

ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight

**MORE
MEDIA
CLOSED**

Myanmar junta revokes licenses
of three more independent
media outlets amid ongoing
press crackdown

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DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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

MYANMAR'S INFORMATION WAR

Myanmar's military regime has long understood that controlling information is as important as controlling territory. Last week's decision to revoke the licenses of three independent media organizations – see our cover story – is therefore not an isolated administrative act but part of a broader campaign to dominate the narrative surrounding the country's civil war and political collapse. Since the 2021 coup, journalists have been arrested, newsrooms raided, internet blackouts imposed, and independent reporting criminalized. The junta recognizes a simple reality – if citizens and the international community cannot reliably see what is happening inside Myanmar, accountability becomes far more difficult.

The struggle over information has become one of the defining battlegrounds of modern Myanmar. Independent outlets, many now operating in exile or underground, continue to document air strikes on civilians, village burnings, mass displacement, and the detention of political prisoners. Their reporting has often provided the only credible window into events in remote regions where humanitarian access is restricted and state media spreads carefully curated propaganda. By stripping licenses from media organizations, the junta aims not only to silence dissenting voices but also to intimidate remaining journalists into self-censorship.

Yet the regime's attempt to monopolize the story is facing resistance far beyond Myanmar's borders. The protest in London last week that disrupted a public relations discussion organized

by the Myanmar Embassy demonstrate how deeply contested the information war has become internationally. Activists accused the event of attempting to sanitize the junta's actions and present a misleading image of stability and legitimacy. Their successful mobilization reflects a growing awareness among diaspora communities and human rights advocates that propaganda thrives when left unchallenged in respectable diplomatic and academic spaces.

This contest over truth is not merely symbolic. International perceptions influence sanctions, humanitarian aid, diplomatic pressure, and foreign investment. Authoritarian governments increasingly rely on sophisticated messaging campaigns to blur realities on the ground, often portraying resistance movements as terrorists while depicting state violence as necessary for order and security. Myanmar's junta has followed this playbook aggressively, using state television, social media manipulation, and diplomatic outreach to muddy the facts of the conflict.

But repression also reveals insecurity. A government confident in its legitimacy does not fear reporters, independent broadcasters, or public discussion. The persistence of underground journalism and global activism suggests that despite the junta's efforts, the flow of information has not been contained. Myanmar's future may ultimately depend not only on battles fought in villages and cities, but also on whether truth itself can survive sustained assault from a regime determined to erase it. This is why independent Myanmar media matters.

EDITORIAL

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Cover photo of a newspaper vendor in Yangon by AFP



A newspaper seller in Yangon.
Photo: AFP

MORE MEDIA CLOSED MYANMAR JUNTA REVOKES LICENSES OF THREE MORE INDEPENDENT MEDIA OUTLETS AMID ONGOING PRESS CRACKDOWN

The military junta's Ministry of Information officially revoked the publishing licenses of Myaelatt Athan, Red News Agency (RNA), and Asia Citizens News Agency on 11 May.

The regime accused the outlets of violating Section 8(b) of the Printing and Publishing Law, a common legal tool used by the administration to silence independent reporting.

Editors-in-chief from the targeted organizations expressed little surprise at the decision, with some describing the formal rejection as a "silver lining."

Ye Thwin Hein, editor-in-chief of Myaelatt Athan, noted that being publicly targeted by the military helps clarify their independence to critics who have occasionally accused the outlet of pro-junta bias when reporting on human rights abuses within revolutionary groups.

Similarly, Win Zaw Naing of Red News Agency emphasized that while the loss of licenses is expected under a dictatorship, the real casualty is the public's access to impartial information.

"If press freedom no longer exists in Myanmar, the greatest loss will be the absence of independent and impartial media that serve the public interest. This is a pattern seen in every dictatorship. That is why journalists must continue striving to defend the rights of the people," he said.

Ko Ko Zaw, chairman of the Independent Press Council of Myanmar (IPCM), criticized the junta's latest actions, saying that despite changes in name and structure since the coup, its methods and conduct remain unchanged.

"They may have changed their appearance, but they are still acting the same way they did after the coup. Aside from Senior General Min Aung Hlaing now being referred to as U Min Aung Hlaing, I see no real change in how they operate," said IPCM Chairman Ko Ko Zaw.

Since the coup, the military junta has revoked the publishing licences of more than 20 independent news outlets, including Mizzima, Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), Khit Thit Media, Myanmar Now, and 7Day News, while also arresting, imprisoning, and killing journalists, media workers said.

According to data from the Independent Press Council of Myanmar (IPCM), more than 200 journalists were arrested between the 2021 military coup and May 2026, with 18 still remaining in prison.

According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Myanmar ranks 166th out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index, placing it in the "red zone" as one of the most dangerous environments for press freedom.



FLASHBACK - A journalist is arrested in Yangon.
Photo: AFP



Media personnel on the street.
Photo: AFP

ANALYSIS & INSIGHT



Photo: AFP

ASEAN DEADLOCK OVER MYANMAR

The institutional inertia plaguing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was laid bare at the 48th ASEAN Summit in Cebu, Philippines, where leaders failed to chart a decisive path forward regarding the ongoing Myanmar crisis. The persistence of this diplomatic paralysis has triggered sharp warnings from the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), who caution that the bloc is creeping toward a tacit, gradual acceptance of the military junta's administration.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., serving as the current ASEAN Chairperson, openly confessed his profound disappointment with the situation. Acknowledging that the junta has failed to fulfill a single tenet of the mandated Five-Point Consensus, Marcos described Myanmar's peace process as effectively moribund, urging member states to aggressively seek alternative mechanisms to break the deadlock.

Reflecting this frustration, the summit firmly refused to engage with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, who recently appointed himself president through a widely condemned rubber-stamp parliament. Instead, leaders reiterated demands for direct access to ousted democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi.

Despite this official wall of resistance, a controversial diplomatic shift is quietly underway. Spurred by a proposal from frontline neighbour Thailand, ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao

Kim Hourn announced plans for an upcoming virtual meeting with the junta's newly appointed foreign minister. Furthermore, ASEAN foreign ministers have conditionally agreed to permit the regime's top diplomat to join their upcoming ministerial gatherings.

This pivot highlights Thailand's highly accommodating stance. The Thai Foreign Minister recently visited Myanmar, treating the coup leader as an elected president, while high-level preparatory meetings between Thai and Myanmar diplomats in Bangkok further signal a push for normalization.

This accommodation has severely fractured the bloc. Singapore's Foreign Minister strongly rebuked Bangkok's unilateral maneuvers, warning that engaging with the regime in the absence of a genuine democratic transition is profoundly premature. Singapore, alongside Malaysia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste, forms a hardline faction insisting on strict adherence to the Five-Point Consensus until authentic political reform occurs. Conversely, Thailand - desperate to stabilize its porous border - leads a accommodationist faction supported

by Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam that favours rapid reintegration.

Sensing this internal rift, the junta has launched a coordinated diplomatic counter-offensive. On May 10, Myanmar's military-run foreign ministry issued a scathing statement accusing "a few member countries" of discrimination and violating the principle of equal representation. Since the 2021 coup, the regime has been barred from sending political leaders to top-tier summits, restricted to sending low-level public servants.

Now, the junta is dangling minor concessions to exploit ASEAN's divisions and regain normal relations. Following targeted diplomatic missions by Thai and Chinese officials, Min Aung Hlaing transferred Aung San Suu Kyi from prison to a designated "house arrest", suggesting that her welfare remains under "favorable consideration." However, as ASEAN wavers between isolation and engagement, the bloc risks legitimizing a sham political transition, trading away its democratic leverage for a superficial veneer of regional stability.



Myanmar-India border. Photo: Mizzima

India maintains contact with Myanmar junta

Indian Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi's recent four-day official visit to Myanmar underscores a deeply pragmatic and complex geopolitical balancing act by New Delhi. Staged alongside a strategic port call by two Indian warships, the visit signals a calculated deepening of military ties with the Myanmar junta at a time when the regime is facing unprecedented pressure from internal armed resistance.

The core of the high-level engagement focused intensely on deteriorating border security. Meeting with Myanmar Navy Chief Admiral Htein Win and the junta's Army Chief, General Ye Win Oo, Admiral Tripathi discussed coordinated efforts to neutralize insurgencies along their shared frontier. This region has turned into a volatile theater, with the Arakan Army and Chin revolutionary forces actively pushing back

junta troops, while Naga rebel factions operate across the porous Indian border. Notably, the junta's recent silence regarding Indian drone strikes on Naga bases inside Myanmar territory reveals a tacit reliance on New Delhi to help secure its collapsing western flank while its forces are stretched thin elsewhere.

