chin forces commander on the front lines also confirmed the officer's death to Mizzima.

"We received news that Thant Zaw Oo has been taken down. The 'dogs' (junta troops) took many hits in yesterday's fight," he said.

A front-line Chin revolutionary member also said that they have only been able to confirm the deceased Lieutenant Colonel Thant Zaw Oo was a battalion commander from a unit under the 77th Light Infantry Division (LID).

Mizzima has not yet been able to independently verify the death of the Lieutenant Colonel in battle.

Since late October 2025, the junta has been

launching offensives with approximately 1,000 troops from the Kalay-Teingin and Kalay-Webula routes to retake Falam Township, which is controlled by Chin revolutionary forces.

About six months after the offensive began, the junta managed to station troops in Lunbang, Phathal, Var Bridge, Tsum Hrim, and Khunli within Falam Township. Intense fighting is now occurring near Kyawng He, Tsum Hrim, and the strategically important Surbung Airport, located about five miles from Falam.

According to front-line military sources, battles remain fierce on 24 April as the junta continues to advance by conducting excessive airstrikes, despite suffering heavy losses on the ground.

The quasi-civilian military administration declared a 90-day state of emergency on 23 April for 60 townships nationwide controlled by revolutionary forces, including all townships in Chin State except Hakha and Tedim.

Salai Htet Ni commented that this announcement is a pretext for the junta to use military operations as an excuse to allow its local troops to terrorize and oppress the public.

A Chin force leader warned citizens in townships and villages under martial law to remain vigilant, dig bomb shelters, and prepare for potentially increased aerial bombardments by the junta.



Photo: AFP

ROHINGYA REFUGEE BOAT EXODUS SURGES BY 90%: SAVE THE CHILDREN

The number of Rohingya refugees fleeing Bangladesh and Myanmar by boat has increased by 90 percent compared with last year, Save the Children said on 23 April, based on United Nations figures.

Many Rohingya who escape persecution in war-torn Myanmar undertake perilous sea journeys every year in search of better living conditions, travelling on overcrowded, rickety boats often operated by trafficking networks.

Khin Maung, a member of the United Council Rohingya (UCR), an elected refugee council in Bangladesh, said the statistics were deeply "upsetting".

He said there were awareness programmes about the risks of the journey, but that people were desperate.

"As our children see no future, no clear prospects of repatriation, and face the absence of formal education, they risk their lives," he told AFP.

More than a million Rohingya refugees, many who fled Myanmar during a brutal military crackdown in 2017, live in vast refugee camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar.

"Children and their families face rising insecurity and inadequate aid," Save the Children official Golam Mostofa said in a statement.

"Many families feel that they have no choice but to risk their lives and leave by boat -- but their journeys are fraught with danger."

Last year was the deadliest on record for Rohingya refugees fleeing by sea, with deaths continuing to soar in 2026, according to UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency.

Nearly 900 Rohingya refugees were reported missing or dead in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal in 2025.

More than 250 Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi migrants were reported missing this month after their boat capsized in the Andaman Sea, a route many travel when heading towards Indonesia.

Data from the UNHCR shows that 2,907 people left by sea from Myanmar and Bangladesh up to March 31 this year, compared to 1,517 people over the same period in 2025.

The cash-strapped UN World Food Programme cut aid for large portions of the 1.2 million-strong Rohingya group in Bangladesh this month.

Save the Children said the ration cuts had affected at least 500,000 Rohingya refugee children.

That was "putting further strain on families, with reduced food security inside the camps driving more refugees to attempt dangerous sea journeys", the agency said.

AFP



EU LAUNCHES €15 MILLION PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT MYANMAR DISPLACED PERSONS IN THAI SHELTERS

On 22 April, the European Union launched a new programme to support Myanmar displaced persons in Thailand, with EU Ambassador Luisa Ragher signing an agreement alongside representatives from UNHCR, the International Rescue Committee consortium, and Expertise France.

The text of the statement is as follows.

The initiative comes at a pivotal moment, as Thailand advances policies enabling displaced persons to access legal employment and national services. The programme will support this transition by strengthening healthcare systems, enhancing child protection mechanisms, and expanding livelihood opportunities, while reinforcing coordination between humanitarian actors and Thai institutions. It contributes to a shift from long-term humanitarian assistance towards more sustainable and locally anchored solutions.

H.E. Mrs. Luisa Ragher, Ambassador of the European Union to Thailand, said:

“The European Union remains committed to supporting Thailand in advancing sustainable and inclusive solutions for Myanmar displaced persons. At this critical moment of transition, our partnership seeks to ensure that refugees are not only protected, but also empowered to become self-reliant and active contributors to society. Together with our partners, we are building pathways towards dignity, resilience, and shared prosperity.”

Ms. Pinsuda Jayanama, Director-General of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said:

“Thailand highly appreciates the European Union’s

decision to increase its programme’s funding from 12 million euros to 15 million euros for 2026 – 2028. This enhanced contribution is very timely as we are transitioning from aid dependency for the Myanmar Displaced Persons to a more self-reliant and inclusive path.”

Tammi Sharpe, UNHCR Representative in Thailand, said:

“This programme represents an important step towards advancing protection and inclusion for refugees in Thailand. By strengthening child protection systems and supporting access to national services and employment opportunities, we are helping refugees to transition safely and with dignity, while laying the foundations for longer-term solutions.”

