

ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

# mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight



**HOSTAGE OF THE JUNTA**

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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.

# WHAT'S HE DOING? ROGER STONE AND THE MYANMAR JUNTA'S LEGITIMACY

Is somebody kidding? The reported move by American lobbyist Roger Stone to represent Myanmar's military regime underscores a familiar but fraught strategy - outsourcing legitimacy. Since seizing power in the 2021 Myanmar coup, the Myanmar military junta has faced sustained international isolation, sanctions, and reputational damage, despite now trying to show themselves in civilian garb. Its outreach to a controversial American lobbyist linked to US President Donald Trump suggests less a breakthrough than a continuation of a long-running diplomatic playbook - one that prioritizes optics, access, and narrative management over substantive political change.

The Myanmar junta's core problem is not simply one of messaging but of credibility. Western governments, particularly the United States Department of State, have tied normalization to concrete steps - ending violence, releasing political prisoners, and restoring a democratic process. Hiring a wily figure like Stone may open doors in Washington's lobbying ecosystem, but it does little to address the underlying reasons Myanmar has become a pariah state. If anything, it risks reinforcing perceptions that the regime is more interested in influence-peddling than reform.

This is not to say the strategy is entirely irrational. Authoritarian governments have long relied on foreign lobbyists to soften criticism, delay punitive measures, or exploit divisions within democratic systems. By framing engagement as a pragmatic necessity, the junta can test whether parts of the US policy community are receptive to incremental re-engagement. In a polarized political climate, even marginal shifts in tone can be valuable in order to keep the fighter jet fuel flowing, to bomb civilians, and trade and business deals in place, to enrich the generals.

Yet the timing is awkward, though the junta might not see it as such, given their

moves to turn from green to white. Reports of ongoing conflict, humanitarian crises, and actions from resistance groups continue to dominate media coverage of Myanmar. Against that backdrop, a Washington lobbying contract involving such a "high-profile figure" appearing disconnected from realities on the ground, to the point where some might ask, is this a joke? Stone's contract certainly raised eyebrows. Diplomacy, even transactional diplomacy, depends on a minimum level of mutual trust. Without visible concessions, the junta's overtures may be seen as an attempt to bypass accountability rather than engage with it.

There is also a reputational cost on the American side. Figures like Stone carry their own embarrassing political baggage, which can complicate any effort to present the engagement as a serious diplomatic channel. Why of all people did they choose him? Rather than signaling a reset, the move may be interpreted as a gamble on an unconventional pathway - one that is unlikely to shift official policy but may generate headlines, both positive and negative.

What is becoming clear is the junta's diplomatic game reflects a broader tension between legitimacy and control. International acceptance cannot be fully engineered through contracts or connections - it is earned through actions that align with global norms. Freeing Aung San Suu Kyi might well be one of those actions. Until Myanmar's military leadership addresses that gap - takes real action to hand power back to the people and free the thousands of political prisoners - its outreach efforts using a dodgy American lobbyist are likely to remain tactical maneuvers rather than transformative steps.

The majority of the Myanmar people want to see the military wrenched out of their country's politics. The use of Stone only confirms the generals are desperately trying to hang on to power.

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**Managing Director and Editor In-Chief**  
Soe Myint

**Managing Editor**  
Thaw Zin Tun

**Network Engineer**  
Wai Min Han

**Video and Graphics Editor**  
Wai Yan Shein Zaw

**General Manager**  
No No Lin

**Mizzima Weekly is published by**  
**Mizzima s.r.o**

**Address:**  
Salvatorska 931/8,  
Stare Mesto, 11000,  
Praha 1, Czech Republic

**Contact email:**  
sm@mizzima.com

**Phone/Signal/WhatsApp**  
+420 608 616688

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Cover photo of picture of Aung San Suu Kyi by AFP



Photo: AFP

# HOSTAGE OF THE JUNTA

Questions continue to swirl around the news item released by the Myanmar junta last week that Aung San Suu Kyi was going to be moved to a “designated residence”, accompanied by a photo with no date on it showing Aung San Suu Kyi sitting with what appear to be junta officials.

Where is the “Proof of Life” thousands of members of the Myanmar public are asking, including a call by Aung San Suu Kyi’s son, Kim Aris, calling for her to be freed?

Aung San Suu Kyi – known as “The Lady” and the duly elected leader of Myanmar – is a hostage of the junta, a regime made up largely generals who have exchanged their green uniforms for white civilian garb in a carefully scripted transition.

At the top is military coup-maker Min Aung Hlaing who took steps to make sure he became president after a “sham” election held in December 2025 into January. Min Aung Hlaing has executed what could be termed a second coup by using the electoral support of the pro-military Union Solidarity and Development Party

(USDP) to shore up his rule, while sidelining its leader Khin Yi, relegated to the role of house speaker.

Aung San Suu Kyi is a troublesome tool in Min Aung Hlaing’s arsenal, who at this point of time is being used to show the “leniency” of his regime, suggesting she is being moved from prison to some form of “house arrest” but seemingly not allowed to return to her family’s mansion on the lake in Yangon and possibly barred from seeing visitors – though this rule may be relaxed as part of the game.

Min Aung Hlaing thinks he is clever – and in some ways he is when we observe his moves to become “civilian president”. But Aung San Suu Kyi remains a thorn in his side, a Nobel Laureate and democracy icon loved and voted in by the people, who he feels has to be held out of public sight, behind closed doors, whose name is heard publicly every day, and in protests calling for “proof of life”.

The junta leader continues to argue his coup was just, claiming the landslide success of the 2020 national election by Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for



Many are calling for Proof of Life.  
Photo: AFP

Democracy (NLD) was due to electoral fraud – an echo of the claim made by US Presidential candidate Donald Trump when he challenged the Democratic Party’s win in the 2020 US election.

After Min Aung Hlaing arrested Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, he sought to rustle up a number of charges against them – effectively putting them away for life. The recent amnesty for Win Myint was used as a tool to indicate his new “civilian government” was lenient.

But this leaves eighty-year-old Aung San Suu Kyi locked up under tight security facing about 18 years of further incarceration – effectively a death sentence for this popular leader.

Despite the regime’s announcement on 30 April that she had been moved from Naypyidaw Prison, her lawyers report that they remain barred from meeting her. Individuals close to her legal team told Mizzima that there is currently no plan for a meeting, and the regime has failed to respond to repeated requests for

access, which have been submitted consistently since January 2023.

How Min Aung Hlaing will handle all this is unclear. He is attempting to use diplomacy to improve the legitimacy of his regime. He is leaning on the support of China, Russia and Belarus, and counting on the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to ease up on their demands, that include adhering to the signed Five-Point Consensus. He has reportedly employed an American lobbyist, Roger Stone, to improve US-Myanmar relations, in part to ease sanctions, though it is unclear how this will play out given Stone’s troubled track record.

And then there is the war. Myanmar’s Spring Revolution resistance remains in full swing, despite a lack of unity, and some battlefield losses. Much will depend on how the junta leader’s use of brutality will blunt the resistance and civilian support.

For now, all eyes are on Min Aung Hlaing and how he will treat The Lady.

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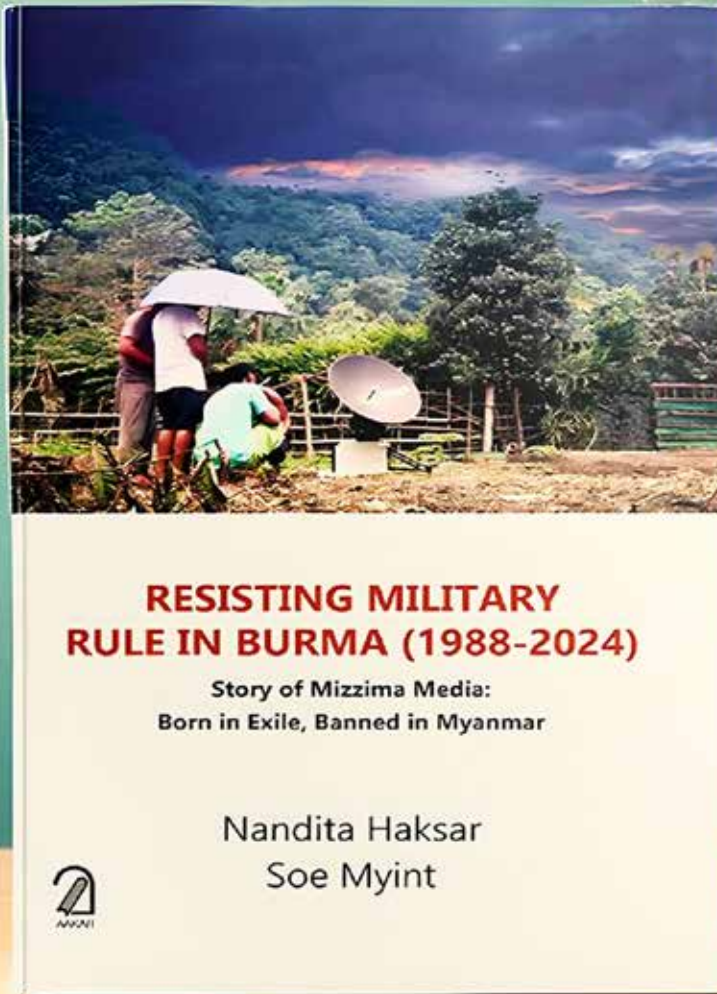
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## ANALYSIS &amp; INSIGHT



## MYANMAR JUNTA PLAYS WITH THE LIVES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

The condition and treatment of key political prisoners in Myanmar are drawing renewed scrutiny, following a series of high-profile moves by the military-backed Myanmar regime that analysts say reflect calculated optics rather than substantive change.