Beyond strategic dialogue, India reinforced its presence through tangible hardware diplomacy, handing over a consignment of naval ship accessories and coastal security equipment supported by the Indian government. This move directly counters expanding Chinese maritime influence in the Bay of Bengal by keeping Myanmar integrated into India's defense framework. Simultaneously, the deployment of the stealth frigate INS Satpura and patrol vessel INS Sunayna to Yangon provided a powerful soft-power backdrop. Although junta state media downplayed the warships' presence by framing the visit of the 500-plus personnel around "friendship sports matches,"



the dual arrival of frontline naval assets alongside the Navy Chief delivers a clear message of strategic solidarity. Ultimately, as Western democracies continue to isolate the regime, New Delhi's willingness to supply military hardware and discuss stability - while quietly acknowledging the junta's highly contested election - demonstrates that immediate neighbourhood stability and regional counterweights trump democratic idealism.

China seeks to maintain grip on Myanmar

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Naypyidaw on 25 May, marking his second trip to Myanmar since August 2024 as Beijing deepens engagement with the military regime amid Myanmar's prolonged political and security crisis. Before arriving in Myanmar, Wang Yi visited Cambodia and Thailand, reflecting China's broader effort to reinforce its strategic influence across mainland Southeast Asia.

During the visit, Wang Yi met junta chief Min Aung Hlaing and senior military officials. According to regime statements, discussions focused on cooperation under the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), energy security, infrastructure development, and joint efforts to combat online scam operations and cross-border cyber fraud, issues that have increasingly affected China's border stability and regional interests.

The junta reiterated its support for the "One China Policy" and expressed gratitude to Beijing for being among the first governments to congratulate Min Aung Hlaing after he assumed the presidency. Chinese officials, meanwhile, reaffirmed support for Myanmar's sovereignty and territorial integrity while pledging continued cooperation with the military authorities.

Analysts view the visit as another indication that Beijing is strengthening political backing for the junta despite ongoing instability and international

criticism. Prior to Wang Yi's arrival, China had already dispatched provincial-level diplomats to meet Min Aung Hlaing, a move interpreted as preparation for higher-level engagement. Observers believe China's increasing diplomatic activity reflects its desire to shape Myanmar's political trajectory ahead of the junta's planned election, which resistance groups and many international observers have criticized as lacking legitimacy.

China's approach appears driven less by ideological alignment and more by strategic calculations. Beijing seeks stability along its border, protection for Chinese investments, suppression of cybercrime networks operating near frontier areas, and continuity for major infrastructure projects linked to the Belt and Road Initiative.

Another notable development surrounding the visit was the renewed public discussion of the suspended Myitsone Dam project in Kachin State. Local authorities and pro-regime circles have reportedly begun advocating for the project's resumption. The Chinese-backed dam, suspended in 2011 under former president Thein Sein following widespread public opposition, remains one of the most sensitive symbols of China-Myanmar economic relations.

At the same time, Beijing has continued its engagement with detained civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi. On 30 April, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian described her as "an old friend of China" and confirmed ongoing consultations regarding her situation. Political observers noted the unusual diplomatic phrasing, suggesting Beijing may be attempting to maintain communication channels with all major stakeholders in Myanmar while preserving its long-term strategic interests regardless of future political outcomes.



AMBASSADOR KYAW MOE TUN CALLS FOR GLOBAL SUPPORT AT UN VESAK DAY

Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun of Myanmar addressed the UN in New York on the International Day of Vesak on 12 May, urging stronger international support to restore peace and stability amid the humanitarian crisis following the 2021 military coup.

The text of Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun's address is as follows.

At a time when the international community is confronting multifaceted crises, with humanity falling into extreme danger, Vesak is a time for us to reflect on the Buddha's timeless teachings of humanity, mindfulness, compassion and non-violence.

In Myanmar, however, such practices have become more challenging than ever since the illegal military coup in February 2021 and subsequent atrocities of the military. Accordingly, Myanmar people's suffering has become profound, ranging from displacement, extreme poverty, and a significant lack of essential services to the loss of so many innocent lives.

Nonetheless, the resilient spirit of our people remains unbroken, yearning for the light of Dharma and genuine peace.

It is in this spirit of resilience that we find immense inspiration today.

I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to the Most Venerable Bhikkhu Paññākāra and all the monks who undertook the grueling "Walk for Peace" journey from Texas to Washington D.C. We are also profoundly honored to be joined today by the monks from Myanmar including the monk who participated in this historic 2,300-mile journey.

For the people of Myanmar, this pilgrimage brought hope and strength to us at this critical time of people thirst for peace. Moreover it also carried a deeply emotional resonance, witnessing a diverse group of monks marching steadfastly for peace that served as a powerful, moving reminder of a role played by monks in the struggle of peace in Myanmar.

We thank you for your incredible endurance, your wisdom, and your unyielding spirit. Through your physical sacrifice, you have shown our people and the world that peace cultivated within naturally ripples outward, keeping the light of hope alive for those struggling in the dark.

This serves as a powerful example and it reminds us, members of the global community, that metta, loving-kindness, requires active, tireless effort.

Therefore, let us not merely speak of peace but walk toward it together.

I humbly ask you all to keep people in crises, including the people of Myanmar, in your minds and hearts.

Please pray for our country's peace and stability and peace and stability of the world.

Please provide stronger and effective support to our people in their effort towards building peaceful, sustainable, prosperous, just and inclusive future Myanmar.

Let all of us continue practicing the Four Noble Truths and keep spreading metta to people around the world for greater peace.



Photo: AFP

KARENNI HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP WARNS OF IMPENDING FAMINE AMID SYSTEMATIC ATTACKS ON FOOD SUPPLIES

The Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG) has issued a stark warning regarding a "worrying" threat of future famine in Karenni State as severe economic blockades and systematic destruction of agricultural sectors continue to intensify.

According to a comprehensive report released by KnHRG on 14 May, the escalating food security crisis is being driven by targeted military attacks on domestic food supplies and local income sources, compounding a total loss of livelihood for both residents and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The crisis is further exacerbated by skyrocketing commodity prices and high inflation driven by global economic instability.

"While the people are striving to survive using local resources, they remain in desperate need of emergency humanitarian aid and security protection," the statement said.

KnHRG warned that ongoing fighting, blockades, and rising fuel costs have restricted the flow of goods, leading to high inflation and increased livelihood pressures, which severely impact the public's access to basic goods and services.

Furthermore, the state's vital agricultural areas have suffered significant paddy losses due to the presence

of junta troops, arrests during harvest seasons, and the deliberate flooding of fields. Farmers face immense challenges in replanting this year, compounded by the surging price of fuel.

Consequently, KnHRG urged the international community to provide aid for over 200,000 IDPs in Karenni State and to coordinate cross-border humanitarian access. They also called for continued financial support and resources from international organizations to meet urgent food and shelter needs, while collaborating to effectively utilize local resources.

KnHRG had previously issued a warning regarding the potential for famine in Karenni State in November 2025.

KnHRG noted that the state's socio-economic situation has shown no improvement; instead, the public continues to face increasingly severe livelihood struggles.

On the other hand, the report mentioned that clashes are likely to intensify again as the junta attempts to regain control of key strategic highways within the state.



FIERCE CLASHES ERUPT AS ARAKAN ARMY, ALLIED FORCES LAUNCH MAJOR ASSAULT ON JUNTA ARTILLERY BATTALION IN AYEYARWADY REGION

The Arakan Army (AA) and allied resistance forces have launched a major offensive against the junta's Artillery Battalion 344 near Ngathaingchaung town in Yegyí Township, Ayeyarwady Region, with fighting intensifying as the resistance tightens its encirclement of the base, according to revolutionary military sources.

The artillery unit, based near Mrauk San village in the Ngathaingchaung area, has been under sustained attack since 10 May by AA-led resistance forces. Sources on the ground say the battalion is now under heavy pressure from the advancing offensive.

"The AA has returned with full force," a local source told Mizzima. "Previously, they mainly blocked military routes leading toward Gwa, but now they are carrying out a full-scale assault aimed at capturing the artillery battalion. The clashes are extremely intense."

The junta had reportedly been preparing a wider offensive into southern Rakhine State by establishing defensive positions at Military Advanced Training School No.5 in Kwinkauk, Ingapu Township, Ayeyarwady Region. However, the AA moved first by targeting and isolating the strategically important Artillery Battalion 344.