Darren Hertz, Country Director, International Rescue Committee, said:

“Through this programme, we aim to ensure that refugees have equitable access to essential services while building the skills and opportunities needed for self-reliance. Supporting livelihoods and social inclusion will help families navigate this transition with greater confidence and resilience.”

Eric Fleutelot, Technical Director, Pandemic Cluster, Health Department, Expertise France, said:

“Improving access to quality healthcare is central to enabling inclusive and sustainable solutions. This programme will strengthen local health systems, support frontline workers, and expand access to care for vulnerable populations, contributing to a more resilient and inclusive response.”



KIA fighters. Photo: KIA

KIA ANNOUNCES INDEFINITE CLOSURE OF STRATEGIC HPAKANT-NAMUA-KAMINE ROAD AS MILITARY TENSIONS ESCALATE

The Kachin Independence Army (KIA) has declared an indefinite closure of the vital Hpakant-Namya-Kamine road starting 22 April, citing the need to block junta military reinforcements and militia movements.

“It is a military route with a significant flow of goods. If reinforcements are sent to Hpakant, the Warazup militia and military commission forces are likely to use this road. We have given prior notice that it will be closed on the 22nd,” said a KIA logistics officer.

He added that ongoing tensions between the military junta, the Warazup People’s Militia Force (PMF) and the KIA could erupt into heavy fighting at any time.

A Hpakant resident said the road is a key supply

route into the town and warned that prolonged closure could drive up prices.

“There is only one road, so the prices of goods and fuel will rise if it is closed. Closures do happen, and when they do, people suffer. They are usually brief, but at times they last longer,” he said.

The KIA is currently conducting drone and landmine attacks near Hpakant, while military forces continue to advance in the area.

On 19 April, artillery fire from junta military forces stationed on a strategic hill in Hpakant killed a three-year-old boy from Malang village in Lone Khin village tract and a man from Hmaw Lakin village.



Photo: Supplied

MULTIPLE AIRSTRIKES DEVASTATE KAN HTOO MA VILLAGE AS MYANMAR JUNTA TARGETS SAGAING REGION

The military junta launched a sustained aerial assault on Kan Htoo Ma village in Taze Township on 21 April, deploying four jet fighters in a series of bombings that lasted from midday until 3:00 pm.

"Three fighter jets dropped bombs one after another, with each aircraft dropping bombs three to four times. The eastern part of the village was hit the hardest. The residents were in a state of panic," said a local woman from Kan Htoo Ma village.

During the bombing attack, around 10 houses were destroyed by fire, and several villagers were injured. In

the aftermath, residents have been forced to flee their homes and seek safety elsewhere.

The village, located near Taze Township, is a roadside village where the local police station was attacked and seized by the revolutionary forces in March 2024.

The military junta has launched airstrikes on the village on three separate occasions, resulting in an estimated total of around 13 civilian deaths to date.



Photo: AFP

MYANMAR JUNTA ARTILLERY STRIKES KILL TWO CIVILIANS, INCLUDING A CHILD, FOLLOWING MINE AMBUSH IN HPAKANT

Two civilians, including a three-year-old child, were killed in Hpakant Township, Kachin State, on 19 April, after military junta forces launched an indiscriminate attack by heavy artillery on residential areas.

The shelling originated from the Hpakant Strategic Hill, where junta troops targeted nearby villages including Ma Lang and Mhaw Lakin.

According to a member of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the artillery fire was a retaliatory strike following significant losses sustained by a joint column of junta troops and the Warazup Militia.

“They (junta military forces) routinely fire heavy weapons indiscriminately, even in the absence of active clashes, particularly when its troops or allied militia suffer losses. The tactic mirrors their use of airstrikes for support. Yesterday’s artillery fire struck civilians, killing two people,” said a member of the KIA.

Earlier that day, the combined pro-junta force, led by militia leader Min Zin Thant, had attempted to advance toward Nam Ma Phit and Ma Lang villages.

Resistance forces intercepted the column using pre-planted landmines, reportedly resulting in dozens of junta and militia casualties.

“We carried out two mine detonations, and many of them were killed within the minefield,” the KIA member said.

Local sources stated that the military typically resorts to heavy weaponry and airstrikes against civilian populations whenever their ground troops suffer setbacks in the field.

The escalation in Hpakant follows a string of recent resistance victories in the region. On 18 April, just one day prior to the shelling, the KIA and allied forces successfully seized two strategic outposts belonging to the Warazup Militia—Awe Law and Kham Kawng located in the Hukawng region of Tanai Township.

These coordinated operations highlight the intensifying pressure on pro-junta militias in Kachin State, as revolutionary forces continue to dismantle the military’s auxiliary network in the country’s northern jade-mining hub.

Photo: Supplied

MYANMAR JUNTA FIGHTER JETS TARGET HOSPITAL ON THAI-MYANMAR BORDER

In the early hours of 20 April, the Myanmar military junta launched a targeted airstrike on Oo Mae Hta Hospital, located along the Salween River in the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) Brigade 5 territory of Mutraw (Hpapun) District. The attack involving fighter jets dropping approximately 10 bombs around 10:30 am, destroyed two hospital buildings and a nearby Christian church.

