

ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight



Why Aung San Suu Kyi's 81st Birthday Became a Political Signal

A State Welcome, but at a Price: What Min Aung Hlaing's China Visit Reveals About Beijing's Expectations

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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.

MIN AUNG HLAING SHAMES BURMA

INDEPENDENCE FOUNDER AUNG SAN

Burma junta leader Min Aung Hlaing is responsible for a pattern of removal of statues and images of General Aung San around Burma, effectively shaming the founder of Burma's armed forces and the architect of Burmese independence.

Aung San will be rolling in his grave. Images of the general are slyly being removed by a military coup-maker who has further ruined the image of the military in the eyes of the Burmese public. Aung San would be shocked by the actions of the bloodthirsty coup-maker, who since 2021 has been at war with his own people.

The latest action happened in the dead of night in Yangon. Military junta forces removed a portrait of General Aung San from the front gate of imprisoned State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi's residence at No. 54 University Avenue Road, Yangon, under the pretext of conducting a guest-list inspection, according to Mizzima sources.

The portrait removal is part of a broader pattern. Min Aung Hlaing's military junta has been systematically demolishing and removing bronze statues of General Aung San across the country. On the night of 9 June, a 15-foot bronze statue of General Aung San weighing approximately 740 kilogrammes, located on Kan Road in Taungoo, Bago Region, was demolished and removed during a city-wide blackout. Myanmar's junta leader Min Aung Hlaing and newly appointed Chief of General Staff Ye Win Oo had visited Taungoo on 6 June, three days before the demolition.

Since the February 2021 coup, the junta has carried out at least five documented removals of General Aung San's bronze statues, all conducted during midnight blackouts over the last two years - in Thazi, Mandalay Region, in Pobbathiri, Naypyidaw, in Bago, in Pathein, Ayeyarwady Region, and most recently in Taungoo. Now the picture of

Aung San outside Aung San Suu Kyi's house has gone missing.

What is it about the stature of Min Aung Hlaing that prompts him to erase the memory of Burma's founder and general who helped create the Tatmadaw or Burmese military forces? Instead of leveraging the standing of the "Father of the Nation", Burma's new "president" appears to be keen to erase him from memory.

Any steadfast and confident leader would not be giving the order to remove these statues and images in the middle of the night.

No doubt the ego of the Burmese leader was pumped up during his recent state visits to India and China as he seeks to cement his role under a quasi-civilian administration shoehorned into place following "sham" elections that sought to change the regime from green to white - a regime that continues to maim and kill its own citizens.

Clearly, Min Aung Hlaing fears standing in the shadow of the man who founded his country, the man who is the father of the "people's choice", Aung San Suu Kyi - a woman now locked away with no "proof of life". Maybe this is why he has ordered his men to take a sledgehammer to statues of Bogyoke Aung San, a man brutally taken down in a hail of bullets on the 19 July 1947 in the Secretariat Building in Rangoon.

As the days, weeks and months tick by under Min Aung Hlaing's new regime, it is becoming increasingly clear that the emperor has no clothes. The leaders of India, China and Russia will not tell him, as they have too much to gain from interacting with this charlatan, not fit to be associated with the "Father of the Nation".

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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 Aung San Suu Kyi
by AFP



Out of sight but not out of mind.
Photo: AFP

WHY AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S 81ST BIRTHDAY BECAME A POLITICAL SIGNAL

The 81st birthday of Myanmar's detained democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi on 19 June became far more than a personal milestone. The occasion evolved into a coordinated political message from pro-democracy groups, activists, embassies and Myanmar communities abroad, highlighting not only her continued detention but also the broader issue of political prisoners and the need for stronger international pressure on the brutal Myanmar military regime. It also had analysts scrambling around to try to read possible underlying messages sent by Western embassies that might hint at weakness in their stance concerning the junta that is trying to pass itself off as an "elected civilian administration" under the "presidency" of Min Aung Hlaing.

'PROOF OF LIFE'

More than five years after the February 2021 coup, Aung San Suu Kyi remains in military custody with opposition figures screaming for "proof of life". Her whereabouts remain uncertain and public access to her has been severely restricted, with an undated photo of her released by the junta prompting more questions than answers.

As her son Kim Aris pointed out, the anniversary marked her sixth birthday spent in detention since the coup and underscored the unresolved nature of Myanmar's political crisis. Aris encouraged people to run, cycle or skateboard 81 kilometres to mark the anniversary, with him showing off his skateboarding skills.

REMINDER ABOUT PRISONERS

Pro-democracy organisations used the occasion to stress that her case is inseparable from the fate of thousands of other detainees imprisoned since the military takeover. Rather than focusing solely on one individual, the anniversary was presented as a symbol of

the struggle against military rule and a reminder that democratic aspirations in Myanmar remain unresolved.

Her birthday proved to be another occasion where some commentators felt it necessary to mention Aung San Suu Kyi's troubled interaction with the International Court of Justice in 2019, where she stood up for the Myanmar military over their conduct in the alleged genocide against the Rohingya in Rakhine State in 2016-17. This prompted "The Independent" to make a documentary entitled "Cancelled: The Rise and Fall of Aung San Suu Kyi" that sought to explain her actions.

This controversy was a reminder that nobody is perfect, including "The Lady", who was tarnished by the accusations, but remains a potent symbol and democracy icon whose struggles and bouts of incarceration over the decades remind the Myanmar people and their supporters over the overall goal of the Spring Revolution – to kick the military out of Myanmar leadership and politics.



The Rose Movement in support of Aung San Suu Kyi

ERADICATING DICTATORSHIP

The National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) issued a statement calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners. The organisation described her as a long-standing figure in Myanmar's democratic movement and argued that her detention represents the military's continuing rejection of the popular will.

The NUCC reaffirmed that the objectives of the Spring Revolution are the eradication of dictatorship and the establishment of a federal democratic union based on equality, justice and self-determination. According to the statement, the most meaningful way to honour Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday would be to achieve lasting democratic change and restore sovereignty to the people.

Other major anti-junta institutions echoed similar themes. Mizzima reported that the Committee Repre-

senting Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), the National Unity Government (NUG) and the NUCC jointly demanded the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners. Their statements framed the issue as part of a broader democratic struggle rather than a campaign centred on one political personality.

All this said, the demonstrations, statements, and overall hoopla by the opposition and Western players ran counter the recent India and China state visits where Min Aung Hlaing was feted and fed, no doubt reassuring him about their neighbourly support.

CALLING ON ASEAN AND THE UN

The birthday was a chance to remind the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations that "hurty words" leveled at the Myanmar junta are not enough to tackle South East Asia's festering sore.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) used the anniversary to demand concrete international action. It argued that the continued imprisonment of Aung San Suu Kyi and thousands of others demonstrates the military's attempt to overturn democratic outcomes and deny citizens their right to choose their government. The organisation called on ASEAN members, governments and United Nations bodies to move beyond rhetorical expressions of concern and instead apply coordinated pressure on the junta.

The anniversary was accompanied by widespread mobilisation both inside and outside Myanmar. Mizzima reported that anti-regime activists launched an international "Rose Campaign", using the flower long associated with Aung San Suu Kyi as a symbol of resistance. Demonstrations took place in different parts of Myanmar, where protesters demanded her release and called for unity among resistance forces. In many instances, this proved to be a "cat-and-mouse" game



May Myat Noe, model and actress, calls for 'proof of life'

where protestors sought to voice or show their feelings without being arrested by the organs of the military junta.

OUT ON THE STREETS

Myanmar communities overseas also transformed the occasion into a political event. In the Thai border town of Mae Sot, members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and Myanmar expatriates organised merit-making activities, distributed food and handed out roses. In London, activists staged a 24-hour hunger strike outside the Myanmar embassy to protest her continued detention.

Another campaign focused on obtaining proof of life for the imprisoned leader. Mizzima reported on growing international efforts aimed at securing confirmation of her condition and location. The issue has become increasingly important because of the limited information available regarding her health and whereabouts.

Diplomatic actors joined the campaign as well. Several foreign embassies and diplomatic missions based in Yangon launched parallel digital campaigns marking her birthday. These symbolic gestures reflected continuing international concern over the detention of Myanmar's former state counsellor and the wider political situation.

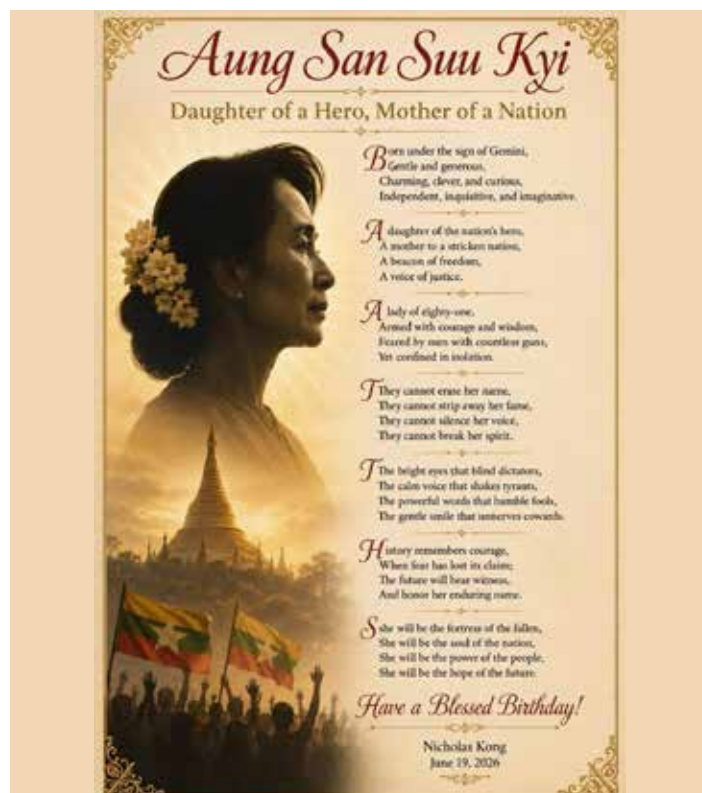
The significance of the anniversary therefore extended beyond commemorative activities. It became an opportunity for pro-democracy actors to reconnect Myanmar's domestic crisis with international diplomacy. Calls for Aung San Suu Kyi's release were linked to demands for the release of all political prisoners, accountability for the military authorities and stronger international engagement.

SEEKING A SETTLEMENT

For resistance organisations, keeping Aung San Suu Kyi's case visible internationally serves several purposes. It reminds foreign governments that the democratic mandate established before the coup remains unresolved. It highlights ongoing human rights concerns. And it reinforces the message that any political settlement in Myanmar cannot ignore questions of political imprisonment and democratic legitimacy.

As Myanmar's conflict enters its sixth year, the 81st birthday of Aung San Suu Kyi demonstrated that her detention still carries powerful symbolic weight. Through coordinated statements, diaspora activism, embassy campaigns and appeals for international action, pro-democracy forces used the anniversary to send a broader message - that the struggle against military rule must continue and that sustained international pressure remains essential to securing democratic change and freedom for Myanmar's political prisoners, not just "The Lady".

Sources: Mizzima



ANALYSIS & INSIGHT



EVIL MYANMAR REGIME FAILS TO CHANGE ITS SPOTS

When Senior General Min Aung Hlaing formally assumed the presidency earlier this year following elections, some observers speculated whether the move might signal a change in the Myanmar military regime's approach. Developments over the past two months, however, suggest the opposite.

Military operations and attacks on civilians have continued across multiple conflict areas, particularly in Chin State. On 19 June, a junta airstrike struck an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in Kyindwe, killing five civilians, including two women, and injuring more than ten others. The attack occurred amid ongoing military offensives in Kanpetlet and Mindat townships, where resistance forces have mounted significant challenges to junta troops.

Local residents report near-daily airstrikes since mid-May. Communications blackouts and restricted access have made independent verification difficult, but accounts from displaced civilians indicate growing fear and insecurity. On 21 June alone, junta aircraft reportedly conducted more than 50 bombing runs, dropping over 110 bombs across Mindat and Kanpetlet townships.

The intensified use of air power appears linked to difficulties faced by ground forces. Residents and local sources suggest military units have suffered losses during operations in southern Chin State, increasing reliance on aerial bombardment to support offensives and exert pressure on civilian populations.

A recent report by Women for Justice highlights the human cost of this strategy. The organization documented 119 civilian deaths in Chin and Sagaing regions since Min Aung

Hlaing assumed the presidency. Airstrikes accounted for the majority of fatalities, followed by artillery attacks, killings involving human shields or detainees, and landmine incidents. More than 150 civilians were also reported injured.

Rather than signaling moderation, the evidence points to a continuation—and in some areas an escalation—of military tactics that have characterized the conflict since the 2021 coup. For civilians living in contested regions, the change in Min Aung Hlaing's title has not translated into greater security or protection from violence.