"The attack on the artillery battalion came just as the junta army was preparing to send reinforcements

into southern Rakhine," the source said. "By attacking the base, the AA has effectively cut off the junta's planned offensive route. Reports also indicate that Infantry Battalion 36 from Kyonpyaw has been deployed as reinforcement."

The junta has reinforced Artillery Battalion 344 in an attempt to maintain control of the Gwa-Ngathaingchaung road. Troops deployed in separate columns along the nearby Thita Plateau and Nagarit Ridge are facing repeated clashes with AA-led forces surrounding the area, and some junta soldiers have reportedly fled during the fighting, according to local sources.

Forces stationed at the Artillery Battalion 344 camp reportedly include troops under the Patheingyi-based Southwestern Regional Command, along with reinforcements from Infantry Battalion (IB) 36 in Kyonpyaw, IB 98 in Pyapon, IB 108 in Danubyu, and IBs 14 and 18 from Hinthada under Light Infantry Division (LID) 66.

The Artillery Battalion 344 camp is located only about two miles from the Ngathaingchaung checkpoint. Local residents said clashes had already erupted in April after junta troops advanced into territories controlled by the AA and allied resistance forces.



Photo: Supplied

MYANMAR JUNTA AIRSTRIKES ON MINDAT AND KANPETLET KILL FOUR, INCLUDING A POW

Military junta forces carried out approximately 15 airstrikes on Mindat and Kanpetlet in southern Chin State within a single day, killing four people, including a prisoner of war (POW), according to the Chin People's Union/Chin People's Army (CPU/CPA).

The junta targeted Mindat with jet fighters twice at around 11:45 pm on 11 May. On 12 May, the town was hit again by 11 more strikes: two at 8:00 am, two at 11:00 am, and five at 6:00 pm.

According to the CPU/CPA, these attacks killed four people, including one POW. The strikes also destroyed 15 civilian homes, 10 government buildings, and four vehicles, while causing multiple injuries. Specific details regarding the identities of the deceased and the condition of the wounded remain undisclosed.

In a separate attack, Kanpetlet was targeted by two jet fighters and a Y-12 transport plane after 10:00 pm on 12 May, a Kanpetlet Township defence official told Mizzima.

"They bombed the Kanpetlet Hotel Zone using two jet fighters and a Y-12. The fighters struck three times,

while the Y-12 dropped about nine bombs, including cluster munitions," he said. Casualties and the extent of damage from the Kanpetlet attack are still being confirmed.

Revolutionary military sources suggested these airstrikes likely signal an upcoming ground offensive in southern Chin State.

"They wouldn't bomb without a military objective. It is possible they are clearing the path before launching a ground column," a source noted.

Junta reinforcements have been stationed in Kan Gyi village, Magway Region – roughly 10 miles from Mindat – since late April. Additionally, approximately 500 troops and 17 vehicles reached Laung Shey in Saw Township, bordering Kanpetlet. Revolutionary forces have urged residents to remain vigilant.

The Chin Brotherhood (CB) and its allies captured Mindat on 21 December 2024, and Kanpetlet on 22 December. Having lost significant territory, the junta recently recaptured Falam on 25 April and is currently moving to retake Tonzang while maintaining air operations against Mindat and Kanpetlet.



Photo: Burma Campaign UK

BURMESE EMBASSY IN UK FORCED TO CANCEL SO-CALLED OPEN DIALOGUE EVENT

Burma Campaign UK yesterday welcomed news that a planned 'open dialogue' event organised by the Burmese Embassy in London has been cancelled. The Embassy is currently under the control of the Burmese military.

Burma. We will block any attempt by the embassy to seek legitimacy and we continue to campaign for the military attaché, Captain Soe Aung, to be deported from the UK."

The event planned for 14 May was called off after Burma Campaign UK and Burmese community organisation Stars of Myanmar Friendship called for the event to be boycotted, had organised a planned protest at the Burmese embassy during the event, and written to Ambassadors of countries likely to be invited, asking them not to attend.

Julie Khine, co-founder of Stars of Myanmar Friendship said: "To the Myanmar Embassy: Don't try again on our democratic soil. We'll respond strongly to your propaganda work for war criminal Min Aung Hlaing. We don't recognise the illegitimate government."

The so-called open dialogue event is part of a new public relations offensive by the Burmese military as they desperately seek international recognition after sham elections in late 2025 and early 2026.

Chris Gunness, Director of the Myanmar Accountability Project said: "Engaging with mass murderers empowers them to commit increasing rounds of mass murder. Engaging with people who have fixed elections and ignored the will of their people empowers them to greater heights of illegitimacy and impunity. Sanctions and accountability are the way out of Myanmar's quagmire. Engagement right now serves only to fuel further cycles of violence and humanitarian catastrophe".

Minn Tent Bo, Advocacy Officer at Burma Campaign UK said: "This is a humiliation for the military-controlled embassy in London. It was ridiculous that they ever thought they could get away with holding an open dialogue event when open dialogue is banned in

A small celebratory protest still went ahead outside the embassy at midday yesterday.



Photo: Supplied

AROUND 8,000 RESIDENTS FLEE AS MYANMAR JUNTA FORCES ADVANCE IN PAUK TOWNSHIP

Around 8,000 residents from 14 villages in Pauk Township have been forced to flee their homes as junta forces advance through the area, according to the township's Social Affairs, Labour and Humanitarian Affairs Department.

Residents have been fleeing Pauk Township since May 1 as junta forces continue advancing through the area, while people sheltering in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps have also been forced to flee, an official from the township's Social Affairs, Labor and Humanitarian Affairs Department told Mizzima on May 13.

"On May 11, the military launched heavy artillery attacks in the afternoon, carried out drone bombings and conducted airstrikes. Clashes in the area continued until early this morning," he said.

Since May 1, a junta column moving from the Defence Equipment Manufacturing Factory (Ka Pa Sa) 22 in Seikphyu Township to Ka Pa Sa 24 in Pauk Township has forced residents from seven villages along the Pathein–Monywa road to flee their homes, with people from three villages still remaining displaced.

The column arrived at Ka Pa Sa-24 on May 6 before advancing south of the facility on May 11, forcing nearly 5,000 residents from more than 1,100 households across 11 villages to flee their homes.

"What is unusual is that residents from these 11 villages are now seeking refuge in long-term displacement camps," the official said.

The newly displaced residents come from villages including Palaung, Mya Pan, Khin Aye, Kyauk Mae Taung, Kyauk Da Gar, Yaw Kone, Ma Kyi Kone, Nat Sin Kone, Ta Pin, Htan Pin Chaung and Ohn Min.

Displaced residents in Pauk Township are reportedly facing severe shortages of drinking and household water and urgently need shelter materials and other humanitarian assistance.

The Pauk Township People's Defence Force said in a statement released on May 12 that revolutionary forces ambushed a junta column on May 7 near Te Pin Kan Village, at the junction of the Pauk–Seikphyu Road and the Pathein–Monywa Road. According to the statement, seven junta soldiers were killed and at least 30 others wounded in the clash, while one member of the revolutionary forces was also killed.

The department said that since the military coup, around 24,000 people from 52 villages have been unable to return home and remain in long-term displacement, in addition to the newly displaced populations. It warned that these communities are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.



Photo: AFP

CHILDREN STILL VICTIMS OF AIRSTRIKES IN MYANMAR ONE YEAR AFTER DEADLY SCHOOL BOMBING, SAYS IIMM

The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) issued a press release on 12 May, the anniversary of a deadly airstrike by the Myanmar Air Force on a school in Sagaing Region. The UN investigative body notes that children continue to be the targets of airstrikes that deliberately target civilians.

The IIMM statement is as follows.

One year after the Myanmar military's deadly attack on a school in Oe Htein Kwin village in Sagaing Region that killed more than 20 students, the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar continues to investigate this atrocity, along with more recent incidents of children killed or injured in bombardments of schools, hospitals, places of worship and homes. Airstrikes that deliberately target civilians, or are indiscriminate, violate international law.

Earlier this month, an air attack killed at least five children between the ages of five months and 10 years at a village playground in Chin State. This tragic incident follows multiple airstrikes across the country which have caused the death and injury of children in the past year, including attacks on villages in Mandalay, Bago Region and Rakhine State (March and April

2026); a church in Tanintharyi Region (March 2026); two schools in Rakhine State (September 2025); and a monastery sheltering internally displaced people in Sagaing Region (July 2025).