“Oo Mae Hta is not a village, but a site dedicated to healthcare services. Patients seek treatment there not only from Mutraw District but also from Doo Tha Htoo, Kler Lwee Htoo, and Taw Oo (Districts).

Refugees from camps such as Mae La Oon also rely on the facility. When the bombs struck, there were no casualties, as people had already been on high alert and took shelter instead of fleeing,” said Saw Eh Doh Wah, an official from the Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN).

Reports from the Thai side also indicate that one of the bombs from the airstrike landed and exploded on the bank of the Salween River on Thai side, though Mizzima has yet to independently confirm this information.

Oo Mae Hta Hospital is located only about 500 meters from the Salween River, which serves as the border between the two countries.

The hospital has now been bombed twice in April.

On the night of April 11, the military junta reportedly dropped two 500-pound bombs, injuring patients receiving treatment and damaging hospital facilities.

Mizzima is currently trying to contact Lieutenant Colonel Saw Kler Doh, spokesperson for KNLA Brigade 5 to obtain detailed information regarding the extent of damage from the attack.

“We strongly condemn this as an inhumane act. Although we issue statements for every such incident, the international community does not seem to pay sufficient attention. We urge them to take these incidents seriously – specifically to cut off aviation fuel supplies, halt the provision of weapons, and support cross-border humanitarian assistance,” added Saw Eh Doh Wah of the Karen Peace Support Network.

On April 18, the Karen National Union (KNU) issued a statement calling on ASEAN member states and the broader international community to go beyond expressions of concern and take concrete action.

The group urged immediate and practical measures in response to war crimes committed by the military junta through airstrikes on civilian areas, demanding effective steps to halt the airstrikes.

The KNU stated that silence and inaction in response to such clear violations of law would effectively amount to encouraging the military junta to carry out even more blatant acts of the terrorism.

THE CEREMONY OF SIGNING THE MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION BETWEEN
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY, THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR,
AND INVESTMENT DEVELOPMENT FUND "RC-INVESTMENTS", THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
ON BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION



Photo: Supplied

MYANMAR AND RUSSIA SIGN LONG-TERM ENERGY DEAL AS NAYPYIDAW AIMS TO BECOME REGIONAL "ENERGY HUB"

The Myanmar junta Ministry of Electricity and Energy signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) on 16 April, with Russia's "RC Investments" to secure a long-term, continuous supply of crude oil and petroleum products.

The agreement, finalized during a high-level visit to Russia by Union Minister U Ko Ko Lwin, aims to provide Myanmar with discounted Russian energy, including LNG, LPG, and fertilizers, while ensuring quality and transit security.

The state-controlled Mirror newspaper reported on 18 April that the two countries had signed a memorandum of understanding on economic and technical cooperation, aimed at strengthening collaboration in the electricity and energy sectors, including a long-term agreement for the supply of crude oil and petroleum products.

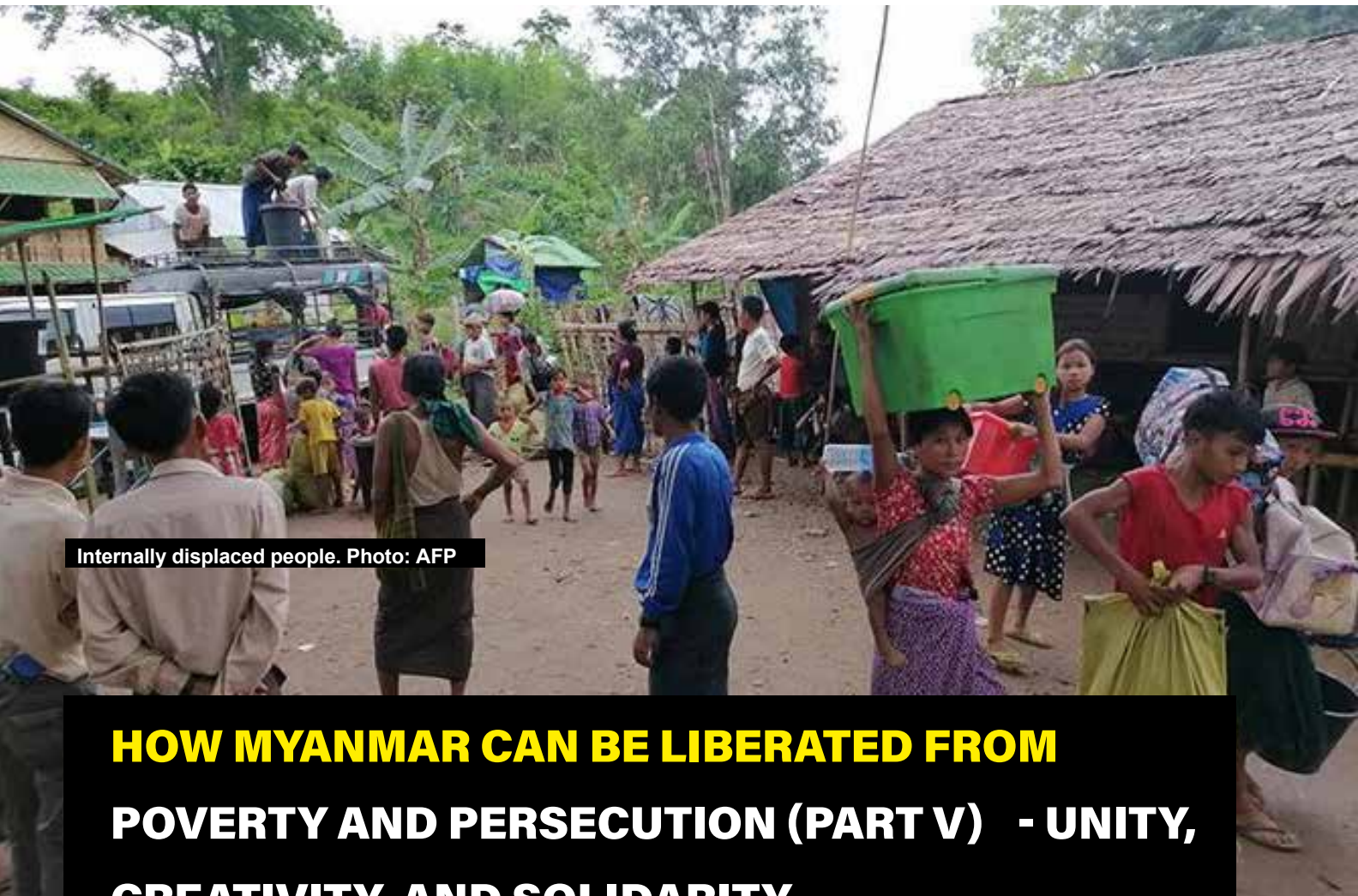
"We discussed affordable pricing, quality assurance, road safety and long-term logistics, building on the friendship between the two countries, and agreed on plans for continued engagement," the statement said.