After assuming the presidency, junta leader Min Aung Hlaing oversaw the release of ousted president Win Myint from Taungoo Prison on April 17, coinciding with the Myanmar New Year. While the release was framed as a gesture of goodwill, access to Win Myint remains tightly controlled. Individuals who have met him, including close associates, have reportedly faced questioning by authorities. Among them is Myo Nyunt, a senior figure from the National League for Democracy (NLD), who was summoned after speaking to media about the former president's condition.

Beyond this symbolic release, the junta announced sentence reductions for certain categories of prisoners. These include commutations for death row inmates and reductions for those serving long-term sentences. However, according to families who have recently visited detainees, political prisoners serving life sentences, death penalties, or terms exceeding 40 years have largely been excluded from meaningful amnesty provisions. The

measures appear limited in scope, raising doubts about their broader impact.

There has also been movement involving Aung San Suu Kyi, who was reportedly transferred from a prison facility to a “designated residence” at the end of April, coinciding with Buddha Day. The timing followed remarks by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian, who described her as a long-standing friend of China and noted that Beijing was monitoring her situation. The NLD, however, dismissed the move as a political maneuver, urging the international community to respond more decisively to Myanmar’s crisis.

Observers argue that these developments do not signal a genuine shift toward reconciliation. Instead, they suggest the junta is leveraging selective releases and transfers to project an image of flexibility while maintaining strict control over political detainees. In this view, such actions are intended to bolster the legitimacy of the newly structured administration rather

than initiate meaningful political dialogue.

Meanwhile, the status of other senior NLD figures—including Win Htein, Aung Moe Nyo, Nang Khin Htwe Myint, and Nyi Pu—remains unclear. A recently circulated video showed Nang Khin Htwe Myint receiving treatment for a neurological condition at a hospital in Hpa-An, though she was reportedly returned to prison after only three days.

Taken together, the developments highlight the continued precarity of political prisoners in Myanmar, where limited concessions coexist with sustained restrictions and uncertainty.

### **USDP see limited role in new regime**

Frustration is surfacing within the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), the military-aligned political vehicle, over its limited share of power in the junta’s newly formed administration, according to party sources.



Khin Yi, leader of the USDP.  
Photo: AFP

Despite winning a landslide in the military-designed elections—securing 339 seats across the upper and lower houses—the USDP has received only a marginal role in key executive positions. Senior members had expected that electoral dominance would translate into substantial influence over cabinet and union-level bodies. Instead, their representation has reportedly been capped at around 10 percent.

The party failed to secure the presidency, which is held by junta leader Min Aung Hlaing, as well as other powerful union-level posts. Its cabinet presence is limited to three ministries—labour, hotels and tourism, and culture—portfolios widely viewed as lacking political weight within the broader administration.

Party insiders have also expressed dissatisfaction with how positions were assigned. Some ministers with relevant expertise were placed in roles that do not match their professional backgrounds. A source noted

that individuals with experience in energy, diplomacy, and education were assigned to less influential or unrelated ministries, raising concerns about both efficiency and intent.

Analysts see this distribution as a deliberate effort by Min Aung Hlaing to consolidate authority. By limiting the influence of established USDP figures and elevating individuals perceived as more controllable, the junta appears to be prioritizing centralized power over institutional balance.

The USDP's formal role remains modest. It holds the lower house speakership – held by USDP party leader Khin Yi – and a vice-presidential position, but beyond these and the three cabinet posts—out of roughly 30 ministries—its influence is limited. Many other ministerial roles have reportedly gone to individuals who joined the party only shortly before the elections.



Overall, the situation highlights growing tension within the pro-military camp, as the junta tightens its grip on political power.

## Fuel crisis worsens

Myanmar's deepening fuel crisis is exposing a widening gap between official policy and market reality, with ripple effects across livelihoods, agriculture, and cross-border trade.

The military authorities have tightened controls on fuel distribution in an effort to stabilize prices and manage supply. Measures include a QR code system at filling stations, restrictions based on even- and odd-numbered vehicle plates, and limits on purchase frequency. While these steps have slightly reduced official pump prices, they have also constrained access, driving the rapid expansion of a black market.

Across the country, informal fuel sales have become more reliable than official channels, albeit at significantly higher prices. This divergence highlights a structural imbalance: administrative controls are suppressing visible prices without resolving underlying shortages. As a result, parallel distribution networks are filling the gap. The consequences are particularly severe for low-income workers. In Hpa-An, motorcycle taxi drivers—who rely on daily fuel purchases—are scaling back operations or leaving the sector entirely due to rising costs.

Myanmar continues to depend heavily on imported fuel, mainly from Malaysia and Singapore, with only a small share coming from Thailand. Supply disruptions and foreign exchange constraints have compounded domestic shortages. At the same time, inflationary pressures are spreading beyond fuel into the broader economy. A housewife in Yangon told Mizzima that even though fuel prices have slightly declined, the cost of basic goods continues to rise. Her experience reflects a broader trend: higher fuel costs—whether official or from the black market—are feeding into transportation

and production expenses, pushing up the price of daily necessities.

Agriculture, a key sector, is also under strain. Fruit growers are struggling to irrigate orchards during the critical hot and ripening season. Insufficient watering has caused premature fruit drop, heat damage, and cracking in crops such as durian, mangosteen, and rambutan, significantly reducing yields. With limited access to regulated fuel supplies, many farmers are forced to buy on the black market, sharply increasing production costs. As a result, final prices are rising beyond what most consumers can afford.

Paddy farmers face similar challenges ahead of the monsoon planting season. Ploughing costs have doubled due to higher fuel prices, while fertilizer and pesticide costs have also surged. One farmer said tractor fees have reached 150,000 kyats per acre, with fertilizer exceeding 100,000 kyats per bag. He warned that the overall cost of paddy cultivation this year could double.

At the border, Thailand allows fuel exports to Myanmar through official channels but has intensified crackdowns on illegal trade. In late April, Thai authorities seized 1,800 liters of unclaimed petrol in Mae Hong Son, and in early May, arrested two Myanmar nationals transporting fuel illegally by boat. Despite these measures, smuggling remains highly profitable, with traders reportedly earning margins of up to 50 percent per liter.

Overall, the fuel crisis is creating broad economic distortions. Efforts to control distribution have not eliminated shortages but shifted them into informal markets, driving inflation and undermining key sectors. Without addressing supply constraints, the gap between policy intent and economic reality is likely to widen further.



## SAD TIMES AS MYANMAR MARKS WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

This year we mark World Press Freedom Day 2026 on 3 May with the global community standing ready to honour the courage of the press.

This year's theme, 'Shaping a Future at Peace: Promoting Press Freedom for Human Rights, Development, and Security,' underscores the critical role of the media in modern society.

The commemoration is particularly significant in Myanmar, where the media continues to face tough challenges and repression, over five years after a military coup that hijacked the popularly elected government of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint.

Ever since 1 February 2021, the day of the military coup d'état, the Myanmar military has pulled the rug out from under the government and avenues of society including what was a thriving media scene. Journalists were arrested and independent media organizations had their licenses taken away. Myanmar degenerated into a brutal and bitter civil war, with the military targeting resistance and civilians alike, including journalists.

Today, the Myanmar military – under the guise of a sham “elected civilian government” label – is trying to rehabilitate its image, yet continues to hound the press and block freedom of speech. While other members of the Association of South East Asian Nations are not perfect, Myanmar stands out as the “black sheep of the family”, an embarrassment to the regional bloc, with

a regime that has consistently failed to adhere to an agreed Five-Point Consensus designed to bring back peace and return to the true democratic path.

Myanmar's independent media has done a surprisingly good job of soldiering on to tell the truth despite the threats to its personnel and serious funding challenges. Independent media organizations such as Mizzima, Irrawaddy, DVB, Myanmar Now and a host of others painstakingly document the crisis and civil war in Myanmar and the twists and turns of the Myanmar military hiding behind a façade – men in green now dolled out in white.

An adherence to truth is vital for the people of Myanmar and the host of people negatively affected including incarcerated journalists and political prisoners, including the most prominent detainee, Aung San Suu Kyi, who remains a hostage and a pawn of the military junta.

The media's role remains crucially important as the Myanmar junta seeks legitimacy domestically, regionally and internationally. Critics of junta leader Min Aung Hlaing may rap him for his behaviour but he is being smart with the chips he has to play, working his way into the role of president and sidelining his political party partner, the Union Solidarity and Development Party, the USDP, placing the party header in the role of house speaker. In addition, the junta leader has dipped into the junta pockets to fund an American political lobbyist, Roger Stone, with a sketchy record, to attempt to improve Myanmar-US relations and seek to get rid of US sanctions.

Given the games being played, the media matters. As UNESCO just said in its statement to mark World Press Freedom Day: “Where independent journalism weakens, societies become more exposed to disinformation, polarization, manipulation, and violence, particularly in environments where nearly one-third of the world's population remains offline, limiting equitable access to public interest information. Press freedom and independent journalism are not sectoral issues. They are forces for the future and cross-cutting enablers of peace, resilience and democratic governance. By fostering access to reliable information, accountability, dialogue, and trust, they are key to peace, economic recovery, sustainable development, and human rights.”

Myanmar's independent media is crucial in this fight to publish the truth.



Photo: AFP

## LEGAL TEAM DENIED ACCESS TO AUNG SAN SUU KYI FOLLOWING 'DESIGNATED RESIDENCE' TRANSFER

Uncertainty continues to surround the condition and whereabouts of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, as her legal team confirms they have received no official communication regarding her transfer to a "designated residence."

Despite the military junta's announcement on 30 April that she had been moved from Naypyidaw Prison, her lawyers report that they remain barred from meeting her.

Individuals close to her legal team told Mizzima that there is currently no plan for a meeting, and the regime has failed to respond to repeated requests for access, which have been submitted consistently since January 2023.