"The Mechanism is focusing on air strikes that appear to directly target civilians in locations where children are likely to be present, which may be war crimes or crimes against humanity," said Nicholas Koumjian, Head of the Mechanism. "We are collecting and analysing the evidence, including the composition of the Myanmar Air Force and its chain of command, to identify the perpetrators involved so that they can be held to account."

Based on the available data, which is likely an underestimate, children were killed or injured in at least 640 airstrikes between the military takeover in February 2021 and 2025. Even for children who have not personally experienced an attack, the danger and stress from the risk is having a deep and lasting impact on them.

"Attacks on children are particularly heinous," said Koumjian. "Children in Myanmar should be able to sleep, study and play without fear."



Photo: AFP

MYANMAR JUNTA FORCES LAUNCH OFFENSIVES TO RECLAIM LOST TERRITORIES ACROSS THREE KNLA BRIGADES

Junta forces are launching offensives to regain control of camps and territory previously captured by the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and allied forces, with fighting and tensions escalating across three KNLA brigades, local residents and sources said.

The areas experiencing heavy clashes include Tanintharyi Township, Myeik-Dawei District of Brigade 4, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District of Brigade 5, and Bilin Township, Thaton District of Brigade 1.

The junta has deployed three columns along at least two routes in Brigade 4 to retake Maw Taung town, which was previously captured by the KNLA. Daily clashes are reportedly occurring as junta troops have reached the vicinity of Village No. 9, just over 15 miles from Maw Taung.

"We are currently fighting defensively. They are pushing forward with a massive force in three columns. Behind them are trucks, prison vans, and vehicles carrying heavy and light weaponry. To stop their advance, we had to destroy two bridges. They are conducting daily airstrikes and reconnaissance," said a ground source in Maw Taung.

Due to the ongoing fighting, residents of Maw Taung have fled to the Thai border and nearby forests. They are in urgent need of basic food supplies, shelter from the rain, and medicine.

In Belin Township in the Brigade 1 area, the junta deployed massive ground forces alongside drones, paramotors and aircraft to retake Lay Kay camp, seized by the KNLA on 12 April. Junta troops also moved to prevent the fall of Win Tar Pan camp, which remains under siege. Reports confirm that junta forces retook Lay Kay camp on the evening of 11 May.

Two sources said allied revolutionary forces were forced to withdraw from their offensive against Win Tar Pan camp due to intense junta counterattacks involving both ground reinforcements and heavy airstrikes.

In Brigade 5, a ground commander reported that the junta is sending hundreds of troops from Kamamaung to prevent the fall of the besieged Hpapun Strategic Base and to regain control of Hpapun town. Daily battles are taking place along the Kamamaung-Kadaingti route.

"They have reached the vicinities of Kyauk Kwin Gyi, Kyauk Kwin Lay, and War Tho Kho. Fighting happens every day, but they haven't been able to advance any further yet," he said.

According to the KNU's territorial designations, there are seven districts corresponding to the KNLA's Brigades 1 to 7 spanning Kayin State, parts of Bago Region, most townships in Mon State, and Tanintharyi Region.



OVER 800 IDPS CROSS INTO MIZORAM AMID ESCALATING MILITARY TENSIONS IN CHIN STATE

More than 800 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have crossed into Mizoram, India, amid escalating clashes in Myanmar's Chin State, according to local residents and media reports.

Following reports that the Myanmar military was preparing to retake the border town of Rikhawdar and Khawmawi village along the India-Myanmar Trade Camp No. 2 route, at least 820 IDPs crossed into Mizoram over the two days leading up to May 13, Zonet TV reported, citing local police, the Assam Rifles and a youth organization in Zokhawthar, Mizoram.

"Yes, the current figure reflects only those who officially registered through the Friendship Bridge. The number of people who entered through other routes without registration is likely at least double that," a resident of Zokhawthar village told Mizzima on May 14.

After registering with military and police authorities, the displaced people are being housed in rented accommodation or with relatives and friends who previously sought refuge in the area. Local residents said that if more people arrive, plans are in place to shelter them in halls operated by youth and women's organizations.

While the displaced are being welcomed due to the life-threatening conditions they face, a resident of Zokhawthar said their arrival has also brought challenges, particularly cases involving drug trafficking,

drug use and related arrests. He urged the displaced people to respect local laws and customs and to live peacefully with the community.

The newly displaced people are reportedly from Tedim Township, where clashes with the Myanmar military are ongoing. Residents from villages in Tonzang Township and along the Falam-Hakha road, as well as from Hualngoram near the Mizoram border, are also said to be among those affected.

"There has been no fighting in our village so far, but we fled as a precaution. If clashes break out, escaping will not be easy," one displaced person said. "For now, we will have to rent a house. We cannot say what will happen next. If we are forced to stay away for a long time, there will be many difficulties."

Although fighting has not yet reached their area, residents said they fled out of fear of possible airstrikes and concerns for the safety of elderly family members.

Despite reports that the border trade post could come under continued attack following the capture of Falam town, U Ku Ngar, defence officer of the Hualngoram People's Organization (HPO), told Mizzima that there was no need for excessive concern.

"Some of our people have fled from our territory. However, there has been no military action on our side on the ground, so there is no need for excessive concern, and we will provide updates if necessary," he said.

"If the military regime launches an attack, we are prepared to resist. We call on all able-bodied adults, except children, the elderly and women, to defend our territory out of a sense of nationalism, and some people have already registered to join," U Ku Ngar added.

The Rikhawdar border trading post along the India-Myanmar border was seized by Chin resistance forces in November 2023 and is currently under civilian administration.

According to Indian government figures, more than 30,000 Myanmar refugees are currently sheltering in Mizoram, including over 7,000 who have taken refuge in Zokhawthar village in Champhai district.



Photo: Supplied

RESISTANCE FORCE ASSASSINATES DEPUTY BATTALION COMMANDER IN MON STATE

A high-ranking Myanmar military official was killed in a targeted attack by the "Ye Belu" (Ye Ogre Force) resistance group on the evening of 11 May, in Lamaing town, Mon State.

The victim has been identified as Htun Yar Kyaw, the deputy battalion commander of the military junta's Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 106. According to the leader of Ye Belu, the officer was shot dead at approximately 6:00 pm while his vehicle was parked just 100 meters from the Lamaing Police Station.

"He was traveling in a white Honda Fit accompanied by three bodyguards. While his three soldiers got out of the car to buy something at a shop, he stayed inside the vehicle talking on the phone. That was when our Ye Belu group carried out the attack and killed him," the group leader said.

The resistance group reportedly monitored the commander's movements for an extended period, characterizing him as a notorious figure known for

the systematic mistreatment and oppression of local civilians.

Witnesses and resistance sources confirmed that the commander sustained five gunshot wounds and died instantly at the scene. The accompanying junta personnel were reportedly unharmed, as the attackers' used handguns at close range and retreated before the soldiers could react.

This operation follows a string of targeted killings by Ye Belu in the region. In April, the group claimed responsibility for the fatal shooting of Maung Naing, a prominent leader of the Pyu Saw Htee pro-junta militia in Ye Township.

The uptick in urban guerrilla tactics in Mon State highlights the persistent security challenges facing the junta, even in areas close to established police and military installations.



Photo: Supplied

REVOLUTIONARY FORCES AMBUSH MYANMAR JUNTA CONVOY IN UPPER SAGAING REGION AS MILITARY TENSIONS ESCALATE

A combined force of revolutionary groups, led by the Arakan Army (AA) and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), successfully intercepted and attacked a junta convoy in Sagaing Region on 10 May.

The ambush took place midway between Tigyain and Katha around 2:30 pm resulting in several junta casualties and the seizure of significant military equipment.

Regarding the battle, a frontline source said, "The military council column began moving from Tigyain to Katha on the 10th. Revolutionary forces were waiting to intercept them midway. The fighting was intense. Two junta soldiers were killed on the spot, and many others were wounded."

Revolutionary forces, which also included People's Defence Force (PDF) units, emerged from the engagement without casualties, seizing three military vehicles, a motorcycle, and seven firearms.

Furthermore, a large reinforcement column consisting of 30 military vehicles and a tank advanced from Katha toward Indaw on 11 May. This movement has heightened military tensions within Indaw Township, said residents.

Commenting on the ground situation, a local revolutionary comrade in Indaw stated: "A massive column including tanks is now moving from Katha toward Indaw. There is a high likelihood of intensified fighting in Indaw Township. Consequently, residents from over ten nearby villages are proactively fleeing to safer areas."