Officials also announced that a memorandum of understanding will soon be signed between the quasi-civilian military administration and Russia to expand cooperation across the electricity and energy sector, including increased investment and training for human resource development.

On 16 April, a delegation led by Ko Ko Lwin also met with Russia's Inter RAO to discuss plans for a coal-fired power plant, an oil refinery at the Dawei deep-sea port, and the construction of an LNG terminal and related facilities.

Amid a fuel crisis linked to conflict in the Middle East, U Ko Ko Lwin, the Minister of Electricity and Energy under the quasi-civilian military administration, visited Russia via China from 12 to 18 April.

U Ko Ko Lwin also met Russia's energy minister on 15 April, where he expressed interest in importing liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Russia to Myanmar and re-exporting it to China and Thailand via pipelines.



Internally displaced people. Photo: AFP

HOW MYANMAR CAN BE LIBERATED FROM POVERTY AND PERSECUTION (PART V) - UNITY, CREATIVITY, AND SOLIDARITY

NICHOLAS KONG

While much of the world continues to dissect Myanmar's choreographed "civilian" transition, a newly unified resistance council—the Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union (SCEF)—has quietly created a potentially credible alternative that Beijing and Washington may overlook at their peril.

On March 30, 2026, coup leader Min Aung Hlaing formally relinquished his position as Commander-in-Chief while assuming the vice presidency—an outcome not of reform, but of design. It was the final step in a long-calculated transition: repackaging himself from general to a nominally civilian president, fulfilling the very ambition that precipitated the 2021 coup.

Yet, paradoxically, that same day marked something far more consequential—the emergence of a unified resistance leadership: SCEF.

A Managed Transition to "Civilian" Rule Without Transfer of Power

The junta's staged election does not represent a return to civilian rule. It formalizes military supremacy under a civilian disguise, echoing the model institutionalized in 1974, when the country was transformed into a one-party socialist state under a military-drafted constitution. Power is not transferred—it is recycled. A "President" Min Aung Hlaing is elevated through a parliament dominated by military figures, most handpicked by him to ensure continuity of control.

For months, both local and international media have focused on the mechanics of this process—the sequencing of parliament, presidency, and institutional reshuffling. But this fixation risks missing the broader point. It reflects a narrative shaped by the very architect of the crisis. While attention remains on the spectacle, the substance of power remains largely unchanged.

Min Aung Hlaing is not improvising or reforming; he is following a well-worn playbook of military rule. From Ne Win, he adopted the tactic of shifting between military and civilian façades. From Than Shwe, the strategy of elevating compliant subordinates. From Khin Nyunt, the method of dividing ethnic forces to maintain control.

His next moves appear predictable: fragment ethnic armed organizations along border lines, initiate controlled “peace talks,” selectively release political prisoners with calculated timing to signal reform, and attempt to reclaim international legitimacy—including Myanmar’s seat at the United Nations. These steps are less indicative of transformation than of regime preservation.

A Breakthrough For Unity: SCEF

What may deserve greater attention is the emergence of SCEF—a potentially significant turning point rooted in unity. For the first time, many major resistance actors—including, among others, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Chin groups, along with the National Unity Government (NUG) and the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH)—have come together under a collective leadership framework described as “one policy, one strategy.” This represents one of the most cohesive coalitions to date, while remaining open to broader participation.

This unity is not merely symbolic; it is structural.

