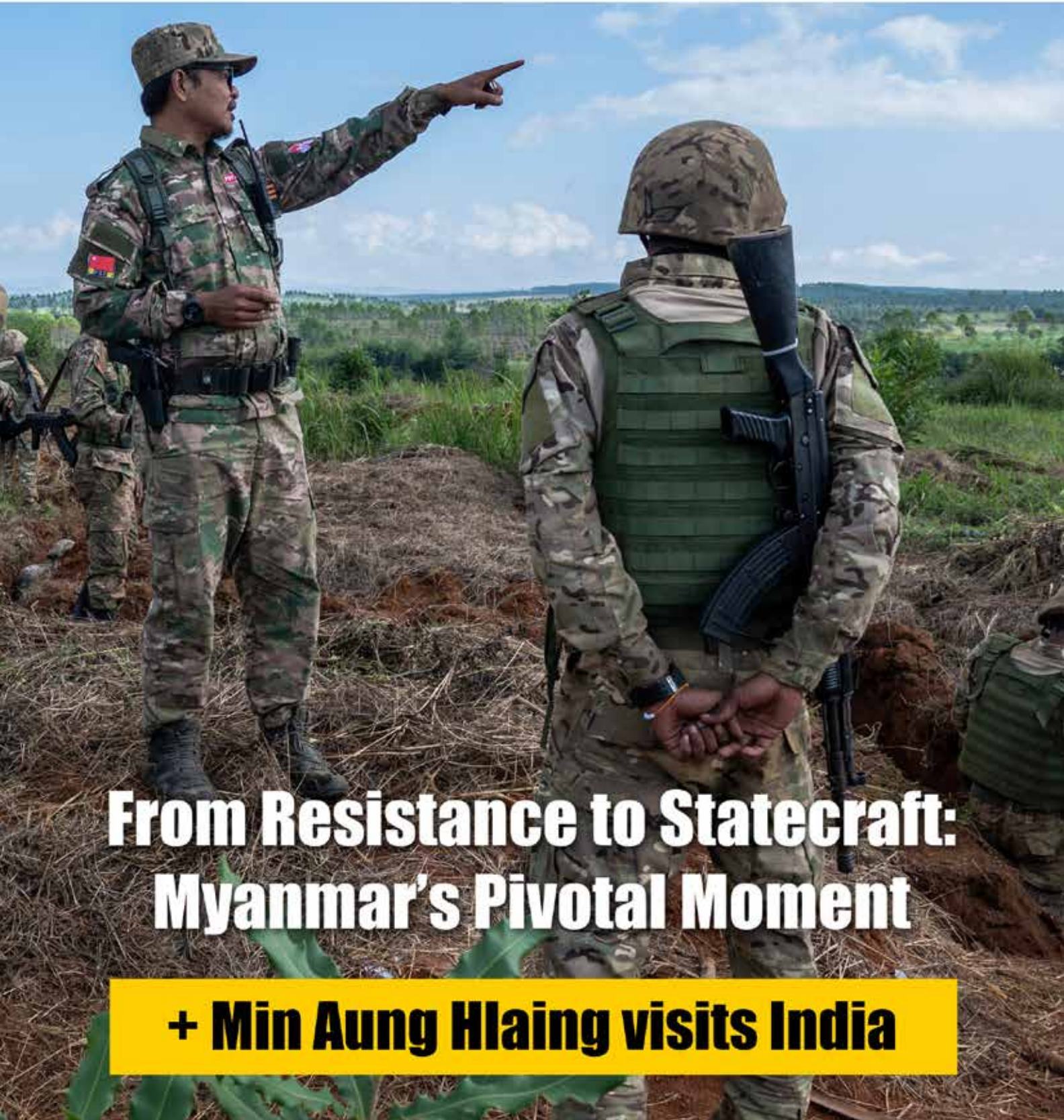


ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight



**From Resistance to Statecraft:
Myanmar's Pivotal Moment**

+ Min Aung Hlaing visits India

mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight



DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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

ATTENTION ELSEWHERE

An important world defence conference held last weekend in Singapore failed to seriously tackle a major crisis in Asia, namely the Myanmar civil war. The Shangri-La Dialogue hosted a number of important defence speakers but the focus was on a raft of crises around the world, including the ongoing war in the Middle East.

Myanmar hardly had a look in. While the crisis was mentioned or touched on during a number of sessions – largely due to the pressing issues of scam centres, drug trafficking and human trafficking – the main focus was on major standoffs around the world, not the blood being spilt in the Golden Land.

In a way, that should be no surprise. The Myanmar crisis is a hard nut to crack. It is a stain on the standing of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), a crisis their agreed 5-Point Consensus has failed to tackle as Myanmar coup-maker Min Aung Hlaing changes the regime from green to white in an effort to pass himself off as a democratic leader. Few countries take him seriously, but he does have friends in powerful places including Beijing, Moscow, and New Delhi. That could be seen in his invitation to visit India on the weekend, a visit that sparked outcry from democracy activists in Myanmar communities around the world.

It is a pity that the Myanmar crisis did not receive the attention it deserved at the Shangri-La Dialogue. While there have been efforts at cooperation by governments, not least the US, to tackle scam centres and drug running, these were relatively brief mentions compared to the focus of the conference on the war in the Middle East, US-China relations, and maritime security affairs.

The Myanmar crisis significantly impacts South East Asia and it needs a comprehensive settlement in which the military is removed from power and a democratic federal union is built, ideally from the ground up. The mission of resistance and democracy groups needs support and recognition, given the quasi-civilian military administration is illegitimate and is causing so much bloodshed and turmoil.

The situation in Myanmar is dire. Look at the lives ruined. Recognize the everyday difficulties for members of the Myanmar population. Governments and NGOs need to do more to take action over the Myanmar crisis. Myanmar needs attention.

EDITORIAL

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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 PDF resistance fighters in Mandalay by AFP



PDF fighters in Sagaing. Photo: AFP

FROM RESISTANCE TO STATECRAFT: MYANMAR'S PIVOTAL MOMENT

K2

The Limits of Military Victory

Myanmar's resistance stands at a historic precipice. After years of relentless armed struggle against a brutal military junta, revolutionary forces have fundamentally weakened the regime, gaining control of an estimated 38% of the country's territory and securing 66% of its border trade. These are historic and undeniable gains. Yet, history warns us that military advances alone are never enough to secure a durable political victory or permanently unseat successive military regimes. It is time for a decisive, strategic pivot: the revolution must immediately transition from armed resistance to coordinated state-building, credible federal governance, and constitutionalism.

The Danger of a "Hybrid Trap"

We are currently facing the imminent threat of the "hybrid trap". As the military junta reels from its battlefield losses, external actors may attempt to orchestrate a coerced, "fake peace" or political settlement. This dangerous scenario would effectively freeze the conflict in place, preserving the junta's power and military influence in a newly disguised form. The junta is already attempting to manufacture this false legitimacy through its sham 2025/2026 elections, which operate under the fatally flawed 2008 Constitution. Because this underlying constitutional framework fails to limit government power or protect fundamental human rights, any administration formed under it is merely an unconstitio-



PDF groups are learning to be more professional.
Photo: AFP

nal continuation of the dictatorship. To counter this and definitively invalidate their attempts at securing international recognition, we must systematically dismantle the junta's political strategy by operationalizing our own Interim Federal and State Constitutions.

Why Constitutionalism Matters Now

We can no longer afford to operate as a transitional resistance in an ambiguous, "half-frog, half-fish" state without concrete executive, legislative, and judicial pillars. Temporary military and political alliances, such as the Democratic Nationalities United Front (DNUF) in 1956 or the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) in 2011, historically fade without the bedrock of strong state organs. Currently, the movement relies heavily on the Federal Democracy Charter, which is merely a non-binding political agreement that cannot be enforced in domestic courts. Much like South Africa's historic transition from the aspirational Freedom Charter to a binding constitutional democracy, Myanmar must establish a true constitutional system with an independent Federal Supreme Court and state-level judiciaries. This formal legal framework is essential to guarantee fair trials, uphold fundamental human rights, and ensure the military junta is held legally accountable for international crimes—blocking any "fake peace" that would grant the military impunity.

Building Legitimacy at Home and Abroad

Furthermore, international legitimacy is not awarded solely for winning battles; it is earned by demonstrating functioning governance. Just as the American revolutionaries had to establish the Continental Congress and draft a functional Constitution to secure vital financing and recognition from France, Myanmar's resistance must establish legitimate state organs to sign international treaties and legally secure vital resources. This structural legitimacy is essential for transitioning

to "offensive economics": By implementing independent tax systems and formalizing the management of the 66% of border trade currently under our control, we can sustainably fund the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and critical governance. Crucially, formalizing federal institutions ensures equitable resource management and prevents the internal disputes that have historically plagued revolutionary groups such as the KNU and NMSP in 1988, as well as the current frictions among armed groups.

The Southeastern Region: A Federal Pilot

How do we build this state while still fighting a war? The answer lies in refusing to wait for a nationwide consensus or the conclusion of post-conflict negotiations. To avoid strategic stagnation, we must adopt a "bottom-up" federal approach, mirroring the early United States, which began with 13 willing states rather than waiting for the entire continent to unite. The Southeastern Region—comprising Karenni, Karen, Mon, and Tanintharyi—is perfectly positioned to serve as a pilot model. By immediately coordinating economic management, security, and governance in this sub-region, we can provide a powerful "proof of concept". This working sub-regional model will build institutional legitimacy and population confidence, generating the necessary momentum for other regions to adapt and follow over time.

The "Spider and Starfish" Approach

To effectively manage Myanmar's highly diverse ethnic and political landscape, the new state should establish a "Spider and Starfish" Joint Operational Command spanning the political, economic, military, and diplomatic domains. The "Spider" will act as a centralized coordinating mechanism, aligning the national vision, international engagement, and constitutional direction. Conversely, the "Starfish" empowers civil

administrations, local states, and Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) to execute on the ground in a decentralized, adaptive manner. This carefully calibrated hybrid approach successfully avoids both the paralysis of excessive centralization and the fragmentation of complete decentralization.

A Call to Action: Birth of a New Union

The time for ambiguous political arrangements is over. A Strategic Leadership Summit would mark a decisive turning point and should be convened as soon as possible, ideally before the end of 2026. Leaders from the NUG, NLD, CRPH, NUCC, EROs, and emerging federal units must seize this opportunity to move beyond provisional alliances.

Together, we must declare the operationalization of our respective constitutions and formally bring into being the New Federal Democratic Union. The revolution's ultimate victory depends not only on the strength of our armed forces, but on an immediate and courageous commitment to genuine statehood.

K2 is a seasoned strategist and advisor specializing in nonviolent activism, conflict resolution, and federal democracy in Myanmar. With extensive experience in strategy development, policy consultation, and human rights advocacy, he currently serves as Senior Executive at the Institute for Peace and Social Justice - IPSJ

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ANALYSIS & INSIGHT



MYANMAR RESISTANCE FORCES FACE OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

More than five years after Myanmar's military coup, resistance forces across the country are confronting growing operational challenges as shortages of weapons, ammunition and financial support begin to affect battlefield dynamics. While morale among anti-junta fighters remains largely intact, mounting logistical constraints have forced some groups to relinquish territory and reassess military strategies.

One of the most significant pressures stems from dwindling public contributions. After years of conflict, many civilians who have supported the revolution through donations and fundraising campaigns are experiencing fatigue amid economic hardship and prolonged instability. As a result, several People's Defence Forces (PDFs) and Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) are reporting difficulties in maintaining adequate supplies of food, ammunition and military equipment.

The impact is becoming visible on the battlefield. Resistance groups have withdrawn from a number of previously controlled areas, including parts of Katha, Indaw, Mawlu and Falam, citing shortages of ammunition and the challenges of sustaining prolonged defensive operations. Analysts say these setbacks reflect logistical realities rather than a collapse in fighting capability.

The situation has been compounded by developments along Myanmar's northern border. China's increasing influence in northeastern Myanmar has constrained the

movement of weapons and military supplies, affecting several armed groups that have historically relied on border trade routes. Observers point to the Ta'ang National Liberation Army's loss of control over key towns along the Muse-Mandalay trade corridor and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army's decision to hand back Lashio to the junta as examples of political pressures shaping military outcomes.

The consequences have extended beyond the border regions. The Mandalay People's Defence Force (MDY-PDF), widely regarded as one of the most capable Bamar-led resistance forces, has faced growing difficulties maintaining positions near Mandalay as supply chains have come under strain. Similar challenges are confronting the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), one of the strongest ethnic armed organizations in the country.

Although the KIA controls lucrative rare-earth mining areas and has sought to balance its relationship with China through economic leverage, it is also facing shortages of raw materials needed for domestic

weapons production. The disruption of supply networks has affected both conventional ammunition stocks and the manufacturing capacity of resistance-linked arms workshops.

Despite these obstacles, resistance morale appears largely resilient. Commanders and fighters continue to frame the struggle as a long-term revolutionary movement rather than a conventional military campaign measured solely by territorial gains.

At the same time, many groups are adapting by investing in technology. Across several fronts, resistance forces have increasingly deployed advanced first-person-view (FPV) drones and other precision strike systems. In Chin State, resistance groups have publicized successful drone operations against junta positions, while the KIA and allied PDFs have used drone warfare extensively in northern Sagaing Region and southern Kachin State.

Even in areas that resistance forces have withdrawn from, drone attacks continue to challenge junta efforts to consolidate control and establish



The junta military is struggling with morale.
Photo: AFP

administrative mechanisms. Fundraising campaigns frequently highlight newly acquired drone technology, demonstrating both public support and the growing importance of unmanned systems in the conflict.

As traditional supply routes become more restricted, drone warfare is emerging as a critical force multiplier, allowing resistance groups to offset material disadvantages and maintain pressure on military targets despite broader logistical challenges.

Myanmar military morale under strain

Reports emerging from multiple battlefronts suggest that morale within Myanmar's military ranks is under increasing strain as soldiers face prolonged deployments, mounting casualties and growing dependence on conscripted recruits.

According to sources close to frontline operations, junta troops stationed in conflict zones such as Bhamo in Kachin State and the Natyekan area along the Rakhine-Magway border have endured months, and in some cases years, of continuous combat

without returning to their home units. The extended deployments have taken a psychological toll on soldiers who have witnessed the deaths and injuries of fellow troops while facing relentless attacks from resistance forces.