The junta forces previously recaptured Indaw on 30 April from the KIA and PDF. They had also regained control of Katha on 29 March.

Local sources indicate that military activity is rising in Upper Sagaing as the AA and allied forces launch guerrilla operations to regain dominance over these territories.



Photo: Supplied

IMPORT BLOCKADE BY MYANMAR JUNTA IN NORTHERN SHAN STATE TRIGGERS FEARS OF REGIONAL INFLATION

Residents in northern Shan State are increasingly concerned about a potential spike in commodity prices following the military junta's implementation of strict new restrictions on the import of Chinese goods.

While border towns like Muse and Laukkai continue to see a steady flow of products, military forces have begun conducting rigorous inspections and seizing items at checkpoints in areas where they still maintain administrative control, particularly around Lashio.

A resident of Lashio told Mizzima that since most goods in northern Shan State are imported from China, there are growing fears that these stricter blockades will drive up the cost of living.

"The most immediate impact is on the drivers. They are in trouble because they can't transport goods anymore. And when goods can't be moved, prices will inevitably go up. For now, they haven't increased yet," the resident said.

According to locals, the junta is specifically prohibiting the transit of Chinese goods in areas where they still maintain administrative control.

The source added that in Lashio, which is currently under the administration of the Naypyidaw-based military, Chinese products entering from the Muse side are being subjected to rigorous inspections.

A resident of Kutkai said that other towns in northern Shan State are not facing restrictions as severe as those in Lashio.

"They are seizing Chinese goods in the regions and towns they control. While goods can still manage to leave Muse and Laukkai, the military is intercepting them below Lashio. There hasn't been any change in Hsenwi or Kutkai," the resident explained.

This blockade has immediately impacted transport workers who are now unable to move essential supplies, creating a bottleneck that locals warn will inevitably drive up the cost of living.

Although there are reports that these seizures are part of a military "100-day plan," specific details remain undisclosed.

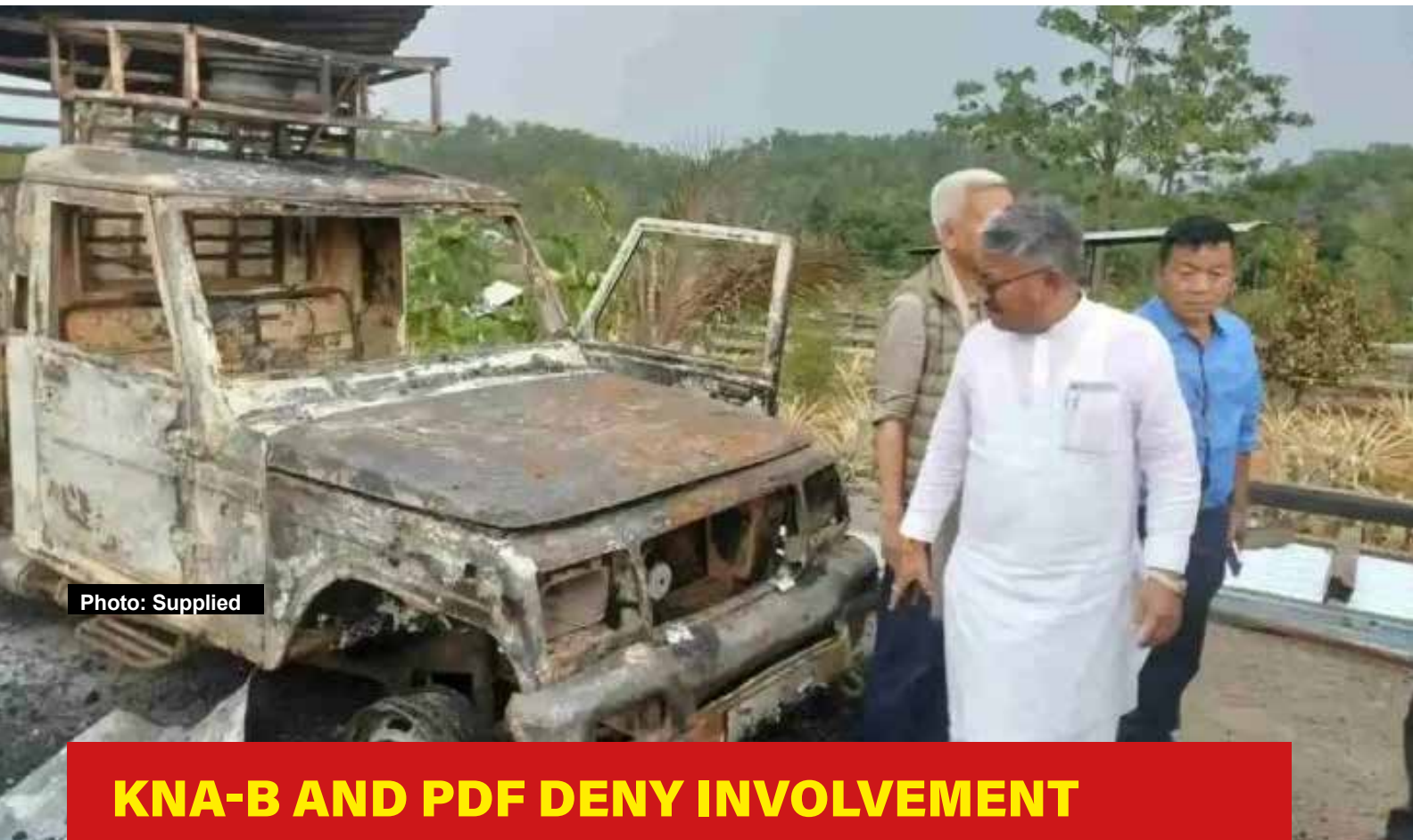


Photo: Supplied

KNA-B AND PDF DENY INVOLVEMENT IN MANIPUR BORDER ATTACKS

The Kuki National Army-Burma (KNA-B) and the People's Defence Force (PDF) have officially denied allegations of involvement in recent attacks on three villages in Manipur, India.

The denials follow a 7 May incursion into Namli, Wanli, and Choro villages in Manipur's Kamjong district, located near the international border, which led to the destruction of over 15 homes and forced numerous residents to flee into nearby forests.

The incident was characterized as a "foreign incursion" by Leishiyu Keishing, a Manipur Member of Parliament, who argued that the burning of homes and reports of torture pointed toward an external invasion rather than localized ethnic conflict. Tangkhul Naga Long (TNL), a prominent community organization, also

reported that two individuals were abducted during the raids.

"Many houses were burnt, and many people were injured, indicating that the incident was not an ethnic conflict but an external invasion," Leishiyu Keishing said.

More than 15 houses were destroyed in Choro village during the attack, while residents were allegedly tortured, two people were abducted and many others fled into nearby forests for safety, according to a statement by Tangkhul Naga Long.

"We are not involved in any activities inside Indian territory. They are trying to discredit the group without any credible evidence. We reject the false and

dangerous allegations,” the Kuki National Army-Burma said in a statement issued on 7 May.

“The restoration of democracy in Myanmar remains our goal. We have consistently called for peace and dialogue among all stakeholders in the region and urged them not to allow the situation to escalate into ethnic conflict,” the group said.

Similarly, a leader of the People’s Defence Force based in Tamu Township along the India-Myanmar border told Mizzima that the group was not involved in the attack.

“The incident took place inside Indian territory, not in Myanmar. The PDFs were not involved in the matter, and the Kuki National Army-Burma is also active only in Myanmar, so it has nothing to do with us,” he said.

The People’s Defence Force leader based in Tamu Township added that the group responsible for the attack was the Village Volunteer Eastern Zone (VVEZ), and said they had no further comment.

The Village Volunteer Eastern Zone (VVEZ) said in a statement on 7 May that the attack was carried out in retaliation for the burning of Lanchah village in Kamjong district on 2 May by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland.

It further stated that the operation targeted National Socialist Council of Nagaland (East) and its allied groups operating in the area, and that the forces withdrew following a brief exchange of fire.

The statement said they had no intention of engaging in hostilities with any community, including

the Tangkhul community, and added that despite long-standing peaceful coexistence and mutual respect in the region, they would continue to fulfil their responsibility to protect the security, dignity and legitimate rights of their ancestral lands.

A delegation led by Govindas Konthoujam, Manipur’s Home Minister, along with members of parliament, visited the area on May 9 and met with local residents and displaced people from Myanmar, according to Ukhrul Times.

