

ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight



CAMPAIGNING FOR KYAW MOE TUN

The Myanmar People's UN Voice

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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.

BATTLE FOR LEGITIMACY

Myanmar's struggle for legitimacy is increasingly being played out not only on the battlefield but in diplomatic corridors, where recognition can be almost as valuable as territory. At the centre of this contest is the United Nations, where Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun continues to occupy Myanmar's seat while the military authorities seek to replace him. The Credentials Committee has repeatedly deferred the question of representation, allowing Kyaw Moe Tun to remain in place. As the 81st session of the General Assembly gets under way, that contest is again coming into focus.

Kyaw Moe Tun represents more than an individual diplomat. Appointed by Myanmar's elected civilian government before the February 2021 coup, he refused to accept the military takeover and has continued to speak at the UN on behalf of Myanmar. Keeping him in the UN seat denies the junta one of the most important symbols of international acceptance - formal representation in the world's premier diplomatic institution, the United Nations.

The junta, meanwhile, is pursuing a very different strategy. Min Aung Hlaing has increasingly presented himself not as the commander who seized power in 2021, but as a head of state entitled to conduct normal international relations. His elevation to the "presidency" in April, following elections widely criticised as designed to entrench military power, has been followed by a diplomatic campaign across Asia and beyond.

His latest state visit to Cambodia is therefore about much more than bilateral relations. The red carpet, ceremonial

welcome and meetings with Hun Sen and Prime Minister Hun Manet provide powerful imagery for a regime attempting to demonstrate that its international isolation is ending. Cambodia's willingness to receive him at this level risks helping the junta turn diplomatic contact into political legitimacy.

This is the danger. International governments can argue that engagement is necessary to maintain channels, protect interests or encourage dialogue. But there is a crucial difference between talking to Myanmar's rulers and legitimising their claim to represent the Myanmar people.

The international community should therefore be careful not to allow diplomatic normalisation to outrun political reality. The UN seat is not a ceremonial prize. It is a question of who has the right to speak for Myanmar internationally - speaking for the Myanmar people.

Kyaw Moe Tun's continued presence at the UN provides an important reminder that the Myanmar military's claim to power remains contested. Cambodia's embrace of Min Aung Hlaing provides the opposite message.

The battle for Myanmar's legitimacy is consequently far from over. The international community must decide whether legitimacy is earned through elections, consent and respect for human rights - or simply accumulated through enough handshakes, state visits and red carpets. Right now, the Myanmar people are making their voices heard calling for Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun to retain his seat at the UN.

EDITORIAL

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**Cover photo of Myanmar
Ambassador to the UN
Kyaw Moe Tun at the UN
by AFP**



OUR UN AMBASSADOR

**U KYAW
MOE TUN**

The True Voice of
MYANMAR

**CAMPAIGNING FOR
KYAW MOE TUN**

**THE MYANMAR PEOPLE'S
UN VOICE**

KHIN OHMAR

This week in New York, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is gathered for the start of its 81st session.

I am here with another woman human rights defender from the Karen Women's Organisation and the Women's League of Burma, meeting with members of the UNGA. We are here to share firsthand accounts of the situation on the ground in Myanmar, make recommendations to address the deepening humanitarian crisis, and seek support for Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun's credentials.

Backed by a groundswell of support both at home and abroad, Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun has legitimately and rightfully represented Myanmar and its people at the United Nations for the past five years.

The UNGA has now appointed the nine members of this year's Credentials Committee. It consists of six new members—Bahamas, Belgium, Benin, Jamaica, Uganda, Vanuatu—alongside three permanent members: China, Russia, and the United States. Even before these members were announced, the people of Myanmar were calling on the Credentials Committee to retain Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun as Myanmar's Permanent Representative to the UN.

Reaffirming their unwavering support, the people of Myanmar are mobilizing campaigns once again ahead of the 81st Session of the UNGA, urging the UN to retain him. In July, 191 civil society organizations sent an open letter to the UNGA calling for this action. Additionally, a petition urging the UN Credentials Committee to uphold this established practice was launched in August.

Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun was appointed in October 2020 by Myanmar's democratically elected government, which the military has violently and illegally attempted to overthrow since February 2021. On 26 February 2021, just weeks after the coup attempt, he stood before the General Assembly and appealed to the international community to take the "strongest possible action" against the illegitimate military junta. Watching his impassioned address live on my computer screen—as he openly rejected the military's coup attempt and raised the three-finger salute of resistance—I was in utter shock, unable to believe my own eyes. Throughout my three decades of advocacy and engagement with various United Nations bodies, I had only ever encoun-

tered Myanmar ambassadors who fiercely defended the military. Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun's defiance was a profound shock not only to me but to the entire people of Myanmar, filling us all with overwhelming pride and joy. Predictably, the illegal junta announced his dismissal the following day, but the UN stood firm on principle and did not hand his seat to the generals.

Year after year, the Credentials Committee has deferred its decision on Myanmar's representation, allowing Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun to remain at the UN. During the 80th session, the Committee once again received competing communications from the junta, yet chose to retain his credentials.

The junta's desperate attempts to manufacture legitimacy

The junta has spent the past five years trying to manufacture an appearance of legitimacy it cannot earn—and will never earn—from the people of Myanmar. This strategy culminated in its recent sham election.

During this farce, an estimated 10.5 million eligible voters were excluded, while millions more chose to boycott it. Where voting did occur, people faced threats, military surveillance, and physical coercion. Meanwhile, the junta launched airstrikes that killed 170 civilians and arbitrarily detained over 400 people.

Following this charade, Min Aung Hlaing declared himself "president."

This was never a serious attempt to play-act a democratic process. Instead, it was a superficial effort to deceive the international community and cloak military rule in civilian disguise. Nothing more.

Will the Credentials Committee—and by extension, the UN—allow this illegitimate junta to achieve through a sham election the legitimacy it failed to secure through a violent and inhumane coup attempt? It must not.

The junta's violence continues unchecked

Since its illegal coup attempt, the junta has launched more than 14,000 aerial attacks and carried out at least 577 documented massacres. Last month alone, it conducted 530 aerial bombardments, killing 139 people.

On 21 August, a fighter jet dropped four bombs on a Buddhist monastery during a meditation retreat, killing at least 14 people and injuring over 20. The following day, military warplanes dropped approximately 100 bombs on the town of Ngapali in Rakhine State, killing one person and injuring 14 others. On 25 August, another 10 bombs struck a school in Chin State, killing five people—including two children—and injuring nearly 20.

In total, these August airstrikes killed 88 people, injured over 150, and damaged 15 public buildings, including 10 religious sites and three schools.

On 22 August 2026, the National League for Democracy (NLD) confirmed the extrajudicial killing of 133 party members, including eight lawmakers, by the military junta. Approximately 2,900 NLD members, including party chairperson Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, remain arbitrarily detained under life-threatening conditions, alongside more than 19,000 other political prisoners.

This is the reality behind the junta's civilian façade. The junta is not a government exercising legitimate authority—or any authority. It is an illegal, criminal entity waging a campaign of terror against a population that refuses to accept tyrannical rule.

The junta has no authority over the Myanmar state

The junta lacks both a democratic mandate and the nationwide authority it claims.

Across vast regions of Myanmar, democratic resistance forces and emerging federal governance institutions already govern independently of Naypyidaw. Despite ongoing military attacks, these interim bodies manage and deliver public health, education, emergency logistics, and humanitarian services, in close collaboration with civil society.

Myanmar is undergoing a profound political transformation; its youth, human rights defenders, civil society, ethnic resistance organizations, and people's defense forces are actively building a federal democracy from the ground up while defying the military's extraordinary violence.

The Credentials Committee must recognize this reality and uphold the democratic representation of the people of Myanmar.