Recognizing these pressures, military authorities have reportedly attempted to boost morale through symbolic gestures, including the distribution of popular food items such as biryani, paratha and fried noodles to frontline units. While intended to improve soldiers' spirits, such measures have done little to address the deeper challenges facing troops engaged in some of the country's most intense battles.

Unusual morale-boosting practices have also emerged. In Bhamo, military authorities reportedly distributed items such as egg paratha, cigarettes and energy drinks, not only as provisions but also as part of symbolic rituals believed by some officers to ward off enemy offensives. Such practices highlight the extent to which superstition and psychological coping



Drone warfare is getting more sophisticated.
Photo: Supplied

mechanisms have become intertwined with military life in a protracted conflict.

The junta's increasing reliance on conscription has introduced additional complications. Newly recruited conscripts have reportedly been deployed to frontline positions defending against offensives by the Arakan Army (AA), often with limited training and inadequate logistical support. Accounts from the battlefield describe conscripts being sent into combat with insufficient food and water while facing restrictions on retreat during intense fighting.

Sources also allege that some conscripts have been given stimulants or narcotics to help them endure harsh battlefield conditions. In certain operations, newly recruited soldiers were reportedly positioned at the front of advancing columns to clear potential minefields, exposing them to heightened risks. Reports of troops being shot while attempting to withdraw have further contributed to fear and resentment among recruits.

Meanwhile, evidence of growing dissatisfaction has surfaced through videos released by defectors and deserters. In one widely circulated account, former conscripts described harsh treatment within military units and alleged abuses committed against civilians during operations. The testimonies also revealed concerns about deteriorating discipline and accountability within some frontline formations.

Taken together, these developments point to a military under considerable pressure. While the junta retains significant firepower and institutional resources, persistent combat losses, recruitment challenges and reports of desertion suggest that maintaining troop morale may become an increasingly difficult task as the conflict enters another year.

Myanmar military drones change the dynamics of warfare

Myanmar's military has significantly expanded its drone capabilities over the past year, introducing more sophisticated unmanned systems that are changing the dynamics of warfare across several conflict zones.

Resistance sources report that since mid-2025 the junta has benefited from enhanced drone technology and technical assistance linked to Russia and China.

The improvements have been particularly noticeable in major battlefronts such as Bhamo, where the military has integrated drones into broader reconnaissance and strike operations.

According to resistance fighters, newer junta drones possess advanced surveillance capabilities and are increasingly used alongside fixed-wing aircraft. Scout drones identify targets and monitor troop movements before airstrikes or drone attacks are launched, creating a more coordinated battlefield approach. Resistance commanders acknowledge that these systems are more difficult to counter than earlier generations of drones and have forced revolutionary forces to adjust their defensive tactics.

The growing effectiveness of military drones has also raised concerns beyond Myanmar's borders. During recent fighting near the Thai-Myanmar frontier, clashes between junta forces and allied Karen National Union (KNU) and People's Defence Force units displaced thousands of civilians. More than 200 people reportedly crossed into Thailand seeking refuge.

On 2 June, a suspected junta kamikaze drone landed on the Thai side of the border. According to local reports, several Myanmar migrants approached the device out of curiosity before it exploded, killing three people and seriously injuring two others. KNU sources stated that the drone resembled systems previously deployed by the military in attacks against KNU-controlled areas.

The incident underscores how drone warfare is increasingly extending the risks of Myanmar's conflict beyond traditional battlefields. As both the military and resistance forces continue to invest in unmanned technologies, drones are becoming one of the most influential factors shaping the future course of the war.



Min Aung Hlaing arrives in India. Photo: Ministry of External Affairs of India

INDIA FACES SHARP BACKLASH FROM MYANMAR RESISTANCE OVER MIN AUNG HLAING VISIT

India hosting Myanmar military chief-turned-president Min Aung Hlaing for an official state visit last weekend, a diplomatic move that triggered sharp condemnation from Myanmar's pro-democracy forces and civil society organizations.

The five-day state visit, initiated via a direct invitation from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, marked Min Aung Hlaing's first official foreign trip since assuming the presidency following a tightly controlled parliamentary transition in Naypyidaw in April.

While the Indian Ministry of External Affairs framed the high-profile visit around its "Neighborhood First" policy and long-standing "civilizational ties," regional human rights watchdogs and anti-junta resistance forces argue the invitation serves to legitimize a regime that is carrying out ground military operations, daily airstrikes, and cluster bombings against its own population.

To the resistance forces currently bleeding on the ground to establish a federal democracy, India's pragmatic embrace of the regime, ostensibly to balance Chinese influence and secure trade routes amounts to legitimizing "rule by the gun."

Activists point out that while Western nations and ASEAN continue to isolate the regime, New Delhi's willingness to engage in bilateral handshakes offers the junta a vital diplomatic lifeline, directly insulting the thousands who have been killed, imprisoned, or displaced since the 2021 coup.

Diplomatic sources indicate that the bilateral talks between Min Aung Hlaing and Prime Minister Modi focused heavily on border stability, trade routes, and maritime connectivity. Security along the shared 1,600-kilometre border remains a core priority for New Delhi, which has recently moved to fence the frontier and end the Free Movement Regime (FMR) due to regional instability.

INDIAN GOVT CANNOT CHAMPION DEMOCRACY ABROAD AND HOST ITS DESTROYER AT HOME: SIF

The Strategic Initiative Forum (SIF) says it categorically rejects the India Government designation of Min Aung Hlaing as "President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar" in its May 28, 2026 MEA press release.

SIF says this is not diplomatic protocol. It is the legitimization of a brutal coup attempt by the Military in Myanmar. And the popular narrative that the junta's first trip to India signals a desire to distance from China is wrong.

The following is SIF's press statement:

HE DID NOT WIN AN ELECTION. MIN AUNG HLAING IS NOT A PRESIDENT

Min Aung Hlaing holds no electoral mandate. In Myanmar's last free and fair election on November 8, 2020, the National League for Democracy won 396 of 498 Union Parliament seats and 82% of all elected seats nationwide — on a turnout of 71.89%, representing 25.9 million votes. The junta's own political proxy, the USDP, won just 33 seats. On February 1, 2021 — the day Parliament was to convene — the military arrested the elected government and seized power by force.

To manufacture a presidency, the junta staged a three-phase election from December 28, 2025 to January 25, 2026. Over 40 political parties were dissolved, including the NLD, eliminating parties representing 72% of the 2020 popular vote. Nearly 23,000 political prisoners were held at the time of polling. An estimated 10.5 million voters were structurally excluded. The result: just 13.1 million votes cast versus 25.9 million in 2020. In Chin State, turnout fell below 5%. During the election period, the junta launched 308 airstrikes across 89 townships, killing 281 civilians. The United Nations, ASEAN, the European Union, Human Rights Watch, FIDH, ANFREL and over 300 civil society organizations publicly rejected the results as illegitimate.

The Indian Government provided the Electronic Voting Machines and biometric systems used in this fraudulent exercise. Now they receive its architect as a head of state.

THE JUNTA'S TRIP TO INDIA IS NOT BALANCING CHINA. IT IS KEPT ALIVE BY CHINA.

The claim that this visit signals strategic balancing that Myanmar seeks alternatives to China, that India offers a relationship without domination — cannot survive the facts.

Chinese Government pledged \$3 billion to the junta in late 2024 to fund its sham elections. Chinese drones and weapons won back Kyaukme in August 2025. Over \$1 billion in Chinese arms transfers have reached the junta since 2021, documented by the UN Special Rapporteur. Beijing blocked dual-use technology exports to resistance groups at the junta's own request. China brokered the MNDAA ceasefire and handed Lashio back to the junta. Xi Jinping met Min Aung Hlaing at the SCO Summit just nine months ago.

This is not a patron being distanced. This is a patron managing its client.

On sovereignty: Chinese Government has erected over 600 km of border fencing in direct violation of the 1960 China-Myanmar Boundary Treaty. Since December 2025, fencing has advanced up to 100 meters into Myanmar territory near Chinshwehaw, Kyukok-Pansai, and Namtit. Three homes in Chinshwehaw now sit on the Chinese side. The junta's response was not protest — it was censorship, pressuring media to remove coverage while its own Foreign Ministry pleaded ignorance.

A sovereign government protests. It invokes treaties. It demands re-demarcation. This junta suppressed the story to avoid offending the patron, keeping it alive.

INDIA GOVERNMENT IS BEING ASKED TO LEGITIMIZE DESPERATION.

The junta today controls less than half of Myanmar's territory. Resistance forces contest or control over 235 townships. Its sham election drew barely half the votes of the free 2020 election. Its economy is propped up by Chinese aid and a criminal border economy that generated \$15.3 billion in cybercrime revenues in 2023 — nearly a quarter of GDP.

One visit to New Delhi changes none of this. India is being asked to provide the image of strategic relevance that the junta no longer possesses on the ground. The cost to India's democratic credibility is real. The benefit to Myanmar's people is zero.

The real Myanmar — its democratic forces, its ethnic peoples, its civil society, represented by SIF's 20 member organizations across Karenni, Karen, Kachin, Mon, Arakan and other communities — seeks genuine partnership with India. Not the laundering of the regime that has bombed their townships, imprisoned their leaders, and handed their land to China.

Strategic Initiative Forum (SIF) | strategic.initiative.forum@proton.me

1. Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP)
2. Karen National Union (KNU)
3. Democratic Party for A New Society (DPNS)
4. Arakan League for Democracy (ALD)
5. Karen National Party (KNP)
6. Social Democratic Party (SDP)
7. General Strike Committee (GSC)
8. All Burma Federation of Student's Union (ABFSU)

9. Democracy Movement Strike Committee - Dawei (DDMSC)
10. Kachin State Civilian Movement (KSCM)
11. Union of Karenni State Youth (UKSY)
12. Dictatorship Revolution and People's Defense Network (DRPDN)
13. All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress (AASYC)
14. Progressive Labor Community (PLC)
15. Anonymous Organization working on Facts Checking
16. All Kachin Students and Youth Union (AKSYU)
17. India For Myanmar
18. Mon State Development Committee (MSDC)
19. NRFF - New Rehmonnya Federated Force
20. Karen Youth Organization

The Strategic Initiative Forum (SIF) established since 2022 is a coalition of 20 ethnic revolutionary organizations, political parties, strike committees and civil society groups united in the struggle to establish a Federal Democratic Union in Myanmar. Through its Anti-Sham Election Campaign Committee (ASECC), SIF mobilized resistance against the junta's fraudulent elections across nearly 100 townships over the past four years.



MYANMAR CRISIS OVERSHADOWED AS MAJOR POWERS' FOCUS ON TAIWAN, CHINA-US RIVALRY AND MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS

A major annual world defence conference held in Singapore over the weekend failed to get to grips with the serious crisis in Myanmar.

Widely recognised as Asia's premier defence summit, the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue is said to be a unique meeting where ministers debate the region's most pressing security challenges, engage in important bilateral talks and come up with fresh approaches together. It was held from 29 to 31 May and included speakers from major countries around the world.

Myanmar low-key

Centre-stage was the balance of power between the United States and China, according to observers. Myanmar was not a major standalone agenda item in public sessions. However, discussions about ASEAN cohesion, regional stability, humanitarian crises, transnational crime, and strategic competition all indirectly affect Myanmar.

The summit's emphasis on ASEAN centrality was significant because Myanmar continues to challenge ASEAN's diplomatic credibility and consensus-building efforts. ASEAN's ability to manage regional crises is being viewed alongside broader security questions in the Indo-Pacific.

Several discussions focused on illicit maritime activity, sanctions evasion networks, cyber threats, and transnational criminal operations. These issues are relevant to Myanmar because regional governments increasingly link instability, arms trafficking, narcotics production, cybercrime hubs, and illicit financial flows to broader regional security concerns. Myanmar has been in the spotlight over these issues.

Myanmar remains a black sheep for ASEAN following the 2021 military coup and civil war, given its failure to adhere to the agreed 5-Point Consensus and efforts by the junta leader Min Aung Hlaing to wrap his regime in civilian garb following the 2025-26 elections that gave him the presidency – while Myanmar's democratically-elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi remains under "house arrest".

US-China relations

What is clear from the Shangri-La Dialogue meetings is the central strategic issue remains the balance of power between the United States and China. US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, speaking at the gathering, reaffirmed Washington's commitment to Indo-Pacific security but adopted a less confrontational tone toward Beijing following

recent US-China diplomatic engagement, with US President Donald Trump holding talks in Beijing with Chinese President Xi Jinping. However, concerns over China's military modernization, maritime activities, and regional influence remain prominent.

Several regional governments are questioning whether the US can simultaneously sustain commitments in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, leading to increased discussion of strategic hedging and defense diversification.

Taiwan and maritime security

Taiwan remains one of the most sensitive issues discussed at the meeting. Regional officials continue to focus on deterrence, military preparedness, and the risks of escalation in the Taiwan Strait. Maritime security discussions are centered on freedom of navigation, the South China Sea, and enforcement of international law.

Australia's Defense Minister Richard Marles warned that undersea infrastructure is becoming a new strategic battleground, citing repeated incidents involving damaged submarine cables in the Taiwan Strait and elsewhere.

AUKUS and military technology

AUKUS, a strategic partnership, remained a major focus. The United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom announced new cooperation on advanced uncrewed undersea vehicle technologies and maritime surveillance systems. Discussions emphasize maintaining military advantages in the Indo-Pacific and protecting critical undersea infrastructure.

Middle East conflict

Meanwhile, the US-Israel Iran war and tensions around the Strait of Hormuz affected discussions. Many countries in Asia, including Myanmar, have been badly impacted by the war's effects on fuel and fertilizer supplies. Myanmar's economy and its public have been

seriously affected by higher prices and restrictions. Many Asian countries are concerned that US military resources may become overstretched, potentially weakening deterrence in the Indo-Pacific. Energy security and supply-chain vulnerability are recurring themes.

ASEAN centrality and strategic balance

ASEAN was still an important discussion point. Vietnamese leader To Lam used his keynote address to call for responsible behavior by major powers, respect for international law, and avoidance of confrontation. His remarks reflected broader ASEAN concerns about being caught between competing great powers while preserving regional stability and autonomy.