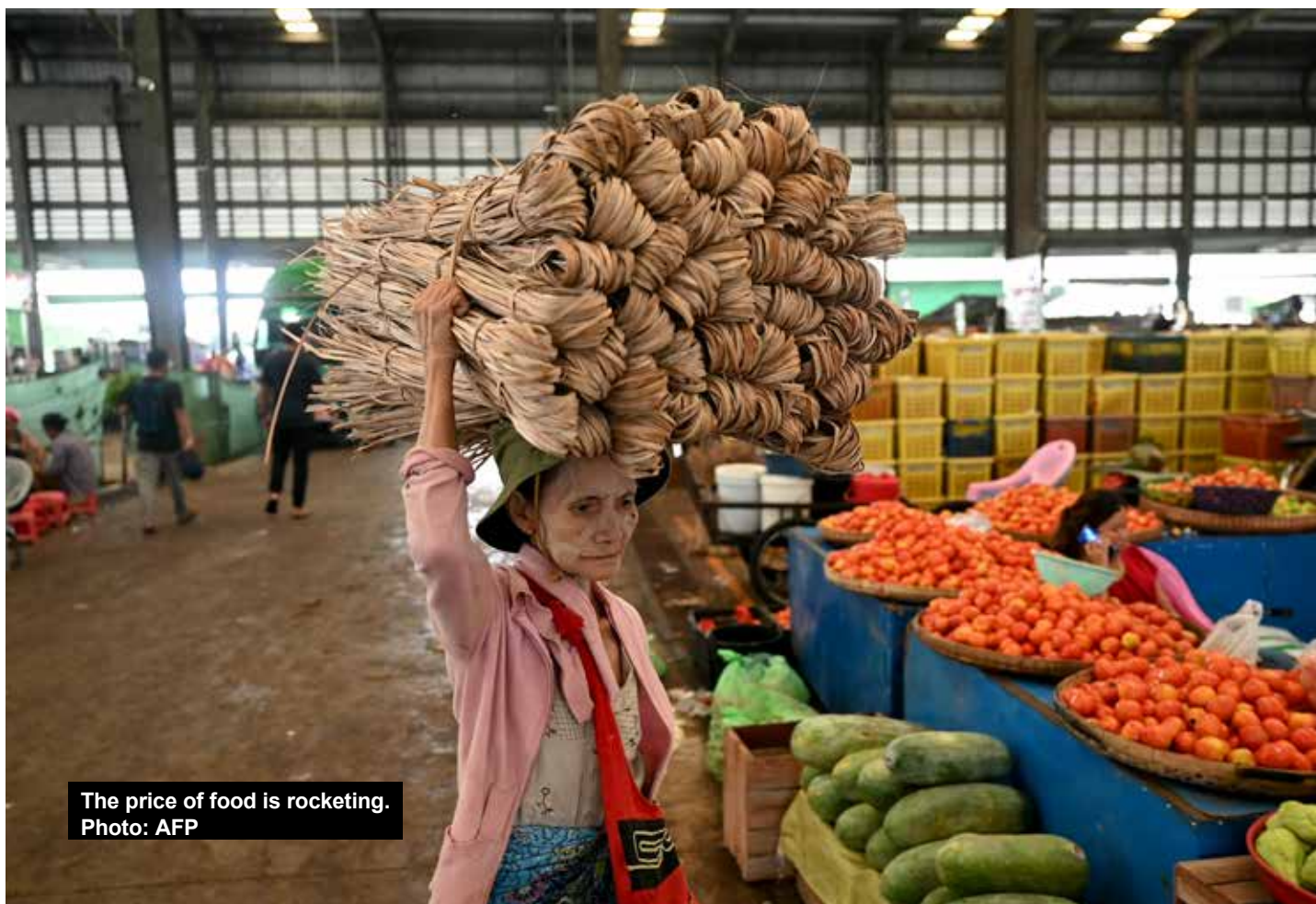
Myanmar population suffer from the cost-of-living crisis

Myanmar's economic crisis continues to deepen as inflation, conflict and policy failures combine to place unprecedented pressure on households and farmers. While official indicators already paint a troubling picture, conditions on the ground suggest that the hardship experienced by ordinary people is even more severe.

One of the most visible impacts has been the sharp rise in agricultural input costs. Fertilizer prices have increased dramatically in recent months, climbing from below 100,000 kyats per bag to between 160,000 and 180,000 kyats. Traders and farmers attribute the increase partly to disruptions linked to conflict in the Middle East, which has affected global supply chains and commodity markets.

Domestic policies have also contributed to the problem. Critics argue that import permits for agricultural inputs are concentrated among a small group of companies with close ties to the authorities, reducing market competition and pushing prices higher. As a result, farmers are paying more for essential inputs while receiving little support to offset rising production costs.

For Myanmar's farmers, particularly those in Shan State, the consequences are severe. Southern Shan remains one of the country's most important vegetable-producing regions, yet many farmers are trapped in a cycle of debt. While production costs continue to rise,



The price of food is rocketing.
Photo: AFP

farm-gate prices for crops often remain low, leaving producers unable to recover their investments.

Many farmers depend on brokers for loans and production financing. As profits shrink, debt accumulates, forcing families to continue farming despite recurring losses. The imbalance between rising input costs and weak market returns has become one of the most significant threats to rural livelihoods. Farmers increasingly report that agriculture is no longer generating sustainable incomes, yet they have few alternative employment opportunities.

The broader economic outlook offers little reassurance. The World Bank projects Myanmar's economy will grow by only around two percent during the 2026–2027 fiscal year. Inflation reached 24.6 percent in April 2026, up from 21.1 percent in the previous fiscal year. Although these figures are already alarming, consumers report much sharper increases in the prices of everyday necessities, particularly food, fuel and transportation.

The impact extends beyond agriculture. Businesses and workers increasingly focus on survival rather than

expansion or investment. Security concerns, labour shortages and the effects of military conscription have pushed many workers out of productive sectors, weakening domestic production and reducing income opportunities. Thousands of young people have either left the country or moved away from traditional industries to avoid conscription and insecurity, creating additional pressure on local economies.

Food insecurity is becoming an increasingly urgent concern. According to the World Food Programme, 16.7 million people in Myanmar are expected to face food-security challenges in 2026, compared with 13.3 million in 2024. Of these, approximately 2.8 million people are struggling to secure even one meal a day.

The combination of conflict, inflation and declining economic opportunities is creating a vicious cycle. As costs rise and incomes stagnate, households reduce spending, businesses delay investment and farmers scale back production. Lower agricultural output then contributes to higher food prices, further worsening the burden on consumers. Without meaningful economic stabilization and improvements in security, Myanmar's



cost-of-living crisis is likely to worsen, carrying serious implications for food security, poverty and social stability in the year ahead.

Farmers under siege

As Myanmar enters the rainy season, farmers across the country would normally be preparing their fields for one of the most important periods of the agricultural calendar. Instead, many are confronting a different reality: displacement, insecurity and the growing risk of losing another year of production due to armed conflict.

Agriculture remains the backbone of livelihoods for millions of people in Myanmar. Because much of the country's farming depends on seasonal rainfall rather than irrigation systems, timing is critical. Missing the planting season can mean losing an entire harvest and the income needed to sustain a family for the following year.

Yet military operations and ongoing clashes are preventing many farmers from accessing their land.

In Okpho Township in Bago Region, a large junta military column has moved through rural communities since May, forcing residents from around 30 villages to flee their homes. The military presence has disrupted preparations for paddy cultivation at precisely the time when farmers would normally begin fieldwork. Local residents report that many are unable to return to their farms because troops continue manoeuvring through villages and surrounding areas.

Similar challenges are emerging in Sagaing Region. In Indaw Township, where military forces have recently attempted to reassert control over territory contested by resistance groups, fighting has made agricultural work increasingly dangerous. Farmers not only face security risks but also shortages of essential inputs as transport routes and supply chains remain disrupted.

The situation is particularly severe in Karenni State, one of the regions most heavily affected by displacement. According to local organizations, approximately 80 percent of the state's population has been forced from their homes since the conflict intensified. Many displaced families were previously dependent on farming for both food and income.

The scale of agricultural decline is striking. Before the 2021 coup, Karenni State had roughly 90,000 acres of farmland under cultivation. Local authorities now estimate that only about 20,000 acres remain actively farmed. Vast areas of productive land have been abandoned as conflict prevents communities from returning safely.

Even those who continue farming face enormous uncertainty. Farmers describe working under the constant threat of drone surveillance and aerial attacks. The risks do not end with planting. Many worry that crops may never be harvested if fighting erupts during harvest season. In some communities, previous harvests were disrupted by armed clashes and drone strikes, causing both crop losses and civilian casualties.

Economic pressures further compound these difficulties. Years of conflict have forced many farming households into debt. In border areas between southern Shan State and Karenni State, more than 20,000 acres of paddy land reportedly have remained uncultivated for three consecutive years because of insecurity. As incomes disappear, some families have begun selling land or other assets to repay loans.

The consequences extend beyond individual households. Reduced cultivation means lower food production, increasing dependence on imported rice and food supplies from other regions. In areas where local rice varieties were traditionally consumed, communities are increasingly forced to purchase more expensive alternatives from central Myanmar.



Myanmar's Min Aung Hlaing with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Photo: AFP

A STATE WELCOME, BUT AT A PRICE: WHAT MIN AUNG HLAING'S CHINA VISIT REVEALS ABOUT BEIJING'S EXPECTATIONS

Myanmar junta leader Min Aung Hlaing undoubtedly will have been chuffed by the pomp and symbolism of the state reception he received in China last week, the pounding of a military salute echoing across Tiananmen Square. After years of diplomatic isolation following the 2021 military coup, photographs of him meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping and senior Chinese leaders offered the Myanmar leader something he has long sought - international legitimacy and another "diplomatic win" on the back of his recent India visit.

Yet beneath the ceremony and official language lay a more uncomfortable reality. Beijing's embrace was accompanied by unmistakable reminders that China expects Myanmar to serve Chinese strategic interests and remain responsive to Chinese demands. The visit highlighted not a relationship between equals, but one in which Beijing continues to wield enormous influence over its troubled southern neighbour.

CHINA'S 'VASSAL STATE'

It is no surprise that Beijing continues to treat Myanmar like a "vassal state".

For Min Aung Hlaing, the trip represented an important political achievement. China remains Myanmar's largest trading partner, one of its biggest investors and arguably the foreign power with the greatest leverage over developments inside the

country. Being received with full state honours in Beijing provided the military leader with an image of international acceptance that Western governments continue to deny him.

Chinese officials spoke warmly about the long-standing "Pauk-Phaw" friendship between the two countries and stressed the importance of expanding strategic cooperation. Mizzima reported that the visit resulted in a series of agreements covering trade, infrastructure, transportation, health, media cooperation and disaster management.

But behind the language of friendship, China made clear what it expects from Myanmar.

SEEKING STABILITY

Foremost among Beijing's priorities is stability. Chinese leaders once again emphasised the need for peace and national reconciliation. For Beijing, instability inside Myanmar threatens major Chinese investments and strategic projects, particularly those linked to the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, which forms part of the wider increasingly strained Belt and Road Initiative.

These projects are enormously important to China, given the geopolitical challenges the country faces. They provide access to the Indian Ocean through the deep-sea port of Kyaukphyu, reducing dependence on vulnerable maritime routes and giving Beijing

alternative channels for energy imports and trade. Pipelines already crossing Myanmar carry oil and gas directly into China, while further infrastructure plans remain central to Beijing's long-term geopolitical ambitions.

Myanmar is China's back door.

Chinese leaders therefore urged the Myanmar authorities to advance these projects and create conditions that would allow them to proceed without disruption. Such calls underline how closely Chinese strategic interests are tied to events inside Myanmar.

SEEKING SECURITY

China also placed considerable emphasis on security along the two countries' shared border. Beijing again raised concerns about cybercrime, online scam centres, narcotics trafficking and transnational criminal networks operating in border regions.

These issues have become major irritants for China. In recent years Beijing has pressured various actors inside Myanmar to crack down on criminal enterprises that have targeted thousands of Chinese citizens. During Min Aung Hlaing's visit, Chinese leaders stressed the need for greater cooperation in suppressing these activities.

China's approach reveals its fundamentally pragmatic view of Myanmar. Beijing has maintained relations not only with the military authorities but also with several ethnic armed organisations controlling territory near the Chinese border. Its overriding concern is not ideology or political legitimacy but stability and protection of Chinese interests.

This pragmatism has often left Myanmar appearing less like an independent partner and more like a country whose political trajectory is heavily influenced by Beijing's calculations.

Reporting suggests that Chinese calls for dialogue and peace are similarly driven by practical concerns. Beijing wants fighting reduced because prolonged conflict threatens infrastructure projects, disrupts border trade and creates instability that spills into China itself.

STRESSING NON-INTERFERENCE

At the same time, China continues to avoid direct criticism of the military leadership. Rather than pressing for democratic reforms or accountability, Beijing consistently emphasises non-interference and respect for sovereignty. Such positions have provided important diplomatic cover for Min Aung Hlaing's administration.

For the Myanmar junta leader, this support is valuable. International sanctions and widespread condemnation from Western countries have left the junta with relatively few influential friends. China's willingness to engage publicly with Min Aung Hlaing provides him with badly needed political recognition.

WEAK STATE

Yet the relationship remains highly unequal.

Myanmar's economy is weak, foreign investment from many countries has dried up and armed conflict continues across large parts of the country. Under such circumstances, dependence on China has increased. Beijing possesses economic leverage, political influence and relationships with multiple actors inside Myanmar, including some ethnic armed groups whose actions directly affect the military's position.

This imbalance means that every public display of friendship carries implicit expectations. China expects cooperation on border security. It expects protection for Chinese investments. It expects progress on strategic infrastructure. And it expects Naypyidaw to remain sensitive to Beijing's wider regional interests.

For Min Aung Hlaing, the images from the Beijing visit undoubtedly represented a diplomatic success. But they also served as a reminder that international acceptance can come with significant obligations.

STATE OF DEPENDENCE

The state welcome may have projected prestige, but it underscored an enduring reality. More than five years after the coup, Myanmar's rulers remain heavily dependent on China, while Beijing continues to shape the country's future according to its own priorities.

For many observers, that dependence increasingly resembles a relationship in which Myanmar is treated less as an equal partner and more as a subordinate state whose stability, resources and geography are expected to serve the interests of its giant northern neighbour.

That may have been the unspoken message behind the smiles, handshakes and ceremonial honours in Beijing – and ironically it runs counter to the Myanmar generals' hidden but long-standing distrust of its northern neighbour.