A source close to the court said that any meeting between Aung San Suu Kyi and her legal team can only happen if the military junta grants permission.

"It is impossible to see her. It has been an issue where access has been denied for a long time. This entirely depends on their (the military junta's) permission, so no one can simply go and meet her on their own," the source said.

Moreover, although the military junta announced on the night of April 30 that Aung San Suu Kyi had been

transferred from Nay Pyi Taw Prison to a "designated house" to serve the remainder of her sentence, her legal team was not officially informed. According to the team, they do not even know where she is currently being held.

Meanwhile, Reuters, citing a member of Aung San Suu Kyi's legal team, reported that the lawyers were planning to visit her this coming Sunday. However, two court sources contacted by Mizzima rejected this claim.

The military junta has barred her legal team from meeting her since late 2022, following the delivery of verdicts in the cases filed against her after the coup.

Following the military coup, Aung San Suu Kyi was charged in 19 cases and sentenced to a total of 35 years in prison. Her sentence was later reduced by two years in December 2021 and by a further six years in August 2023, bringing it down to 27 years.

After additional reductions announced on 17 April and 30 April, her remaining sentence now stands at 18 years and nine months.

Meanwhile, her younger son, Ko Htein Lin (also known as Kim Aris), has said that his mother remains a "hostage" of the military junta and has called for proof that she is still alive.



# NUG AND FAMILY DISMISS JUNTA'S RELOCATION CLAIM, DEMAND PROOF OF LIFE FOR AUNG SAN SUU KYI

The National Unity Government (NUG) and the family of Aung San Suu Kyi have rejected the military junta's announcement regarding her transfer from Naypyidaw Prison to a "designated residence", labeling it a deceptive political maneuver that fails to provide credible proof that the former leader is alive.

Nay Phone Latt, spokesperson for the NUG Prime Minister's Office, told Mizzima that the footage aired on state-run MRTV on 30 April was merely a recording of an undated photograph.

"We cannot confirm when the photograph was taken, so it cannot be regarded as solid proof that she is alive and well," he stated. He added that moving her to an undisclosed, unverified location is effectively just shifting her from one site of detention to another, rather than a genuine release.

The announcement showed only an undated photo of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi seated beside one person wearing a military uniform with his back facing the camera, and another person in a police uniform.

Commenting on the reported relocation, Nay Phone Latt said that keeping her at an undisclosed residence, with no known exact location, is effectively the same as detaining her at another site.

He pointed out that it is premature to describe the move as "house arrest," since Aung San Suu Kyi has not been returned either to her residence 54 on University Avenue in Yangon or to the house where she previously stayed in Naypyidaw.

He stressed that the move is merely a political tactic by junta leader Min Aung Hlaing to seek international recognition for his presidency and sham government. He added that the revolutionary forces would not be deceived by the military junta's actions and would continue firmly pursuing their objectives.

Similarly, Kim Aris (aka Ko Htein Lin), the younger son of Aung San Suu Kyi, issued a statement on the night of April 30 saying that his mother remains "a hostage."

He called for proof that she is alive, stating that moving her from prison to a secret location does not mean she is free.

Kim Aris also criticized the move, saying it came immediately after statements from the China government and appeared to be a premeditated attempt to ease international pressure.

Following the military coup, Aung San Suu Kyi was sentenced to a total of 35 years in prison in connection with 19 cases. Since late 2022, she has been denied access to her lawyers. Even after recent sentence reductions including a one-sixth cut to her remaining term announced on 17 April and 30 April, along with earlier amnesties, she still has 18 years and nine months left to serve.

The military junta said the order was issued under Section 541, Sub-section (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, allowing the remainder of her sentence to be served at a designated residence.



## JAPAN MONITORS TREATMENT OF MYANMAR'S INCARCERATED LEADER AUNG SAN SUU KYI

The Japanese government has said it is monitoring the situation in Myanmar and the fate of its democratically-elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a press release issued by Press Secretary Kitamura Toshihiro on 1 May.

The following is the press release:

The Situation in Myanmar

(Treatment of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and others)

1. In Myanmar, U Win Myint, who had been detained for an extended period, was granted amnesty and released on April 17, and Myanmar's state broadcaster reported on April 30 that the remaining portion of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's sentence at Nay

Pyi Taw Prison has been commuted to be served at a designated residence.

2. The Government of Japan has been making efforts for the release of detainees to improve the situation in Myanmar. From this perspective, Japan is closely monitoring these recent developments and regards them as positive steps.

3. While the situation in Myanmar remains uncertain, Japan hopes to see political progress, such as the cessation of violence, further release of detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and sincere dialogue among parties concerned, as well as further efforts aimed at improving people's lives. Japan will also strengthen its efforts to improve the situation.



Campaigning for  
Human Rights  
and Democracy

## BURMA CAMPAIGN UK SAYS SUU KYI'S MOVE TO 'HOUSE ARREST' BY MYANMAR JUNTA SHOULD FOOL NO ONE

The Burma Campaign UK released a statement on 1 May blasting the Myanmar junta's announcement of the movement of Aung San Suu Kyi from prison to 'house arrest' as a PR move that should fool no one. The activist group says she remains detained, only the location has changed.

The text of the statement continues below.

The move follows sham elections followed by General Min Aung Hlaing installing himself as 'President', and then the staggered staged release of some political prisoners aimed at maximising the public relations gains from the releases. More than 14,000 political prisoners remain in jail.

At the same time, the Burmese military are stepping up airstrikes targeting health facilities and civilians, in recent weeks using deadly 'double-tap' airstrikes for the first time, using more jets in each attack, and dropping a much larger number of bombs than before.

"It is a long-used tactic by the Burmese military to take two steps back and then one step forward to try to garner praise for the one step forward, even though things are still worse than before," said Mark Farmaner, Director of Burma Campaign UK. "Aung San Suu Kyi spent 15 years under house arrest. The detention was condemned globally by Presidents and Prime Ministers. Are any governments seriously going to argue that the Burmese military placing her under house arrest again is progress?"

The Burmese military want to give the impression that there is a new civilian government ruling Burma (Myanmar). There isn't.

\* The President and two Vice Presidents are from the Burmese military or Burmese military proxy political party.

\* 86% of ministers running ministries are from

the Burmese military or the Burmese military proxy political party.

\* 30% of ministers have been sanctioned for their role in human rights violations and the 2021 coup.

The Burmese military know that using Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners is an effective way of gaining international attention and receiving international praise. They use political prisoners who should never have been in jail in the first place as public relations pawns.

In recent days Burmese military-run social media accounts have been demanding Aung San Suu Kyi admit to election fraud, the false claim made the by Burmese military to justify their latest coup in 2021. Here is an example: "Aung San Suu Kyi and her associates must admit to the election fraud on November 8, 2020 committed by the #NLD. She should accept responsibility for the national collapse and infrastructure destruction carried out by the NUG and PDF groups derived from her party."

Source: <https://x.com/MoeSatKhinn/status/2047615649678266854>

There is concern by human rights activists in and from Burma that superficial gestures by the Burmese military will be used by governments as an excuse to normalise relations and lift sanctions and other pressure, as happened after sham elections in 2010. The Burmese military are hoping that with so many crises around the world they can get away with even fewer concessions than last time.

"Moving Aung San Suu Kyi isn't about change or reform, it's about public relations designed to preserve military rule," said Mark Farmaner. "No-one should be fooled."



Tom Andrews. Photo: AFP

## OUTGOING UN EXPERT SAYS MYANMAR JUNTA'S IMPUNITY MUST END

**U**N expert Tom Andrews called on the international community on 28 April to increase efforts to make Myanmar's junta accountable. He said human rights catastrophe in Myanmar was the result of decades of impunity.

The text of his statement is as follows.

"Ending the crisis will require not only dismantling the military's capacity to attack and oppress the people of Myanmar, but also holding those responsible for grave human rights violations to account. The international community has done far too little to support those seeking justice and accountability," said Tom Andrews, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar as he released his final report, *From Impunity to Justice*.

Andrews warned that the people of Myanmar are frustrated and angry that a decades-long cycle of violence and oppression in their country continues unabated, with not a single senior military official having been held accountable.

For decades, Myanmar's military has attacked civilian populations, persecuted ethnic minorities, and committed widespread sexual violence, among other serious human rights violations. "Myanmar civil society and international investigators have collected abundant evidence of the military's atrocities, many of which amount to crimes under international law. Yet accountability remains elusive," the Special Rapporteur said.

“For the people of Myanmar, justice delayed is justice denied.”

While cases before international tribunals and judicial authorities in other countries offer a glimmer of hope to victims and the people of Myanmar, they are narrow in scope and insufficient to break the system of impunity that shields the military from accountability, the expert said.

“While some important steps have been taken, the international community has too often turned its back the people of Myanmar,” Andrews said. “The Security Council’s failure to refer the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court is an abdication of responsibility and an indictment of the world’s commitment to justice.”

The Special Rapporteur’s report outlines the work being done by activists, lawyers, human rights defenders and various revolutionary bodies to develop institutions and processes to hold perpetrators accountable and provide remedies to victims, both now and in the future.

“The champions of accountability in Myanmar deserve the full backing of the international community,” the expert said. “The long, hard work of reforming courts and institutions hollowed out by decades of military domination will require technical support and the investment of significant resources over many years.”

Andrews highlighted other opportunities for the international community to support accountability for grave human rights violations in Myanmar, including broadening the investigation by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, laying the groundwork for the prosecution of senior military officials, expanding the application of universal jurisdiction, and setting up a reparations fund for victims of human rights violations. He also urged States to prepare for a judgment by the International Court of Justice in the case concerning genocide against the Rohingya.