The strongest story emerging from the Shangri-La Dialogue is not a direct Myanmar development but a widening regional concern that Indo-Pacific security is entering a more volatile phase. Competition between Washington and Beijing, uncertainty about US commitments, maritime tensions, and technological militarization have been dominating discussions.

What was clear is strategic competition may reduce attention on Myanmar as the country increasingly sits within a larger regional security framework rather than at the centre of diplomatic attention.

A notable undercurrent is that Taiwan, China-US competition, AUKUS, and Middle East developments are consuming much of the strategic attention of major powers. This may further reduce high-level international focus on Myanmar despite continuing conflict, humanitarian needs and the controversy over the legitimacy of Min Aung Hlaing's quasi-civilian military administration.



Photo: AFP

MYANMAR BRIEFLY MENTIONED AS A CRISIS OF CONCERN AS QUAD WINDS UP NEW DELHI MEETING

A meeting of Quad foreign ministers in New Delhi on 26 May included a brief mention of the crisis that has engulfed Myanmar since the 2021 military coup.

A statement was released by the Foreign Minister of Australia, the External Affairs Minister of India, the Foreign Minister of Japan, and the Secretary of State of the United States of America on the occasion of the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi, India.

In their statement, they mentioned a number of issues of concern at this juncture.

"We convene at a time of not only great challenges, but also unprecedented opportunities. In the midst of conflicts, geopolitical tensions, and strains on global supply chains, we reaffirm that peace, stability, and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific hinges on upholding international law, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. We reaffirm our commitment to defending the rule of law, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. We recognize the immense potential of innovation, emerging technologies, and trusted partnerships to drive economic prosperity across the Indo-Pacific and beyond. We strongly oppose any destabilizing or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo, including by force or coercion, which escalate tensions and undermine regional peace and stability," the statement said.

With regards to Myanmar, they had the following to say:

"We remain concerned by the continuing conflict in Myanmar and its impact on the region. We reaffirm our support for ASEAN's efforts and call for the immediate cessation of violence; the release of those unjustly detained; a conducive environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance; and dialogue between all parties and affected groups involved in the conflict. We are also concerned about the impact of the crisis on regional security and the spread of transnational crimes."

In addition, they mentioned a scourge affecting Myanmar and the South East Asia region:

"The Quad remains deeply concerned about the proliferation of online scam centers within Southeast Asia and surrounding regions which are linked to the spread of other transnational crime, including trafficking in persons, drug trafficking, sexual extortion, illicit financing, and other forms of cybercrime. We will deepen cooperation, particularly law enforcement and regulatory engagement including strengthening partners' ability to combat online scam centers and associated transnational organized crime."

One Burmese analyst, James Shwe, commenting on the Quad meeting, noted that Burmese people have been calling for action over the Myanmar crisis, including a restoration of democracy, stopping the violence and the release of the unlawfully arrested. He noted that over 60 CSOs sent a letter to the Quad meeting calling on the ministers to take action.



Photo: AFP

CHINA'S PROPAGANDA CHIEF SPENT 48 HOURS IN MYANMAR VISITING EVERY CORNER OF ITS TELEVISION INDUSTRY

China's top propaganda official visited both Myanmar's state broadcaster and its largest private television network within 48 hours last week, according to statements from the junta's Ministry of Information and Chinese state-linked media.

Cao Shumin, deputy head of the Chinese Communist Party's Publicity Department and minister of China's National Radio and Television Administration, arrived in Naypyidaw on 27 May.

She had two days. She used them to visit both ends of Myanmar's television industry.

At the junta's Ministry of Information, Cao met Information Minister Htein Linn. Chinese Ambassador Ma Jia was in the room. On the table: plans to co-produce documentaries and television dramas, expand cultural exchanges, and sign agreements deepening media cooperation, according to the ministry.

The next morning, Cao was 350 kilometres south in Yangon — at the headquarters of Sky Net, Myanmar's largest private broadcaster. She told its executives the

network would receive China's support to become a "bridge" in Myanmar–China relations, according to One News Myanmar.

Both sides agreed to expand Myanmar–China content across platforms. The delegation toured the company's Hexagon film studios. Sky Net is owned by Kyaw Win, chairman of the Shwe Than Lwin Group.

In Naypyidaw, China's top propaganda official sat with the leadership of Myanmar's state broadcaster. In Yangon, she sat with the owner of its largest private network. Both meetings. Same official. Same agenda. Forty-eight hours.

What Myanmar's viewers watch on state television, and what they watch on private television, is now a subject of negotiation between Naypyidaw and Beijing.

The memorandums of understanding discussed in Naypyidaw, the junta's Ministry of Information said, has not yet been signed.



Photo: Supplied

THAILAND DETAILS 10-YEAR TIMELINE TO DISBAND AND CLOSE MYANMAR BORDER REFUGEE CAMPS

Thai authorities have announced plans to close refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border within the next 10 years, according to sources familiar with the matter.

At a meeting held during the second week of May, Thai officials reportedly stated that they would first consolidate the refugee camps over the next five years and then fully close them within a decade. This information was shared by Saw Pwe Say, secretary of the Karen Refugee Committee (KRC).

"That is correct. The refugee camps will be consolidated within five years, as explained by Thai authorities during our meeting. Beyond that five-year mark, and within a ten-year timeframe, the camps will be systematically closed down and will cease to exist officially," said Saw Pwe Say.

Despite announcing the consolidation and eventual closure of the camps, Thai officials have yet to clarify critical details regarding the future legal residency or freedom of movement for the displaced populations.

The policy shift impacts nine refugee camps operating along the Thai-Myanmar border including major sites such as Mae La, Nu Poe, Umpiem (Ohn Phan), and Mae La Oon (Mae La Oo) and has triggered widespread anxiety among long-term residents facing an uncertain future.

At present, officials are compiling a list of residents in Nu Poe camp, to determine whether residents are willing to relocate to either Umpiem or Mae La refugee camps. According to local residents, only a small number of people have registered.

"The registration process has already been carried out, but people are very worried, including us," said a middle-aged resident of Nu Poe camp. "We are afraid to register. They only asked us to choose between two places, Umpiem and Mae La."

In addition, Thai authorities are reportedly considering issuing special identification cards to refugees living in the border camps. According to a source close to the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the cards may be similar to the "pink cards" currently used by migrant workers in Thailand.

"I heard that refugees here may also receive a special ID card, similar to the pink cards given to migrant workers," the source said. "But I cannot confirm it yet."

Since international aid organizations reduced food assistance to refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border, Thai authorities have allowed refugees to work legally outside the camps beginning in 2025, helping many families support themselves.



Photo: AFP

GROWING FEARS: MYANMAR FARMERS FACE FERTILISER, FUEL DEARTH

Under monsoon skies leaden with rain, Myanmar rice farmers despondently tend their paddy fields, doubtful the deluge will bring bountiful harvests during a fuel and fertiliser crisis caused by the Iran war.

"If prices continue to rise, I will be a beggar," says veteran farmer Soe Naing, perched on a sack of rice seed overlooking his 30 acres (12 hectares) of rented land outside the delta town of Kawhmu.

"I may give up working as a farmer, but growing rice is my calling," the 49-year-old told AFP between thunderous sheets of rain heralding the start of planting season across Myanmar's riverine south.

The US-Iran war continues to send supply shocks worldwide, even as a fragile ceasefire holds.

Conflict closing the Strait of Hormuz has been particularly damaging to Asia, the destination for 80 percent of oil transiting the seaway, according to the International Energy Agency.

Myanmar, already gripped by a humanitarian crisis amidst its civil war, is vulnerable further still.

The Southeast Asian nation imports 90 percent of its fuel oil, according to official figures.

Up to 95 percent of its chemical fertilisers -- produced in abundance in the Gulf where natural gas is burnt to synthesise ammonia -- is also imported, according to the UN's World Food Programme (WFP).

Spiking prices of both commodities have left Myanmar farmers struggling to fuel rotavators needed to till fields or buy fertiliser to boost their seedlings at a crucial time in the agricultural calendar.

The WFP warns a 50 percent drop in fertiliser use could result in farming output dipping up to 15 percent in Myanmar, where food insecurity is already widespread.

"The current situation is the most difficult time we have faced," said Soe Naing. "As for my hope, I have nothing other than my fields."

Barren hope

More than 4,000 kilometres (2,500 miles) from the embattled Strait of Hormuz, Moe Aung's paddy -- situated a 15-minute boat ride up a serpentine creek -- is beholden to the shock of the global shipping crisis.

He sows seed onto the mud but plans to ration half a bag of fertiliser per acre this year -- one-sixth of what his crop needs to thrive.

"I am just doing it because I own fields, but I don't want to do it," says the 53-year-old. "I have no willingness to continue if this situation doesn't end."

Prices for a 50-kilogram bag of fertiliser have multiplied up to five times, he estimates, now costing as much as 200,000 kyat (\$48).

Moe Aung works with his hands in the sucking mud of the humid paddy fields.

But much of his profession now entails complex mental arithmetic and accountancy as he struggles to manage a cycle of high-interest debt worsened by the far-off Middle East war.

Buying fertiliser on credit and paying the bill after the harvest is common, but this year Moe Aung fears the sums will simply not add up.

"I don't think the expense and the revenue will be equivalent," he says.

"Previously, we were comfortable; we could look after our parents, we could go for some social activities, our family was peaceful and happy," he said.

"That is all disappearing."

'History full of doubts'

Myanmar was once the world's rice bowl, exporting more of the staple than any other nation in the years before World War II.

Decades of post-independence conflict and instability, and now the civil war sparked by a 2021 military coup, have eroded the country's agriculture sector.

The coup deposed the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's popular democratic leader who remains detained and who once held Kawhmu's parliamentary seat.

The resulting war has killed more than 90,000 people on all sides, monitoring group ACLED says, and displaced more than 3.7 million, according to the United Nations.

The United Nations describes Myanmar as a country mired in a "polycrisis", with the effects of the Middle East conflict another layer of degradation.

But there may be yet another problem on the horizon.

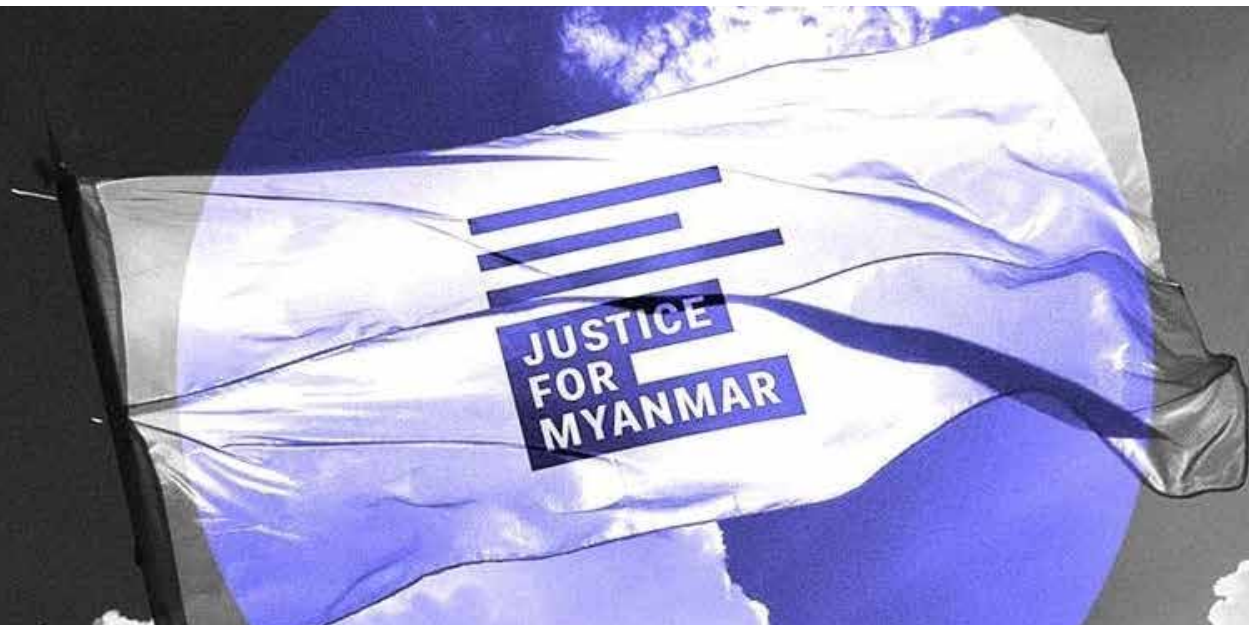
Forecasters predict this year will see a strong iteration of the El Nino weather phenomenon, which typically brings heatwaves and drought to parts of Southeast Asia.

It is due to start as soon as this month -- another global shock with the potential to reverberate in fragile Myanmar.

"If we continue this way, farmers could disappear from this country," laments Myanmar Farmer Union chair Su Su Nway.

"We do not want future generations to read a history full of doubts, wondering if these farmers truly existed."

AFP



JFM WELCOMES THE RESIGNATION OF MYANMAR JUNTA CRONY AS ICELAND'S HONORARY CONSUL TO MYANMAR

On 30 May, Justice for Myanmar (JFM) issued a statement welcoming the resignation of Ko Ko Latt as Iceland's Honorary Consul to Myanmar. The Myanmar junta crony voluntarily tendered his resignation after eleven weeks in the post. The post was formally withdrawn effective 15 May, the Icelandic Foreign Ministry confirmed to JFM.

The text of the statement continues as follows.

The withdrawal comes after the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs launched a review into Ko Ko Latt's business with the military junta, including EU sanctioned entities, which Justice For Myanmar raised in a letter to Foreign Minister Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir on March 27 that demanded the position be revoked.

In the letter, Justice For Myanmar detailed Ko Ko Latt's business dealings with the illegally junta controlled Myanma Timber Enterprise (MTE) and the

military conglomerate Myanma Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL), which are both subject to EU sanctions that are in force in Iceland.

MTE is a lucrative revenue earner for the junta through the sale of timber, including Myanmar teak, which is in high demand internationally. Timber purchases from MTE help finance the junta's campaign of terror against the people of Myanmar, which it has intensified in the lead-up to its sham election and through its subsequent rebranding.