Sources: Mizzima

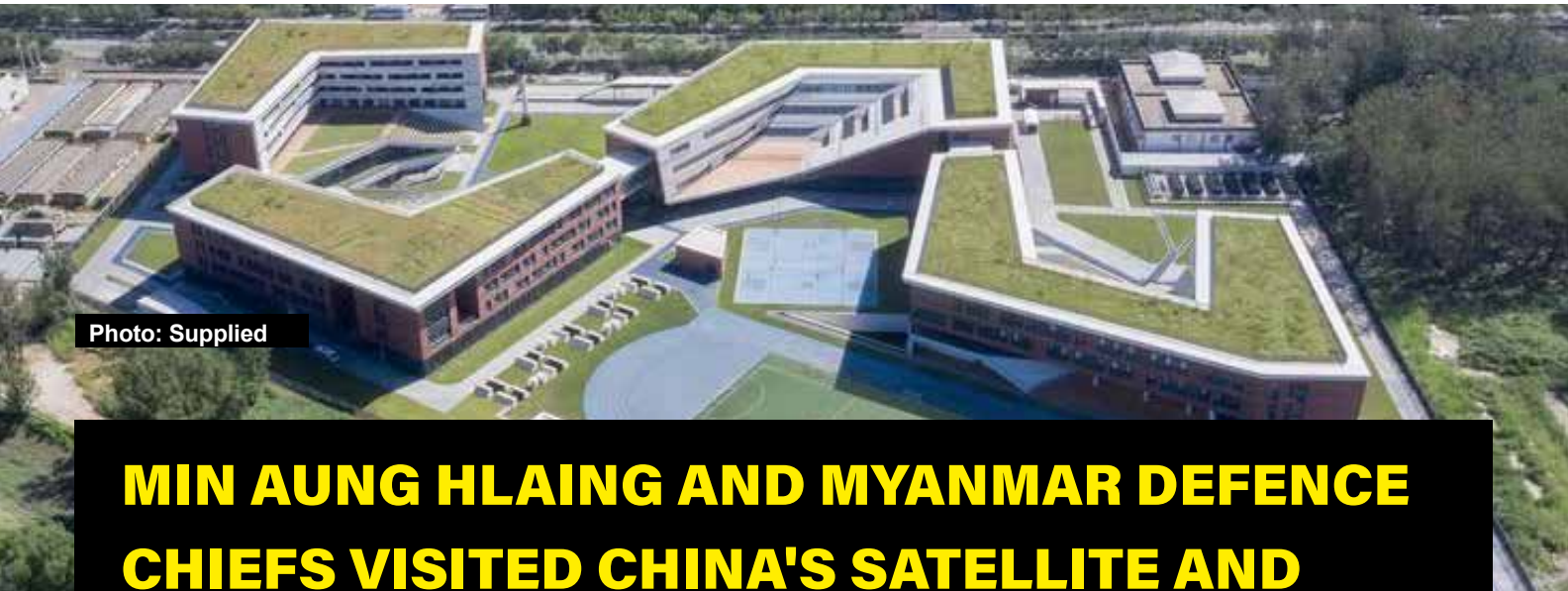


Photo: Supplied

MIN AUNG HLAING AND MYANMAR DEFENCE CHIEFS VISITED CHINA'S SATELLITE AND SPACE FACILITIES IN BEIJING

Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing visited Beijing Aerospace City on the evening of 15 June, accompanied by Chief of Defence Industries Lt. Gen. Moe Myint Swe and Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Ko Ko Oo, before his formal talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, according to the Commander-in-Chief Defence Services (CINCDs) official website. Myanmar's state media described the visit as focused on agricultural and environmental applications of satellite technology. No agriculture minister was included in the delegation.

The facility, located in Beijing's Huairou District, houses the Beijing Aerospace Control Centre, the China Academy of Space Technology, and the Astronautics Centre of China. Chinese officials briefed the delegation on the BeiDou satellite navigation system, Earth remote sensing technology, the Gaofen high-resolution imaging satellite programme, and the Tiangong space station, according to *The Mirror Daily*, a Myanmar state-run newspaper that devoted 11 pages of its 17 June edition to coverage of the visit. The delegation was also shown facilities related to China's manned spaceflight programme.

According to the junta's official account published by CINCDs, Chinese officials said they would transfer space technology to Myanmar, manage the admission and training of scholarship students in space science, and use satellite technology to improve the collection of forest, climate, water resource, and geographical data for agriculture and livestock development.

China is the third partner from which the regime has sought space and satellite technology since seizing

power in the February 2021 coup.

In March 2021, Japan's Hokkaido University halted the deployment of Myanmar's first satellite, a joint project with Myanmar's government-funded Aerospace Engineering University, after concerns were raised that cameras on board the 50-kilogram microsatellite could be used by the military against civilians, according to Reuters. The contract between the two universities did not specify that the satellite could not be used for military purposes, Reuters reported.

In July 2025, the junta established the Myanmar Space Agency under Min Aung Hlaing's direct supervision, according to the *Irrawaddy*. The agency's mandate includes authority to "supervise and coordinate the launch, control, and operation of state and private satellites" and to store and distribute satellite imagery. In February 2026, Russia's state space agency Roscosmos signed an agreement to help select and train Myanmar's first cosmonaut, according to Reuters. Under that deal, Myanmar agreed to deploy a data-collection station for Russia's GLONASS satellite navigation system.

China's space sector "serves important military purposes and is integral to the People's Liberation Army's ambitions to become an informatised and intelligent fighting force," according to a July 2025 analysis by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

Min Aung Hlaing is scheduled to remain in China until Friday, 19 June, and is expected to meet National People's Congress Chairman Zhao Leji before the visit concludes, according to Beijing's foreign ministry.



JUSTICE FOR MYANMAR CONDEMNS CHINA FOR HOSTING MYANMAR JUNTA CHIEF MIN AUNG HLAING

On 17 June, Justice For Myanmar on condemned China's hosting of junta leader Min Aung Hlaing, calling on Beijing to cease arms supplies and business dealings that the group says make it complicit in war crimes and crimes against humanity in Myanmar.

By hosting war criminal and junta head Min Aung Hlaing, Xi Jinping is now deepening this complicity and awarding false legitimacy to a junta that has been rejected by the Myanmar people, who have courageously resisted its terror for more than five years.

The junta routinely uses Chinese weapons and equipment to slaughter civilians, destroy civilian infrastructure and drive mass displacement. For instance, the state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) provides the Myanmar military with

fighter jets that it uses in its indiscriminate airstrikes, while the Chinese company Sinotruk provides the vehicles that the junta uses to transport troops that commit rape and sexual violence, torture and raze villages.

Now, the illegal junta has the opportunity to negotiate new arms and business deals, as the Chinese regime and its companies profit from the blood of Myanmar people.

Justice For Myanmar condemns the Chinese state and corporate complicity with the junta's International crimes, and calls for accountability of all those who aid and abet genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in Myanmar.



Photo: AFP

STATEMENT MARKS AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S 81ST BIRTHDAY WITH CALL TO FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) called for the immediate and unconditional release of detained Myanmar leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, marking her 81st birthday on 19 June with demands that key stakeholders move from words to coordinated pressure on the junta.

In its statement, the group said Aung San Suu Kyi has spent around 20 years in detention or under house arrest since 1989 for her political participation and her commitment to democracy in the country. The continued detention of political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, stands as evidence of the junta's ongoing efforts to overturn democratic outcomes, nullify the will of voters, and deny the people their right to choose their own government, according to the statement.

The statement called on ASEAN members, governments, United Nations mandates, and domestic actors to demand Aung San Suu Kyi's immediate and

unconditional release along with all other political prisoners — "not merely in words but through concrete, coordinated pressure on the junta to act."

It also urged stakeholders to support the Proof of Life campaign, to ensure her family is granted immediate access, and to allow independent observers to verify her condition without delay. Any political process that excludes the country's democratically elected representatives lacks legitimacy and must not be recognised by key stakeholders, the statement said.

Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested on 1 February 2021 when the military seized power from her elected National League for Democracy (NLD) government and was later sentenced to 27 years in prison on charges her supporters describe as politically motivated. She has been held largely incommunicado since 2022, with no independent verification of her condition permitted. Her son, Kim Aris, has led an international Proof of Life campaign seeking confirmation that she is alive and receiving medical care.



UN Envoy Julie Bishop. Photo: AFP

UN ENVOY CALLS FOR RELEASE OF MYANMAR'S SUU KYI ON 81ST BIRTHDAY

The UN special envoy for Myanmar on Friday called for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi, as the opposition icon spent her 81st birthday under detention inside the military-controlled nation.

"I have repeatedly raised with Naypyidaw the predicament of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, who was re-elected in November 2020 but condemned to a harsh and punitive detention after the military takeover," Julie Bishop told UN member states, a few weeks after her fourth visit to Myanmar.

"There have been no independent verifiable reports of her circumstances for years. Today, on her 81st birthday, I urge others to join with me in calling for her release," she said.

She added that "in the eyes of many, there can be no progress to peace while ... State Counsellor Daw Suu is held prisoner." Daw is an honorific and state counsellor was her official title before the 2021 military coup against her elected government.

In April, junta leader Min Aung Hlaing -- who became president after elections that barred the democratic opposition -- announced that the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, sentenced to more than 30 years in prison, would now be placed under house arrest.

But Aung San Suu Kyi's whereabouts remain unclear. Her son Kim Aris has demanded that Myanmar's military rulers provide proof that his mother is alive.

AFP



Kim Aris is calling for 'proof of life' for his mother. Photo: AFP

KIM ARIS SKATEBOARDS 81 KMS IN HONOUR OF THE BIRTHDAY OF HIS MOTHER AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Aung San Suu Kyi's son Kim Aris has announced he has completed a 81-kilometre skateboarding challenge to mark his mother's 81st birthday, which falls on 19 June.

Aris completed the challenge on 17 June, part of a proof of life movement including fundraising.

In a statement online he had the following to say:

Today, I completed my 81 km skate challenge in honour of my mother.

As she approaches her 81st birthday, I want to thank everyone around the world who has joined the 81 for 81 - Global Proof of Life Challenge.

Your support and solidarity mean a great deal.

But our work is not done.

Please continue standing with us as we ask one simple question:

Is my mother still alive?

The more people who join this challenge, the louder our collective voice and the harder it becomes to ignore the call for credible, independently verified proof of life.

Together, we can build hope, amplify the truth, and show that the world has not forgotten.



MYANMAR JUNTA SHUTS DOWN THREE MORE MEDIA LICENCES BRINGING TOTAL TO 97

Myanmar's quasi-civilian junta revoked the operating licences of three more media outlets, Myaelatt Athan, Red News Agency, and Asia Citizens in May 2026, bringing the total number of suspended media agency licences to 97, according to the Athan human rights organisation's monthly report on freedom of expression.

Athan's research found that by the end of May 2026, 23 independent media outlets and 12 publishing houses or printing presses had had their licences revoked. The latest suspensions came less than 50 days into the junta's new term of office, which followed elections widely regarded as fraudulent, the report said.

The Independent Press Council Myanmar said the country remains among the worst nations in the world for press freedom restrictions, according to the report.

In May, a woman journalist based in Rakhine State was subjected to online sexual harassment and threats and is seeking action against the perpetrator from the United League of Arakan / Arakan Army (ULA/AA), Athan reported.

Beyond the restrictions on media freedom, the report documented the violent arrest of Students' Revolutionary Force (SRF) chairman Ko San Tin

Htun and several of his colleagues by the Sagaing Federal Unit defence minister and the PDF/PaOF military officer-in-charge for Minkin Township, which sparked public protests. On 2 May, around 200 political prisoners at Kalay Prison in Sagaing Region staged a hunger strike demanding equal rights, according to the Political Prisoners Network Myanmar (PPNM).

The "Proof of Life" campaign demanding proof that detained public leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who is being held unlawfully, is alive continued to gain strength in May, the report said.

Resistance forces in those areas use walkie-talkies to alert local residents to air strikes and military column movements and to share critical information, the report said.

In areas controlled by resistance forces, restrictions on the use of Starlink internet continued, citing military tensions and security grounds. In May, Starlink use was restricted in Sagaing Region's Indaw, Depayin, Ye-U, and Tantse townships. In Mon Township, Tanintharyi Region, resistance forces cut domestic phone lines, leaving local residents struggling to access information, according to the report.



Min Zin

ISP-MYANMAR'S STATEMENT ON THE WRONGFUL DETENTION BY CHINA OF MIN ZIN

The Institute for Strategy and Policy-Myanmar (ISP-Myanmar) writes in a statement 17 June that it is deeply troubled by the wrongful detention of their Executive Director, U Min Zin, by the People's Republic of China.

ISP-Myanmar calls for the immediate and unconditional release of U Min Zin, who was detained while traveling to Kunming, China, for the sole purpose of attending an academic workshop.

ISP-Myanmar is an independent, non-partisan, and non-governmental think tank that promotes democratic leadership and public participation in Myanmar's public affairs to encourage a resilient and tolerant society. Its goals are to advance democracy, build a

federal union, and strengthen civil society in Myanmar through policy-oriented research, data-driven analysis, public outreach, leadership-level dialogue, and training. Its research focuses on Myanmar's political and socioeconomic development.

ISP-Myanmar says it strongly rejects and condemns any groundless allegations. The organization remains steadfast in its mission to conduct independent open-source research and provide analysis that serve the public interest and contribute to a better understanding of Myanmar's political, social, and economic developments. It is vital that academic and research organizations such as ISP-Myanmar should be able to conduct their work without intimidation, they add.



Photo: Supplied

FIVE BUILDINGS INCLUDING PRIMARY SCHOOL DESTROYED IN MYANMAR JUNTA AIRSTRIKE ON NIPPON FOUNDATION HOUSING IN YE TOWNSHIP

A junta airstrike dropped two bombs at approximately 1:00 am today, 18 June, targeting a residential housing project built with Nippon Foundation support in Chaung Hna Khwa village, located in the Ye Chaung Phyar area of Mon State's Ye Township.

The attack destroyed five buildings, including four homes and a primary school, though no casualties were reported.

"People reside there. Upon hearing the aircraft approaching, they fled immediately into bomb shelters, preventing any casualties. It was extremely fortunate," a local source familiar with the incident said.

The area targeted by the junta's airstrike lies within territory controlled by the New Mon State Party

(NMSP). The housing project was constructed starting in 2013 under the U Thein Sein administration.

"Residents had only recently returned. Last month, reconnaissance planes hovered and bombed the area, forcing people to flee. They had barely resettled after conditions stabilized, and now this has happened again," a Mon news source said.

This incident marks the third airstrike on the Ye Chaung Phyar region, following a 27 May attack targeting the Ye Balu camp that killed 10 personnel and injured over 20, and a second strike on 3 June that claimed the life of a man in his 40s.



FOUR MYANMAR JUNTA SOLDIERS INCLUDING VETERAN SERGEANT DEFECT TO CHIN RESISTANCE WITH WEAPONS

An official statement from the Chinland Defence Force-Siyin (CDF-Siyin) local defence force on 18 June announced that four military junta personnel, including a veteran sergeant from the Thaingyin camp in Tedim Township, Chin State, have defected to the resistance group along with their weapons and ammunition, and were subsequently presented with cash rewards.