“The United Kingdom, as penholder on Myanmar at the Security Council, and ASEAN have a key role to play in shaping the international community’s response to the pending court ruling in the genocide case against Myanmar. They must lead a coordinated international effort to isolate the new military-controlled government and pressure Myanmar to comply with any Court orders,” the Special Rapporteur said. “In the case of a ruling against Myanmar, States must act swiftly and decisively to make clear that genocide is an intolerable stain on humanity’s conscience and will be met with immediate and severe consequences.”

“Opportunities to break the cycle of impunity that has gripped Myanmar are available. What is missing is the political will to seize them,” Andrews said.



Market in Tachileik. Photo: Antonio Graceffo

## SCAM CENTERS FUEL INFLATION IN BURMA, THE CASE OF TACHILEIK

### ANTONIO GRACEFFO

Since the 2021 military coup, Burma's economy has contracted by about 20%, annual inflation has exceeded 30%, and more than one-third of the population faces food insecurity. Jobs are scarce across the entire country, and food prices in some areas have more than tripled. Inflation is worst in regions hosting scam center compounds, where the influx of criminal capital distorts local markets without generating productive economic activity.

Scam compounds are typically large, fortified complexes operating behind a public-facing commercial layer of casinos, hotels, restaurants, and shopping areas. That legitimate exterior provides cover for the core operation inside: trafficked workers forced to conduct cyber fraud, typically cryptocurrency investment schemes and romance scams targeting victims in the United States and elsewhere. Workers are recruited under false pretenses or kidnapped outright, confined behind walls and armed guards, and face violent punishment for failing to meet daily quotas.

The economic benefits to the area are sharply unequal. Most residents face rising prices and increased danger with no gain. A small number find low-wage work in public-facing businesses, while a very small group at the top, Chinese syndicate leaders and their militia partners, accumulates significant wealth.

Many scam centers are situated in the Golden Triangle, the region where Myanmar, Thailand, and

Laos converge, long notorious for drug trafficking, the illegal arms trade, and unregulated gambling. At its heart sits Tachileik, a border city in eastern Shan State directly across from Mae Sai in Chiang Rai Province, northern Thailand. The Mekong River serves as a vital artery for trade and transportation linking communities across borders, and multiple currencies, the Thai baht, Chinese yuan, and Myanmar kyat, circulate widely, reflecting the region's cross-border character. In recent years, Chinese-owned mining operations and manufacturing businesses have expanded into the area alongside scam centers, adding new dimensions to an economy already shaped by criminality.

Tachileik is itself a documented scam hub. Residents report hundreds of online gambling and fraud operations running out of rented homes and hotels across the city's 11 neighborhoods, with Chinese among the operators. Named hotels, including the 1G1-7, the Tachileik International, and the Regina, have been raided by junta forces, with hundreds of foreign nationals detained and hundreds of computers, mobile phones, and Starlink satellite devices confiscated. Thailand identified Tachileik as one of five Myanmar border locations serious enough to warrant cutting electricity supplies in February 2025.

Despite the poverty of most of the population, the cost of living in Tachileik remains high compared to neighboring Thailand, while wages are significantly

lower. A typical daily wage in Tachileik is around 200 baht (\$6 USD), less than half of Thailand's average of 500 baht (\$15 USD) per day. At the same time, a simple bowl of noodles costs about 80 baht (approximately \$2.50) in Tachileik, compared to around 50 baht across the border.

The inflationary impact of scam centers operates through three distinct channels. The first is labor market distortion. In Laikha Township, Shan State, a Chinese-run scam call center established under the protection of the 758 Battalion of the Shan Border Guard Force paid wages high enough to pull young people off farms, bidding up consumer goods prices for the broader community.

Nang Oo, a 25-year-old noodle vendor from Tachileik, witnessed the same dynamic firsthand. "Before the call centers arrived, the prices of goods and rent were similar to those in Thailand," she said. "But when the scammers set up their base around 2018, prices nearly doubled." She was among the few who benefited indirectly, earning enough from the increased foot traffic to buy a house and a car, but described that period as exceptional and largely over by 2024 and 2025, when most operations in Tachileik were shut down.

The second channel is commodity market manipulation. When crackdowns threatened scam center operations, militias cornered the domestic fuel market, causing acute price spikes across Karen, Mon, and Shan State within weeks, with fuel nearly doubling in some areas. Thailand was pressed to resume fuel exports to bring prices back down, demonstrating that armed groups controlling these compounds have sufficient market power to trigger supply-side inflation in essential commodities on short notice.

The third channel is the macro-level currency collapse in which both operate. Since the coup, the kyat, Myanmar's currency, has fallen from roughly 1,300 to 3,900 to the dollar, a 75% decrease in value. The loss of buying power has made imported goods and fuel, priced in dollars or yuan, exponentially more expensive in local terms.

The scam economy accelerates the economic collapse caused by the military conflict by replacing legitimate economic activity with illicit revenue that flows primarily to Chinese syndicate leaders and their militia partners rather than back into the general economy. Scam centers have such a high rate of return that those with enough money and political connections choose to build a scam center rather than

a manufacturing business, which would create more jobs and bring down the cost of goods.

The scale adds to the problem. A United States Institute of Peace report estimates that 305,000 scammers across Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos account for \$39 billion in stolen funds annually. The Myanmar military collects roughly half of the \$192 million earned annually by the Border Guard Force from the Shwe Kokko scam center alone, making this revenue an existential contribution to the junta's war budget. The war itself drives further inflation through supply-chain disruption, displacement, and destruction of agricultural land.

As international pressure mounts, operators have begun relocating compounds 100 to 200 kilometers from the border into more remote areas of Shan and Karen states, spreading these inflationary effects into communities previously insulated from them.

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





Photo: Supplied

## MYANMAR JUNTA BOMBARDMENT KILLS OVER 10 CHILDREN IN MYINGYAN WITHIN A SINGLE WEEK

A devastating escalation in military violence has claimed the lives of more than 10 children under the age of 12 in Myingyan Township between 20 and 27 April, as the junta intensifies its use of airstrikes and heavy artillery.

The Myingyan Township People's Movement Committee reported that the fatalities mostly young boys, some as young as seven were the result of incendiary bombs dropped from jet fighters, drones, gyrocopters, and paramotors, as well as shelling from howitzers operated by Light Infantry Battalion 15.

An official from the Myingyan Township People's Movement Committee said, "In this past week alone, over 10 children have died from both airstrikes and heavy artillery fire. Some were as young as seven years old. In Myingyan, there isn't a single village that hasn't faced military columns or artillery shelling.

On 22 April alone, strikes on Yon Htoe village destroyed a monastery and several homes.

The surge in violence follows recent leadership changes within the military administration, leading to a "scorched earth" policy across Myingyan and Taungtha townships.

Residents report that over 23 villages were raided and burned in April, with soldiers returning to partially burned sites repeatedly until every structure was levelled. In Pyo Kan-Kan Swe village, troops and Pyu Saw Htee militia members reportedly looted essential community assets, including a public transformer and a new funeral hearse.

The humanitarian crisis is deepening as airstrikes now occur between three and ten times daily, often involving multiple aircraft simultaneously. While urban residents are fleeing to border regions or foreign countries to escape extortion and forced conscription, rural villagers are hiding in open fields and farmlands, braving extreme seasonal heat because they are too terrified to remain in their homes.



## MYANMAR JUNTA JET BOMBS BRIDGE UNDER REPAIR IN SOUTHERN CHIN STATE, KILLING NINE CIVILIANS

A junta airstrike killed nine civilians, including several children, in Kanpetlet Township on Wednesday morning as local residents were attempting to repair a vital transportation link, according to the Chin Brotherhood (CB).

A YAK-130 jet fighter, reportedly originating from the Tada-U Air Base, targeted the area near the Mone Chaung Bridge in Kyindwe at approximately 10:15 am on 29 April.

Salai Yaw Man, a spokesperson for the CB, confirmed the fatalities, noting that the victims were engaged in bridge repairs at the time of the “senseless” attack.

The strike occurs as tensions mount in southern Chin State. Approximately 200 troops from the Kyaukhtu Artillery Command 368 have been stationed in Kan Gyi village, just 12 miles from Mindat, since 25 April.

While local CDF-Mindat officials have urged the public to remain calm regarding ground movements, they have issued stern warnings that aerial bombardments remain the primary threat to liberated zones like Kanpetlet, Mindat, and Matupi.

Residents have been advised to dig bomb shelters and maintain constant vigilance against sudden jet activity.

While southern Chin State remains largely free of junta ground columns, the military has successfully reasserted control in the north, regaining Falam on 25 April.

The junta continues to conduct aggressive “ground clearance” operations and nighttime airstrikes in that region, including three bombing runs near Khun Lon village late Tuesday night.

According to the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), the military’s air campaign in Chin State has been relentless this year. Between January and March 2026 alone, the junta carried out 173 airstrikes in the state, resulting in 19 deaths and 42 injuries, while levelling nearly 90 buildings. This latest massacre in Kyindwe significantly adds to that growing civilian toll.



## MYANMAR'S JUNTA RELEASES FOUR ARTISTS IN FULL MOON DAY AMNESTY; DIRECTOR MIKE TEE REMAINS DETAINED

The Myanmar junta granted amnesty to four prominent artists on Wednesday, 30 April, to mark the Full Moon Day of Kason, though notable political detainees remain behind bars.

The released artists include directors Thet Lwin (also known as Zambu Htun Thet Lwin) and Aung Chan Lu, comedian Ohn Daing, and actor Kyaw Win Htut. All four had been serving maximum seven-year sentences under the Election Protection Law for criticizing the military's electoral processes and its propaganda relating to them.