The junta uses revenue from MTE and other state-owned enterprises it illegally controls to purchase the arms and aviation fuel that it needs to carry out its widening attacks, including indiscriminate airstrikes and shelling that slaughter civilians, destroy hospitals, schools and places of worship, and cause mass displacement, while the junta weaponises and systematically obstructs aid. These attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure amount to ongoing war

crimes and crimes against humanity, which the junta commits with total impunity.

MEHL is directly owned by the very generals and military units committing international crimes, and is used as a vehicle for their personal enrichment and to sustain the systemically corrupt and brutal military.

The appointment of Ko Ko Latt also awarded false legitimacy to an illegal military junta that has been rejected by the Myanmar people, who continue to courageously resist after more than five years. Ko Ko Latt had presented his letter of consular commission to the junta's then foreign minister Than Swe on February 23, 2026.

Ko Ko Latt responded to Justice For Myanmar's letter to the Icelandic foreign minister by stating that the honorary consul accreditation process began "during the previous government" and he denied having any business dealings with MEHL and MTE.

A report Justice For Myanmar has published today shows that Ko Ko Latt's denials are directly contradicted by his own company documents, records from junta agencies, and information from Ko Ko Latt's own social media accounts and company websites.

The report shows that Ko Ko Latt, through the K K Business Group that he owns and leads:

- Operates Central Hotel in Yangon on a fifteen-year lease from MEHL, confirmed in an import permit application Ko Ko Latt himself signed and submitted to the junta's commerce ministry in December 2025. Ko Ko Latt claims that his involvement with Central Hotel is limited to a fried chicken restaurant.

- Became the biggest purchaser of timber from MTE in 2022 and 2023 out of more than 40 companies, based on leaked timber auction records on file with Justice For Myanmar.

- Has been exporting timber internationally following the military's coup attempt and MTE sanctions. Verified exports found in commercial trade databases include multiple teak shipments to Turkey, which is a known transit route for illegal Myanmar timber to enter the EU. Ko Ko Latt claims his businesses have never purchased timber from MTE and that he is not a timber trader.

- Expanded his business following the military's coup attempt, establishing among others, an aviation services company and a company registered for the extraction of oil and gas. Aviation, even when civil, is a known high-risk sector that often serves the Myanmar air force, while oil and gas extraction is one of the junta's biggest foreign currency earners.

- Has been doing business through an account with Myanma Foreign Trade Bank, which is sanctioned by the USA, Canada and Australia, according to K K company documents submitted to the junta.

Justice For Myanmar calls on the USA, UK, EU, Canada and Australia to respond to K K Business Group's continued business with the junta and undermining of existing sanctions on MEHL and MTE by imposing targeted sanctions on K K Business Group and its principals, including Ko Ko Latt.



Photo: Supplied

MYANMAR JUNTA ATTACKS KILL THREE CIVILIANS AND TRIGGER MASS DISPLACEMENT IN OKPHO TOWNSHIP

The Myanmar military junta has intensified its offensive in Okpho Township, Tharrawaddy District, Bago Region, killing three civilians, wounding another, and triggering mass displacement through a combination of airstrikes and ground ambushes.

On 27 May at around 10:15 am, a junta jet fighter carried out an airstrike on Chaung Gwa Gyi village in Okpho Township. During the attack, a 50-year-old resident identified as U Paw Hla was struck by bomb shrapnel and died at the scene, residents said.

"He was transporting three horses from Thayet Hnit Phyar Lein village to Chaung Gwa Gyi village. Just after arriving in Chaung Gwa Gyi, he was struck by the bomb and died instantly. The three horses he brought with him were also killed," a local resident said.

The airstrike reportedly also damaged a school building and several homes in Chaung Gwa Gyi village.

In a separate incident on 26 May, a junta infantry column that arrived in Kaing Gyi village, Okpho Township, captured and killed two local residents, identified as U Pho Zaw, 40, and U Aye Gyi, 51, as

they were returning to the village. According to local sources, junta troops also confiscated and looted money belonging to the victims.

"They returned to the village believing the military column had already withdrawn but instead encountered a junta ambush position and were shot dead. The junta troops also took the money belonging to U Pho Zaw," a local resident said.

In addition, on the morning of 28 May, a junta aircraft dropped two bombs on the eastern side of Htan Pin Kone village in Okpho Township. A local woman was seriously injured in the attack and is said to be in critical condition.

Local sources said the military junta has continued carrying out ground offensives and airstrikes across Okpho Township, forcing many residents to flee their homes. Displaced civilians are reportedly unable to return to their villages and are now in urgent need of emergency food assistance.




Photo: Supplied

MYANMAR JUNTA TIGHTENS BLOCKADE ON WESTERN MAGWAY, DRIVING SEVERE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The Myanmar military junta has severely intensified its "Four Cuts" strategy in western Pakokku Township, Magway Region, completely blocking the transport of food, medicine, and basic goods to neighbouring areas like Pauk, Myaing, and the Yaw region since mid-May.

With the junta banning the transport of goods throughout western Pakokku, those fleeing conflict in these areas are suffering a double blow, facing steadily rising commodity prices and severe goods shortages alongside displacement, an official from the Anya Myay Coalition Forces told Mizzima on 28 May.

"People are heavily displaced by the conflict. On top of that, junta military columns are operating in the area. With all these factors combined, everything seems to be heading toward a state of general crisis," the official said.

Since 14 May, the transportation of goods, including food and medicine, from Pakokku to western areas such as Pauk, Myaing, Myitchay, and the Yaw region has been blocked.

The official added that while similar blockades have occurred throughout the post-coup period, the current situation has significantly worsened.

"Now, [the chief of Myanmar army] Ye Win Oo is, as the saying goes, 'outdoing his predecessors to flex his power.' When leaving Pakokku, he doesn't even allow a single bundle of roselle leaves or water spinach to be loaded onto a car," the Anya Myay Coalition Forces official said.

While transit into the local regions is strictly forbidden, the junta reportedly still allows goods from other areas to be imported into Pakokku town itself.

Similarly, supply routes leading to Pauk Township in Magway Region have been blocked since 1 May.

An official from the Pauk Township Department of Social, Labor, and Humanitarian Affairs noted that the township is currently experiencing acute shortages, and the prices of remaining goods have skyrocketed.

"Rice prices have surged dramatically. A rice sack that normally costs 85,000 to 90,000 MMK is now selling for around 100,000 to 110,000 MMK. Even then, we can only purchase it in limited quantities," the official explained.

He further mentioned that because locals are currently displaced and job opportunities are scarce, the suspension of trade flows combined with rising prices has caused severe distress. Consequently, emergency assistance is urgently needed to support the IDPs as much as possible.

In areas where goods flows have been cut off, the junta has also been launching military offensives.

According to Anya Myay Coalition Forces, a junta column killed six civilians, including a CDM school teacher, near Tabyin Village in Saw Township within the Yaw region.



Photo: Supplied

MYANMAR JUNTA COLUMN TORCHES 250 HOMES IN NYAUNG-U TOWNSHIP AS RAINY SEASON BEGINS

A Myanmar junta column has raided and burned down Kutaw village in the southern pocket of Mandalay Region's Nyaung-U Township, destroying an estimated 250 civilian homes. The devastating arson attack has left approximately 1,500 residents displaced and exposed to severe weather elements just as the regional monsoon rains begin to intensify.

According to local community sources, the assault was carried out by an operational strike column consisting of roughly 300 troops mobilized from bases in Ngathayauk and Nyaung-U townships.

The unit had been aggressively advancing through rural tracts along the administrative border of Nyaung-U and Kyaukpadaung townships since 23 May 2026.

Witnesses reported that the column advanced from neighbouring Hpalankan village toward Kutaw on 24 May, instigating an armed clash with local defensive forces. Prior to entering the residential layout, the military forces unleashed an indiscriminate barrage of heavy artillery.

"They fired heavy weapons before entering the village. Nearly 250 houses were completely destroyed by the shell impacts and the resulting fires that swept through the dense structures," a local resident said.

Kutaw village has now been burned twice. In early March, junta troops also set fire to around 30 houses in the village. A woman from Kutaw said the two incidents have affected about 1,500 residents, many of whom are now struggling to survive.

"Now we can't even return to the village to live," she said. "We have to stay in the forest and in other villages. We are also facing food shortages, and we don't even have tents for shelter."

As the rainy season has begun, local residents said displaced villagers are in urgent need of shelter and clean drinking water.

The military column that torched Kutaw village reportedly spent the night in Taungtaw village on 27 May and left the village in two separate groups on the morning of 28 May, one heading west and the other north, according to locals.

Photo: Supplied

NUG FORCES FORCIBLY ARREST STUDENT REVOLUTIONARY FORCE LEADER IN MINKIN TOWNSHIP AMID CLASHES

Forces loyal to the National Unity Government (NUG) have forcibly arrested Ko San Tin Tun, chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Student Revolutionary Force (SRF), in Sagaing Region's Minkin Township.

The operation, which took place around 5:00 pm on 26 May, has ignited severe internal friction within the anti-junta revolutionary movement, drawing widespread protests and allegations of civilian casualties.

U Kyaw Ni, the NUG Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Immigration, confirmed the high-stakes arrest to Mizzima, stating that the operation was launched following years of unaddressed criminal complaints.

"Regarding the issue involving the SRF, the township People's Administration Team (commonly

referred to by the Burmese acronym Pa Ah Pha) has been filing complaints since the beginning. Numerous incidents have been reported, including arrests, kidnappings, and killings, particularly involving the detention and murder of NUG officials and members of the People's Defence Team (Pa Ka Pha). Although discussions had repeatedly been held to secure the handover of the suspects, they refused to cooperate. As a result, the Ministry of Defence, together with township administrative bodies and district command teams, provided military assistance to carry out the arrest operation," the NUG Deputy Minister of Home Affairs said.

The Minkin Township Pa Ah Pha reported on 26 May that the SRF had committed at least eight crimes in its operational area in Minkin Township between 2023 and 2026, including the killings of two Pa Ka Pha members and a woman.

The SRF was repeatedly notified to appear and resolve the cases in accordance with the law but failed to do so.

In response to the allegations, the SRF said in a statement to the NUG on 24 May that it was not establishing a parallel administration in the area, but was instead assisting the health and education sectors at the request of local residents.

The SRF also said it was prepared to address the eight cases filed by the People's Administration Team, which it described as unilateral accusations, through impartial legal experts.

Regarding the arrests on 26 May, the Minkin Township Pa Ah Pha said an initial attempt to detain the suspects was made on the evening of 25 May, but the operation was suspended after SRF members allegedly used local residents as human shields by surrounding themselves with civilians.

In a statement, the Pa Ah Pha said authorities resumed the operation on the evening of 26 May after requesting the crowd to disperse and receiving no cooperation in handing over the suspects. It added that warning shots were fired into the air to control the situation after some residents obstructed the arrests but stressed that no civilians were directly targeted.

However, the SRF said in an emergency statement, supported by footage circulated from the scene, that one man and one woman were injured when joint forces from the Pa Ah Pha and Pa Ka Pha opened fire during the operation.

The SRF also alleged on 26 May that the arrests took place while its members were travelling to an in-person meeting following an online discussion via Zoom with officials, including the NUG Defence Minister. The group claimed the meeting was interrupted and that the arrests violated an agreement guaranteeing their security by regional leaders.

An official from the Minkin Township Pa Ah Pha told Mizzima that the actions were carried out in accordance with the law.

"This is not a dispute between revolutionary groups that can be resolved through armed force. We are acting in accordance with the law in response to complaints and in arresting suspects. As an armed group, we are using force to carry out arrests, but we are not attempting to intimidate any armed group," the official said.

The People's Revolutions Supply Family (PRF) and the People's Democratic Army (PDO/PDA) have strongly condemned the use of force against unarmed civilians and called for the immediate release of those detained.

The Pa Ah Pha told Mizzima that detained SRF leader Ko San Tin Htun is being held at a secure location, while efforts are ongoing to apprehend the remaining suspects, amid escalating arrests and protests on the ground.

Mizzima contacted the SRF for comment on the matter, but had not received a response by the time of publication.



Photo: AFP

REPORT SAYS DIGITAL PLATFORMS FAILED MYANMAR INDEPENDENT MEDIA DURING JUNTA ELECTIONS

A new Human Rights Myanmar report warns that major digital platforms failed to protect Myanmar's independent media during the junta's 2025-26 elections, enabling censorship, threats, and financial exclusion against exile-based journalism.

The report, released in May in partnership with the Institute for Press and Communication Management (IPCM), noted that after the 2021 coup forced many outlets into exile, independent Myanmar media became increasingly dependent on platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. However, this reliance exposed journalists to "digital hostility" and opaque moderation systems during the junta-organised elections held between December 2025 and January 2026.

The report described the polls as a "sham election" widely rejected by the international community and regional bodies.

Among the report's key findings, 69% of the surveyed media outlets said that online threats to their operations worsened in the lead-up to the elections, while 91% reported that their organizations experienced digital attacks during the electoral period.

Researchers said platforms frequently removed journalism documenting conflict and alleged military abuses. According to the report, every outlet surveyed had at least some content deleted by automated moderation systems; specifically, 76% of the outlets reported the deletion of journalistic photographs and 59% reported the loss of video content from their channels.

"One journalist said, 'Really important news has been censored,'" the report noted.

The report argued that platforms failed to distinguish between graphic propaganda and legitimate reporting on war crimes and violence in Myanmar's civil war.

"By deleting our conflict coverage, the platforms are penalising the witness and helping the murderer hide the evidence," one editor told researchers.

Human Rights Myanmar also highlighted the collapse of effective appeals mechanisms. Notably, while 88% of outlets attempted to challenge content removals, 82% described the process as useless due to the lack of human review and contextual understanding.

The report further found that half of surveyed media outlets received no platform monetisation revenue, largely because exile media could not meet corporate registration requirements imposed by tech companies. As a result, many outlets faced significant financial hardship.

Women journalists faced particularly severe abuse, with 77% of respondents reporting technology-facilitated gender-based violence, such as harassment, deepfake imagery, and attacks targeting their families.

The report called on digital platforms to establish Myanmar-specific human moderation systems, protect public-interest journalism from arbitrary deletion and reform monetisation rules for exiled media outlets.