According to resistance sources, the defectors were personnel from Light Infantry Battalion 101, under the command of Light Infantry Division 77, and had only recently arrived at the Thaingyin camp from Kalay on 4 June.

The group of four includes a highly experienced sergeant with 26 years of service who had previously been deployed to Yangon, Tanintharyi, and Rakhine, a corporal with seven years of service who had prior deployments in Okpho and Rakhine, and two privates who had each served for four years.

On 11 June, a total of six soldiers initially fled the camp together. However, junta forces pursued

and opened fire on them, resulting in the deaths of two soldiers, while the remaining four escaped and successfully reached the Chin resistance forces on 17 June.

A spokesperson for CDF CDM Siyin told Mizzima that because the soldiers had only recently arrived at the Thaingyin camp, they lacked detailed knowledge regarding the local terrain and camp layouts prior to their escape.

The strategic significance of Thaingyin village stems from its location at the junction of the Kalay-Tedim-Falam highway, serving as a critical logistical and military hub that has frequently been the site of armed clashes.

The junta re-established control over the area on 9 November 2025. CDF CDM Siyin, a member organization of the Chinland Council, stated that all defectors are being assisted in accordance with their wishes to safely relocate to liberated zones, while captured prisoners of war continue to be detained in strict compliance with the Geneva Convention.



MYANMAR AIRSTRIKE KILLS SEVEN CIVILIANS IN RAKHINE'S KYAUKTAW: WITNESSES

A Myanmar military airstrike has killed seven civilians including a five-year-old child in Kyauktaw in the western state of Rakhine, a witness and a rescue worker said Thursday.

Local rescue worker Naing Win Lwin said from around 3:00 pm (0830 GMT) on Wednesday a trio of jets dropped nine bombs around the town of Kyauktaw, which borders Bangladesh.

He said seven people including the young child were killed and 15 people were wounded.

A Myanmar military spokesman did not respond to a request for comment.

In Kyauktaw, the ruins of buildings were charred and still smouldering on Thursday as shopkeeper Htay Htay recounted losing her husband among the seven fatalities.

"I even went to check the places that were on fire, but I could not find him. I didn't realise he was inside our house," said the 48-year-old.

"It seems he entered the house to look for me during the strike. Only later, when they brought out his body, did I find him," she added. "I have no words to say."

Rakhine is controlled almost entirely by ethnic minority faction the Arakan Army, which is also accused of committing atrocities in the civil war.

Outside Rakhine, however, analysts say the military is on the front foot and has placed the state under a blockade compounding the war's effects with a humanitarian crisis.

Myanmar was ruled directly by the military for five years after the coup, before the junta held deeply restricted polls which this year delivered a walkover win for its allies in civilian politics.

New MPs elected coup leader Min Aung Hlaing as president in a transition which democracy watchdogs derided as a ploy to rebrand his continuing rule.

Min Aung Hlaing is currently on a five-day trip to China, where he is enjoying red-carpet treatment on his first full state visit since the election vocally backed by Beijing.

China "firmly supports the Myanmar side in realizing national peace and stability, national reconciliation, social harmony and lasting peace", according to a joint statement late Wednesday.

AFP

MYANMAR JUNTA REMOVES GENERAL AUNG SAN'S PORTRAIT FROM GATE OF SUU KYI'S RESIDENCE



Military junta forces removed a portrait of General Aung San from the front gate of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's residence at No. 54 University Avenue Road, Yangon, on the night of 14 June, under the pretext of conducting a guest-list inspection, according to Mizzima sources.

At around 11:00 p.m., an administrative team of approximately seven personnel, including a Bahan Township police major and local officials, entered the compound claiming to inspect the overnight guest log. While the team was inside, a separate group waiting outside removed the portrait from the front gate.

"They arrived at 11:00 p.m. to check the guest list, accompanied by the township police chief. While the group went inside, those remaining outside took down the portrait. No vehicles were seen; they came on foot. About seven people entered the house. Since the removal outside wasn't directly visible, the exact number involved in that act remains unknown. They kept us occupied inside with the guest inspection. I understand the portrait was painted by Auntie [Daw Aung San Suu Kyi] herself," an anonymous source told Mizzima.

The source said the junta is acting with absolute hostility, treating its opponents with uncompromising ruthlessness. Mizzima has not independently verified whether the portrait was painted by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Residence No. 54 remains embroiled in an ongoing inheritance dispute. Despite four separate attempts

to auction the entire property at discounted rates, no buyers have emerged. On 29 May 2025, U Aung San Oo filed a petition at the Kamayut District Court to partition and sell one acre of the land first, leaving Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's residential portion of 0.923 acres untouched for now. The property, registered under the name of their late mother Daw Khin Kyi, spans a total of 1.923 acres.

The National Unity Government (NUG) has designated No. 54 as an interim national cultural heritage site and warned of legal action against any transactions or destruction involving the property.

The portrait removal is part of a broader pattern. The junta has been systematically demolishing and removing bronze statues of General Aung San across the country. On the night of 9 June, a 15-foot bronze statue of General Aung San weighing 453 viss (approximately 740 kg), located on Kan Road in Taungoo, Bago Region, was demolished and removed during a city-wide blackout. Myanmar's junta leader Min Aung Hlaing and newly appointed Chief of General Staff Ye Win Oo had visited Taungoo on 6 June, three days before the demolition.

Since the February 2021 coup, the junta has carried out at least five documented removals of General Aung San's bronze statues, all conducted during midnight blackouts: in Thazi, Mandalay Region, in October 2024; in Pobbathiri, Naypyidaw, in July 2025; in Bago in August; in Pathein, Ayeyarwady Region, in November; and most recently in Taungoo.



Photo: AFP

MYANMAR JUNTA-DIRECTED COMMITTEE FORMED TO NEGOTIATE WITH SIX NAGA ARMED GROUPS

The Naga Traditional Literature and Culture (Central) Association in Khamti has established a Peace and Negotiation Committee to engage with six Naga armed groups, according to local political sources.

The committee comprises 51 representatives divided into six sub-teams tasked with initiating dialogue with armed groups operating in the Naga region.

The targeted groups include breakaway factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland – the NSCN-YA (led by Yung Aung), NSCN-AM (led by Ang Mai), and NSCN-IM (led by Isak-Muivah) – alongside the Naga National Council (NNC), the Eastern Naga National Army (ENDA), and one unnamed faction.

A Naga politician told Mizzima that the initiative, launched this June, likely serves as groundwork for the military junta's 100-day peace negotiation plan.

"We know they are acting on the SAC's orders. It is disheartening. The central traditional committee behaves like Naga cronies," the politician said.

Notably, the Naga People's Defence Organisation (NPDO) and the Naga People's Defence Force (NPDF) have been excluded from the negotiation list.

Dr. Ei Nwe Hsaing Nyu, a Naga literature and culture scholar, told Mizzima that while the junta likely initiated the outreach, it is premature to assess its viability.

"I assume the government directed this communication. Peace efforts are positive, but effectiveness depends on the genuine political will of the stakeholders, whether the initiative is truly independent, and their level of preparation," he said.

He added that negotiations led by the junta or its intermediaries would yield little progress, given the divergent stances of the groups involved.

Among the groups, NSCN-AM has signed a ceasefire and is currently engaged in peace talks with the junta. NSCN-YA, NSCN-IM, NNC, and ENDA have no formal dialogue with the military but are not engaged in active clashes. ENDA, however, was formed after the 2021 coup and actively fights the junta in alliance with partner forces.

The Naga people primarily inhabit the Self-Administered Zone of Leshi, Lahe, and Nanyun townships, as well as Khamti, Homalin, and Tamu townships in Sagaing Region, and parts of Kachin State. They also reside across the border in India's Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and Assam states.



MYANMAR JUNTA ESCALATES FORCED CONSCRIPTION ARRESTS IN KALAY AS LOCAL FIGHTING RAGES

Civilian arrests for forced military conscription are rising in Kalay, Sagaing Region, as clashes continue across the township, according to local sources.

To retake control of the Kalay-Tamu highway, junta forces launched an offensive on 8 June. On 14 June, junta troops recaptured Yazagyo village and its reservoir in northern Kalay Township, military sources reported.

The junta launched a two-pronged offensive to secure the 80-mile inter-city highway, advancing to Yazagyo from the Kalay side and reaching the vicinity of Witok from the Tamu side, triggering active clashes.

As fighting rages in northern Kalay, forced recruitment of civilians inside the town has intensified.

"The press-gangs started early this morning. They grabbed people by the neck and dragged them away by force, treating them like criminals," a Kalay resident said.

Starting around 7:00 am today, junta troops and subordinate groups arrested approximately 15 youths near Tahan, Taung Thar Hteik, and the main bus terminal. About 50 people have been detained over the past three days, the resident said.

"I saw them arrest a sidecar driver who had just dropped off students for their placement exams. People are living in constant terror," another resident said.

The incident occurred near High School No. 7 in Nyaungpinthar Ward, where placement exams are being held for out-of-school youths to resume education based on their age group. Junta forces arrested a sidecar driver who had transported four students to sit for the exams.

Conscripted detainees are held at the Kalay Township General Administration Office for medical examinations before being transferred to Military Training Depot No. 10 near Sakhan Gyi village in Kalay, or to other training facilities in different townships.

Previously, families could secure the release of detainees through brokers for 4 to 10 million Kyats (40 to 100 lakhs) while they were held at the administrative office. However, securing releases with money has now become extremely difficult, according to a local resident.

Under the junta's activated People's Military Service Law, men aged 18–35 and women aged 18–27 are eligible for conscription. Evading or ignoring draft summonses is punishable by up to three years in prison, a fine, or both.



KALAY RESIDENTS AFRAID TO FILE CHARGES AFTER MYANMAR JUNTA TROOPS KILL CIVILIAN AND CONCEAL BODY

Family members of a man allegedly killed and buried by junta troops in Kalay, Sagaing Region, are afraid to file a lawsuit due to fear of retaliation, according to local sources.

"We haven't heard of them filing a case. They are working-class people and not well-connected. They seem to fear that if they file charges, they will face various forms of retaliation," a Kalay resident familiar with the incident told Mizzima.

The victim, Ko Ye Zaw (33 years old), a resident of Aung Thitsa Ward in Kalay who earned a living selling brooms on foot, went missing on June 12 after leaving his home to sell brooms in the town.

Following a search by his family, his buried body was exhumed on June 15 at the Pyin Thar Cemetery in Kalay. The body bore signs of torture alongside gunshot wounds to the temple and neck.

The resident noted that although the death was initially assumed to be an ordinary murder due to the physical injuries, locals concluded that junta troops committed the killing based on the two gunshot wounds and the circumstances surrounding the incident.

"We haven't heard of the military offering compensation or taking responsibility. This is their

usual practice. Killing whoever they want and hiding the bodies is no longer unusual," the Kalay resident added.

He further explained that after shooting civilians, junta forces typically justify their actions by claiming the victims failed to stop for security checks, fled inspection, or were members of underground (UG) groups or the People's Defence Force (PDF). Consequently, bereaved families are too afraid to file cases or demand justice.

According to residents, since 2021, junta forces in Kalay Township have frequently cremated unidentifiable, severely disfigured bodies, often shot at close range from behind the head, at the Doe Wine Chaung Cemetery, a practice that continues to this day.

Ko Ye Zaw is survived by his wife and two young children. His family has already held the one-week memorial service.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), from the start of the military coup on 1 February 2021, to June 16, 2026, a total of 8,094 people have been killed by the junta and its affiliates, with approximately 5,000 of those deaths still requiring verification.



Photo: AFP

KNHRG CALLS FOR COMPASSIONATE AND COORDINATED RESPONSE TO MYANMAR'S REFUGEE CRISIS IN ADVANCE OF WORLD REFUGEE DAY

On 19 June, the Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG) issued a statement of concern about the worsening refugee crisis in Karenni State and across Myanmar and calling for a 'compassionate and coordinated' response by the international community.

The text of the KnHRG statement is as follows.

Ahead of World Refugee Day, the Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG) is concerned about the ongoing deterioration of civilian rights and freedoms. In Karenni State and across the country, a crisis of worsening scale and intensity has cost people their lives and their basic freedoms. The military junta has created and fuelled a war that has left thousands without a place to call home. Since 2021, at least 250,000 people in Karenni State have been displaced and urgently need emergency humanitarian aid.

Despite the need for life-saving assistance, severe shortages of food, medicine and basic shelter persist. Makeshift camps and temporary stations are increasingly targeted by the junta and are not guaranteed safe zones. As conditions on the ground worsen, Karenni people are seeking refuge across the Thai border in Mae Hong Son province. For decades, camps have shielded vulnerable groups from the violence that has forced them from their homes. However, Thailand is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

After years of advocacy by civil society organizations, Thai policy shifted in a landmark way

last year, with the government granting registered refugees (aged 18 to 59) living in the nine camps the right to work legally. The announcement came not long after the fallout from US government funding cuts to life-saving humanitarian programs and social services that were being operated in the camps. While this was an important step forward, additional challenges remain to be addressed, including protection concerns. KnHRG is grateful to the Royal Thai Government for this important step forward in advancing refugee rights, as well as for issuing Identification cards that permit legal employment.

Recommendations from border-based groups working with and supporting refugees continue to call on neighbouring countries for support, especially amid ongoing reductions in foreign aid. Refugee rights are human rights and demand a compassionate and coordinated effort to ensure they are protected and enforced.

The strength and resilience shown by internally displaced people and refugees are a testament to their ability to endure adversity. Despite enduring immense hardship, they have also overcome significant hurdles, with many becoming leaders in various capacities, including as educators, rights defenders and mobilizers in their communities. On World Refugee Day and every day, the remarkable tenacity they embody must be acknowledged.



Rohingya refugees in a camp in Bangladesh.
Photo: AFP

EU ADDS EUR 14 MILLION IN DEVELOPMENT FUNDING FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN BANGLADESH

The European Union and UNHCR announced on 18 June a renewal of their partnership with a further EUR 14 million development grant to sustain assistance and strengthen protection for 1.2 million Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and to support the host community's livelihoods.

The funding complements EU humanitarian funding and an earlier multi-year development policy contribution from the EU. It will provide Rohingya refugees and nearly 70,000 members of the Bangladeshi host community with support including skills development initiatives and access to clean cooking gas.