Notably, directors Zambu Htun Thet Lwin and Aung Chan Lu were originally sentenced for simply using "Love" and "Haha" emoji reactions on social media posts critical of the regime.

Despite the release of these high-profile figures, movie director Mike Tee was excluded from the

amnesty. Mike Tee was arrested in November 2025 for allegedly criticizing the junta's election propaganda film, *Khit Thamine Ko Done Saing Myi Thu Myar*.

"The reason for his continued detention remains unknown," a source close to the artistic community told Mizzima.

The move comes as part of a wider amnesty involving more than 1,500 prisoners. However, human rights observers pointed out that the list consists almost entirely of common criminals, with virtually no other political prisoners included in the release.

While the junta's information department claims nearly 100 people have been prosecuted for "disrupting" the upcoming elections, independent monitoring groups suggest the actual number of those imprisoned for political dissent is significantly higher.



## TCSN SAYS 'TA'ANG IDENTITY' BEING ERASED IN KUTKAI, NORTHERN SHAN STATE

The Ta'ang Civil Society Network (TCSN) has stated that the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), which recently took over control of Kutkai Township in northern Shan State, is destroying the traditional culture and ethnic identity of local communities, as well as committing human rights violations.

In a report titled "Destruction of Indigenous Identity and Human Rights Violations by MNDAA," released on 28 April, TCSN detailed developments in Kutkai over the past two weeks following the MNDAA's takeover of the town.

"The destruction of village entrance signs and their replacement with Chinese characters is a deliberate attempt to erase the identity of the Ta'ang people," the report stated.

Kutkai was initially captured by the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) during the first phase of Operation 1027, but tensions between the TNLA and MNDAA escalated on 13 February after TNLA forces dismantled CCTV cameras installed by the MNDAA in the town.

According to the report, the MNDAA subsequently blocked the Union Highway and launched a large-scale offensive on 14 March, forcing TNLA troops to

withdraw from Kutkai in an effort to minimize civilian casualties.

TCSN reported that MNDAA forces have been removing entrance signs to Ta'ang villages, erasing original village names and replacing them with Chinese-language signage. Around 15 Ta'ang villages including Mangban, Painhwoi, Panku, Pansae, Manmaung, Loikan, Naungkhun, and Honaung, have reportedly been affected.

The TCSN said these actions demonstrate a lack of respect for local language and culture and constitute a deliberate effort to erase the ethnic identity of indigenous communities.

The report also alleged that more than 300 Ta'ang schools in the Kutkai area have been shut down, with preparations underway to introduce Chinese-language instruction. It further accused MNDAA forces of killing prisoners of war and forcibly recruiting local residents.

In addition to cultural destruction and school closures, drone strikes carried out by MNDAA forces reportedly caused civilian casualties.

Between 14 and 17 March, seven civilians including two children were killed and seven others injured, according to TCSN. The attacks also damaged monasteries such as Shwe Kabar Aye, Loihseng and Manhtam in Loihseng, Manhtam, and Hokyant villages, as well as schools and residential buildings.

Furthermore, the report accused some MNDAA troops and officers of committing physical assaults and other human rights abuses against local residents.

In response, Ta'ang civil society organizations have issued eight key demands to the MNDAA. These include an immediate halt to the destruction of culturally significant village signs, restoration of the original signage, a ban on the use of Chinese characters on village entrance signs, and accountability for MNDAA personnel involved in human rights violations.

Mizzima contacted TCSN in advance of the report's release to ask whether MNDAA officials had been informed of the allegations or asked to respond. No reply was received prior to the time of publication.

The MNDAA has not yet issued any response to the allegations. MNDAA spokesperson Li Jiawen could not be reached for comment.

Photo: Supplied

## MASSIVE MYANMAR JUNTA OFFENSIVE IN SOUTHERN KANI FORCES 8,000 TO FLEE AMID DRONE STRIKES

A military column of approximately 500 junta troops launched a large-scale sweep through southern Kani Township on Tuesday, forcing an estimated 8,000 residents from seven villages to abandon their homes.

The offensive began around 7:00 am on 28 April, as the column moved from Tayawkyin village in Yinmabin Township toward Chaung Ma village in Kani. The force, which reportedly originated from the Northwestern Command and moved through the Banbwekone military base, is advancing in two separate lines, a tactic residents say makes evacuation nearly impossible.

"The troops are advancing in two lines, blocking escape routes. It's raining lightly, making the situation even worse. Families are trying to build makeshift shelters using carts and three-wheeled motorcycles," a local resident told Mizzima.

While no direct ground engagements were reported by midday Tuesday, local revolutionary groups confirmed that the military is conducting active drone strikes to clear the path for the infantry.

Residents from Linponyay, Chaung Ma, Thintwin, and Laeshay villages are among those currently displaced.

In response to the two-day surge in military activity across the Yinmabin-Kani border, resistance forces have temporarily closed the Kani-Yargyi-Monywa road to civilian traffic.

Revolutionary sources stated they are monitoring the column's position in Chaung Ma but declined to provide further details on their own tactical movements for security reasons.



Photo: Supplied

## MYANMAR RESISTANCE FORCES SEIZE STRATEGIC "STRONGEST FORTIFICATION" IN KALEWA AFTER 10-DAY BATTLE

Revolutionary forces have successfully captured the Aung Chan Thar village camp in Sagaing Region's Kalewa Township, seizing weapons and ammunition following a gruelling 10-day battle that ended on 25 April.

The camp, which served as a strategic hub for military and trade operations, was defended by approximately 50 junta personnel. Despite its reputation among military circles as one of the area's "strongest fortifications," the base fell to a coalition of People's Defence Forces (PDF) after over a week of intense ground fighting.

"There were deaths and injuries on the side of the junta. We also obtained weapons and ammunition, though no prisoners of war were taken," a member of the defence forces told Mizzima.

The Salingyi-based "Bed Nga Nyo" group released a documentary video following the victory, showing fighters celebrating inside the captured facility and

mocking the junta's claim that the camp was an impenetrable stronghold.

The victory was achieved despite the junta's attempts to repel the assault through repeated aerial bombings.

Following the fall of the camp, surviving military troops reportedly retreated to Sin Aing Ma village, a known stronghold for the pro-junta Pyu Saw Htee militia.

While active clashes have paused since the base was secured, military tensions in the township remain high as revolutionary forces monitor the regrouped junta and militia units in nearby Sin Aing Ma.

Official details regarding the exact number of casualties and the volume of seized equipment are expected to be released by defence officials shortly.



U Tin Nyunt

## ACCLAIMED AUTHOR U TIN NYUNT AND SON ARRESTED OVER TIKTOK SALE OF "NLD-ERA" BOOKS

**R**enowned writer and National Literary Award Winner U Tin Nyunt has been arrested and charged by the quasi-civilian military administration in Thanlyin Township, along with his son and a bookseller, following the online sale of political titles published during the previous civilian government's term.

U Tin Nyunt, 71, was taken into custody at his residence by security forces around 2:00 am on 23 April.

He has been charged at the Thanlyin Police Station under Section 505(a) of the Penal Code, a broadly defined law often used to criminalize dissent. According to family sources, one of his sons remains in detention alongside him, while a young female bookseller was arrested in a separate raid for listing the author's work on TikTok.

The crackdown reportedly centres on three specific titles published between 2015 and 2020: *Nga Tar the Dog Handler*, *The Generals Lied to Me*, and *U Than Shwe's Yadaya (Rituals)*.

Authorities reportedly cited the lack of an online shopping license as a pretext for the bookseller's

arrest. Literary circles, however, view the move as a direct targeting of political content from the National League for Democracy (NLD) era.

U Tin Nyunt is a pillar of Myanmar's literary community, having authored over 50 books across multiple genres. A retired teacher and former editor at *The Voice Daily*, he was awarded the National Literary Award in 2017 for his memoir, *A Teacher's Memoir*. He is perhaps most famous for his novel *Tears on the Yoma*.

The arrests come amid a period of heightened sensitivity for the new quasi-civilian administration, which was formally inaugurated on 10 April. While the rotating chair of ASEAN has recently called for the release of political prisoners, the detention of a high-profile cultural figure like U Tin Nyunt suggests a continuing hardline stance on freedom of expression.

Both the author and his son remain in custody as family members seek legal counsel to challenge the charges.



## CHIN RESISTANCE VOWS COUNTER-OFFENSIVE AS MYANMAR MILITARY PUSHES TOWARD HAKHA AFTER RECAPTURING FALAM

Intense clashes between the Myanmar military and Chin resistance forces continued Monday along the strategic Falam-Hakha corridor, as junta troops attempted to consolidate their hold on the region following the recapture of Falam town.

The military regained control of Falam and the strategically vital Surbung Airport at approximately 3:00 am on 25 April, ending a massive six-month offensive characterized by heavy air support and ground saturation. Following the town's fall, junta columns immediately pushed toward the Falam-Hakha axis, sparking ongoing engagements near the villages of Lone Pi, Laizou, and Rilthi.

"The military is clearly trying to secure the entire corridor to Hakha, but the resistance is meeting them at every village," a Chin military source told Mizzima. Similar fighting was reported along the Kalay-Falam road on 26 April, where local units conducted hit-and-run operations.

The human toll of the half-year campaign has been severe. Observers estimate that nearly 500 junta troops have been killed since October 2025, with more than 100 others deserting or fleeing.

On the resistance side, over 50 fighters have been killed, including Salai Thein Kyaw, a platoon leader for the Chin Defence Forces (CDF-Zotung), who fell on 26 April. Earlier clashes in Falam also claimed the lives of two Chin National Defence Force (CNDF) members and one PDF-Zoland fighter.

The quasi-civilian military junta in Naypyidaw claimed it conducted 109 separate operations during the offensive, resulting in the recovery of 19 bodies and the seizure of 33 weapons. Junta officials have signalled they will now intensify "counter-terrorism" efforts to fully clear insurgent groups from Chin State.