The minister said that the concerns of local residents were heard during the meeting and assured that measures to strengthen security and improve development in the area would be enhanced.

When asked whether the incident could be described as “foreign aggression,” he said the state government would submit a report to the Union government if evidence supported such a claim, noting that official reports so far do not use that terminology.

The Indian government is reportedly considering fencing more than 1,600 kilometres of the border with Myanmar to strengthen security and curb drug trafficking, smuggling, and irregular migration.

During the Indian Navy chief’s visit in the first week of May, officials in Naypyidaw and India announced that he and Myanmar’s military leadership, including General Ye Win Oo, discussed maintaining a buffer free of armed groups along the border, as well as strengthening regional stability and security through strategic-level bilateral defence cooperation.

BROUK SAYS ROHINGYA WOMEN AND GIRLS FACE ESCALATING VIOLENCE FROM AA IN NEW BRIEFING

On 14 May, the Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK) released a new briefing documenting escalating sexual violence against Rohingya women and girls in northern Rakhine State by the Arakan Army (AA) in a system of detention and coercion reminiscent of that used by the Myanmar military during the alleged 2017 genocide.

The text of the BROUK statement accompanying the new briefing is as follows.

Sexual violence against Rohingya women and girls, a hallmark of the genocide committed by the Burmese military, is becoming increasingly embedded within systems of detention, coercion and control under Arakan Army (AA) authority in northern Rakhine State, BROUK warned today.

In its new briefing, *Sexual Violence Against Rohingya Women and Girls: Emerging patterns of abuse in Arakan Army-controlled areas of Rakhine State*, BROUK documents escalating sexual violence linked to detention, forced recruitment and repression targeting Rohingya communities under AA control.

Continuing persecution under AA control

As the AA consolidates control across large areas of Rakhine State, Rohingya women and girls are facing sexual violence across multiple settings amid displacement and worsening humanitarian conditions.

The briefing documents:

- Rape, gang rape and threats of sexual violence against Rohingya women and girls in northern Rakhine State.
- The AA subjecting Rohingya women and girls to sexual violence during recruitment raids, arbitrary detention and incommunicado confinement.
- Rohingya women and girls being detained incommunicado, enabling abuse to occur with impunity.
- Sexual violence and intimidation being used as tools of repression targeting Rohingya communities.
- Worsening humanitarian conditions and displacement increasing the risk of trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse.

Ongoing abuses under AA control, alongside longstanding persecution by the Burmese military, show that international efforts to protect the Rohingya have failed.

These findings come as more than 150,000 Rohingya have fled into Bangladesh since late 2023, while the UN High Commissioner for Refugees recently described the Andaman Sea as an “unmarked grave” for Rohingya refugees.

International inaction and continuing impunity

The findings also come amid growing concern over impunity in Burma, with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar warning that failures to hold perpetrators accountable for atrocity crimes are enabling ongoing abuses.

Nearly nine years after the Rohingya genocide, perpetrators of mass atrocities still have not been held accountable, while Rohingya communities continue to face persecution, denial of citizenship and severe restrictions imposed by both the Burmese military and the AA.

Tun Khin, President of BROUK, said:

"The genocide against the Rohingya did not end in 2017.

"The international community failed to dismantle the system that enabled genocide against the Rohingya. Today, those same structures are being reproduced under new authorities.

"This should deeply alarm the international community."

BROUK also warned that accountability for abuses against Rohingya communities cannot be selective and must apply regardless of whether violations are committed by the Burmese military or the AA.

Earlier this year, BROUK urged the Argentine court investigating the Rohingya genocide to include atrocities committed by the AA within the scope of accountability efforts.

BROUK calls for urgent international action

BROUK's recommendations included:

- Convening urgent UN Security Council action on violations of the International Court of Justice's provisional measures and ongoing abuses against Rohingya communities in Rakhine State.

- Publicly condemning sexual violence against Rohingya women and girls and explicitly naming abuses committed by the AA alongside those of the Burmese military.

- Increasing humanitarian access and funding for Rohingya communities in Rakhine State and refugee camps in Bangladesh.

- Imposing coordinated sanctions and other targeted measures against perpetrators of serious human rights abuses.

- Strengthening international accountability efforts, including support for ICJ proceedings, ICC pathways and universal jurisdiction cases covering crimes committed by both the Burmese military and the AA.

- Increasing support for Rohingya-led organisations documenting sexual violence and human rights abuses in Rakhine State.

Tun Khin added:

"The world said 'Never Again' after the genocide against the Rohingya, yet Rohingya women and girls are once again being abandoned to violence, fear and impunity.

"There can be no genuine future for Burma while anti-Rohingya persecution continues."

MYANMAR JUNTA ACCUSES ASEAN MEMBERS OF "DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES" FOLLOWING CEBU SUMMIT EXCLUSION

The Myanmar military junta's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a sharp rebuke on the evening of 10 May, accusing specific Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states of persisting with "discriminatory practices" and interfering in the country's internal affairs.

The statement, released following the 48th ASEAN Summit in Cebu, Philippines, criticized a "few member states" for maintaining restrictions and excluding the regime from equal representation, claiming such actions violate the core principles of the ASEAN Charter.

In its press release, the junta alleged that the exclusion of its top leadership ignores the "will of the Myanmar people" and constitutes unconstructive pressure. Despite being barred from high-level summits since the 2021 coup, the regime claimed it has remained patient and cooperative over the last five years. Defying regional calls for the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus, the junta declared it would instead proceed with a "Myanmar-led, Myanmar-owned" process tailored to the actual situation on the ground.

This announcement follows the 48th ASEAN Summit and related meetings held on 7 and 8 May in Cebu, Philippines. While the junta referenced a "few countries," it did not explicitly name the nations involved.

The diplomatic friction follows meetings in Cebu between 7-8 May, where junta chief Min Aung Hlaing was again denied attendance, with representation limited to Permanent Secretary U Hauk Do Suan.

The Japanese news agency The Mainichi reported on 9 May that during the Foreign Ministers' meeting prior to the summit, Thailand proposed allowing Myanmar's participation in the upcoming July meeting. However, Singapore reportedly objected to the junta's Foreign Minister attending the main session in person.

Nevertheless, The Mainichi, citing sources, noted that plans are being made to allow the junta's Foreign Minister to join an online side event during the regional Foreign Ministers' meeting this July.

On 8 May, the Singapore-based The Straits Times reported that regarding the Myanmar crisis, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste wish to strictly adhere to the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus, whereas Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam are more inclined toward re-engagement.

Meanwhile, Philippine President Marcos, the current ASEAN Chair, expressed at a press conference in Cebu on 8 May that ASEAN leaders are frustrated by the lack of progress regarding the situation in Myanmar.



National Unity Government

NUG RESPONDS TO MYANMAR JUNTA'S CRITICISM OF ASEAN ENGAGEMENT

On 11 May, Myanmar's National Unity Government rejected the military junta's criticism of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the international community for allegedly ignoring the results of the junta-staged elections and excluding the regime from regional engagement.

The text of the NUG's statement continues as follows.

These remarks are deeply contradictory and politically dishonest.

The same military leadership now calling for respect for electoral outcomes is the very institution that nullified the overwhelming results of Myanmar's 2020 general election through an unlawful coup attempt. The junta cannot credibly claim to defend democracy while continuing to imprison elected leaders, suppress political parties, silence journalists, and wage violence against civilians across the country.

ASEAN's current position toward the military junta did not arise arbitrarily. It is the direct consequence of the junta's continued failure to implement the Five-Point Consensus, its refusal to pursue inclusive dialogue, and its ongoing attacks against the people of Myanmar.

The people of Myanmar have already clearly expressed their political will through democratic

elections. Legitimacy cannot be manufactured through force, propaganda, or tightly controlled electoral exercises conducted under military rule and widespread conflict.

A credible election requires freedom of expression, political participation, security for voters, independent institutions, and public trust. None of these conditions currently exist under the junta's administration.

The National Unity Government reiterates that any political process excluding democratic forces, ethnic resistance organizations, and the broader will of the Myanmar people cannot produce genuine peace, stability, or legitimacy.

We therefore call upon ASEAN, the United Nations, and the international community to remain firm in supporting the aspirations of the Myanmar people for a federal democratic future and to reject attempts by the military junta to seek political legitimacy without accountability.

The crisis in Myanmar will not be resolved through staged narratives or coercive elections, but through an inclusive political transition grounded in justice, democracy, and the sovereign will of the people.