Michael Miller, Ambassador and Head of the European Union Delegation in Bangladesh, said the funding would help Bangladeshi host communities in Cox's Bazar and, for the Rohingya, would expand options for education and the learning of practical, portable skills, while improving living conditions. He said the funding was about preserving dignity and strengthening resilience, "giving refugees the tools to rebuild their lives, preparing them for voluntary, safe and dignified return to Myanmar when conditions allow."

Ivo Freijsen, UNHCR Representative in Bangladesh, said reliable support is fundamental to families who have experienced hardship for the past nine years, and thanked the EU for ensuring refugees can access protection services and meet their basic needs.

According to the press release, overcrowded living conditions, limited resources, and prolonged displacement leave refugees highly vulnerable, with women and children facing heightened risks of gender-based violence, trafficking, and exploitation. Comprehensive protection services within the camps, including safe shelters, well-lit environments, community-based protection mechanisms, and accessible reporting channels, are critical to safeguarding refugees' rights and dignity, the release said.

The provision of liquid petroleum gas (LPG) protects women and children from the risks of foraging for firewood, reduces household smoke that damages refugee health, and eases pressure on surrounding forests, according to the release.

The contribution comes ahead of World Refugee Day, observed annually on 20 June.

UNHCR works alongside the Government of Bangladesh, humanitarian partners, and donors to strengthen refugee protection as part of the 2025-2026 Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis. The plan calls for USD 710 million this year to meet the most critical needs of 1.2 million Rohingya refugees, including new arrivals, and to ensure they can live in dignity until they can return home voluntarily, in safety and with full rights.



MYANMAR REFUGEES' RIGHT TO WORK IN THAILAND IN FOCUS

A World Refugee Day 2026 seminar in Chiang Mai highlighted the importance of refugee protection and the right to work for Myanmar refugees in Thailand, as humanitarian assistance declines and displacement becomes increasingly prolonged.

The seminar, titled “Changing Global Order, Aid Retrenchment, and Refugee Protection: Reframing the Right to Work for Myanmar Refugees in Thailand”, was held on 19 June at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, ahead of World Refugee Day on 20 June.

It was hosted by the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD), Chiang Mai University, in collaboration with the Center on Gender and Forced Displacement at the Asian Institute of Technology.

Held under this year’s World Refugee Day theme, “Until Everyone Is Safe,” the event brought together academics, policymakers, humanitarian practitioners and civil society representatives to discuss the future of refugee protection amid declining international aid and growing global uncertainty. Recent axing of USAID programmes and reductions in other Western funding have had a serious negative impact on refugees. The situation has become so desperate that there have been a number of refugees who have committed suicide, according to the Karen Peace Support Network.

Participants discussed the situation of Myanmar refugees living in Thailand, including how reduced humanitarian assistance is affecting their lives and how responsibilities for protection and support are shifting. The seminar also examined the challenges refugees face in securing their rights, becoming financially independent and finding durable regional solutions for people displaced by conflict in Southeast Asia.

The right to work was a central focus of the discussion. Participants said access to employment is not only an economic issue, but also an essential part of refugee protection, dignity and long-term well-being.

Speakers noted that work opportunities can help reduce dependence on humanitarian aid. However, they also said legal, political and administrative barriers continue to limit refugees’ access to secure and meaningful employment.

The seminar also highlighted camp-based restrictions and legal uncertainties faced by refugees in Thailand, with several camps having been in existence for decades. Participants emphasized that access to employment alone does not guarantee adequate protection or sustainable livelihoods, and called for stronger regional cooperation and more inclusive policies.

Dr Hayso Thako of the Karen Refugee Committee, who participated in the seminar, said discussions focused on future government policies related to refugees’ right to work and ways to strengthen the existing system.

“The issuance of identification cards presents an important opportunity for refugees to access legal employment outside the camps. However, not all refugees currently have access to these opportunities,” he said.

He added that refugees remain hopeful that all those living in camps will eventually be able to work legally in Thailand and gain access to a wider range of employment opportunities under Thai government-supported policies.

The seminar concluded that expanding work opportunities for Myanmar refugees must be considered together with legal protection, dignity, safety and long-term well-being.

UNHCR WELCOMES ID CARDS FOR REFUGEES ON THE THAI-MYANMAR BORDER



Refugees living in temporary shelters along the Thai-Myanmar border have begun receiving official identity cards in a historic milestone welcomed by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

The issuance of official, non-Thai identity cards by the Royal Thai Government formally, starting on 17 June, recognizes the group as “Myanmar Displaced Persons”, and is a landmark step towards inclusion, protection and self-reliance for one of the world’s most protracted refugee populations.

“For refugees from Myanmar in Thailand, these identity cards are not simply a form of documentation – they are a gateway to protection, stability and opportunity,” said UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, Raouf Mazou. “These cards help restore dignity, open new possibilities, and enable refugees to build meaningful futures.”

This milestone builds on the Government’s commendable policy shift announced in August 2025, establishing legal access to employment for longstanding refugees and marking a move away from encampment-based approaches. Since its implementation in October 2025, more than 5,500 refugees have joined the workforce, contributing to the sustainable development of the Thai economy and helping strengthen community resilience. The hope is that many more will follow.

The new identification system includes biometric registration and integration into the national civil registry. The system, which includes QR code verification, enhances protection by reducing the risks of identity fraud, trafficking and exploitation, while enabling access to essential services such as banking,

telecommunications, and health care.

“This initiative empowers refugees to contribute economically and live with greater security and independence,” said Mazou. “We commend the Royal Thai Government for this progressive policy, which holds important lessons for other countries responding to protracted displacement.”

“UNHCR stands ready to continue working closely with the Government to support these efforts and achieve the best possible outcome for displaced communities and the people of Thailand.”

Some 80,000 forcibly displaced people from Myanmar are hosted in temporary shelters along the Thai-Myanmar border. The identity cards will be issued in phases to those over the age of 5, with the first phase focusing on those currently employed. With the dire security, humanitarian and human rights situation in Myanmar, they continue to be in need of international protection. Many have lived in the camps for decades and are entirely dependent on humanitarian aid. Around 45 per cent of the refugees were born in the temporary shelters in Thailand.

Globally, UNHCR is focusing on a clear and measurable goal: to reduce by more than half, over the next decade, the number of refugees in long-term displacement reliant on humanitarian assistance, thereby improving prospects for millions of people. Thailand’s progress is a strong example of its commitment to international responsibility-sharing, ensuring that people forced to flee are not only protected but also empowered to rebuild their lives with dignity.



Photo: AFP

NEW BRIEFING PAPER DETAILS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN WAKE OF MYANMAR'S 'SHAM' ELECTION

On 16 June, the Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma (ND-Burma) released a briefing paper documenting human rights violations following the Myanmar junta's 2025-26 elections.

The ND-Burma press release is as follows.

Since the attempted coup in 2021, the military has schemed to fool the international community through its bid for legitimacy. Global and regional stakeholders must not acknowledge or recognize the junta leadership as a government of any kind. The briefing paper released by ND-Burma serves as further evidence of the ongoing perpetration of crimes against civilians since coup leader Min Aung Hlaing asserted himself as the President of Burma.

ND-Burma members have continued to document the worsening human rights situation on the ground. This briefing paper includes member data and media coverage of air and ground attacks. The military junta has neither ceased nor slowed its attacks against innocent civilians. Conflict-affected communities across Burma are in urgent need of basic shelter, medicine, food and clean water. As thousands are

deprived of their humanity, the junta is lauding itself as the rightful ruler, despite having no credibility.

Gaps in support for affected populations continue to widen amid a funding crisis that has increasingly limited many organizations' ability to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to those who remain displaced. The Burma Army has weaponized aid, making it difficult to safely deliver life-saving items. While the resilience of resistance leaders and community human rights defenders endures, their voices must be heard as agents of change and as those dedicated to a lasting peace in the country, one that does not include militarized control.

Additional pressure is required to hold the military accountable for its crimes against humanity. Vulnerable groups have suffered oppression and denial of their basic rights and freedoms, and this will persist as the crisis deepens. We urge global stakeholders to cut all ties with the terrorist military junta. Support, resources, and funding should be directed toward the pro-democracy movement and human rights defenders driving positive change, especially civil society organizations providing local social services, including cross-border aid.

BHRN URGES ULA TO STOP FORCED LABOUR AND LAND SEIZURES IN ARAKAN STATE



Photo: AFP

The Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN) on 16 June called on the United League of Arakan (ULA) and its armed wing, the Arakan Army (AA), to immediately halt forced labour imposed on Rohingya civilians in northern Maungdaw Township and stop the confiscation and redistribution of Rohingya-owned land to ethnic Rakhine settlers.

BHRN said its researchers documented forced labour demands on at least six Rohingya villages in northern Maungdaw since the last week of May 2026, mobilising more than 300 people in total to build infrastructure for new Rakhine settlements at two former Rohingya village sites, Sapay Kone and Maung Hna Ma.

The six villages of U Shey Kya, Kyet Yoe Pyin, Ngan Chaung, Ngar Sar Kyu, Nga Khu Ra, and Pwint Phyu Chaung were each assigned a quota of labourers ranging from 25 to 75 people. Households unable or unwilling to provide a labourer were compelled to hire a substitute at their own expense, reportedly around 25,000 kyat per day. Female-headed households were not exempt.

"The Arakan Army is seizing Rohingya land, handing it to Rakhine settlers, and forcing the dispossessed Rohingya to build the new settlements with their own hands," BHRN Executive Director Kyaw Win said. "This is forced labour in the service of permanently erasing the Rohingya from northern Maungdaw."

According to BHRN's documentation, the ULA is offering each incoming Rakhine family a housing plot and two acres of farmland seized from local Rohingya. One Rohingya resident of Maungdaw told BHRN that allocating land without the consent of its owners was "totally unacceptable" and described the pattern as evidence that "the ULA is always searching for the

possibility to oppress the Rohingya and to grab their properties."

A second resident told BHRN the resettlement sites were "built on Rohingya-owned land and built by Rohingya forced labourers for the incoming Rakhine families," describing it as a strategy to permanently transfer Rohingya land to Rakhine settlers.

The forced labour documented in late May is not isolated. Since 9 February 2026, BHRN said, approximately 50 Rohingya youths each from the villages of Ngan Chaung, Kyet Yoe Pyin, and Ngar Sar Kyu have been compelled on a rotational basis to repair a road connecting Phar Wut Chaung in northern Maungdaw to Aung Mingalar village. Several of those same villages were then called upon again for the late May construction work, indicating a sustained and recurring demand on the same communities. Rohingya who resist are reportedly threatened with expulsion.

BHRN's findings echo reporting from across Maungdaw over the preceding months. In February 2026, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that Rohingya land and property were being confiscated by the Arakan Army and that non-Rohingya villages were being rebuilt on Rohingya land. Construction of Rakhine settlements at Maung Hna Ma was documented in February 2026 by Burma News International and Arakan Now, and the seizure of Rohingya farmland and prawn ponds for redistribution to Rakhine settlers was reported by independent Rohingya media in 2025.

The forced labor demands compound what BHRN described as an already desperate humanitarian situation, with the Rohingya community in Rakhine State facing severe food insecurity and extreme livelihood hardship.



Photo: AFP

FUEL SHOCK DEEPENS PRESSURE ON MYANMAR'S FRAGILE ECONOMIC STABILISATION, SAYS WORLD BANK

Myanmar's tentative economic stabilization in early 2026 is threatened by a sharp fuel price surge due to Middle East conflict, the World Bank says.

The World Bank's Myanmar Economic Monitor released on 16 June 2026 estimates that the economy contracted by 2 percent in the 2025/26 fiscal year and projects growth of just 2 percent in 2026/27, down from its previous forecast of 3 percent. The report said ongoing conflict, power shortages, foreign exchange constraints and policy uncertainty continue to weigh heavily on economic activity.

"While there are signs that economic conditions have stabilised, Myanmar's economy remains under significant strain," said Melinda Good, World Bank Division Director for Myanmar and Thailand.

The report said economic activity improved modestly through late 2025 and early 2026 as businesses recovered from the effects of the March 2025 earthquake and benefited from temporary improvements in power supply. Manufacturing, construction and some service sectors recorded gains, while firms reported higher operating capacity than six months earlier. However, the World Bank said these improvements had not translated into a durable recovery in output, sales or profits.