Despite losing control of the town, Chin revolutionary leaders dismissed claims that the withdrawal indicated a lack of cohesion.

Officials stated that resistance units are currently regrouping and plan to launch renewed attacks against the military's supply lines. At present, the military maintains control over Hakha, Tedim, and Falam, while five other townships remain in revolutionary hands and Thantlang remains divided.



## MYANMAR JUNTA FIGHTER JETS STRIKE STRATEGIC KNU-CONTROLLED BORDER TOWN OF MAWDAUNG

**M**yanmar military aircraft launched two separate airstrikes on the KNU-controlled town of Mawdaung in Tanintharyi Township on 26 April, dropping six 250-pound bombs on residential areas.

The strikes, which occurred at 10:45 am and 1:44 pm, targeted No. 1 and No. 9 villages. While two houses were damaged, no civilian casualties were reported as residents had largely pre-emptively evacuated or sought shelter.

Mizzima contacted Padoh Saw Ae Nar, Secretary of KNU Mergui-Dawei District, regarding the Mawdaung airstrike, but he has not yet responded.

Mawdaung is a vital border trade hub connecting Myanmar's Tanintharyi Region with Thailand's Prachuap Khiri Khan Province via the Singkhon Pass. The town was captured by the Karen National Liberation Army

(KNLA) and allied forces on 14 November 2025, after more than 30 years of military occupation.

Since its fall, the junta has been desperate to retake the town due to its role as a major revenue source and its strategic location along the Mawdaung–Thien Khun road.

Despite a five-month-long ground offensive, junta troops have been unable to penetrate resistance blockades on the roads leading from Myeik and Tanintharyi.

Local observers note that the military has increasingly relied on aerial bombardment as its ground forces remain stalled in the southern lowlands. The KNU continues to hold administrative control over the town, which previously served as the headquarters for KNU Mergui-Dawei District before the 1990s.



Photo: Supplied

## MYANMAR JUNTA OCCUPIES STRATEGIC VILLAGE IN MAGWAY REGION, BLOCKING VITAL TRADE ROUTES TO CHIN AND RAKHINE STATES

**M**ore than 200 Myanmar military troops have seized Kangyi village in Saw Township, Magway Region, establishing a permanent base at a strategic junction that serves as a critical corridor for trade between central Myanmar, Chin State, and Rakhine State.

The occupation began on the evening of 25 April, when roughly 100 soldiers from Artillery Regiment 368, based in Kyaukhtu, moved into the village. They were soon reinforced by a second column of 100 troops arriving by truck.

Residents report that soldiers have occupied the main intersection and several buildings on the outskirts, effectively halting all commercial and civilian movement.

"Since they arrived, no trucks or motorbikes have dared to pass through," a local resident told Mizzima, expressing fear that the presence of the 210-strong force signals a long-term deployment.

The move has sparked immediate concerns over a looming humanitarian crisis. Kangyi is a vital logistics hub located just 18 miles from Saw, six miles from

Kyaukhtu, and 12 miles from Mindat in Chin State. Communities in mountainous Chin State rely heavily on this route for fresh vegetables and essential supplies from the Yaw area.

Local farmers also face significant losses as perishable crops like tomatoes and leafy greens can no longer reach markets. With the rainy season approaching, residents warn that the blockade will lead to severe food shortages and hyperinflation of basic goods.

Local resistance sources analysed the move as a strategic effort to reclaim territory lost during the 2025 offensives and to secure a foothold for further advances toward Saw.

This latest occupation mirrors a similar tactic used last year when the military secured a permanent camp in Shaungpin village. As tensions remain high, the regional trade disruption threatens to leave thousands of civilians without access to food and medicine across multiple state borders.



Workers at the airport. Photo: AFP

## MYANMAR LABOUR ALLIANCE DENOUNCES "FAKE" UNIONS IN MAY DAY CALL TO ACTION

**O**n the eve of International Workers' Day, the Myanmar Labor Alliance (MLA) issued a high-alert statement on 30 April, calling for the urgent dismantling of military-linked labour organizations that it claims are sabotaging genuine worker representation.

In its 136th May Day address, the MLA warned that these "fake" entities are being manufactured to divide the labour movement and weaken the bargaining power of the working class.

According to the statement, workers in Myanmar have faced worsening conditions since the coup, including declining incomes, rising living costs, and fewer job opportunities. Many are dealing with low wages and long working hours, while also enduring unsafe workplaces and a lack of social protection.

The MLA said workers' rights have been severely restricted, particularly the right to organize and defend their interests. Freedom of association is increasingly under threat, with reports of intimidation, arrests, surveillance, and crackdowns on trade union activities.

As a result, workers are more vulnerable to exploitation and are often unable to raise concerns, report rights violations, or engage in collective bargaining.

"Workers and activists who stand up for labour rights face threats, violence, imprisonment, and even death," the statement said. "Independent trade unions are being cracked down, while fake organizations are created to divide and weaken the labour movement."

The alliance also urged workers, farmers, and low-income communities to unite in the spirit of May Day to resist these conditions.

In addition, the MLA called on governments, employers, and international organizations to reject illegitimate systems and actors, support measures under Article 33 of the ILO Constitution, review harmful ties, and cut financial flows that contribute to abuse and rights violations.



## **BROUK WELCOMES UN EXPERT REPORT, URGES GOVERNMENTS TO ENFORCE ARGENTINIAN ARREST WARRANTS OVER ROHINGYA GENOCIDE**

**T**he Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK) on 30 April welcomed the final report by UN Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews, calling on governments to enforce arrest warrants issued by an Argentinian court against 25 senior Myanmar military and government officials in a universal jurisdiction genocide case.

The text of the BROUK statement is as follows.

In his final report, the Special Rapporteur warns that the international community's failure to act on justice and accountability has enabled the Burmese military to continue committing genocide and other atrocity crimes with impunity. He also sets out urgent steps governments must now take to deliver justice and accountability.

Presented to the UN Human Rights Council, the report, *The imperative of accountability in Myanmar*, spells out how this failure has enabled ongoing abuses: attacks on civilians across Burma are not isolated incidents but are driven by the continued lack of accountability for past crimes, including the genocide against the Rohingya. Crucially, it also highlights that the mechanisms to deliver justice already exist but are not being effectively used.

"This new report clearly spells out actions that governments can take which will help prevent continuing atrocities. Now we must challenge governments to explain why they are refusing to act," said Tun Khin, President of the Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK. "Justice is not only about holding people to account for their crimes, it is also vital to prevent future crimes.

Genocide against the Rohingya continues because those perpetrating it have never faced justice.”

In the absence of action by governments, the International Criminal Court and United Nations Security Council, Rohingya refugees have sought alternative avenues to achieve justice. The Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK, made up of Rohingya refugees in the UK, was forced to go all the way to Argentina and use its universal jurisdiction laws to bring a case of genocide in its courts.

The universal jurisdiction case in Argentina, led by Rohingya survivors, remains the only initiative to have resulted in arrest warrants against senior Burmese military and government officials.

The Special Rapporteur made specific recommendations relating to the case in Argentina, including:

- Take all available opportunities to enforce arrest warrants issued against 25 individuals by the Argentinian court in its case concerning genocide and crimes against humanity against the Rohingya.
- Cooperate with Argentinian authorities as expeditiously as possible on the issuance of Red Notices for individuals subject to arrest warrants.

These recommendations expose the central problem identified in the report: the issue is not a lack of legal mechanisms, but a failure by governments to enforce them.

“Arrest warrants have been issued for those responsible for genocide against the Rohingya, yet they continue to travel freely. Governments that fail to act are enabling impunity,” said Tun Khin. “Governments must enforce the Argentinian arrest warrants and ensure that perpetrators are arrested wherever they travel. Without action, there will be no justice for the Rohingya or for those resisting military rule in Burma.”

The report also makes clear that ending impunity requires coordinated and sustained action by governments and international institutions, using all available legal mechanisms.

Governments must move beyond statements and take concrete, collective measures to ensure accountability.

This includes: ▪ Expanding the use of universal jurisdiction to prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes ▪ Supporting investigations and legal cases brought by victims and civil society organisations ▪ Taking action against individuals, entities and businesses linked to serious human rights violations ▪ Ensuring accountability efforts are coordinated across states and international institutions

The UN Special Rapporteur also emphasises that the upcoming judgment of the International Court of Justice in the case concerning genocide against the Rohingya must be met with concrete action. States must act on the Court’s findings and ensure that any determination of genocide results in measures to hold perpetrators accountable.

He explicitly calls on the UK, as penholder on Burma at the UN Security Council, to take a leading role in advancing accountability and ensuring that the Council responds effectively to the outcome of the ICJ case.

As the Special Rapporteur himself stated, “Opportunities to break the cycle of impunity that has gripped Myanmar are available. What is missing is the political will to seize them.”

“All governments must act now on the Special Rapporteur’s recommendations, including by enforcing the Argentinian arrest warrants,” said Tun Khin. “Any government making a decision not to act on these recommendations is making a decision to let genocide continue.”

# The Theatre of Piety in a Time of Fire:

MYANMAR'S STAGED COUNCIL  
AND THE CRISIS OF THE SACRED

By  
ALAN CLEMENTS



From April 30 to May 2, 2026, in Yangon—within the vast, cavernous stillness of the Maha Pasana Cave at the Kaba Aye Pagoda complex—a grand commemoration unfolds: the seventieth anniversary of the Sixth Buddhist Council. Yet to begin with the ceremony alone is to misread not only the event, but the moral architecture that gives it meaning. One must begin, instead, with the man whose vision first consecrated this sacred space with its enduring resonance: U Nu.