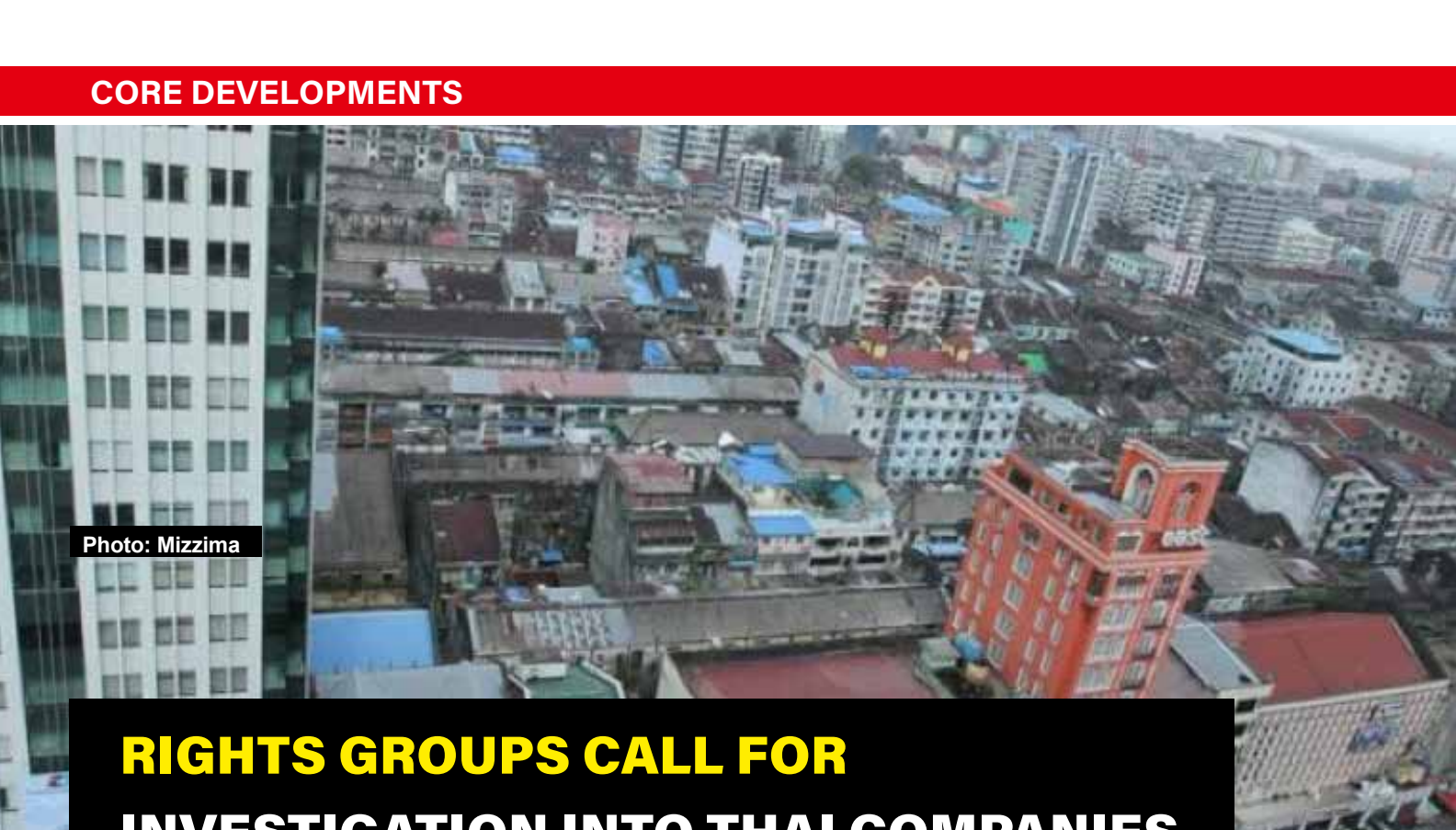


Photo: Mizzima

RIGHTS GROUPS CALL FOR INVESTIGATION INTO THAI COMPANIES FUNDING MYANMAR JUNTA

Blood Money Campaign (Myanmar/Burma) and Campaign for a New Myanmar filed a formal complaint with Thailand's National Human Rights Commission on 25 May, urging an investigation into the transboundary human rights impacts of Thai oil and gas companies operating in Myanmar.

The text of the statement continues below.

The groups urge a probe into PTT, PTTEP, and Northern Gulf Petroleum's operations in Myanmar since the 2021 military coup attempt. These companies' revenues bolster the junta's capacity for human rights violations and atrocity crimes, breaching the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The Thai government must ensure compliance with international law, including the UN Guiding Principles, Thailand's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, and, in light of its bid to join the OECD, the OECD Guidelines.

The illegitimate Myanmar military junta continues to seize power through force of arms against the people of Myanmar.

Min Aung Hlaing, who orchestrated the coup and led the military junta, has now been appointed "President" by the military-controlled parliament following a sham election. While publicly and deceptively claiming a transition toward democracy, the junta continues to carry out mass killings of civilians, severe human rights violations, war crimes, and daily airstrikes.

Since the illegal coup attempt of 1 February 2021, nearly 93,000 people have been killed and the junta has arbitrarily detained over 20,000 people, and conducted 7,201 airstrikes killing 4,496 civilians, including pregnant women and newborn infants. Tanintharyi Region, through which the Yadana, Zawtika, and Yetagun gas pipelines run, has seen intensified conflict with thousands displaced and widespread human

rights violations, including killings, arbitrary detention, and property destruction.

According to the Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica data, from February 2021 to April 2026, the Myanmar military junta carried out 253 airstrikes in the Tanintharyi Region, resulting in the deaths of 63 civilians and injuries to 138 others. In addition, within a four-month period from January to April 2026, there were up to 11 mass killing incidents, resulting in 76 deaths. In Yebyu Township - through which the gas pipeline from offshore Tanintharyi to Thailand passes - there were 7 airstrikes and 1 mass killing incident, resulting in the deaths of at least 6 civilians.

Thai companies PTT, PTTEP and Northern Gulf Petroleum generate more than \$1 billion annually for the junta, its largest legitimate source of foreign income that is facilitating the ongoing atrocities in Myanmar. At a time of escalating brutality, PTTEP is negotiating with the junta to increase production at the Yadana and Zawtika projects and to kickstart the new Aung Thein Kha project while ensuring the junta can avoid sanctions. Similarly, Northern Gulf Petroleum's subsidiary, Gulf Petroleum Myanmar, has recently signed an agreement with Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) for the Min Ye Thu project.

The complainant calls on the Commission to conduct a formal investigation, gather evidence from affected communities and civil society, and reflect UN Special Rapporteur and OHCHR recommendations, including targeted sanctions on Myanmar gas revenues.

The complaint requests concrete measures for PTT, PTTEP, and Northern Gulf Petroleum, including placing gas revenues in escrow accounts, suspending new investment in Myanmar's gas sector, and responsibly

disengaging where operations pose unavoidable human rights risks. The complaint also urges the Thai government to ensure these companies do not contribute further to the junta's atrocities by stopping payments to the junta, enforcing sanctions compliance, and enacting mandatory human rights due diligence laws.

Mulan of the Blood Money Campaign (BMC) said: "The military junta fully controls MOGE. Thailand's state-owned PTT company, its subsidiary, PTTEP, and privately-owned Thai company Northern Gulf Petroleum are providing millions of dollars in Thai baht payments to enable the Myanmar military junta's severe ongoing human rights violations every month. This constitutes financial complicity in the criminal junta's daily war crimes and mass killings of civilians. Communities along gas pipeline routes and people nationwide are facing severe human rights violations. These companies are breaching international business and human rights standards and jeopardise Thailand's plans for OECD ascension. Therefore, we request Thailand's National Human Rights Commission to investigate and stop these financial contributions to the junta's brutal crimes."

Keel Dietz, Senior Policy Advisor for the Campaign for a New Myanmar (CNM) said: "The military junta needs hard currency to pay for the weapons and military supplies it uses to conduct its campaign of violence against the people of Myanmar. PTT, PTTEP, and NGP must do everything in their power to ensure that their operations do not fund the junta's barbarity. Revenues from Myanmar's gas fields belong to the people and not the military junta. The oil and gas companies must put that money in escrow for a future democratic government of the people of Burma.



Photo: Supplied

KADU MONKS TEACHING IDP CHILDREN FACE DEATH THREATS FROM LOCAL COUNCIL LEADER

Buddhist monks from the Kadu ethnic minority who are providing humanitarian aid to displaced families and teaching native literature in Sagaing Region's Banmauk Township are preparing to flee the region following explicit death threats.

The Kadu Youth Federation confirmed that the religious leaders are seeking emergency relocation to major urban centres due to escalating security risks.

An official from the Kadu Youth Federation told Mizzima that the monks have come under threat after negotiating and appealing to various local armed groups on behalf of IDPs seeking to return home following long-term displacement, as well as due to their efforts to teach and preserve Kadu literature.

"The monks had to engage with both the Shanni Nationalities Army (SNA) and the People's Defence Force (PDF). Because they helped IDPs who wanted to return home and organized Kadu literature classes, a man named Ko Myo Thein Oo, who represents the self-proclaimed 'Maing Thon Council,' threatened them," the official said.

"He (Ko Myo Thien Oo) reportedly stated that monks could be arrested or killed for failing to focus on their religious duties and warned that action would be taken against them if they continued teaching literature," the official said.

The Kadu monks have been assisting IDPs in both northern and southern Banmauk Township, while Kadu literature classes are being conducted mainly in the northern part of the township.

The official added that, due to growing security concerns, the Kadu monks' association is now preparing to relocate to major cities such as Yangon and Mandalay.

Mizzima attempted to contact Ko Myo Thein Oo of the Maing Thon Council for comment but was unable to reach him.

Banmauk Township is rich in natural resources, particularly gold mining sites, and remains an area where multiple armed groups are active and frequently operate.



Photo: Supplied

MYANMAR JUNTA DEPLOYS FLEET OF JET FIGHTERS AND Y-12 BOMBER TO POUND RESISTANCE-HELD MATUPI

In a major escalation of its air campaign over southern Chin State, the military junta launched a massive, coordinated aerial assault on the town of Matupi on 26 May. The strike force utilized a fleet of seven jet fighters and a Y-12 transport aircraft reconfigured as bombers.

The heavy aerial bombardment commenced around 10:00 am, according to local aviation monitors and ground sources. The multi-wave raid involved jet fighters scrambled from three major airbases across central Myanmar: three from Tada-U (Mandalay), two from Magway, and two from Ela (Naypyidaw).

"The bombing this morning was quite intense. They targeted the areas where the military used to be stationed. However, no casualties have been reported so far," a Matupi resident told Mizzima.

Mizzima is still attempting to contact officials from the Chin People's Union, which currently controls Matupi, regarding the ongoing situation in the region.

Matupi had previously been hit by junta airstrikes on 19 May, during which the blast caused the death of a four-day-old newborn baby, while also damaging a sports center near the golf course and Basic Education High School No. 2.

According to information released by the Chin People's Union, the military junta conducted up to 36 airstrikes in Mindat, Matupi, and Kanpetlet townships in southern Chin State between 11 and 22 May.

Numerous people were injured, and houses, shops,

and government buildings were destroyed in those attacks, though the Chin People's Union has not yet released specific details on the extent of the damage.

An official from the Chin People's Union said, "Recently, they have launched military columns toward Kanpetlet and are aggressively attacking via air. They are doing this just before their fake election government has taken power; this is their inherent nature, which they have been practicing all along."

The official added that comrades are resisting the junta's offensive to the best of their ability, and emphasized that the public must also fulfill their respective duties in resisting these cruel and unjust acts.

According to military sources, fierce clashes have been taking place since 17 May, accompanied by continuous airstrikes, as junta troops advance toward Kanpetlet in southern Chin State via Saw Township in Magway Region, after capturing Falam and Tonzang towns in northern Chin State.

Furthermore, the military is reinforcing its troops via Kyauktu and making military preparations at a location just over 10 miles away from Mindat.

The Chin Brotherhood and its allies captured Matupi on 29 June 2024, Mindat on 21 December and Kanpetlet on 22 December, and have since been establishing public administration mechanisms. The junta is now launching counter-offensives in response to these developments.



Photo: EPA

SHAN YOUTH VOICE DEEP CONCERNS OVER MNDAA EXPANSION IN NORTHERN SHAN STATE

The Shan Youth Congress has publicly raised alarms regarding the territorial expansion and governance practices of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) across northern Shan State.

Speaking to Mizzima following the fallout of Operation 1027, an official from the youth congress urged the ethnic Kokang armed group to review its activities, calling for immediate regulation, transparency, and oversight.

"We, the Shan youth and the wider Shan community, want the MNDAA to engage transparently on issues that cannot be overlooked, and we urge the group to review and regulate its activities," an official from the Shan Youth Congress said.

The organization reported a steady rise in documented field incidents, dividing local grievances into two primary categories: administrative abuses and land confiscation, alongside human rights violations and socio-economic disruptions.

Shan youths accuse the MNDAA of relying on excessive military force, armed intimidation, and economic mismanagement as it extends control beyond its traditional Kokang-majority strongholds, warning that these actions are actively exacerbating local ethnic tensions.

The official from the Shan Youth Congress added that reports and documented incidents linked to the MNDAA's activities on the ground have steadily increased over time.

"Recently, Shan youth organizations have documented a growing number of cases indicating that the MNDAA's actions are straying from the principles of peaceful coexistence and a federal union system. These include economically motivated activities involving a neighboring country that adversely affect local communities, threats to the safety and future of young people, and concerns over natural resource management," he said.

Responding to the situation in northern Shan State, a soldier from the MNDAA said, "There is significant conflict in northern Shan State, where numerous ethnic armed organizations are active. Naturally, differing perspectives and narratives are also being published."

Following its capture of Hsenwi, Chin Shwe Haw, Laukkai, Kyu Koke (Pang Hseng), Mong Koe, and Kunlong during Operation 1027, the MNDAA has reorganized the Kokang Special Region (1) into four districts and one town, with administrative mechanisms now reportedly in operation.



Photo: Supplied

EXILED MYANMAR CDM TEACHER DEFRAUDED OF 10 MILLION KYATS AND ABANDONED IN MAE SOT ARREST

A striking Myanmar schoolteacher taking part in the anti-junta Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) was defrauded of 10 million kyats (approximately \$2,100 USD under current parallel market rates) by an illicit human-trafficking broker who promised her secure placement and safe transit to Bangkok.