According to the report, fuel supply disruptions linked to conflict in the Middle East have become

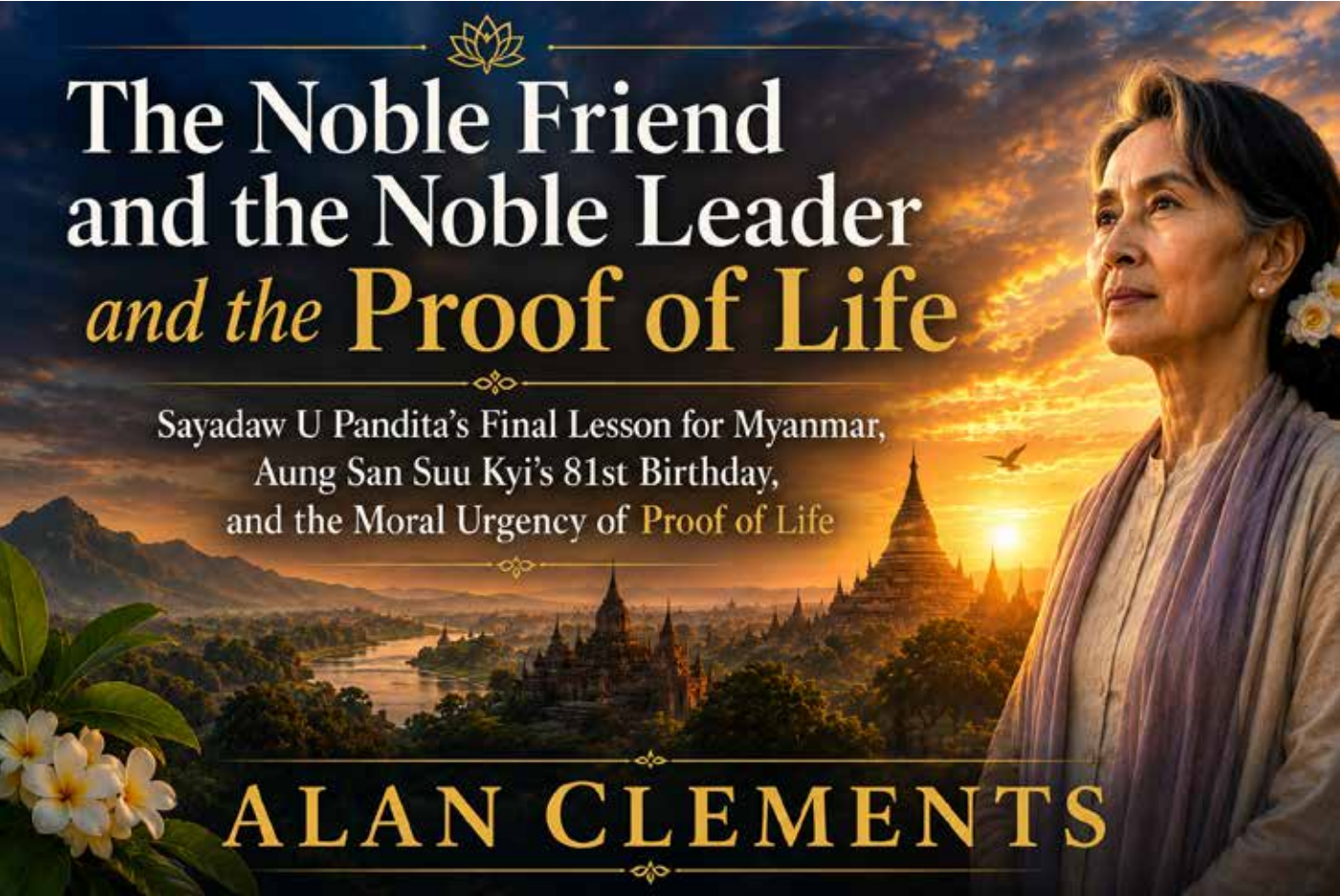
the latest major shock facing Myanmar's economy. Domestic fuel prices surged by 90-160 percent between March and April, driving up transport, logistics, and production costs while increasing demand for scarce foreign exchange.

Inflation accelerated to 24.6 percent year-on-year in April after easing in late 2025, with higher fuel and transport costs feeding into food prices and household expenses. The World Bank warned that rising costs are further reducing purchasing power and increasing pressure on vulnerable households.

Poverty remains widespread, with an estimated 29.9 percent of the population living below the poverty line in 2025. Casual workers, female-headed households, people with disabilities and communities affected by conflict were identified as among the groups most exposed to economic shocks.

The report also highlighted continued pressure on the kyat, rising fiscal deficits and persistent weaknesses in the private sector. Businesses cited political instability, electricity shortages, transport disruptions and limited access to finance as among the most significant barriers to growth.

The World Bank warned that ongoing fuel supply risks, conflict, and pressures on foreign exchange could further weaken growth and deepen poverty.



The Noble Friend and the Noble Leader *and the Proof of Life*

Sayadaw U Pandita's Final Lesson for Myanmar,
Aung San Suu Kyi's 81st Birthday,
and the Moral Urgency of Proof of Life

ALAN CLEMENTS

On June 19, 2026, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi turned eighty-one years old while imprisoned under Myanmar's military regime and beyond meaningful independent verification. For more than three years, no journalist, international observer, physician, family member, or trusted representative has been permitted sufficient access to confirm her condition according to any reasonable standard of transparency. Whatever one's political views may be, this reality should concern anyone who believes in human dignity.

This essay is offered in support of a simple humanitarian appeal: proof of life. The request is neither political nor ideological. It is a nonviolent call for independent verification that a fellow human being is alive, safe, receiving appropriate care, and treated with the dignity owed to every person.

For nearly four decades, Sayadaw U Pandita of Burma was far more than my meditation teacher. He was my mentor, my spiritual friend, my confidant, my challenger, and one of the most extraordinary human beings I have ever known. His influence did not arise from political office, wealth, institutional authority, or public acclaim. It emerged from something far more difficult to cultivate and far more enduring: the integrity of a life devoted to wisdom, compassion, discipline, and the liberation of the human heart.

Sayadaw U Pandita was also the revered Dhamma teacher of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the democratically elected leader whose life became inseparable from Myanmar's long struggle for freedom, democracy, and human dignity. Their relationship was not founded upon political strategy or shared ambition. It emerged from one of Buddhism's most profound traditions: the bond between teacher and student, where guidance is intended not to create dependence but to awaken courage, mindfulness, compassion, and moral responsibility.

For those who understand that relationship, the appeal for proof of life carries a deeper significance. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was not merely a political leader. She was a devoted student of the Dhamma who received teachings on mindfulness, patience, compassion, and the inner discipline required to face suffering without hatred. The principles Sayadaw U Pandita taught compel us to look beyond political identity and see the human being. They require us to care, to inquire, and to refuse the normalization of silence. No person should disappear behind a wall of secrecy. No human being should become invisible because those in authority find invisibility convenient.

Sayadawgyi, as his disciples lovingly called him, understood that humanity's greatest challenges are not merely political or economic. They originate

within the human mind itself. The same forces that create suffering in individuals—greed, hatred, fear, and delusion—can become catastrophic when amplified through institutions of power. A nation, no less than a person, can lose its way when wisdom is abandoned and authority becomes separated from compassion.

During our final conversations together, dialogues that later became part of my book *Wisdom for the World*, I asked Sayadaw U Pandita a question that feels increasingly urgent in our troubled age:

“What are the qualities of noble leadership?”

His answer was deceptively simple yet contained a profound challenge to many of our assumptions about power.

“Before one can understand noble leadership,” he said, “one must first understand the qualities of a noble friend.”

In a world that often measures leadership through power, influence, wealth, military strength, or the ability to command obedience, Sayadaw U Pandita redirected the conversation toward something far more fundamental: friendship. Yet he was not speaking of friendship in the ordinary social sense. He was speaking of *kalyāṇa mitta*—the noble spiritual friend—a relationship rooted in ethical responsibility, mutual respect, and a commitment to the well-being and awakening of another human being.

The Buddha’s teaching on the noble friend offers one of the most profound definitions of leadership ever articulated. A noble friend is someone whose character naturally inspires trust because their actions remain aligned with their values. Such a person does not need to manufacture an image of goodness or cultivate a public reputation for virtue. Their conduct speaks for itself. Respect arises not because they demand it, but because their humility, integrity, and wisdom make coercion unnecessary. Their lives remind others of what is possible when conscience, compassion, and awareness are allowed to guide human action.

A noble friend is also committed to truth. They do not flatter those in power, reinforce comforting illusions, or manipulate others through fear and deception. They possess the courage to speak difficult truths when necessary, yet they do so without malice. Their purpose is not to humiliate, dominate, or defeat another person, but to illuminate reality more clearly. At the same time, they remain open to criticism themselves, understanding that wisdom cannot flourish where ego refuses to listen. Their loyalty is to truth rather than self-protection.

Most importantly, a noble friend never exploits another human being. They do not treat people as instruments for personal advancement or sacrifice another person’s dignity in pursuit of status, influence, or power. They understand that the measure of a life is not how many people serve one’s ambitions, but how deeply one serves the welfare of others. Compassion is not an accessory to leadership. It is its foundation.

When I asked Sayadaw U Pandita whether these same qualities applied to political leadership, his response came without hesitation.

“Yes. It is important to possess the qualities of a good friend.”

The simplicity of his answer concealed its revolutionary implications. In a world that frequently confuses leadership with dominance, he was proposing something radically different. The true leader is not the person who controls others. The true leader is the person who has cultivated sufficient inner discipline to serve others without becoming corrupted by authority. Leadership, in its deepest sense, is not the capacity to impose one’s will upon the world. It is the capacity to carry responsibility without losing one’s humanity.

This teaching reaches far beyond Myanmar. It speaks directly to a global crisis of leadership unfolding across nations, institutions, and cultures. It invites us to reconsider the very qualities we reward, admire, and entrust with power. It asks whether authority without compassion can ever produce justice, whether influence without conscience can ever produce peace, and whether any society can flourish when power becomes disconnected from moral responsibility.

We are living in an age in which violence is routinely justified through the language of security, stability, national interest, and economic necessity. Governments and institutions often argue that extraordinary measures are required to prevent greater harm, that military force is unavoidable, or that the suffering of civilians represents an unfortunate but acceptable cost of preserving order. Such arguments have become so familiar that many people scarcely pause to examine the assumptions beneath them.

Yet Sayadaw U Pandita’s teachings invite us to ask a deeper question. What happens when power becomes separated from compassion? What happens when authority is no longer accountable to conscience? What happens when leaders become more committed to preserving control than protecting human dignity? These are not merely political questions. They are moral and psychological questions that reach into the very heart of human civilization.

Buddhist psychology describes the primary forces that distort human perception and behavior as the Three Poisons: greed, hatred, and delusion. Although often understood as individual afflictions, they do not remain confined to the private sphere. They can infect institutions, governments, ideologies, and entire societies. When greed dominates leadership, human beings become resources to be exploited. When hatred dominates leadership, opponents become enemies to be crushed rather than fellow human beings to be understood. When delusion dominates leadership, those in power persuade themselves that suffering inflicted in pursuit of their goals is somehow justified.

Myanmar offers a painful illustration of these dynamics. For generations, the people of the country have endured military domination, armed conflict, displacement, censorship, imprisonment, and recurring cycles of fear. The military coup of February 2021 shattered a fragile democratic experiment and plunged the nation into one of the darkest chapters of its modern history. Thousands have been imprisoned. Entire communities have been uprooted. Families have lost loved ones. Millions have been forced to live amid uncertainty, violence, and loss.

Yet the story of Myanmar is not merely one of suffering. It is also a story of extraordinary courage. Countless citizens, journalists, students, monks, teachers, physicians, artists, workers, and ordinary families have risked everything because they believe that human dignity cannot be surrendered to authoritarian power. Their struggle reminds us that the deepest conflict in Myanmar has never been simply political. It is a struggle between fear and freedom, domination and dignity, coercion and conscience.

For this reason, Myanmar cannot be understood solely through the narrow lens of geopolitics, strategic interests, or regional influence. What is unfolding there raises a universal question that concerns every society: whether human dignity remains inviolable when confronted by concentrated power. The answer we give to that question will reveal not only what we believe about Myanmar, but what we believe about ourselves.

It is within this larger moral context that the call for proof of life must be understood. At one level, the appeal concerns a single individual: an eighty-one-year-old political prisoner whose condition remains shielded from meaningful independent verification. At a deeper level, however, it concerns a principle that transcends politics altogether. Every human being possesses an inherent dignity that does not disappear when freedom is taken away. No government, military

institution, or political system acquires the moral right to erase a person's visibility simply because it controls the conditions of their confinement.

The demand for proof of life is therefore neither an ideological campaign nor an endorsement of any political position. It is a humanitarian appeal grounded in the most basic standards of human decency. It asks for transparency where secrecy prevails. It asks for accountability where uncertainty has been allowed to flourish. It asks for independent confirmation that a fellow human being remains alive, safe, and treated with dignity. Such a request should not be controversial. It should be self-evident.

For those who have followed Myanmar's modern history, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has long represented different things to different people. Some regard her as an icon of democratic resistance. Others view aspects of her political legacy through a more critical lens. Such debates are both inevitable and legitimate. Yet before she is a political symbol, she is a human being. Before she is a subject of history, she is a daughter, a mother, a student of the Dhamma, and a woman now entering her eighty-first year of life under conditions the world has not been permitted to independently verify.

The tendency to reduce people to symbols is one of the recurring failures of political culture. We elevate individuals into abstractions and then forget their humanity. We argue over reputations while losing sight of the living person beneath them. The teachings of Sayadaw U Pandita point in the opposite direction. They remind us that wisdom begins by seeing clearly, and that clear seeing always returns us to the reality of human experience. Behind every political narrative stands a human life. Behind every headline stands a person capable of suffering, hope, fear, courage, and loss.

This is why the proof-of-life appeal carries significance far beyond Myanmar. The principle at stake applies everywhere. Whenever a society permits secrecy to replace transparency, whenever power becomes insulated from accountability, and whenever the humanity of an individual is subordinated to political expediency, something essential is endangered. The issue is not merely the fate of one prisoner. The issue is whether human dignity remains a value that transcends power itself.

Seen in this light, the question before us is remarkably simple. Can the world verify that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is alive, safe, and receiving humane treatment? Until that question is answered through credible and independent access, it remains not only

a humanitarian concern but a test of the international community's commitment to the most fundamental principles of human dignity and human rights.

Yet perhaps the deepest question raised by Sayadaw U Pandita's teachings is not whether we will ultimately obtain proof of life for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

The deeper question is whether our world can still recognize the qualities of genuine leadership when it encounters them.

In every generation, societies are confronted with a choice. They can organize themselves around fear or around trust, around domination or around dignity, around the pursuit of power or the cultivation of wisdom. The choice is rarely as dramatic as history books later make it appear. More often it emerges gradually through countless individual decisions—through what leaders reward, what citizens tolerate, what institutions defend, and what moral compromises become accepted as normal.

Sayadaw U Pandita understood that lasting change does not begin in parliaments, military headquarters, or international summits. It begins within the human heart. The external crises that dominate headlines are frequently manifestations of deeper internal conditions. A society governed by fear inevitably creates fearful institutions. A society governed by greed inevitably creates systems of exploitation. A society governed by wisdom and compassion creates the possibility of justice because it recognizes the humanity of every person, including those with whom it disagrees.

This understanding explains why the Buddha placed such emphasis upon the noble friend. The noble friend is not merely a companion on the spiritual path. The noble friend represents a model of human relationship grounded in trust, integrity, truthfulness, humility, accountability, and compassion. These same qualities form the foundation of ethical leadership. Without them, authority eventually degenerates into coercion. With them, power becomes an instrument of service rather than domination.

Myanmar's long tragedy illustrates both sides of this truth. It reveals the destructive consequences of power divorced from accountability, but it also reveals the remarkable resilience of the human spirit. Despite decades of repression, countless Burmese citizens have continued to embody courage, conscience, and an unwavering commitment to freedom. Their example serves as a reminder that while institutions can imprison

bodies, they cannot fully extinguish the human longing for dignity.