SCEF provides a platform for coordinated policymaking across governance, diplomacy, and military strategy. It strengthens operational capability and lays the foundation for a future federal democratic union. More importantly, it addresses a persistent challenge in Myanmar’s political history: fragmentation.

A more unified front may also begin to reshape international perceptions. External actors have long viewed Myanmar’s resistance as fragmented and therefore difficult to engage. SCEF could begin to alter that calculus by creating clearer channels for engagement—with the United Nations, ASEAN, neighboring countries, and major powers.

ASEAN’s Dilemma, China’s Risk, America’s Blind Spot

ASEAN, while often criticized for inaction, has so far declined to recognize the junta’s election, withholding full legitimacy. This creates limited but meaningful diplomatic space. SCEF could seek to engage ASEAN states more systematically—not only as observers, but as stakeholders in regional stability, security, and economic integration.

Equally important is how SCEF navigates relations with major powers. Both China and the United States operate through largely transactional frameworks. A unified resistance must move beyond reactive diplomacy—engaging where interests align while maintaining strategic autonomy where they diverge.

For China, instability under prolonged military rule carries protracted risks for border security, infrastructure projects, and regional economic corridors. At the same time, concerns over Myanmar’s sovereignty and overdependence on China remain salient.

With the United States, Myanmar has often been framed primarily through democratic values. However,

the rise of transnational crime—including narcotics trafficking, human trafficking, and cyber scam networks—highlight broader strategic implications within the Indo-Pacific. In fact, US authorities estimate that cyber scams cost Americans over ten billion in single year, with major hubs in Myanmar and neighboring countries.

SCEF may therefore need to position itself carefully to avoid Myanmar becoming a proxy arena, while pursuing constructive relations with both neighboring countries and major powers.

SCEF as a Strategic Partner

The emergence of SCEF creates space for possible recalibration:

- ASEAN could consider expanding engagement frameworks to include resistance actors integrated under SCEF, among others under existing channels.
- Beijing may find it increasingly relevant to view SCEF as part of the broader landscape affecting border stability and economic prosperity.
- Washington could benefit from engaging SCEF representing a unified group among other wider set of actors in addressing transnational security concerns, including illicit economies linked to Myanmar.

A more unified resistance does not resolve Myanmar's crisis, but it may reshape how external actors approach it.

A Narrow but Critical Window

SCEF faces a narrow but potentially significant window. Ongoing geopolitical engagements between two major powers continue to influence Myanmar's trajectory, often without direct representation from domestic stakeholders.

For SCEF, the challenge lies in translating organizational unity into strategic clarity—particularly in foreign policy and external engagement.

To break the cycle of suppression that has defined Myanmar for over six decades, the resistance must move ahead of the military—not only on the battlefield, but across four fronts:

- Information: Counter propaganda with clarity, consistency, and credibility.
 - Diplomacy: Engage proactively, not reactively.
 - Economic: Undermine military-linked revenue while building alternative systems.
 - Military: Coordinate operations and develop innovative asymmetrical strategies under unified command.

Unity alone may not be sufficient; it will need to be reinforced by creativity in strategy and solidarity in execution.

Conclusion

Myanmar's future will not be determined by the choreography of a staged election, but by whether unity can overcome entrenched division—and whether resistance can evolve into a viable political order.

The path forward remains narrow. But for the first time in decades, it appears increasingly within reach.

The original article was published in the Eurasia Review on April 24, 2026.



Myanmar junta leader Min Aung Hlaing.
Photo: AFP

NO PEACE IN A FABRICATED STATE: WHY THE WORLD MUST REJECT MYANMAR'S WAR- CRIMINAL-LED POLITICAL ORDER

THET SWE WIN

Myanmar today is not moving toward peace. What is being presented as a transition is, in reality, a carefully engineered political illusion designed by a military regime that has ruled through violence, coercion, and manipulation. The recent election, the so-called amnesties, the language of reconciliation, and the growing diplomatic engagement are not signs of progress. They are components of a broader strategy to transform raw military power into normalized political authority. At the center of this effort stands Min Aung Hlaing, a man internationally scrutinized for grave crimes, now attempting to rebrand himself as a civilian leader. This is not reform. It is the laundering of authoritarian rule.

The December 2025 election must be understood for what it was: not merely flawed, but entirely illegitimate. After arresting the leaders who won the 2020 election—including State Councilor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint—the military seized power in 2021 and dismantled the existing democratic mandate. The 2025 vote did not restore that mandate; it attempted to erase it. Conducted in the midst of an ongoing civil war, with large parts of

the country beyond military control, millions displaced, and genuine political actors imprisoned, banned, or in exile, the process lacked any basis in popular participation. Voting was partial, controlled, and structurally predetermined. This was not an election in any democratic sense. It was a staged exercise designed to fabricate legality, to overwrite the will of the people, and to convert an unlawful seizure of power into a formal political order without ever relinquishing military dominance.

Against this backdrop, the recent prisoner amnesties have been portrayed as gestures of goodwill. In reality, they represent a continuation of repression by other means. Thousands of political prisoners remain detained, including many who are legally entitled to release but have been deliberately excluded. The process is selective, opaque, and politically calculated. The release of President U Win Myint is particularly revealing. While symbolically significant, it does not reflect a genuine political opening. Instead, it serves multiple functions for the regime: projecting an image of moderation to the international community, easing external pressure, and introducing ambiguity within

the resistance. Without structural change, without the unconditional release of all political prisoners, such acts cannot be interpreted as reform. They are tactical moves in a broader campaign to reshape perception.