Instead of receiving the promised employment, the educator was directed into a high-risk route and subsequently arrested by Thai immigration authorities in the border town of Mae Sot, Tak Province.

Immediately following her detention, the broker severed all lines of communication, deleting contact profiles and abandoning all responsibility for her legal jeopardy.

An official from the Pyi Chit Pan CDMers Organization, a community network assisting striking civil servants, told reporters that the teacher was eventually released on 22 May, following intense, localized interventions and negotiations handled at the Mae Sot police station.

"The main goal was simply to find a job. She believed she would be able to travel safely to Bangkok, but when she was arrested, the broker disappeared and took no responsibility," the official said.

The educator is currently being sheltered at a regional safe house, though her identity and precise location have been strictly withheld due to overlapping security concerns regarding cross-border surveillance and legal status.

Labor rights groups and refugee aid workers operating along the Salween River border note that human smugglers and rogue employment brokers systematically target vulnerable Myanmar migrants, particularly CDM participants who are desperate to escape economic devastation at home.

The official added that their organization has previously assisted other CDM members who were arrested while attempting to cross the border through brokers.

"I previously had to negotiate for and help rescue another person in a similar situation," he said.

The National Unity Government (NUG) and independent media outlets estimated that the number of CDM participants reached between 360,000 and 420,000 following the 2021 military coup.

However, the NUG later stated that the number declined after 2023 due to arrests, economic hardship, and family pressure, with current estimates placing the figure at around 200,000.

INSEIN POLICE ACCUSED OF INACTION OVER BRUTAL RAPE OF MINOR IN YANGON

Severe public backlash has erupted in Yangon's Insein Township following reports that the Insein Myoma Police Station refused to register a criminal case or open an investigation into the repeated rape of an underage girl.

The family's formal complaint, submitted on 22 May, details a horrifying pattern of sexual assault, chemical restraint, and death threats occurring in the 10-Mile area of Sawbwa Gyi Gone.

According to a legal advocate assisting the victim's family, the systematic abuse began in April. The accused, identified as U Soe Moe, a man in his 40s, reportedly lured the minor, drugged her by mixing ecstasy and alcohol into her drinks, and repeatedly assaulted her. Despite the gravity of the allegations and the existence of up to 17 eyewitnesses, local authorities have deliberately stalled the justice process.

Commenting on the incident, a High Court lawyer explained that under Section 375 of the Penal Code, if a man has sexual intercourse with a woman, even with her consent, it constitutes rape if that consent was obtained by threat or coercion that causes fear of pain or death.

"Under the law, this is rape. If justice cannot be obtained through the hundred-household head or ward administrator, copies of the complaint and supporting evidence should be submitted to the township administrator and township police chief. If no action is taken there either, the case should be escalated to the national level," the lawyer said.

The lawyer further stated that police have the authority to accept the complaint, investigate the case, and arrest and question the suspect without requiring a warrant.

According to a person close to the victim's family, the family decided to file a complaint at the police station after the hundred-household head and ward administrator failed to take action against the accused,

U Soe Moe, a man in his 40s. However, the police reportedly told them verbally to settle the matter through the ward administrators and turned them away.

"We pleaded with them and asked them to take action, but nothing happened. Eventually, we contacted the community police officer. He came, summoned both sides, and questioned them about the incident. When he asked the man, 'Did you threaten to kill the girl if she told her family?', the man admitted it in front of the officer. However, the officer said that because the incident occurred within the ward, any criminal case would first need to go through the local administrator before it could be escalated further. After that, the officer went to speak with the administrator," said a person close to the victim's family.

The family first submitted the complaint to the hundred-household head and ward administrator on 3 May.

"The man lured her, mixed ecstasy and alcohol into her drinks, and raped her. There are also eyewitnesses to what happened. When we reported the case to the administrators and asked them to take action, the hundred-household head showed no sympathy at all and told us, 'Control your own niece. If you can't, tie her up with a rope,'" said the person assisting the victim's family.

Although the accused reportedly admitted to the crime and there are as many as 17 eyewitnesses, no action has yet been taken to arrest or detain him.

Currently, the victim's family is facing financial hardship, making it difficult for them to pursue the case through higher levels of the authorities.

Local residents said that since the military coup, police forces under the military junta have largely focused on tracking down and arresting politically active individuals, while being slow to take action against suspects involved in criminal cases such as robbery, theft, and rape across Yangon Region.

JFM WELCOMES THAI SEC SUSPENSION OF ACC SHARE OFFERING TO MYANMAR ARMS BROKER NETWORK

On 26 May, Justice For Myanmar (JFM) issued a statement welcoming the Thai Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) decision to suspend a share offering by Advanced Connection Corporation (ACC) to companies in the Sky Aviation Myanmar arms broker network.

The text of the statement is as follows.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of Thailand has suspended Advanced Connection Corporation Public Company Limited's (ACC) private placement share offering to two companies in the Sky Aviator arms broker network, Sky Aviator Trading and Heli Asia Trading, and a Thai individual investor, Wichai Wanavit. The two Sky Aviator companies are registered in Singapore with subsidiaries in Thailand with the same name.

According to the SEC announcement, "The SEC found that the information clarified and disclosed by ACC in the notice calling the shareholders' meeting lacked material information and did not comply with the requirements under Clause 5(2)(b), Clause 5(4), and Clause 7(2) of the Notification of the Capital Market Supervisory Board No. Tor Jor. 73/2558".

SEC's suspension order was issued after the private placement was approved at the ACC shareholders' meeting on April 27, where it was put to a vote against the advice of the company's independent financial advisor.

The suspension follows letters Justice For Myanmar sent to ACC, the SEC, the Anti-Money Laundering Office and the Department of Business Development warning

that the Sky Aviator network was using a nominee structure to acquire a significant stake in ACC, raising serious money laundering concerns.

ACC immediately responded to the SEC notice by stating that they have already received payments for the share subscription but cannot proceed with the capital increase under the private placement at this time.

On 18 May, ACC then held a board of directors meeting, where they decided to appeal against the SEC suspension of the share offering, stating, "The Company is of the view that there are additional facts and supporting information which should be submitted to the SEC Office for further consideration".

The Sky Aviator network is led by Kyaw Min Oo, one of the key arms brokers used by the Myanmar military, including to supply parts needed to maintain their fleet of Russian Yak-130, MiG-29, Mi-35 and Su-30 aircraft. As a result, he is sanctioned by the USA, UK, EU and Canada, with additional sanctions in place against some of his Myanmar businesses.

Yet, current sanctions on the Sky Aviator network and key individuals are uneven, and the network is exploiting the gaps to pursue this Thai investment.

The USA, UK, EU, Canada and Australia should respond by imposing coordinated and targeted sanctions on the whole Sky Aviator network of companies and individuals.



Bangladeshi migrants on Indian border. Photo: AFP

MIGRANTS TRY TO FLEE TO BANGLADESH FEARING INDIA CRACKDOWN

Hasina Bibi clutched her hungry four-year-old daughter as she waited at an India-Bangladesh border post, trying to leave as fears grow of an Indian crackdown on undocumented migrants.

She is among the hundreds of Bangladeshis who have gathered over two days at Hakimpur in India's West Bengal state, police said, hoping to cross back as authorities tighten enforcement under a new state government.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party won power in West Bengal earlier this month promising to "detect, delete and deport" illegal migrants.

The rush underscores growing anxiety among migrant communities -- many of whom lack proper documentation -- with rights groups warning of forced expulsions and limited legal protections.

Many are in limbo, caught between Indian pressure

to leave and Bangladesh's refusal to accept them without formal proof of citizenship.

Many have waded across a river to return in desperation, although the scale of the exodus remains unclear.

Last week, West Bengal authorities ordered the establishment of "holding centres" for "apprehended foreigners", including Bangladeshis and Rohingya, fuelling anxiety among the state's roughly 35 million Muslims.

"We have been asked to leave immediately, or the government will take stern action," said Hasina, 45, who worked at construction sites in Kolkata after entering India six years ago.

"We came to this city in search of a job. Now we want to return to Bangladesh, (but) we don't know what is waiting for us there," she said.

Her husband tried feeding their child scraps of leftover bread as families huddled in an unfinished building near the outpost, some without proper food for days.

The sudden influx followed word spreading among migrant communities that crossing into Bangladesh was possible from Hakimpur, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) east of Kolkata.

India shares a long and porous border with Bangladesh, where migration has historically been driven by economic hardship and longstanding family links.

In Indian states that border Bangladesh, like West Bengal and Assam, undocumented migrants have formed an integral part of the informal workforce for years.

But activists say hundreds have been pushed across the border from Assam in recent months without due legal process, often based on ethnic profiling.

'Hopes dashed'

The developments in Assam have heightened fears in West Bengal, officials and residents say.

"People are trooping to the Hakimpur border check-post since Tuesday after hearing that crossover to Bangladesh is possible from this outpost," senior state police official Subrata Saha told AFP at the site.

Authorities said those who have gathered at the temporary shelter will be moved to holding centres for preliminary checks before being handed to Border Security Force (BSF) and sent to Bangladesh.

West Bengal's history of migration dates back to the partition of British India in 1947.

Bengal was divided along religious lines into predominantly Hindu West Bengal, which became part of India, and Muslim-majority East Pakistan, later becoming Bangladesh.

For many, returning raises questions of identity as much as survival.

"My parents came to India from Bangladesh over two decades ago. I was born in Kolkata, but I don't have valid documents to prove my (Indian) nationality," said Abdul Sheikh, 20.

With his parents now dead, Sheikh said he had been warned to leave "or face the consequences".

"All my hopes are dashed. I don't know how I can prove that I am Bangladeshi."

Others said they felt they had no choice.

"We feel helpless, we are returning as it is now a government order," said Ariful Sardar, a bricklayer who came three years ago for his father's treatment.

Border guards warned crossings were increasing, with many attempting to slip across a nearby river under cover of darkness.

"It's not difficult to cross the river and it has now become very difficult to guard the border," a BSF official told AFP.

AFP

MYANMAR JUNTA'S NEW EV-TRADE MANDATE SPARKS CHAOS AMONG URBAN RESIDENTS

A newly enacted military junta directive forcing the decommissioning of older automobiles in exchange for Electric Vehicle (EV) import permits has triggered widespread frustration and administrative chaos across Myanmar's major urban centres.

Political analysts view the policy as a thinly veiled effort by the cash-strapped regime to forcibly engineer a domestic transition toward Chinese-manufactured EVs while simultaneously weaponizing scarce foreign currency reserves through the centralized banking cartel.

According to a formal notification issued by the Ministry of Commerce, the junta's National-Level Leading Committee on the Development of Electric Vehicles and Related Industries has introduced an "Old Vehicles Exchange Programme." Under this framework, vehicle owners can secure an official license to import a single battery electric vehicle (BEV) by systematically or voluntarily deregistering fuel-powered vehicles.

The mandate targets three primary categories: vehicles that are more than 20 years old from their year of manufacture, vehicles officially deemed beyond repair for safe driving, and vehicles under 20 years old whose owners choose to surrender them.

To initiate the trade-in process, owners are required to surrender their cars to the Road Transport Administration Department (RTAD) and obtain an official Vehicle Deregistration Certificate Form (d).

Following a strict vetting process by the regime's Leading Committee, the Central Bank of Myanmar will reportedly allocate and sell the necessary foreign currency required for the EV import at a junta-controlled exchange rate, according to junta's affiliated news media.

While state-run propaganda outlets frame the initiative as an eco-friendly push to curb public fuel wastage, minimize toxic exhaust emissions, and reduce traffic accidents, local populations view the policy with severe skepticism.

For the middle and working-class citizens of Yangon and Mandalay, the policy represents an aggressive assault on their personal property and economic survival. Decades of restrictive import policies under successive military regimes have turned older, well-maintained Japanese vehicles into foundational financial assets for local families.

"My car is over 20 years old from its year of manufacture. It was made in Japan, and I am still driving it in great condition," said a frustrated Yangon resident, echoing the sentiments of thousands of local motorists. "I have absolutely no plan to exchange my reliable vehicle for Chinese EV cars. If they force me to deregister, I will keep my car hidden or stored. If I am forced to buy another car, it will be another Japanese fuel-powered vehicle, not an EV. An EV is completely impractical for a country like Myanmar right now. The electricity grid is totally unstable with daily blackouts, there is no enough public charging infrastructure, no specialized maintenance servicing, and a complete lack of car spare products. Forcing us into EVs is an administrative joke."

Automotive market specialists have labeled the junta's sweeping roadmap as economically unfeasible.

To replace even a fraction of these units with foreign EVs would require billions of dollars in foreign exchange allocations, an impossible sum for a Central Bank currently choked by international sanctions and depleted reserves.



Photo: Mizzima

MYANMAR NATIONALS IN THAILAND PROVIDE A 'MASSIVE' CONSUMER BASE, SAYS NEW REPORT

Over 4 million Myanmar nationals living in Thailand have quietly evolved into “a massive consumer group” with a purchasing power of over 221 billion baht (US\$6.77 billion) annually, according to a new report by consultancy firm Happio released on May 23.

According to the report, there are 4.1 million Myanmar people in Thailand, which is equivalent to 6.5 percent of Thailand’s population and they represent 8.2 per cent of the Thai workforce. They directly inject 65 per cent of their expenditure into Thai businesses and local communities, Happio says.

No longer ‘fringe’ sector

This represents a sizeable consumer base, according to the Thai media outlet The Nation.

“Today, the Myanmar consumer market in Thailand is no longer a niche, fringe sector; it is a vital engine of domestic purchasing power,” Natee Jarayabhand, chief executive officer of Happio Co., Ltd., told the media outlet.

Happio estimates that Myanmar consumers generate 221.2 billion Thai Baht annually, with the spending mainly on Thai retail businesses, housing, restaurants, transportation, financial services, healthcare and daily consumer goods. It is estimated that 65 per cent of Myanmar migrants’ income is spent inside Thailand’s economy.

Thai brands are misunderstanding the market, says Happio with the report arguing that many Thai companies still see Myanmar nationals primarily as low-cost labour, rather than a major consumer market, effectively one of Thailand’s important purchasing powers.