The lesson Sayadaw U Pandita offered was therefore not only for Myanmar. It was for humanity itself. He understood that genuine strength is inseparable from compassion, that wisdom without conscience becomes dangerous, and that leadership begins not with authority but with character. The highest purpose of power is not self-preservation. It is the reduction of suffering.

As the world marks Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's eighty-first birthday, the call for proof of life remains both urgent and profoundly simple. It asks for independent verification of a human being's welfare. It asks for transparency where secrecy prevails. It asks that dignity not be surrendered to political convenience.

But it also asks something of us.

When we seek proof that another human being remains alive, safe, and visible to the world, we are ultimately measuring something within ourselves. We are testing whether compassion still matters more than indifference, whether conscience still matters more than expediency, and whether our shared humanity remains stronger than the forces that seek to diminish it.

Perhaps this was Sayadaw U Pandita's final lesson: that the measure of our humanity is found in how we respond to the vulnerability of another. When a human being disappears behind secrecy and silence, the question is not only whether they remain visible to the world. The question is whether we have remained faithful to the humanity we claim to defend.

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.

Photo: AFP

REMEMBERING THE TRUE SPIRIT OF BURMESE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

FERGUS HARLOW

Zeya Thaw didn't want to talk about torture when journalist and author Alan Clements interviewed him in 2016. "If you are filled with hatred, you can't move forward. If your mind is filled with anger, you can't think clearly. Your judgement will be tainted."

As Aung San Suu Kyi's aide and MP for Naypyidaw, Zeya Thaw sat in parliament with those who had imprisoned, tortured, and killed friends and family. "Our Lady is a very good example," he'd said. "She is sitting by the one who ordered her house arrest."

For those who lived it, national reconciliation was never a cynical ploy or empty, self-serving slogan.

"I had to order myself to accept them," U Win Htein, Aung San Suu Kyi's closest confidant, told Clements at the beginning of a series of interviews that would span years. "At first, they were scared of us. They said, 'After so long in prison, how can you still eat like normal people, laugh like ordinary people?' But I made it clear, we will not take revenge against those who have tortured us, we will not lead with a personal grudge. That is Dhamma."

U Tin Oo, an NLD co-founder, had frequently described the spirit of national reconciliation to

Clements ever since their time together as monks. "Where are we going to find alternatives? Are we to start taking up arms again?" he admonished during their meeting in 2013. "We have faced a lot of brutal days through armed uprising, and in the end, they cannot conquer us, and we cannot conquer them."

U Tin Oo explained that the constitution created by independence leader General Aung San eloquently circumvented retribution. "It simply states we fight for freedom - freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of religion, freedom of ethnicity. Aung San Suu Kyi gives a beautiful example," he said, "telling [the military] she will never seek retribution for Depayin."

As Aung San Suu Kyi approaches her 81st birthday, on 19 June 2026, those who knew her best are rapidly disappearing.

Zeya Thaw was executed in 2022. U Tin Oo passed away in 2024. U Win Htein has spent five years in prison.

Though it took five years to complete Burma's Voices of Freedom, the four-volume set of interviews co-authored with Clements from which these extracts are drawn, the most important lesson came quickly: never add emphasis where there was no emphasis,

never add meaning where there was no meaning, never elaborate or embellish, never change the tone.

In the absence of these leaders, others are not so diligent.

"Kim Aris's claim that his mother did more for the Rohingya than anyone else is not just wrong, it is an inversion of the documented record" journalist Kirt Mausert recently commented on X.

But the Rakhine State Socio-Economic Redevelopment Plan existed. The Annan Commission existed. Citizenship verification existed. Without their acknowledgment, Mausert's documented record is far less official than he implies.

On the Yangon Informer Facebook page, nestled between spiteful AI images of Aung San Suu Kyi admiring mass murder, Mausert announces his plans for a series of articles deconstructing her role in genocide.

He begins with the claim that Aung San Suu Kyi's actual intent didn't matter, that no one had ever implied she had control over the security forces in Rakhine State, that her complicity lies elsewhere.

But neither assertion is true.

The 2017 Guardian article that led with 'Pressure mounts on Aung San Suu Kyi to halt military clearance operations in Rakhine State' is one example among dozens, and complicity under the 1948 Geneva Convention is defined by capacity to influence and the intent to do so.

These inaccuracies have consequences. When the UN repeatedly conflated the civilian administration and the military as "the Myanmar government", national reconciliation became synonymous with nationalism. The dhamma described by Win Htein became complicity in genocide.

Today, a new generation of university students are being taught that "the Myanmar government supported religious extremist groups," with no distinction drawn between the civilian government and the military, nor

between the USDP and the NLD.

Win Htein's distress about the USDP's support for nationalist organisation Ma Ba Tha was always obvious: "It's very difficult for us to support Wirathu because he's preaching racism," he'd said. "One of the biggest obstacles is how we challenge the nationalist 969 monks. We don't have the resources."

Clements met with Win Htein at ground zero during riots in Meiktila in 2013. "When the violence in Meiktila exploded," Win Htein confided, "I went there immediately to prevent harm coming to the minority Muslims who were being killed. I went into the crowd. I said quite simply that they are the minority and it's not right for the majority to kill or harm the minority."

Win Htein recounted Buddhists mobs that had "been corrupted, like wild animals" and how, at the Muslim refugee camp, he couldn't control his tears.

Ultimately, the NLD neutralised Ma Ba Tha and prosecuted U Wirathu, though he was later released by the military.

But complicity in genocide is not a bureaucratic shortcoming. It is not a critique of poor leadership, or a moral failing. It is a serious crime under the 1948 Geneva Convention.

Usually, complicity involves the provision of material support to perpetrators, like weapons or money. When it does not, it involves failing to use one's authority to prevent security forces from committing crimes. In the 2007 Bosnian Genocide case, the ICJ ruled that complicity is only possible if the capacity to influence the perpetrators exists.

"Through us, Aung San Suu Kyi asked the police to step in, but they did not," Win Htein said of the riots in Meiktila. "For two days, the violence continued. She told us to organize our NLD members to reduce the tension and give assistance to the refugees."

The 1998 conviction of Jean-Paul Akayesu by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was the first time an individual civilian was charged with complicity in genocide. But Akayesu was a mayor who

had authority over municipal police when he chose to ignore the crimes they were committing.

For Aung San Suu Kyi's accusers, the very mention of a "porous border" is a denial of the persecution of the Rohingya tantamount to complicity. Examining the role of inter-communal violence is "whitewashing genocide." To ask why only half the Rohingya population fled in 2017 is seen as a dismissal of violence, not a request for resolution.

"Some people criticise her, saying she's silent on this issue or that issue," U Tin Oo told us, no more afraid of discussing shortcomings than of returning to prison, "but she never speaks for a particular person, she only speaks for the cause, for peace."

"She's like her father, a man whose only concern was independence," said Win Htein. "She is always thinking about other people. Like her father, she will never lose sight of her objective."

Aung San Suu Kyi's single-mindedness can be criticised. Lawyers could argue that her refusal of the UN fact-finding mission was complicity. But the UN's own report concludes that further investigations are needed to establish culpability.

The international genocide trial at the Federal Court of Argentina that resulted in two arrest warrants out of 25 being issued to civilians is hardly indicative of a criminal conspiracy.

The cruel irony is that critics such as Mausert so often resort to the kind of vilification that the NLD spent decades trying to undo.

"Do the military even tell you what they've done in Rakhine State, or do you have to figure it out through the media?" Alan had asked Win Htein in 2018. "We have to work it out," Win Htein had said.

Complicity requires an actor to have actual knowledge of the principal perpetrator's genocidal intent, and "wilful blindness" only exists where there is an intent to maintain plausible deniability.

It is not enough to accuse a civilian of complicity based on what they "should have known." Courts must prove that concrete evidence was ignored.

"Why hasn't she spoken out more about the Rohingya?" Alan pressed. "I believe she has spoken out about her position clearly," Win Htein replied, "but her answer is that if she speaks up for the Rohingya more, it will only make the situation worse."

The Panglong Conference was the NLD's attempt to return to the principles created by Aung San, "to automatically amend the constitution," Win Htein explained. "All participants agreed to the basic principles. Everybody accepted the idea of federalism. Then, the Rakhine problem exploded. A lot of pressure was put on our government, strangely more severe than with the military government before."

These are not retrospective interpretations. They are contemporaneous accounts from people attempting to navigate events as they unfolded.

The voices of Zeya Thaw, U Tin Oo, and U Win Htein do not settle every debate about Myanmar's darkest years. They do not erase suffering, nor do they absolve anyone of scrutiny. But they remind us that the individuals at the centre of these events understood their mission not as vengeance, ideological purity, or ethnic triumph, but as national reconciliation under circumstances few outsiders can fully grasp.

Fergus Harlow is a writer, scholar, and human rights advocate whose work has been integral to documenting Myanmar's pro-democracy movement. He is the Director of the global campaign UseYourFreedom.org, which calls for the release of unlawfully imprisoned State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and all democratically elected leaders in Myanmar. He has co-authored multiple investigative works with Alan Clements grounded in primary research, direct testimony, and long-term engagement with Myanmar's political and civil-society leaders.



Photo: Supplied

ARAKAN'S FUTURE IS NO LONGER NAYPYIDAW'S ALONE

AUNG MARM OO

Bangladesh's recent disclosure that it is facilitating dialogue between Myanmar's military authorities and the Arakan Army (AA) may prove to be one of the most significant regional developments concerning Arakan in recent months.

Speaking in parliament on June 17, Bangladesh Foreign Affairs Adviser Khalilur Rahman said Dhaka is working to encourage discussions between the two sides to promote stability in Arakan State, arguing that improved security conditions would help create the necessary environment for the eventual return of Muslim refugees currently living in Bangladesh.

Although framed primarily as a humanitarian initiative, the statement carries broader political implications. It reflects a growing recognition among regional actors that sustainable solutions to Arakan's multiple crises cannot be achieved through engagement with Myanmar's military authorities alone.

A Changing Balance of Power

The political landscape in Arakan has changed dramatically since fighting resumed in late 2023.

Today, the Arakan Army and its political wing, the United League of Arakan (ULA), exercise varying degrees of administrative authority across much of the state. In many areas, they oversee governance, law enforcement, dispute resolution, taxation, and public services.

Meanwhile, the military regime has lost control of much of the territory it once governed. Although junta forces continue to hold strategic positions in Sittwe, Kyaukphyu, Manaung, and several military bases, their overall authority across Arakan has significantly diminished.

This evolving reality has become increasingly difficult for neighboring countries to ignore.

Bangladesh's remarks suggest that Dhaka understands that the future of stability in Arakan depends not only on Naypyidaw but also on actors who exercise real influence on the ground.

The Refugee Challenge

For Bangladesh, the refugee crisis remains one of its most pressing foreign policy concerns.

Nearly a decade after the mass displacement of Rohingya and other Muslim refugees from northern Arakan, more than one million people remain in camps across Cox's Bazar and surrounding areas. Successive repatriation initiatives have failed because conditions for safe, voluntary, and dignified return have never materialized.

Rahman's comments acknowledge this reality. He noted that prolonged conflict and insecurity make forced repatriation inconsistent with international standards. His emphasis on dialogue indicates that Bangladesh increasingly sees political stabilization as a prerequisite for any successful return process.

Yet stability in Arakan today cannot be separated from the AA's growing role. Whether one examines border security, humanitarian access, local administration, or future reconstruction, the AA has become an unavoidable actor in shaping developments inside the state.

This helps explain why Bangladesh appears willing to facilitate communication between the AA and Myanmar's military authorities. The initiative appears less about resolving Myanmar's broader civil war than about creating practical conditions for addressing refugee repatriation and border stability.

Regional Powers Are Adjusting

Bangladesh is not alone in adapting to changing realities. Recent visits by Min Aung Hlaing to both India and China demonstrate how regional powers continue to engage Myanmar's military leadership while simultaneously adjusting to shifting political conditions on the ground.

China remains focused on protecting strategic investments linked to the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), the Kyaukphyu Deep-Sea Port, and energy pipelines connecting Yunnan Province to the Bay of Bengal.

India, meanwhile, continues to prioritize the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project and broader security interests tied to its northeastern states.

However, both countries face the same challenge: many of their most important projects are located in areas where the military no longer exercises effective control.

As a result, regional governments increasingly find themselves navigating a complex landscape where formal diplomatic relations remain centered on Naypyidaw while practical realities require consideration of local authorities and armed actors.

Bangladesh's position reflects this wider trend. The difference is that Dhaka's primary concern is not infrastructure or trade corridors, but refugee repatriation and border stability.

Possible Scenarios

Several outcomes could emerge from Bangladesh's initiative.

The most optimistic scenario would involve limited humanitarian dialogue between the military authorities and the AA. Such communication could reduce tensions, improve humanitarian access, and create conditions for small-scale repatriation efforts.

A second possibility is broader regional mediation. Bangladesh, China, and other neighboring countries could encourage confidence-building measures focused on refugee returns, humanitarian access, and border management. While comprehensive peace negotiations remain unlikely, localized arrangements may become possible.

A third scenario is continued stalemate. If fighting persists and meaningful dialogue fails to materialize, refugee repatriation will remain out of reach and humanitarian conditions may continue to deteriorate.

Perhaps the most significant long-term scenario is the gradual normalization of regional engagement with the AA. Without formally recognizing the organization, neighboring countries may increasingly engage with it as a practical necessity. Such engagement would reflect acknowledgment of realities on the ground rather than political endorsement.

The Humanitarian Dimension

Behind these political calculations lies a continuing humanitarian crisis.

Hundreds of thousands of civilians remain displaced across Arakan. Communities continue to face insecurity, economic hardship, limited healthcare access, and the consequences of ongoing military operations.

Recent junta airstrikes on Kyauktaw and its surroundings, which reportedly killed civilians including children, illustrate the continuing vulnerability of local populations.

These challenges are inseparable from Myanmar's wider crisis, which has displaced millions nationwide and severely strained humanitarian response efforts.

For refugee communities in Bangladesh, diplomatic initiatives matter only if they improve security, dignity, and prospects for eventual return.

Any future repatriation process that ignores conditions on the ground risks repeating the failures of previous initiatives.