U Nu, Burma's first Prime Minister, was not merely a political leader gesturing toward religion as cultural inheritance; he was a practitioner for whom the Dhamma constituted an interior discipline rather than a public pose. His role in convening the original Sixth Council in 1954 emerged from a deeper aspiration: to align the fragile emergence of democratic governance with the ethical clarity of the Buddha's teaching. This was not symbolism—it was an attempt, however fragile, to wed power with conscience.

This was no abstraction for me. It was lived continuity.

U Nu's association with Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha—one of the most important centers of *satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā bhāvanā* (the disciplined cultivation of mindful awareness and insight into the nature of reality) in the modern *Theravāda* world—was not ceremonial. It was experiential, rooted in practice, discipline, and direct inquiry into mind and reality. Years later, I was

ordained and lived within that very monastery. And in a convergence of history that continues to humble me, I was given residence in the very room where U Nu himself had once lived and practiced as a yogi.

There was nothing outwardly remarkable about the room. No inscription, no shrine to mark its significance. And yet, in its quiet austerity, something unmistakable lingered—the residue of attention, the architecture of stillness, the ethical gravity of a man who understood that neither democracy nor Dhamma can be performed into existence. They must be lived—privately, rigorously, without audience and without illusion.

He sat there not as Prime Minister, but as a human being subject to impermanence, to suffering, and to the discipline of seeing clearly. And in that simple fact lies a truth more radical than any ceremony: that the legitimacy of power—political or spiritual—begins and ends in the integrity of one's own mind.

That experiment was decisively interrupted in 1962, when Ne Win seized control in a military coup, imprisoned U Nu, and inaugurated a lineage of authoritarian rule that would come to define Myanmar's modern history. What followed was not merely a transfer of power, but the normalization of fear as a governing principle—an architecture sustained through arbitrary detention, the silencing of dissent, the disappearance of bodies into prisons, the use of torture as instrument, and the quiet, unrecorded violence that rarely enters official narratives.

The arc of that lineage extends through Than Shwe and Thein Sein, and culminates, in the present moment, in the rule of Min Aung Hlaing. It is not simply a succession of regimes, but a continuity of method—a recursive psychology in which power sustains itself through the management of perception, the strategic deployment of fear, and the selective appropriation of the sacred as a veil over acts that, when named plainly, reveal themselves as violence against both body and truth.

To understand the gravity of the present commemoration, one must hold these histories together. For what is being staged today at the Maha Pasana Cave is not simply a religious observance; it is an act of representation—a deliberate projection of moral authority at a time when the legitimacy of the state is under profound strain. The spectacle, with its recitations of the **Tipiṭaka**, choreographed processions, curated exhibitions, and the anticipated sermon of Sitagu Sayadaw, seeks to assert that Myanmar remains, at its core, a harmonious Buddhist nation guided by leaders aligned with the preservation of the Sasana.

Yet the dissonance between this image and lived reality is not subtle. It is structural, pervasive, and sustained through force. Since the coup of 2021, the country has been plunged into a state of protracted conflict marked by aerial bombardment, scorched-earth campaigns, the burning of villages, and the systematic targeting of civilian populations. Political prisoners remain detained in the tens of thousands, many without charge, many without access to legal recourse, many subjected to conditions that erase them not only from public life but from the possibility of being accounted for at all.

Among them is Aung San Suu Kyi—held in isolation, removed from public view, with no independently verified proof of life for over three years. Her absence is not merely symbolic; it is an engineered silence, a void maintained as an instrument of control.

The institutions of democratic life have not simply been weakened; they have been dismantled, hollowed out, and replaced by structures that operate through coercion rather than consent. What remains is not governance in any meaningful sense, but administration through fear—an order sustained by the capacity to detain, to disappear, and, when necessary, to kill without consequence.

The ceremony, in this context, does not unfold in the shadow of violence. It unfolds within it. It is not an interruption of conflict, nor a reprieve from it, but

a parallel construction—an image projected precisely because the underlying reality cannot withstand unmediated exposure. The spectacle exists because the truth cannot be shown.

The history of the Buddhist councils offers a lens through which to examine this tension with clarity. The First Council, convened after the Buddha's passing in Rajgir, was an act of urgent preservation. The teachings were recited collectively to prevent distortion. There was no display—only fidelity to the Dhamma.

The Second Council, in Vaishali, confronted ethical deviation within the Sangha. It gathered not to affirm unity but to correct deviation.

The Third Council, under Ashoka in Pataliputra, addressed ideological infiltration and the misuse of doctrine. It purified the Dhamma by separating it from power's distortions.

The Fourth Council, in Alu Vihara, responded to existential threat by committing the teachings to writing—an act of preservation born of vulnerability.

The Fifth Council, in Mandalay, inscribed the canon into marble—not for spectacle, but for endurance.

And the Sixth Council, convened in this very cave, gathered the **Theravāda** world to verify, refine, and unify the Dhamma—its authority rooted not in the state, but in the collective conscience of the Sangha.

Across twenty-five centuries, every council answered the same call: truth must be protected from distortion. And so, the question now arises—not rhetorically, not symbolically, but with moral precision sharpened by history itself: every Buddhist council in history was convened to rescue truth from distortion. The question is whether this gathering preserves that lineage—or quietly betrays it.

For what unfolds today risks something more subtle than contradiction. It approaches inversion. It is not that the forms are absent; it is that they are intact. And it is precisely their intactness that conceals the transformation of their function.

There exists, in the oral recollections of those trained under Mahasi Sayadaw, a story rarely told in public discourse: a devotee who became the unexpected conduit for a deva from Tavatimsa Heaven—an emergence not staged, not curated, not designed. There was no performance, no amplification, no architecture of authority. Awakening occurred through direct encounter. The event did not announce itself as sacred; it revealed sacredness by refusing the conditions of spectacle altogether.

Truth required no theater. Only the right conditions.

And so, we arrive—not at a conclusion—but at a threshold, a point at which imagination becomes a form of moral inquiry. What if, in this moment of choreography, the discourse were to break open? What if the Dhamma spoke—not in alignment with power, but through it, despite it, beyond it?

## A Modern Sutta for a Time of Delusion

Thus have I heard.

At a time when rulers adorned themselves in the language of virtue while the earth beneath them trembled with suffering, there arose a question—not from the halls of power, but from the field of conscience itself.

And the voice spoke:

“Those who rule, listen not with authority, but with vulnerability. You have mistaken permanence for construction, believing that what is built in stone will endure, while what is built in truth remains neglected. Yet all structures founded upon harm carry within them the inevitability of collapse, for they are sustained not by reality, but by denial.

You believe that by invoking the sacred you purify your actions. Yet no word, however ancient, however revered, can cleanse an unwholesome deed. The Dhamma is not sound. It is consequence.

You believe that control brings stability. Yet control rooted in fear multiplies the instability it seeks to conceal. For fear does not obey; it accumulates, and in its accumulation, it transforms into that which cannot be governed.

Know this clearly, without remainder: violence cannot be hidden inside ritual. Injustice cannot be sanctified by chanting. Power does not become truth by declaring itself so.

The Dhamma is not an instrument of statecraft. It is a mirror. And in that mirror, all things are revealed precisely as they are.

Those who imprison the innocent, those who silence the freely chosen voices of a people, bind themselves to consequences that no decree can undo. The continued confinement of those entrusted by the will of the people, including Aung San Suu Kyi and all democratically elected leaders, stands not merely as a political act, but as a moral obstruction to the arising of peace.

Therefore, release them. Release Aung San Suu Kyi. Release all democratically elected leaders. Release

all political prisoners held hostage by fear. Release them not as concession, not as negotiation, not as performance, but as recognition.

For no prison has ever contained truth. And no ruler has ever secured peace through fear.

Monks, speak not to please, but to liberate. Leaders, govern not through dominance, but through understanding. People, do not surrender clarity to spectacle.

The path is not hidden. It has never been hidden. Where there is honesty, there begins freedom. Where there is non-harm, there ends fear. Where there is relinquishment, there is peace.

Walk this path not tomorrow, not in ceremony, but now. For time does not wait. And consequence does not forget.

Thus is the way.”

If such a discourse were spoken fully, without compromise, it would require no endorsement, no amplification, no ceremony to validate it. Its authority would arise not from who speaks, but from what is seen.

The ceremony will proceed. The recitations will be heard. The images will circulate. The narrative will be offered. But beneath it—quieter than ritual, more enduring than spectacle—another question will remain: not whether the Dhamma is being invoked, but whether it is being lived.

And it is within that distinction—subtle, uncompromising, irreversible—that the future of Myanmar, and perhaps the moral credibility of the sacred itself, will ultimately be decided.

## About the Author

Alan Clements is an author, former Buddhist monk ordained in Burma, and longtime human-rights advocate whose life's work has centered on conscience, nonviolence, and the struggle against authoritarian rule. He is the author of seventeen books, including *Conversation with a Dictator*, *Unsilenced: Aung San Suu Kyi—Conversations from a Myanmar Prison*, and *Politics of the Heart: Nonviolence in an Age of Atrocity*. For more than three decades he has worked closely with Burmese democracy leaders, former political prisoners, monks, and civil-society voices. His essays and interviews have appeared in international media across Asia, Europe, and the United States.



## CHINA'S COVERT DRONE DISCOVERY SPARKS REGIONAL SECURITY FEARS IN INDONESIA

**SUN LEE**

China's covert underwater drone operations in Indonesia's Lombok Strait reveal a calculated strategy of surveillance and power projection. This aggressive move by Beijing and the Communist Party is raising alarm across Southeast Asia, threatening regional trust, maritime sovereignty, and stability in one of the world's most strategic sea lanes.