Photo: AFP

NUG WELCOMES ASEAN'S CONCERNS AND CALLS FOR TIMELY ACTION ON JUNTA AIRSTRIKES ON CIVILIANS

On 12 May, Myanmar's National Unity Government (NUG) responded to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit's Chair's Statement, welcoming concerns about the escalating conflict but urging the establishment of clear timelines to halt junta airstrikes on civilians.

The statement is as follows.

The National Unity Government (NUG) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar takes note of the Chair's Statement of the 48th ASEAN Summit, convened on 8 May 2026 in Cebu, Philippines, under the chairmanship of the Republic of the Philippines. We

acknowledge the Summit's reaffirmation of the theme "Navigating Our Future, Together," and underscore that for this vision to be fully realised, the peoples of Myanmar must not be left behind in ASEAN's collective journey toward peace, stability, and inclusive development.

The NUG welcomes the Summit's expression of deep concern over the continued escalation of conflict and the humanitarian situation in Myanmar, and its denunciation of acts of violence against civilians. We echo the Summit's reaffirmation that the Five-Point Consensus (5PC) remains the primary reference framework for addressing the political crisis, and we reiterate our continued commitment to its full and genuine implementation.

The NUG welcomes the Summit's call for all parties to immediately halt indiscriminate violence and exercise utmost restraint. However, words of condemnation must be matched by concrete mechanisms for accountability. We urge ASEAN to establish clear, time-bound benchmarks for the cessation of airstrikes, artillery attacks, and other indiscriminate violence against civilian populations and civilian infrastructure. Without such mechanisms, the call for civilian protection remains aspirational rather than operational.

The NUG notes the Summit's acknowledgement of the conclusion of the military junta's unilateral election exercises. We firmly reiterate that any electoral process conducted amid ongoing conflict, without the release of all political prisoners, and absent an inclusive political environment, lacks democratic legitimacy and popular mandate. ASEAN's own principles require political processes to be inclusive and credible, and we therefore urge ASEAN not to lend recognition to processes that fail to meet these standards.

The NUG acknowledges and appreciates the AHA Centre's continued delivery of humanitarian assistance under Phase 2 of the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Programme to implement Point 4 of the 5PC. We welcome the Summit's call for all relevant parties to facilitate safe, transparent, inclusive, and non-discriminatory delivery of humanitarian aid. We reiterate, however, that effective and principled humanitarian assistance must be coordinated with the NUG and Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs), who administer significant portions of the country's territory and population. Any assistance channelled exclusively through military-controlled mechanisms risks politicisation and falls short of the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality.

The NUG commends the dedicated efforts of H.E. Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro, the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar, and welcomes her broad engagement with a diverse range of Myanmar stakeholders. We support the ongoing deliberations on the Terms of Reference for a long-term ASEAN Special Envoy on Myanmar and strongly urge that any such mandate explicitly include formal, structured engagement with the NUG and EROs as legitimate stakeholders in any political process.

While the NUG acknowledges ASEAN's note of the release of certain political prisoners, such measures remain wholly insufficient. Reports concerning the release of President U Win Myint and the relocation of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also remain unclear and unverified. Meanwhile, thousands of political prisoners continue to be arbitrarily detained. Their immediate and unconditional release is essential to any credible and inclusive political dialogue.

The NUG takes note of the Summit's broader agenda, including its commitment to ASEAN Community-building, digital transformation, sustainable development, and inclusive growth. We reaffirm our aspiration for a federal and democratic Myanmar to contribute fully and me.



Rimond Htoo

THE PASSING OF RIMOND HTOO, FORMER KNPP GENERAL SECRETARY

The Burma Campaign UK issued a statement on the passing of Rimond Htoo, the former Secretary General of the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) on 10 May.

The statement is as follows.

Everyone at Burma Campaign UK is saddened to learn of the passing of Rimond Htoo, former General Secretary of the Karenni National Progressive Party.

Rimond Htoo was an inspiring and experienced political leader who stood firm on principle, opposing the divide and rule tactics employed by the Burmese military.

During his time in London, he became a friend and source of advice, always on top of new political developments and new technology. He was a modest man with no thought of personal gain, dedicating his life to the struggle for freedom for the Karenni people and for all the people of Burma.

We send our condolences to his family and friends. He will be missed.



Photo: AFP

TRUMP 2.0 AND XI 3.0 SUMMIT: TRADE, TECHNOLOGY, AND TERRITORY

NICHOLAS KONG

U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping opened a high-stakes summit in Beijing on May 14, 2026, amid intensifying geopolitical rivalry, fragile economic stabilization, and mounting global uncertainty.

Following an elaborate reception at the Great Hall of the People, the two leaders held more than two hours of bilateral talks covering trade, tariffs, rare earth minerals, artificial intelligence, Taiwan, the Strait of Hormuz, and transnational threats ranging from narcotics trafficking to cyber-enabled financial crime.

Trump arrived with an unusually broad delegation that included the defense secretary, secretary of state, treasury secretary, trade representative, and U.S. ambassador to China, alongside chief executives from 17 major American corporations. Xi was joined by China's vice premier, foreign minister, defense minister,

finance minister, commerce minister, chief of staff, and the head of the National Development and Reform Commission.

The symbolism mattered as much as the substance. The summit was carefully staged to project both competition and coexistence: pride, politics, and power wrapped inside diplomatic choreography.

From Trade War to Managed Coexistence

The atmosphere surrounding the 2026 summit differs sharply from the first Trump–Xi meetings between 2017 and 2020.

In 2017, tensions centered primarily on bilateral trade imbalances, intellectual property disputes, and escalating tariffs. By contrast, the current relationship

reflects a more structurally entrenched rivalry shaped by technological competition, supply-chain security, and geopolitical fragmentation.

After tariffs once surged beyond 140 percent and Beijing weaponized rare earth supply restrictions, both countries now appear to be moving toward what might be described as “managed economic coexistence.” Neither side expects reconciliation, but both increasingly recognize the costs of uncontrolled escalation.

China retains leverage through its dominance in rare earth processing and advanced manufacturing, while the United States continues to wield financial influence, semiconductor export controls, and military superiority in the Indo-Pacific.

Trump enters the summit focused on “reciprocity and fairness,” seeking tangible outcomes on tariffs, agricultural exports, semiconductor access, and strategic supply chains. Beijing, meanwhile, aims to stabilize relations sufficiently to preserve economic confidence while avoiding concessions that could appear politically weak domestically.

China is expected to increase purchases of American goods—including aircraft, agriculture, and energy products—providing Trump with a politically marketable outcome ahead of a contentious election cycle.

Yet beneath these transactional arrangements lies a deeper structural reality: Washington and Beijing are no longer pursuing convergence. They are attempting to prevent rivalry from becoming unmanageable.

Technology: The New Strategic Frontier

Technology has now replaced trade as the core arena of strategic competition.

The disputes that once focused on telecommunications infrastructure and intellectual property theft have evolved into a race over artificial intelligence, quantum computing, advanced semiconductors, and military-enabled technologies.

The summit included discussions on establishing a bilateral channel for AI safety and technological risk management—an acknowledgment that both sides increasingly view artificial intelligence not merely as an economic tool, but as a strategic capability with military and geopolitical consequences.

Washington’s export controls on advanced AI chips remain central to this contest. U.S. policymakers believe that maintaining even an 18-to-24-month lead in frontier AI systems could significantly shape future military and economic balances.

At the same time, concerns over Chinese cyber operations and AI-enabled disinformation campaigns continue to drive U.S. national security thinking.

Despite these tensions, both governments recognize the dangers of unrestricted technological decoupling. Their economies remain deeply interconnected, even as they selectively separate in critical sectors.

Taiwan and the Geography of Risk

Taiwan remains the summit's most dangerous issue.

Xi warned that mishandling the Taiwan question could push bilateral relations "into a very dangerous place," emphasizing that it remains the most sensitive issue in China-U.S. relations.

Beijing reportedly seeks greater restraint from Washington on arms sales, political engagement, and rhetoric surrounding Taiwanese sovereignty. Chinese officials also appear interested in shifting U.S. declaratory language from "not supporting Taiwan independence" toward a more explicit opposition to it.

The Trump administration, meanwhile, appears focused on preserving strategic ambiguity and preventing escalation while avoiding perceptions of weakness in the Indo-Pacific.

Neither side is seeking immediate confrontation. But both understand that Taiwan remains the most likely trigger for a future crisis between the world's two largest powers.