Beyond Naypyidaw

Bangladesh's announcement may ultimately be significant not because it guarantees dialogue, but because it publicly acknowledges a reality that regional governments increasingly recognize.

Arakan's future can no longer be understood solely through the framework of state-to-state relations.

Questions of stability, humanitarian access, refugee return, economic development, and reconstruction now involve multiple centers of authority. Effective solutions will require engagement with all actors capable of influencing outcomes on the ground.

Whether Bangladesh's efforts succeed remains uncertain. What is increasingly clear, however, is that the political landscape in Arakan has fundamentally changed. Regional governments are beginning to adapt to that reality, and their policies are gradually evolving accordingly.

The future of Arakan will not be determined exclusively in Naypyidaw. It will also be shaped by the political forces that have emerged during Myanmar's ongoing conflict, by the strategic calculations of neighboring countries, and by the aspirations of the people who continue to live with the consequences of war.

The question is no longer whether regional actors recognize this new reality. The more important question is how they choose to respond to it.

Aung Marm Oo is the editor-in-chief and executive director of Development Media Group (DMG), a news agency based in Rakhine. He faces charges under Myanmar's Unlawful Associations Act and has been in hiding since May 2019.

An Update to Mizzima Readers

Mizzima continues independent journalism for Myanmar despite repression, censorship, security risks and financial pressure.



1. FUNDING REALITY

Donor funding is now almost none, although we continue to seek support.

2. HOW MIZZIMA IS SUSTAINING ITSELF

- YouTube and digital monetization
- Training and Mizzima Media Training Institute
- AI and Mizzima EAE for research, content regeneration and production
- Content repackaging across TV, Facebook, YouTube and digital platforms
- Mizzima Weekly, Mizzima English and policy products
- HH Channel and diaspora community services
- Production services, events, partnerships and sponsorships
- Agriculture, tea and coffee, restaurants, shops and marketplace initiatives

Thank you for standing with Mizzima.

Mizzima | Truth. Voice. Future.

AN UPDATE TO MIZZIMA READERS AND FRIENDS

Since the 2021 coup, Mizzima has continued independent journalism under very difficult conditions — revoked licenses, office raids, frozen bank accounts, arrests, surveillance, censorship, security risks and financial pressure.

But we continue because Myanmar still needs independent, reliable and verified information.

Today, one difficult reality is that donor funding is now almost none, although we continue to seek support wherever possible.

At the same time, Mizzima is working hard to sustain itself through self-generated revenue and new initiatives, including:

- YouTube and digital monetization
- Training and Mizzima Media Training Institute
- AI Technology through Mizzima EAE for research, content regeneration and production
- Repackaging content across TV, Facebook, YouTube and digital platforms
- Mizzima Weekly, Mizzima English and policy products
- Home Away From Home - HH Channel and diaspora community services
- Production services, events, partnerships and sponsorships
- Non-media business initiatives such as agriculture, tea and coffee, restaurants, shops, community marketplace ideas and other social enterprise activities

AI does not replace our journalists. It helps us work faster and smarter, while human editors remain responsible for accuracy, verification, ethics and editorial judgment.

Mizzima is not only trying to survive. We are adapting, modernizing and building for the future — through media, technology, community services and practical business initiatives that can support our public-interest journalism.

Thank you to our readers, viewers, partners, friends and supporters for standing with Mizzima.

Truth. Voice. Future.

#Mizzima #Myanmar #IndependentMedia
#PressFreedom #MizzimaEAE #MediaResilience
#MediaSustainability

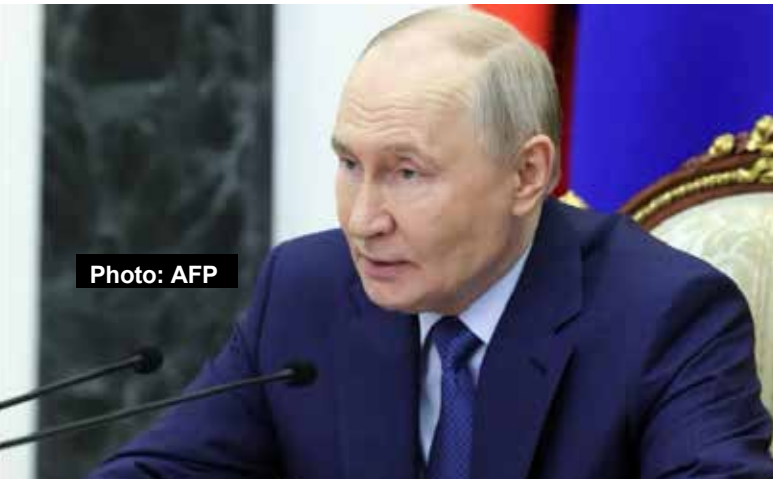


Photo: AFP

PUTIN HOSTS ASEAN LEADERS AMID G7 PRESSURE ON UKRAINE WAR

Russian President Vladimir Putin welcomed Southeast Asian leaders to a summit in the central Russian city of Kazan on 17 June, as the West pressures Moscow to end its Ukraine offensive.

Putin has sought to deepen political and economic ties with Asia during Moscow's more than four-year full-scale offensive against Ukraine.

The summit in the capital of Tatarstan, around 700 kilometres (435 miles) east of Moscow, comes as the G7 meets in France with its focus on ending the Ukraine and Middle East wars.

Representatives of 11 countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations arrived in Kazan ahead of Thursday's main business summit.

It commemorates 35 years of collaboration between Russia and the ASEAN countries, the Kremlin said.

Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Singapore sent their prime ministers, while the Philippines was represented by President Ferdinand Marcos.

Myanmar -- which held a coup in 2021 and has close ties to Moscow -- also sent a delegation.

Moscow said the leaders will "exchange views on global and regional problems" while strengthening Russia-ASEAN ties in "security, trade, investment and humanitarian cooperation."

Facing giant Western sanctions over its Ukraine offensive, Moscow has reoriented its economy --

especially oil exports -- towards Asia.

Wednesday saw Putin meet with Marcos, who invited his host to Manila in November and told him he wished to deepen energy links with Moscow.

Putin also met with the Sultan of Brunei, Hassanal Bolkiah, who was accompanied by his son Abdul Mateen, foreign minister as well as enjoying a sizable following on Instagram.

During those talks Putin said "the strategic partnership between Russia and the ASEAN is a key stabilising factor in the Asia-Pacific region."

The Russian leader's economic and international affairs advisor Kirill Dmitriev told reporters that "only Russia is in a position to resolve the energy problems" of Asian states.

"All the ASEAN states have realised that sanctions do not work -- and they particularly realised that when they were confronted by the serious energy provision problems" which arose in the wake of the US-Israel war on Iran, Dmitriev said.

Pressure on Russia

Russia's economy -- on a war footing for four years -- is struggling with high inflation, a labour shortage and high borrowing costs.

The advance of forces on the Ukrainian battlefield has slowed this year while Kyiv has multiplied attacks on Russian soil, including Tatarstan.

At the G7 in France, US President Donald Trump said Moscow should "make a deal" to end the Ukraine war, as he met Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky.

Trump also said Washington will soon be able to reimpose sanctions against Russian oil.

"Soon we will be able to do that as the oil is now flowing" through the Strait of Hormuz after the deal with Iran to end the Middle East war, Trump said.

Washington had imposed and then extended a sanctions waiver for Russian oil cargoes already at sea, troubling European allies.

Putin has repeatedly refused offers for face-to-face talks with Zelensky, insisting that Moscow intends to capture Ukraine's eastern Donbas region by force.

The Russian leader, 73, ordered a full-scale military attack on Ukraine in February 2022, which has since turned into Europe's worst conflict since WWII.

AFP



THROUGH THE INTERREGNUM

“We believe in dialogs among people of different backgrounds,” explains Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, a Thai professor at Chiang Mai University (CMU) and director of the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD), speaking with the Insight Myanmar Podcast. He argues that besides the obvious political and humanitarian challenges of Myanmar’s present situation, there is an equally important “intellectual” strand to consider. RCSD is one of the platforms attempting to articulate and synthesize an ideological future for Myanmar.

Chayan’s central claim is that Myanmar is living through what he calls an interregnum—a period in which the existing political order has lost legitimacy and coherence, yet no agreed-upon alternative has as yet taken shape. It is a moment of ideological uncertainty, when foundational questions about national identity, federalism, and shared values remain unsettled. This instability creates both risk and possibility: with deliberate intellectual work, a more inclusive political framework could begin to form; without it, however, ethno-political fragmentation may deepen.

He describes RCSD’s mandate as being to provide a critical study of social and environmental transformation in mainland Southeast Asia. Within that regional framework, Myanmar has become a particular focus

because of the scale of upheaval it has experienced over the past two decades, especially following the military coup of February 2021. RCSD began to engage with issues regarding Myanmar well before the coup. Bringing together journalists, activists, and researchers to examine land, education, and social change, their early efforts were designed as collaborative spaces where people working inside Myanmar could analyze their own country’s transformation. In past years, RCSD worked with the University of Mandalay to strengthen research capacity among faculty members, supporting research on issues such as land grabbing in Upper Myanmar, education for young girls entering monastic life from northern regions, and the tension between tradition and modernity in agricultural communities. It has organized regular Myanmar-focused conferences in Chiang Mai, and since the coup, established a scholar-at-risk fellowship program in Thailand that offers fellowships to journalists, artists, and researchers affiliated with civil society organizations. All in all, RCSD functions as a relatively safe academic platform at a time when safety is a pressing concern.

Chayan frames this support as urgent, because many young people who fled Myanmar after the coup have become trapped in limbo. Without proper documentation, they cannot travel freely within Thailand, and returning home may expose them to arrest or persecution. Some are participants in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), a nationwide refusal by civil servants and professionals to work under military rule. Thus, they would essentially be cut off from any possibility of further education. For him, that loss would not affect Myanmar alone: Thailand faces an aging population and increasingly depends on migrant labor in agriculture, services, and industry. A weakened Myanmar ultimately affects the region. Supporting education, he argues, is not charity but long-term, regional investment.

CATCH THE PODCAST

Read more and listen to the Insight Myanmar Podcast here:

<https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2026/5/25/episode-543-through-the-interregnum>



MYANMAR CENTRAL BANK STEPS UP FOREIGN CURRENCY SALES TO STABILIZE KEY IMPORTS

Myanmar's Central Bank has increased sales of foreign currency to importers of essential commodities, according to state media reports, as authorities seek to contain inflationary pressures and stabilize the domestic market.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold more than US\$3.37 million to edible oil-importing companies on 15 June, in addition to foreign currency allocations to export-oriented garment manufacturers and other businesses, according to the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar.

Earlier in the month, the bank also sold more than US\$1.62 million to edible oil importers and provided additional foreign exchange to companies operating under the cut-make-pack (CMP) system.

The interventions form part of a broader policy aimed at maintaining stability in the foreign exchange market and ensuring supplies of key imported goods. State media said the CBM has regularly injected US dollars into the market for edible oil imports throughout June, including allocations of US\$3.6 million on 8 June, US\$2.6 million on 9 June and US\$1.38 million on 10 June.

According to official reports, the central bank has also supplied foreign currency to LNG importers

and other sectors considered important to domestic economic activity. Authorities say the measures are intended to reduce exchange-rate volatility, curb currency depreciation, and help stabilize consumer prices.

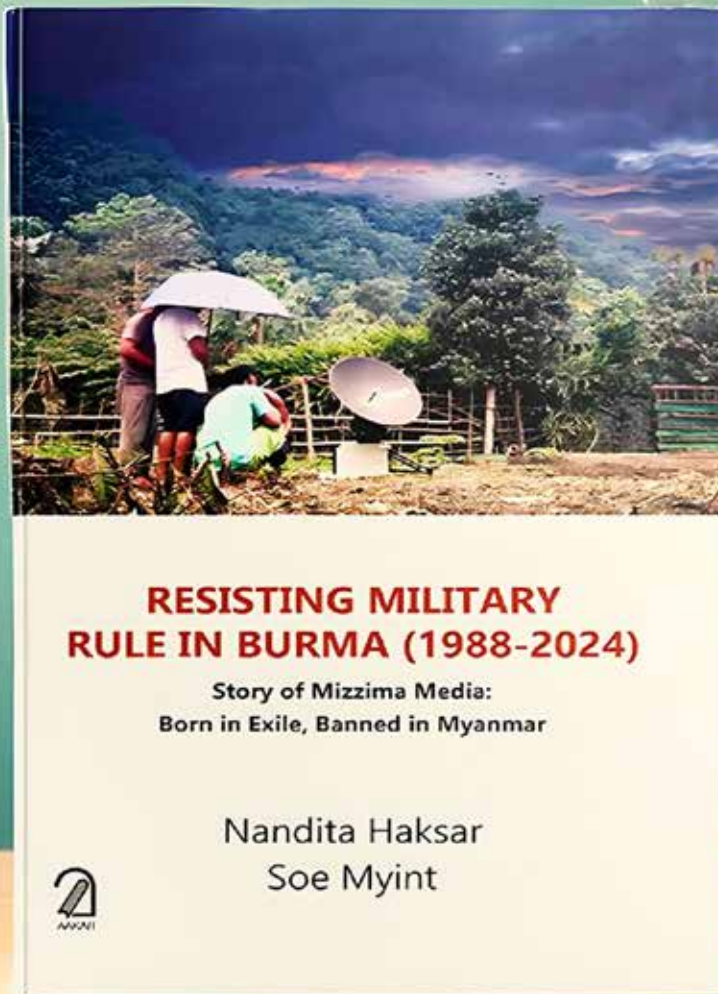
The policy comes as Myanmar continues to face inflationary pressures linked to fuel costs, foreign exchange shortages and wider economic disruption. A recent World Bank report noted that rising import costs and pressure on foreign currency reserves remain significant challenges for the economy.

The CBM has repeatedly stated that it is working with law enforcement agencies to combat currency market manipulation and has maintained a programme of direct foreign exchange interventions since the liberalization of online foreign exchange trading by authorized dealers in late 2023.

State media said the latest injections were intended to support market stability and ensure continued access to essential imported commodities, particularly edible oil, one of Myanmar's most important consumer goods.

RESISTING MILITARY RULE IN BURMA (1988-2024)
**STORY OF MIZZIMA MEDIA:
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Analysis & Insight



DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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