Consumer profile changing rapidly

The Myanmar population in Thailand is no longer made up only of migrant workers. The report identifies three major segments, namely Skilled Blue-Collar Workers, Light Blue-Collar-Long-Term Residents, and White-Collar Professionals & Students, the latter, the fastest growing segment.

There are said to be over 15,000 Myanmar students presently enrolled in Thai universities.

Roughly 40 per cent of spending is on Food & Beverages, Housing & Utilities, Transportation, and Personal Care.

High potential sectors

Happio identifies five sectors with the strongest growth opportunities, namely Food & Beverage with an estimated market of THB 59.2 billion; Housing & Accommodation with an estimated market of THB 46.8 billion; Digital & Financial Services with an estimated market of THB 24.7 billion; and Healthcare and Retail & Consumer Products.

These sectors are expected to benefit most from the rising Myanmar purchasing power

Myanmar consumers are not choosing based on price alone. One of the report's most important findings is that Myanmar consumers increasingly prioritize: Trust; Brand Reputation; Community Recommendations; Cultural Understanding; and Language Accessibility.

According to Myanmar market expert Arwee Taengmeesaeng, brands that understand Myanmar identity and community behaviour have a significant competitive advantage.

Social media plays a critical role

The report highlights that Myanmar consumers in Thailand are highly active on Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and community-based digital networks. Word-of-mouth recommendations spread rapidly through Myanmar social communities.

This makes localized content, Burmese-language marketing, influencer engagement, and community media, particularly effective.

Geographic concentration

It is important to bear in mind where the market is. Myanmar consumers are concentrated in Central Thailand, Bangkok Metropolitan Area, and border provinces (Tak, Ranong, Samut Sakhon, etc.). These regions are considered prime targets for localized marketing campaigns.

The report's main strategic conclusion

The report describes the Myanmar market in Thailand as "A New Blue Ocean Market" meaning it is large, under-served, rapidly growing, and still overlooked by many Thai brands.

Happio recommends a "First Mover Strategy" for businesses that invest early in Burmese-language communication, culturally relevant marketing, community trust-building, and Myanmar-focused products and services.

The biggest takeaway from the report is that Myanmar nationals in Thailand are no longer viewed merely as migrant workers but increasingly as a major consumer economy worth over 221 billion Thai Baht annually, making them one of the most important emerging demographic markets in Thailand.



Joshua Van, left, in action.
Photo: UFC.com

MIZORAM CM PRAISES JOSHUA VAN FOR EXEMPLIFYING ETHNIC UNITY IN UFC OCTAGON

The success of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) athlete and UFC flyweight contender Joshua Van represents the unity of the Chin, Mizo, and Kuki ethnic nationalities, Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma stated.

The Chief Minister made the remarks during the Fight Night event organized by the Mizoram State Mixed Martial Arts Association (MISMA) in Aizawl, Mizoram, on 30 May.

Chief Minister Lalduhoma noted that under historical British colonial policy, the ethnic group was divided across borders using artificial designations—referred to as "Lushai" in Mizoram, "Chin" in Myanmar, and "Kuki" in Manipur. He stated that despite these distinct names, the communities share a single linguistic and cultural identity, and that Joshua Van carries this collective spirit of unity each time he enters the UFC Octagon. He added that the champion's

achievements demonstrate to regional youth that individuals from remote areas possess the talent and resilience to compete at the highest global levels. The Chief Minister also commended Van for utilizing his international platform to speak on behalf of his people.

Prior to his arrival in Mizoram as an honorary guest for the MMA event, Joshua Van traveled from the United States to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he attended the 25th anniversary of the Chin Refugee Committee (CRC) as a special guest.

Born in Hakha, Chin State, Joshua Van lived as a refugee in Malaysia before resettling in the United States approximately 13 years ago, where he advanced to the flyweight division of the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC). In subsequent media interviews, Van has publicly expressed his desire to return to Myanmar, while highlighting the ongoing conflict and the military junta's targeted killings of civilians.



Governments, UN agencies and human rights organisations should be demanding independent proof of life for Aung San Suu Kyi. They should be demanding regular access to all political prisoners. They should be insisting on transparency regarding detention conditions, medical treatment and legal status.

For years, international discussion about Myanmar has revolved around a single question: what went wrong with Aung San Suu Kyi?

That question has generated endless commentary, countless think pieces and an entire industry of moral judgement. Yet it has also produced something far more troubling.

It has distracted the world from what should be one of the most urgent human rights concerns in Asia today.

The most famous political prisoner of the 21st century has effectively disappeared.

Yet what would be considered intolerable almost anywhere else has become strangely normal.

That normalisation did not happen by accident. It is the culmination of a decade-long misframing of Myanmar's political crisis that transformed international understanding of both Aung San Suu Kyi and the democratic movement she represented.

Before the coup, much of the international media increasingly portrayed Myanmar through a simplified moral lens. The country's complicated constitutional structure was compressed into a story about a democracy icon's fall from grace. The distinction between the civilian government and the military was blurred. Context surrounding the conflict in Rakhine State was stripped away. Every event was interpreted through an increasingly narrow framework in which Aung San Suu Kyi became the central villain.

The consequences of that framing extend far beyond historical misunderstanding.

They help explain today's silence.

For years, international audiences were encouraged to view Myanmar's civilian government and the military as essentially interchangeable. UN reports often referred broadly to "Myanmar authorities" or "the government." Media coverage routinely treated the state as a unified actor despite repeated warnings

from observers such as Francis Wade, Derek Mitchell and others.

As Wade observed in 2017, "it's her government that has taken the flak, but it's the military that has executed the campaign."

That distinction was frequently lost in translation.

If the civilian government had already been recast as morally indistinguishable from the military, why should Aung San Suu Kyi's detention command international attention?

Consider how much international attention was devoted to scrutinising Aung San Suu Kyi's statements during the Rohingya crisis. Her words were dissected line by line. Headlines debated whether she had denied genocide, defended atrocities or abandoned democratic principles.

Today, many of the same voices rarely ask a far more basic question.

Is she alive?

The world once demanded that every speech be examined for evidence of moral failure. Now it struggles to demand proof of life.

The same pattern is visible in discussions of political prisoners more broadly.

Myanmar's prisons contain thousands of democracy activists, journalists, elected officials and civil society leaders. Many have disappeared into a penal system controlled by a military notorious for torture, arbitrary detention and abuse. Medical neglect alone is regularly claiming lives.

Yet international attention is fragmented and episodic.

Part of the problem is that the dominant narrative of Myanmar's democratic collapse remains trapped in the assumptions that preceded it.

The story still revolves around what many observers believe Aung San Suu Kyi should have done differently between 2016 and 2020.

Far less attention is devoted to what the military is doing right now.

This imbalance is reinforced by persistent misrepresentations of the past.

Consider how frequently coverage of the Rohingya crisis omitted references to ARSA attacks, the killing of village leaders, or the insurgent violence that formed part of the context surrounding events in Rakhine State. One need not accept the government's arguments to recognise that they existed.

Consider the many headlines that claimed Aung San Suu Kyi dismissed all reports of atrocities as "fake news" when her actual remarks referred to specific, documented instances of misinformation spread by terrorists.

At the International Court of Justice, her references to ARSA attacks were often overshadowed by simplified claims that she was merely "denying genocide." Yet the Tatmadaw's "disproportionate use of force" and crimes against humanity in Rakhine State were the subject of ongoing investigations by her government.

Consider the irony, then, when organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights

Watch criticised “Myanmar authorities” for failing to acknowledge that insurgent attacks were used as an excuse for disproportionate use of force.

The result was a public narrative in which complexity became evidence of guilt and nuance became a form of complicity.

Once that narrative became established, it was remarkably easy for many international observers to move on.

After all, if Aung San Suu Kyi had already been transformed from political prisoner to political problem, her imprisonment no longer seemed like a pressing cause.

That may be one of the most damaging consequences of the misframing.

It did not merely distort understanding of the past. It weakened concern for the present.

Myanmar does not need another round of retrospective debates about whether Aung San Suu Kyi disappointed Western expectations. It does not need more articles reducing an entire democratic movement to the perceived failings of a single individual.

What it needs is sustained international pressure on the military regime.

Governments, UN agencies and human rights organisations should be demanding independent proof of life for Aung San Suu Kyi. They should be demanding regular access to all political prisoners. They should

be insisting on transparency regarding detention conditions, medical treatment and legal status.

Most importantly, they should stop treating these demands as secondary concerns.

The continued imprisonment of elected leaders and democracy activists is not a footnote to Myanmar's crisis. It is the crisis.

The question is no longer whether the world misunderstood Myanmar between 2012 and 2020.

The question is whether those misunderstandings are helping justify today's silence.

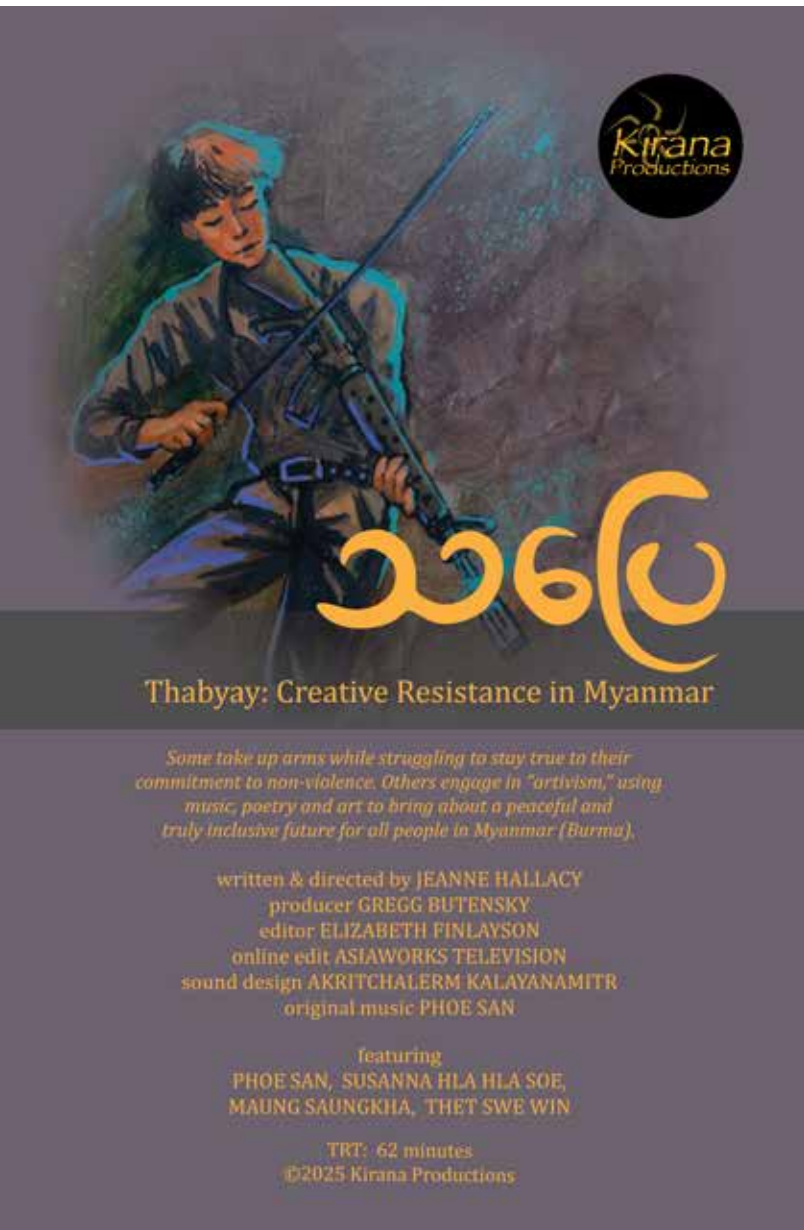
Because silence is not neutrality.

Every day that passes without proof of life for Aung San Suu Kyi, every month that passes without meaningful progress toward the release of political prisoners, sends a message to Myanmar's military rulers.

It tells them that the world is prepared to debate the past indefinitely while ignoring the prisoners in front of it.

That must change.

Myanmar's democratic movement has already paid the price for years of political misframing. It should not be forced to pay the price for international indifference as well.



**THE POWER OF
REVOLUTIONARY
ART
IN MYANMAR'S CIVIL
WAR**

MIZZIMA FILM REVIEW

It is no secret that beyond the armed resistance of revolutionary movements, the arts can serve as a poignant and powerful weapon in the fight to overthrow oppressive systems. Through such forms as music, poetry, and painting, “artivism” (art as political activism) seeks to speak to traumatized populations while simultaneously imagining a future free of violence and carrying with it the wishes of the people. This is the message at the heart of *Thabyay: Creative Resistance in Myanmar* (henceforward referred to as *Thabyay*), a one-hour documentary featuring the role of art and artists in Myanmar’s current fight for democracy.

Thabyay was directed and written by Jeanne Hallacy and produced by Gregg Butensky.

Artistically beautiful, it is worth watching *Thabyay* simply for the artistry and imagery – the telling of

modern Myanmar’s travails through creative means. One of the strongest images of which comes toward the end of the film, depicting a musical performance paying tribute to those who have fallen in the fight against military dictatorship. While at one point earlier in the film the screen is emblazoned with the artistic rendering of a Myanmar youth tenderly praying with an automatic weapon. This latter image strikingly mirrors the cover of Marwan Hisham’s book *Brothers of a Gun*, the story of Syria’s descent from peaceful protests to high stakes civil war and how it too played havoc with the lives of so many.

For its part, *Thabyay* chronicles the stories of four Myanmar artists from the country’s Bamar majority. They are each uprooted from their lives in Myanmar and forced to seek refuge along the Thai-Myanmar border. And they each, in their own ways, continue to incorporate art into their struggle.

There is musician Phoe San, who originally led an anti-coup protest of over 100 violinists through the streets of Yangon. Today, he continues to cross back into Myanmar to bring music to the war zone, while teaching music in the Thai border town of Mae Sot to heal trauma, and performing for displaced persons in Myanmar. And, while non-violent in his protests and means of standing up to dictatorship, he also uses his music to raise funds through YouTube to support revolutionary forces in the jungles of Myanmar.