Iran, Energy, and Strategic Interdependence

The summit unfolded against the backdrop of heightened instability in the Middle East following the U.S.-Iran conflict and threats to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

China, the world's largest importer of Iranian oil, faces growing vulnerability to energy disruptions despite expanded reserves and investment in renewable energy. Rising energy prices and instability in Gulf supply chains also threaten sectors critical to China's economy, including chemicals and semiconductor production.

Washington reportedly pressed Beijing on purchases of Iranian oil and possible indirect support networks connected to Tehran.

At the same time, both sides recognize that prolonged instability in the Gulf harms their respective economies. Even strategic competitors remain bound together by global energy dependence.

Beyond Bilateralism: The Wider Strategic Landscape

The implications of the summit extend far beyond Washington and Beijing.

Europe watches from the sidelines with growing concern as its economic dependence on China's clean-energy supply chains deepens. India fears losing strategic leverage if the U.S. and China stabilize relations sufficiently to reduce reliance on New Delhi as a balancing force in Asia.

Across ASEAN and East Asia, regional governments increasingly prepare for a world defined not by stable equilibrium, but by selective cooperation amid enduring rivalry.

The Gulf states also view the summit closely, given its implications for regional stability, energy shipping, and sovereign wealth investments.

Even Russia remains relevant in the background. Xi's continued engagement with Vladimir Putin reinforces Beijing's broader balancing strategy while signaling that China intends to maintain multiple strategic partnerships simultaneously.

Historical Echoes

The summit inevitably invites comparison to Richard Nixon's 1972 visit to China and the Shanghai Communiqué.

That diplomatic breakthrough did not erase ideological differences between Washington and Beijing. Instead, it established a framework for coexistence despite acknowledged disagreement.

Today's summit reflects a similar logic—but under vastly different conditions. The objective is no longer normalization or integration. It is stability amid systemic rivalry.

Washington increasingly accepts that it must engage China as it exists, not as earlier policymakers once hoped it might become. Beijing, meanwhile, appears increasingly confident that strategic competition can coexist with economic interdependence so long as China's political system and national dignity remain secure.

Managed Instability

The most realistic outcome of the summit is neither reconciliation nor confrontation.

It is managed instability.

Both countries face internal pressures. Trump confronts inflation concerns, energy shocks, and domestic political demands for economic victories. Xi faces slowing growth, weak consumer confidence, demographic strain, and mounting strategic pressure in East Asia.

Neither side can afford uncontrolled conflict. Neither side is willing to fundamentally concede.

The likely result is an uneasy coexistence characterized by selective cooperation, controlled rivalry, and periodic crises managed before escalation spirals beyond control.

The summit may stabilize relations temporarily. It may extend trade truces, create new communication channels, and reduce immediate tensions.

But it will not fundamentally alter the competitive nature of the U.S.-China relationship—or the evolving security architecture of the Indo-Pacific.

The future of U.S.-China relations is unlikely to be stable partnership.

It will be a managed competition under conditions of permanent strategic mistrust.

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WHEN THE WINDOW CLOSED

“There’s always been a Burma network in the Norwegian parliament,” says Ola Elvestuen, speaking to the Insight Myanmar Podcast. An MP for Norway’s Liberal Party since 2013, Elvestuen has devoted his political career to environmental and societal issues that affect us all. He served as Minister of Climate and the Environment from 2018 to 2020, and has held several high-ranking positions in local and parliamentary politics, including vice mayor of Oslo and vice chairman of the Liberal Party.

As a young man in the late 1980s, he witnessed a rapidly shifting global landscape: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the ousting of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, and the 8888 Uprising in Myanmar. Since then, he has engaged with global challenges to promote peace, fairness, and sustainability, and has worked on issues involving Belarus, Iran, Eritrea, Tibet, Taiwan, and beyond. With authoritarianism on the rise, he believes countries like Myanmar are central to reversing this global trend.

Looking back to Myanmar, Elvestuen recalls how the 1988 demonstrations and coup embedded the Burmese struggle deep into Norwegian politics and foreign policy. In 1992, the Norwegian Burma Committee (NBC) was

established following Aung San Suu Kyi’s Nobel Peace Prize win the previous year, and around the same time the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) began broadcasting into the country from Oslo.

Fast forward to 2021, and Elvestuen says the contrast could not be sharper. He argues the international community should have responded immediately—and forcefully—after the military seized power. Instead, he points to weak global media coverage and Western governments’ passive stance as reasons the crisis has escalated. “The demonstrations that were held were incredible,” he says, “but they did not get the support they should have gotten in the early days.”

Elvestuen remains firm that the National League for Democracy (NLD) was the legitimate government following the 2020 elections, and that formal recognition of the National Unity Government (NUG)—by the UN and individual countries—should have happened immediately after the coup.

That clarity of conviction is rooted not only in policy but in his own experience in Myanmar. In 2014, during its democratic opening, Elvestuen joined former Liberal Party leader Arne Fjørtoft on a trip focused on environmental cooperation. He remembers a beautiful country with friendly people, but also meeting families in extremely difficult circumstances. Together, they distributed solar panels to homes without electricity and planted mangrove trees in the Irrawaddy Delta—work Elvestuen still recalls fondly.

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<https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2026/4/28/episode-528-when-the-window-closed>



JUNTA CHIEF PUSHES MSME-LED ECONOMIC STRATEGY AMID MYANMAR POLITICAL CRISIS

Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing has called for expanded support for small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) as part of a broader push for economic self-reliance amid international sanctions and ongoing conflict, according to state media reports published this week.

Speaking at an MSME development meeting in Naypyidaw, Min Aung Hlaing said strengthening domestic production was essential for economic growth and reducing dependence on imports, according to the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

The junta leader urged ministries, regional authorities, and business groups to provide greater technical and financial support for MSMEs, while promoting local manufacturing and agricultural production.

"MSME activities are key to national economic growth," the GNLM quoted him as saying in its 16 May edition.

The comments come as Myanmar's quasi-civilian military junta faces mounting economic pressure from Western sanctions, a decline in foreign investment, and persistent currency instability following the 2021 coup.

The junta has increasingly promoted import substitution policies and domestic production campaigns since seizing power, while attempting to conserve foreign currency reserves.

According to state media, Min Aung Hlaing highlighted the need to boost production of cooking oil crops and other agricultural goods to reduce reliance on imports.

The junta chief also called for increased export earnings and stronger industrial production, while stressing the importance of cooperation between government agencies and private businesses.

The kyat has depreciated sharply against the US dollar since 2021, contributing to rising inflation and higher costs for imported fuel, medicine, and consumer goods.

The junta has responded with increased economic intervention, including foreign exchange controls, import licensing restrictions, and periodic Central Bank currency injections aimed at stabilizing prices and supporting key sectors.

The ongoing conflict, weak investor confidence, and extensive military spending continue to undermine prospects for sustained recovery despite the junta's emphasis on domestic economic development.

State media has increasingly portrayed MSME promotion as a cornerstone of the junta's economic policy agenda as Myanmar faces deepening international isolation and a protracted internal conflict.



Yangon. Photo: AFP

THE K-WORD IS BACK IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND SO IS THE PUSHBACK

Myanmar's social media feeds have filled this week with a familiar pattern. The K-word — a long-standing slur against Muslims and people of South Asian descent — is sweeping back into Facebook comment sections, Telegram channels, and TikTok captions, dragging entire communities into disputes that began as isolated rows online.

The "K-word" in Myanmar is *kalar*, a highly contentious and racist term used to describe people of South Asian descent, particularly Rohingya, Indian, or Muslim minorities.

The tone in many comment threads has turned sharply hostile. One widely shared post read, "They've gotten brazen — they never dared speak like this before. If they don't like it, leave the country." Another insisted, "Some mindsets in this country only deserve military boots."

TikTok creators have piled in with reaction videos, while a separate trending clip showing pro-junta monk

Pauk Ko Taw arguing that a saffron robe alone earns reverence "regardless of the wearer's morality" has drawn both defenders and angry critics, who read it as cover for ultranationalist clergy.

Counter-voices are equally loud. "When something happens, look at the person. Don't bring religion into it," one widely shared comment urged. Another called out double standards: "When it's one of your own, suddenly it has nothing to do with the whole community — but you generalise everyone else." The hashtag #NoDiscrimination is now spreading across Facebook.

On 15 May, the Progressive Muslim Youth Association issued a statement condemning the discrimination and the cycle of reciprocal blame. Myanmar's recent history — from the 2012 Rakhine riots to the 2017 Rohingya crisis — gives this familiar online pattern worrying weight.

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.