The silence of released figures has also become a point of tension. Yet this silence must be understood within the context of constraint. Those released from detention remain under surveillance, subject to implicit or explicit threats, and often unable to speak freely without risking re-arrest or harm to themselves and their networks. However, politically, the regime benefits from this silence. It creates confusion, speculation, and, ultimately, division within the revolutionary movement. This is not accidental. It is a calculated attempt to weaken opposition cohesion without direct confrontation.

At the same time, the language used by foreign governments reveals a deeper problem. The refusal of many embassies to refer to U Win Myint as “President,” opting instead for the neutral “U Win Myint,” reflects a deliberate diplomatic ambiguity. While intended to preserve flexibility and avoid formal recognition disputes, this choice carries political weight. It blurs the distinction between an elected leader removed by force and a military figure who seized power. In attempting to remain neutral, diplomacy risks normalizing a fundamentally illegitimate situation. Language, in this context, is not merely symbolic. It shapes perception, and perception shapes political reality.

Regional dynamics further complicate the picture. Engagement by countries such as Thailand reflects a pragmatic approach driven by concerns over border stability, trade, and security. However, pragmatism is not neutral. Each engagement, each meeting, contributes to the gradual normalization of the regime. This normalization does not occur through formal recognition alone. It happens incrementally, through repeated interaction, through the quiet acceptance of the regime as a governing authority. The danger lies not in a single act, but in the accumulation of such acts over time.

Meanwhile, the reality on the ground remains unchanged. Myanmar is still in a state of active conflict. Airstrikes continue, civilian areas are targeted, and large portions of the country remain contested. The language of peace obscures this reality. What is being framed as a transition is, in fact, a continuation of war under a different narrative. To call this a peace process is to misrepresent the situation entirely.

Within this context, the perception that the revolution has lost momentum requires careful

examination. It is true that, after five years, the initial energy of the Spring Revolution has shifted. The movement now faces fatigue, fragmentation, and significant resource constraints. Some actors have shifted toward humanitarian framing, focusing on prisoner releases and immediate relief rather than systemic change. This shift can create the impression that the revolution is moving from confrontation to accommodation. However, this interpretation is incomplete. What is occurring is not surrender, but adaptation. The revolution has entered a consolidation phase, where survival, coordination, and strategic clarity become more important than rapid expansion.

The greatest threat at this stage is not outright military victory by the regime, but internal fragmentation within the resistance. The military’s strategy relies not on decisive battlefield success, but on prolonging the conflict, exhausting opposition forces, and exploiting divisions. The use of sham elections, selective amnesties, and psychological pressure tactics are all part of this approach. These are not signs of confidence, but of calculated endurance.

Recognizing or legitimizing the current political order in Myanmar would therefore be a profound mistake. It would entrench military rule, repeat the failures of the past transition, undermine democratic forces, and send a broader global message that authoritarian power can be normalized through time and manipulation. It would not resolve the conflict. It would deepen it.

The Myanmar resistance, despite its challenges, remains the only force pushing toward a fundamentally different political future. It represents the continuation of democratic aspirations, the rejection of military domination, and the possibility of a federal and inclusive system. It is imperfect and under immense pressure, but it has not collapsed. What it requires now is not abandonment or sidelining, but meaningful support.

Myanmar does not need a war criminal to lead a peace process. It does not need fabricated elections or symbolic gestures. It needs a political future grounded in legitimacy, accountability, and the will of its people. If the international community chooses to recognize the current system, it will not be supporting peace. It will be endorsing the successful transformation of violence into power. And that would not end Myanmar’s crisis. It would ensure its continuation.



Photos: Rti

MIZZIMA AND RADIO TAIWAN INTERNATIONAL SIGN MOU TO COLLABORATE ON MYANMAR AND TAIWAN NEWS

Mizzima and Radio Taiwan International (Rti) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 27 April to collaborate on editorial content, mutual support in expert exchange, and institutional collaboration.

Attendees included Rti Chairperson Cheryl Lai, Vice President Chris Liu, their team, and Mizzima Managing

Editor Sein Win, as well as Taiwanese journalist Will Yang, who covers Myanmar-related issues.

The MoU aims to promote bilateral exchange of information and culture, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation.