This includes the Bamar People's Liberation Army (BPLA) founded by poet Maung Saungkha, who opines, "You can arrest only the poets, not the poems. Never." At the same time, however, there is no question of avoiding armed opposition, as there appears no other choice. It is a philosophy which seems to at least partially echo the thinking of Frantz Fanon. Namely, the implementation of violence as a cleansing force, serving to provide agency to the oppressed. It's certainly not the non-violence long attributed to Aung San Suu Kyi, but it is where Myanmar is today. While it might have been possible for Myanmar to gradually stumble forward to a better future through the pre-2021 national political make-up, the February 2021 coup irrevocably shattered any such possibility.

In the words of organizer/activist Thet Swe Win, "We the people, we don't choose the armed struggle, but the revolution chose us." The sheer brutality of the military's response to the original peaceful protests, so the argument goes, offered no choice but a turn to violence in a bid to create a more just social and political order. This should come as little surprise, for by reluctantly choosing violence as a last resort, they act as countless others have in the history of oppressed peoples.

And, tellingly, these are not individuals prone to a quick turn to support revolutionary violence. Both Thet Swe Win and Maung Saungkha are depicted in Thabyay protesting alleged injustices during the decade of "democratic transition" from 2011-2021, with the latter arrested for a poem said to mock the president. This speaks to the troubled democratic experiment in Myanmar, and its many faults, which helped to set the stage for February 2021's ill-fated coup. Today, Thet Swe Win runs Independence Café in

Mae Sot, an endeavor that seeks to combine art and activism, its walls decorated with Burmese poems and portraits of political prisoners.

Finally, Thabyay looks at the saga of Susanna Hla Hla Soe, a painter, former MP, and current Minister for Women, Youth, and Children Affairs in the National Unity Government (NUG). Through her art and activism, she looks to provide dreams and hope for Myanmar's young people, who too often have been robbed of their youth by the experiences of war. Her story is also used to raise the profile of Myanmar's ethnic minorities. Having escaped to a region of Myanmar under the control of an ethnic armed organization, she is exposed first-hand to the plight of the country's ethnic minorities, who in many instances have been in the crosshairs of the Myanmar military for decades. In this sense, Myanmar's revolution – and again not unlike countless revolutions throughout history – has brought people face to face not only with their oppressors, but with one another.

And it is the union of Bamar and ethnic resistance to the current dictatorship in Myanmar that is often heralded, including in Thabyay, as an inspiring vision for the future of Myanmar. The aim of the revolution is, after all, said to be to build a future better nation for everyone, not just defeat the military. At least that is the hope. But Thabyay does not wrestle with the complexity of the ethnic question, or, for that matter, with other difficult questions such as the role of regional and international actors. It is instead concerned with chronicling how Myanmar's artists conceptualize what freedom should look and feel like, in a bid to unite people around a common cause.

Will Myanmar's artists be successful in "using music, poetry and art to bring about a peaceful, free, democratic and truly inclusive future for all people in Myanmar," as the trailer for the film says? Ensuring that all those who have given their lives or limbs for the cause have not done so in vain. At the very least, it is inspiring to see how Myanmar's artists have risen to provide both hope and healing for the country. And Thabyay does leave the viewer both cheering for Myanmar's youthful revolution and wondering how they could possibly fail.



Pro-Iranian regime demonstrators.
Photo: AFP

IRAN SAYS NO DEAL WITH US UNLESS ITS RIGHTS SECURED

Iran's chief negotiator said Sunday that Tehran would not agree to any deal with the United States unless it fully secures Iranian rights, as reports emerged that Washington had sent a tougher peace proposal back to Iran.

Any tweaks to the proposal could further delay an agreement to formally end the Middle East war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz after weeks of fraught negotiations marked by sharp rhetoric and occasional flare-ups of violence.

The New York Times and Axios reported on Saturday that Trump had sent back a new framework to be considered by Iran with "tougher" terms, though details remain unclear.

"We will not approve any agreement until we are certain that the rights of the Iranian people have been upheld," Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said, in a video broadcast on state television.

Trump has said his priorities include stopping Iran from any nuclear weapon development and re-opening

the blockaded Hormuz shipping lane.

"The one guarantee that I have to have is that there will be no nuclear weapons. They've agreed to that, and it was very interesting," he told his daughter-in-law Lara Trump in an interview broadcast on her Fox News program on Saturday night.

But Tehran has previously cast doubt on Trump's assertions and the sides remain far apart on key issues.

Iran has said it needs the release of \$12 billion in frozen assets before engaging in substantive talks on its nuclear program, dismissing earlier Trump comments that its enriched uranium stockpile would be destroyed as "baseless", according to Iranian media.

Tehran has also insisted that Lebanon be included in any deal, despite ongoing fighting, with Beirut accusing Israel of a "scorched-earth policy" as it expands operations against Iran-backed Hezbollah.

After previously signalling a deal was close, Trump

struck a less urgent tone, hinting at renewed military action in the Fox interview.

"I'm in no hurry," he said. "If we don't get what we want, we're going to end in a different way."

Flare-ups

That echoed remarks by Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth who said at a defence summit in Asia on Saturday that Washington was "more than capable" of restarting the war if needed.

Though daily strikes throughout Iran and the Gulf halted after Tehran and Washington struck a temporary ceasefire in April and talks mediated by Pakistan, sporadic fighting has continued.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards had shot down a US military drone "about to enter Iranian territorial waters", Iran's state broadcaster IRIB reported, though Washington has not confirmed the incident.

Earlier this week, the worst fighting since the ceasefire erupted when US forces struck the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas, prompting retaliatory fire from Iran.

Nevertheless diplomacy has continued with Trump under pressure to secure a deal that would lift competing US and Iranian blockades around the Strait of Hormuz that have strangled a vital route for global oil supplies.

After Trump said Iran would charge "no tolls" on ships passing through the strait under any deal, Iranian news agency Fars cited sources saying "no such clause" existed.

Iran's ISNA news agency on Saturday quoted lawmaker Alireza Salimi as saying a plan "to implement Iran's management and sovereignty" over the strait would soon go before parliament.

Lebanon front

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said Sunday that troops had also crossed the Litani river and raised the Israeli flag over the strategic medieval fortress of Beaufort in southern Lebanon.

Smoke billowed from the surrounding area as the invading army's banner was seen by AFP above the castle, which Israel famously used as a base during their previous two-decade-long occupation.

The push to Beaufort came as the Israeli military issued a sweeping evacuation order to areas south of the Zahrani River, north of the Litani and around 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the border, warning that it was targeting Hezbollah.

The military said Sunday that one soldier was killed the previous day in a Hezbollah drone strike.

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam has accused Israel of pursuing a "scorched-earth policy and collective punishment", and called for "a swift and real ceasefire."

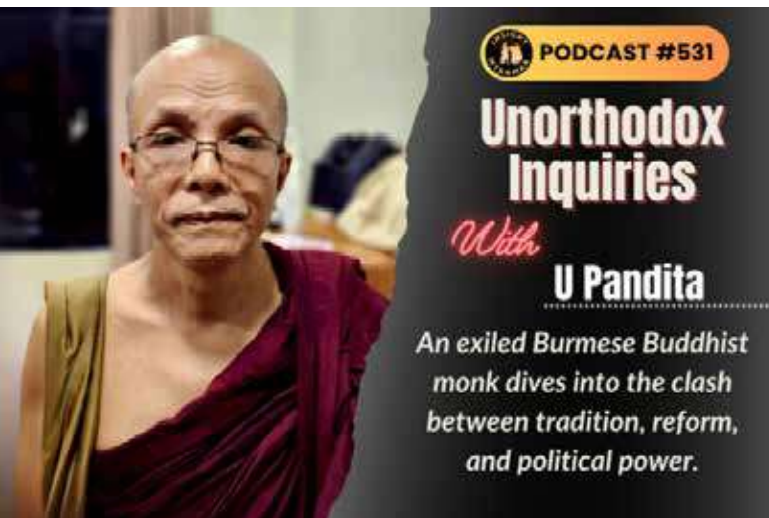
Israel confirmed it was expanding its ground offensive in a statement released early on Sunday, saying "a significant number" of its forces were operating against Hezbollah beyond the Litani river.

A truce between Israel and Hezbollah formally began on April 17 but it has never been observed, with both sides accusing each other of violating it.

In early March, Tehran-backed Hezbollah launched rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's supreme leader in US-Israeli strikes, prompting Israel to carry out near-daily air raids in Lebanon and launch a ground invasion.

Israel and Lebanon began direct talks in April, with a fourth round expected in the coming week.

AFP



UNORTHODOX INQUIRIES

“**T**he laws that govern the monks’ organization were written before 1988, during a one-party dictatorship! In the Sangha organization, you cannot have different voices ... everything comes from the top-down. If you say anything unorthodox, your writing will be censored.”

U Pandita’s story provides a remarkable lens into the intersection of spirituality, academia, and socio-political dynamics in Myanmar. In 1998, U Pandita left Myanmar to study Sanskrit in India. Upon returning, he spent a year overseeing a rural monastery before accepting an invitation to teach at the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU) in Yangon. After a year and a half, he left again, this time to teach Pāli and to continue his academic pursuits in Taiwan. Eventually, he settled in Sri Lanka, where he resides to this day.

U Pandita explains that the monastic environment in Sri Lanka allows for freedom of expression, which he believes is essential for research, publication and a productive exchange of opinions. In contrast, he describes the monastic environment for scholars in Myanmar as rigid and intolerant, even punitive. Since his

writings challenge orthodox interpretations of Buddhist commentaries, it could lead to severe repercussions for him if he ever returned there. He describes the stark choice that would await him: either publicly disavow all of his research findings as incorrect, or be forced to disrobe or even arrested. His dilemma reflects the precarious position of scholar-monks who challenge orthodox norms in Myanmar.

The monastic laws in Myanmar were established before 1988 during a one-party dictatorship. They impose a rigid hierarchical structure on the Saṅgha, a top-down system that stifles dissenting opinions and opposing views. Research, which also includes any publications, must pass through an oversight board, and anything deemed to be unorthodox is subject to being censored outright. U Pandita adds grimly that even during the period of semi-democracy under President Thein Sein and Aung San Suu Kyi’s governments, these strict laws governing the Saṅgha remained unchanged. He speculates that the civilian government’s reluctance to suggest any reforms stems from an unwillingness to interfere with monastic affairs, leaving change dependent on the senior monks in power—a group largely uninterested in altering a status quo upon which they sit at the top.

CATCH THE PODCAST

Read more and listen to the Insight Myanmar Podcast here:

<https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2026/5/5/episode-531-unorthodox-inquiries>



MYANMAR JUNTA APPROVES 12 NEW INVESTMENT PROJECTS AS IT SEEKS TO PROJECT ECONOMIC STABILITY

Myanmar's military junta has approved 12 new investment projects worth tens of millions of dollars, state media reported, as the junta seeks to demonstrate continued economic activity and stimulate recovery in the face of ongoing conflict, sanctions, and international isolation.

The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) approved the projects during its latest meeting in Naypyidaw, according to the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar. The investments, spanning manufacturing, energy, and services, are claimed by junta officials to potentially generate thousands of jobs and increase industrial output.

State media noted that both domestic and foreign investors were involved. The projects aim to attract investment and stimulate growth after years of political upheaval and declining foreign investment.

Many multinational companies have scaled back or withdrawn operations from the country, citing political instability and human rights concerns.

According to state media, officials say ongoing investment is essential for economic recovery, supporting industrial development and job creation.

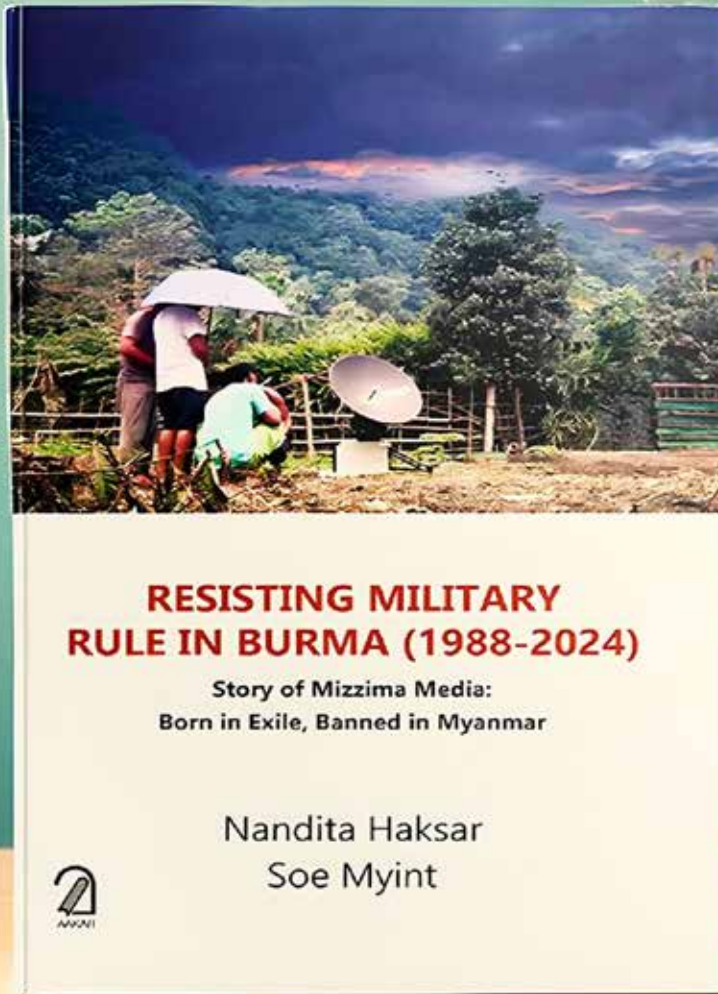
The MIC approvals also reflect the military's efforts to present Myanmar as open for business following the junta-organized elections, which were rejected by opposition groups and widely criticized by Western governments.

However, despite junta efforts to highlight investment approvals and business activity, many sectors of the economy remain under severe strain. Ongoing fighting across large parts of the country has disrupted transportation networks, supply chains and access to labour, while persistent currency instability and foreign exchange controls have complicated business operations.

State media framed the approvals as evidence of confidence in Myanmar's economic prospects, emphasizing potential gains for employment and industry.

RESISTING MILITARY RULE IN BURMA (1988-2024)
**STORY OF MIZZIMA MEDIA:
BORN IN EXILE, BANNED IN
MYANMAR**

by Nandita Haksar and Soe Myint



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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.