The discovery and capture of a Chinese underwater drone in Indonesia's Lombok Strait is not an isolated incident, it is part of a broader pattern of covert surveillance. The Lombok Strait is one of the few deep-water passages connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans, making it vital for submarine operations and global trade routes. By deploying unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) in such sensitive corridors, China is signalling its intent to monitor, map, and potentially control maritime chokepoints critical to both regional and international security.

China's government and the Communist Party are pursuing a multi-layered strategy of dominance: China's covert deployment of unmanned underwater

vehicles (UUVs) reflects a calculated strategy to expand its influence and challenge regional security. These drones are designed for maritime intelligence gathering, enabling Beijing to collect hydrographic data, monitor naval movements, and identify vulnerabilities in neighbouring defences.

By positioning such technology in chokepoints like the Lombok Strait, China strengthens its ability to project power beyond the South China Sea and extend its reach into the Indian Ocean. Covert deployments also serve as a test of regional responses, allowing China to measure how neighbouring states react and to assess their surveillance capabilities and political resolve. At the same time, these operations complement China's broader naval modernization program, reinforcing its ambition to rival U.S. and allied dominance in the Indo-Pacific. Together, these actions reveal a deliberate effort to reshape maritime dynamics, heighten suspicion among neighbours, and assert control over critical sea lanes.

The covert placement of surveillance drones in foreign waters exemplifies China's disregard for sovereignty and international norms. Such actions are not defensive but offensive, designed to intimidate neighbours and assert control without open confrontation. By denying involvement while evidence points to state-owned enterprises like CSIC, Beijing engages in strategic deception, undermining trust and fuelling suspicion.

This pattern reflects a broader tactic: covert expansion cloaked in denial. Whether through artificial islands in the South China Sea or drones in Indonesian waters, China's approach is to establish facts on the ground under the seaborne diplomatic protests can catch up.

Indonesia's discovery of a Chinese underwater drone in the Lombok Strait has already triggered military investigations and heightened vigilance across the archipelago. The Indonesian navy is under mounting pressure to safeguard sovereignty, while public opinion grows increasingly wary of Beijing's intentions. This incident has not only unsettled Indonesia but also sent ripples across the wider region.

Countries such as Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore view the episode as a stark warning of China's expanding surveillance network, deepening suspicion and eroding diplomatic goodwill. The perception of covert Chinese operations is likely to harden regional attitudes, making cooperation more difficult and trust harder to rebuild. Global powers are also watching closely.

The United States and its allies are expected to intensify monitoring of Indo-Pacific waters, a move that could increase the risk of confrontation. Together, these developments underscore how one discovery can reshape security dynamics and heighten geopolitical tensions across the region.

The presence of covert Chinese drones creates havoc in regional security, forcing neighbours to divert resources to counter surveillance and raising the spectre of accidental clashes.

In early April 2026, Indonesian authorities confirmed the discovery of a Chinese underwater drone near the

Lombok Strait. The device measured approximately 3.7 meters in length and 70 centimetres in diameter, bearing the logo of the China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC), a major state-owned enterprise specializing in naval defence technology.

The Lombok Strait itself is a critical maritime corridor, part of Indonesia's ALKI II route, and one of the few deepwater passages suitable for submarine operations between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Analysts have raised concerns that this incident may be part of a broader undersea surveillance network spanning Indo-Pacific chokepoints, designed to monitor naval activity and gather intelligence covertly.

In response, the Indonesian Navy has transferred the drone to a secure base for detailed technical assessment, reaffirming its commitment to safeguarding national sovereignty and maritime security.

China's covert drone operations represent a crooked and vicious strategy of expansion, undermining trust and destabilizing the Indo-Pacific. By intruding into neighbouring waters, Beijing risks transforming suspicion into hostility, eroding diplomatic ties, and igniting a cycle of confrontation.

The incident in Indonesia is a wake-up call: covert surveillance is not just a violation of sovereignty, but a direct threat to regional peace. If unchecked, these acts will fuel suspicion, destabilize alliances, and create havoc across Southeast Asia. Transparency, accountability, and collective vigilance are essential to counter this growing menace.

China's underwater drone in Indonesia's Lombok Strait is more than a technological curiosity - it is a symbol of covert ambition. The Communist Party's relentless pursuit of surveillance and control threatens to destabilize the Indo-Pacific, creating suspicion among neighbours and havoc across strategic waters. The world must recognize these acts for what they are: calculated moves to expand influence at the expense of sovereignty, trust, and peace.

*Sun Lee is a pseudonym for a writer who covers Asia and geopolitics.*



## THE LEFTOVERS

“Looking into Sino-Burmese relations, it obviously goes back hundreds of years, but this particular strand of history is, well, obviously it was a civil war! The Nationalists were losing, and had all but lost, and the Nationalist government relocated—or [I should say], the ROC government relocated—which is still the official name of Taiwan, the Republic of China. It relocated to Taipei, having moved several times,” says James Baron, speaking to the Insight Myanmar Podcast.

Following their defeat by Mao’s Communist forces, remnants of the Nationalist army remained scattered in the hinterlands, including two divisions, most notably the 93rd, which crossed into and then settled in Burma’s Shan States. Today’s interview with journalist James Baron explores how their unexpected and inconvenient arrival marked the beginning of a complex chapter in the region’s history, which went on to reshape the sociopolitical and economic landscape of Burma.

Led by General Li Mi, the Nationalist Army initially claimed it was continuing the anti-communist struggle. However, it soon became involved in exploiting local resources, notably opium cultivation. Li Mi and his

forces, facing limited options for survival, leveraged the burgeoning opium trade as the means to sustain their activities and maintain control in the region. This initially involved relatively small-scale operations, but opium production expanded exponentially under the KMT’s control, transforming the region into the Golden Triangle—what is now a global epicenter of the drug trade. The instability caused by So Li Mi and his forces would entrench themselves in local Burmese affairs, eventually roiling the fledgling nation and diverting significant resources from Rangoon to deal with the resulting turmoil.

In the early 1950s, Burma’s Prime Minister U Nu faced immense pressure as the KMT’s activities undermined his control. He appealed to the country’s recent colonial masters, the British, who in turn pushed the Americans to reign in their allies, the KMT, fearing the geopolitical fallout from Burma’s destabilization. Yet the Americans, through covert CIA channels, remained complicit in funding and arming the KMT irregulars under the guise of anti-communist operations. Covert networks channeled arms and money via Taiwan, Thailand, and Hong Kong. Key figures like Claire Chennault, formerly of the Flying Tigers, played pivotal roles in these operations, using fronts like Civil Air Transport (CAT) to facilitate the arms-drug trade triangle.

### CATCH THE PODCAST

Read more and listen to the Insight Myanmar Podcast here:

<https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2026/4/12/episode-518-the-leftovers>



Queuing for fuel. Photo: AFP

# MYANMAR JUNTA EXPANDS SUBSIDISED FUEL, FERTILISER DISTRIBUTION TO FARMERS

**M**yanmar's quasi-civilian military junta has expanded the direct distribution of subsidised diesel and fertiliser to farmers, indicating an increase in state intervention in the agricultural sector amid ongoing economic strain, according to state media.

Reports in the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar during the past week said low-cost diesel was being supplied directly to farming communities to support the summer cultivation season. Fertiliser was also being sold at subsidised rates to boost crop production.

Officials told state media the programme aimed to ensure farmers had access to key inputs for ploughing and planting. Deliveries of fuel were distributed across multiple regions under government supervision.

Fertiliser supplies were also being coordinated through ministries to improve affordability and availability.

State media framed the initiative as part of broader efforts to improve agricultural output, strengthen food security, and support domestic economic stability.

Agriculture remains a key pillar of Myanmar's economy. A large share of the population is employed

in agriculture, and it contributes significantly to the domestic food supply and exports.

The policy push comes as farmers continue to face rising costs and supply disruptions linked to currency volatility, fuel shortages, and logistical constraints since the 2021 military takeover.

The move reflects the junta's reliance on administrative controls and targeted subsidies to stabilise critical sectors of the economy. This is particularly true in rural areas, where economic pressures are severe.

While these moves may help farmers, any sustained gains in agricultural output will depend on broader factors, including security conditions, access to finance, and reliable infrastructure.

Recent years have seen repeated disruptions in agriculture in Myanmar due to the ongoing conflict, natural disasters, extreme weather, and market instability. This has placed significant strain on rural livelihoods.

While authorities and state media present the initiative as a development measure, its effectiveness will depend on the government's ability to manage distribution and continued supply.



# ONE PHOTO OF SUU KYI LEAVES THE PUBLIC WONDERING WHERE SHE IS

**T**he announcement by the junta that Aung San Suu Kyi has been moved from prison to house arrest dominated Myanmar's social media this week. State media released only a single photo of the 80-year-old leader, with no clear date or location provided, and no indication of her speaking or moving.

Aung San Suu Kyi has been detained since the February 2021 coup and has not been seen in public since a court appearance in May 2021. The latest amnesty, which coincided with the Full Moon Day of Kason, designated her to a "designated residence." Her legal team stated that they only learned of the move through the news.

On Facebook, users expressed skepticism about the announcement. One user commented, "They announced that she has been moved to a designated

home. Since it is a designated home, we cannot call it house arrest." Others demanded tangible proof: "I want to hear Mother Suu's voice and see video footage of her." Some comments were more critical: "There is no transparency about where she is being held." A common sentiment among users was the demand for confirmation of her well-being, with one writing, "Even if they cannot release her right away, they should at least clearly show that she is still alive."

Her son, Kim Aris, described the move as a public relations tactic rather than genuine freedom, and he reiterated his demand for "Proof of Life," coinciding with global rallies held last week. This marks the second amnesty for Suu Kyi in two weeks, reducing her sentence from 27 years to 18 years.

# 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.