Photos: Rti



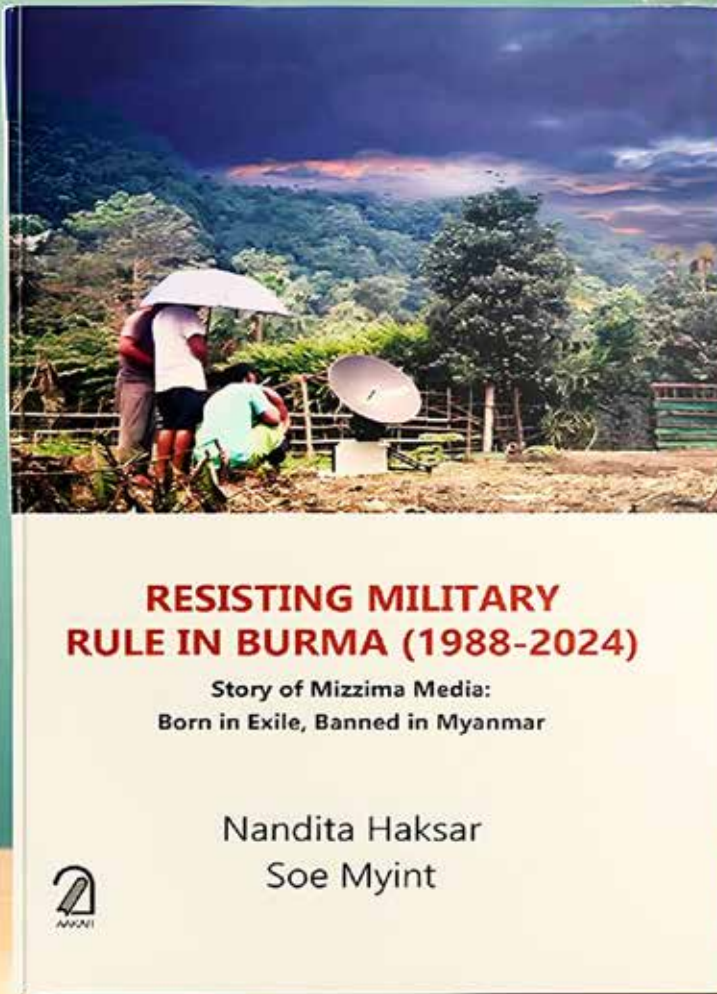
Photos: Rti



Photos: Rti

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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Rare earth minerals in Malaysia.
Photo: AFP

DELICATE EXTRACTION: MALAYSIA OFFERS RARE EARTHS ALTERNATIVE TO CHINA

Workers load tonnes of rare earth minerals into bags ready for shipping at a refinery in eastern Malaysia, fuelling the global pushback against China's grip on the critical sector.

Rare earths are a key ingredient in products ranging from smartphones to fighter jets, electric cars and wind turbines -- and increasingly for hardware powering the artificial intelligence boom.

Global jitters about Beijing's dominance as a rare earths producer have kicked Australian mining giant Lynas into action, expanding its portfolio of rare earths refined in Malaysia as it hopes to boost its approximately 10 percent share of the market.

China makes up the other 90 percent of the world's market, stoking fears about Beijing's ability to choke global supplies.

"China has built its success on executing a clear industrial plan -- it takes us to be serious about it,"

Lynas company's chief executive Amanda Lacaze told AFP.

Pushing against Chinese dominance will "take discipline, focus and clear planning", she said during a rare press visit to the company's sprawling chemical plant in Malaysia's Gebeng industrial hub, near the coastal city of Kuantan.

The Lynas facility in Gebeng is now the world's largest single rare earths processing plant.

Downstream demand

Since 2012, the facility has been refining pure metals from raw materials mined in Western Australia, in an intensive and complicated separation procedure.

It currently handles 11 of the 17 rare earths -- a number that is increasing -- with plans to expand even further to include "heavies" such as yttrium and lutetium, used for lasers, medical imaging and cancer therapy.

From the plant, the bags are transported to Port Klang on the other side of Malaysia, and leave on a ship for Japan, where the metal powders are turned into high-performance magnets used in advanced industries such as electronics and aerospace.

Most bags contain NdPr, short for neodymium-praseodymium, a rare-earth mixture and key magnet material, which sells for around \$100,000 per bag.

Smaller quantities of other separated heavy rare earth oxides like dysprosium, terbium and samarium are sold in 25-kilogramme tins.

Rare earths are so vital for the global economy that they have become a flashpoint in the blistering trade war between the United States and China.

Beijing leveraged its grip on the precious minerals in spectacular fashion last October, reaching a deal with Washington to pause the trade war after its curbs on exports rattled markets and snarled supply chains.

Supply of rare earths is expected to be a key discussion point at an upcoming summit between US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in Beijing set for mid-May.

But the challenge for Lynas is not its production capacity, chief operating officer Pol Le Roux said.

Instead, incentives are needed to boost downstream capacity -- the ability to turn raw minerals into a finished product -- which is "growing too slowly", he told AFP.

Lacaze said the company was already partnering with magnet makers to close the gap between rare-earth processing and manufacturing.

However, she stressed: "We won't just say that we are going to wake up tomorrow and be a magnet maker."

'Minimise risks'

Producing rare earths requires heavy chemicals and can produce toxic waste, with cases including illegal operations polluting Mekong tributaries in Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia with arsenic and cadmium.

Lynas got the green light last month from the Malaysian government to process rare earths there for another 10 years.

The licence was issued as environmental watchdogs such as Greenpeace raised concerns over the management of radioactive by-products.

Under the latest agreement, the government said the company must now halt all activities that produce radioactive waste within five years of its renewed operating licence.

Lynas however, says its by-product from rare earth refining produces a non-toxic, non-radioactive magnesium-rich gypsum and an iron phosphate with a very low level of naturally occurring radioactive material.

Existing by-product is already stored in a permanent disposal facility "constructed and managed to ensure the material does not impact on the surrounding environment," the company said.

Lynas also has ambitions to diversify further into producing rare earths as catalysts over the next decade.

Rare earths are particularly important as a low-cost catalyst in the hydrogen supply chain, for instance, in the recovery process when the gas is transported long-haul as ammonia.

"In 10 years from now, I expect this to be a substantial part of the business," Le Roux said.

AFP



ENTER THE DRAGON

"They are using each other for their own benefit."

With these words framing a delicate topic, Wai Yan Phyo Naing returns to the podcast for a second conversation—this time offering listeners a deep exploration of Myanmar's evolving entanglement with China.

In his first appearance, he traced his path from studying international relations in Moscow to working with migrants in Thailand, reflecting on his rare experience as one of the few civilian Burmese students in Russia. He also shared his nuanced response to Myanmar's 2021 coup, insights into the mindset of young Burmese military officers abroad, and thoughtful reflections on Buddhism, loyalty, and the complex moral choices confronting Myanmar's religious and political figures.

As a researcher and lecturer trained in international relations and modern history, with academic work spanning from the Cold War to the Belt and Road Initiative, Wai Yan Phyo Naing approaches the topic of Sino-Myanmar relations with the precision of a historian and the realism of a political analyst. His earlier research

traced the evolution of these relations from 1988 through the early 2010s, focusing on how changing domestic politics and global alignments shaped the partnership. That background informs his podcast discussion, where he offers an unflinching look at the dynamics between these two unequal but interdependent neighbors.

Wai Yan Phyo Naing emphasizes that Myanmar and China's relationship is one of pragmatic necessity rather than friendship or ideology. Each side turns to the other when convenient and withdraws when costs rise. For Myanmar, China's permanent seat on the UN Security Council and its policy of non-interference provide crucial diplomatic cover during periods of Western sanctions or condemnation. For China, Myanmar represents a vital corridor to the Indian Ocean, reducing dependence on the narrow Malacca Strait. Both countries thus operate out of strategic self-interest, continually testing how much advantage they can extract without losing autonomy. "China is only interested in its national interests," Wai Yan Phyo Naing states firmly. "China is ready to communicate with whoever becomes powerful in Myanmar." These remarks sum up the cold logic underlying China's pragmatism, which, for him, Myanmar must recognize without resentment.

CATCH THE PODCAST

Read more and listen to the Insight Myanmar Podcast here:

<https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2026/4/9/episode-517-enter-the-dragon>



Photo: AFP

MYANMAR JUNTA SAYS IT HAS 60-DAY FUEL RESERVE AMID GLOBAL SUPPLY FEARS

Myanmar's quasi-civilian junta says it has built fuel reserves sufficient for about 60 days and is taking steps to secure additional imports amid global supply concerns that are raising fears of shortages and price pressure, according to state media.

A notice published in the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar on 26 April said officials were monitoring domestic fuel sales and distribution while implementing measures to maintain supply stability across the country.

The report said reserves had been accumulated to cover roughly two months of demand. Authorities were also negotiating with partner countries to ensure continued imports of fuel and petroleum products.

State media linked the measures to volatility in global energy markets and concerns over disruption in the Strait of Hormuz. Rising international prices and geopolitical tensions were also cited as risks to domestic availability.

The announcement suggests growing concern within the junta about the economic impact of a sustained fuel shock in a country already grappling with inflation, a weak currency, and conflict-related disruption.

Authorities said they were supervising fuel distribution and seeking to prevent market instability. Myanmar relies heavily on imported fuel, leaving it exposed to external supply disruptions and exchange-rate fluctuations.

The latest statement follows earlier government efforts to manage fuel demand through administrative measures, including promoting public transport and imposing restrictions to reduce consumption.

While the reserve was presented as evidence of preparedness, the durability of supply will depend on global market conditions, access to foreign currency, and the state's ability to manage distribution networks.



Supporting the duly elected president. Photo: AFP

MYANMAR PUBLIC ANGRY AFTER WESTERN EMBASSIES REFUSE TO CALL U WIN MYINT 'PRESIDENT'

Myanmar social media users were burning with anger last week not at the military, but at Western embassies. The US, UK, Australia, and Norway embassies in Yangon issued statements welcoming the release of political prisoners on Myanmar New Year's Day, but all four referred to the country's democratically elected president simply as "U Win Myint" without his presidential title.

The US Embassy statement read that it welcomed reports of the release of "U Win Myint" and other political prisoners. The choice of words immediately drew fierce criticism on Facebook. "If you dare, write 'President U Win Myint.' If you don't dare, then write nothing at all. Do not insult the people," one user wrote, pointing out that U Win Myint was lawfully elected by the people in the 2020 general election.

Another user criticized the US statement further, noting that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was not mentioned

by name and that the embassy used words like "peace and stability" instead of "democracy and federalism."

The UK, Australian, and Norwegian embassies issued similar statements calling for Aung San Suu Kyi's release but also referred to the freed president only as "U Win Myint." Notably, Canada was the only Western country that used "President U Win Myint" and referred to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as "State Counsellor" in its statement.

Pro-democracy supporters and revolutionary forces argue that refusing to use the title "President" for a leader elected through a legitimate democratic process amounts to indirectly recognizing the illegitimate military government. The United Nations continues to officially list U Win Myint as president of Myanmar.

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.