The junta's campaign for diplomatic recognition intensifies

Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun's seat matters because UN representation is more than just the name on a country's placard. It determines whom the international community recognizes as the legitimate representative of the Myanmar state and its people.

Since the military's illegal coup attempt, Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun has championed the democratic aspirations of Myanmar's population at the UN by using his mandate to call for international accountabi-



Myanmar Ambassador to the UN Kyaw Moe Tun, with delegates. Photo: AFP

lity, support for a federal democratic future, and an immediate end to military violence.

Obviously, the junta wants this powerful global platform for itself.

Its campaign for diplomatic recognition has grown increasingly aggressive. In recent months, the junta has sought high-level engagement with governments including Russia, China, and Belarus while attempting to gain a foothold within the United Nations. Although the UN appears to have quietly but firmly resisted these efforts so far, they remain part of a calculated diplomatic offensive.

A vacant seat is not a neutral compromise

Some may view the decision to block a junta representative while simultaneously removing Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun as a neutral compromise. Let us make no mistake: it is not.

Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun is the democratic representative of the state and people of Myanmar. For five years, his continued presence at the UN has stood as a testament to the moral integrity of Myanmar's people as they continue to defend their democracy and human dignity, striving for genuine peace in the face of the military's inhumane violence and campaign of terror.

Any signal that could be perceived as weakening Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun's position would send a highly dangerous message: that a military with a decades-long track record of grave human rights violations can violently oppress the people for five years, stage a sham election, and ultimately receive international recognition that whitewashes its crimes.

Rewarding a junta that has imprisoned, tortured, and murdered democratically elected representatives—while committing nationwide war crimes and crimes against humanity—would set a precedent that reverberates far beyond Myanmar.

The military junta was illegitimate in 2021, and it remains illegitimate today

The case before this year's Credentials Committee is no more complicated than it was in 2021.

Min Aung Hlaing did not receive a democratic mandate for his violent coup attempt, nor did he earn one

through a five-year campaign of extraordinary violence. He certainly did not acquire one by staging a sham election designed to preserve military power.

The UN must stand by its own findings

At its 61st regular session in March 2026, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) adopted a consensus resolution Myanmar that explicitly condemned the military junta's staged electoral process. The resolution described the sham election as a manufactured attempt by the military to legitimize its illegal February 2021 coup attempt and mask ongoing oppression behind a façade of civilian governance.

Furthermore, the Human Rights Council highlighted airstrikes on civilians, mass arbitrary arrests, political imprisonment, and the criminalization of public criticism of this farcical process. During its 81st Session, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) must now recognize and reaffirm these findings and recommendations from its principal human rights body.

Every member of the Credentials Committee must unequivocally uphold Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun's representation of Myanmar at the UN.

The people of Myanmar have made their collective voice clear: they stand in full support of Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun and demand that the UN retain him as their rightful representative.

The UN must not allow a brutal, criminal junta to buy legitimacy through force and fraud. Instead, it must honor the will of the people.

Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun must keep his seat.

Khin Ohmar is a Myanmar human rights activist who was involved in organizing the '8888' nationwide pro-democracy uprising. She is also the founder and chairperson of Progressive Voice, a Myanmar human rights organization. She developed the Women Peacebuilding Program for Women's League of Burma and served as program coordinator from 2000 to 2006.

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ANALYSIS & INSIGHT



ARE MYANMAR MILITARY DESERTIONS ON THE RISE?

Desertions appear to be an increasingly important manpower problem for Myanmar's military, although the exact scale is difficult to independently verify. The junta is not only facing reported defections of serving personnel but is also increasingly dependent on newly conscripted troops to fill frontline positions.

According to the National Unity Government (NUG), more than 20,000 military personnel and police have deserted or joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and revolutionary forces. While police accounted for a significant share of early CDM participation after the 2021 coup, soldiers have increasingly made up the larger proportion of defectors, particularly since the junta introduced compulsory military service.

The junta's response suggests that retaining and expanding its manpower has become a major priority. It has reportedly sought to bring back soldiers who deserted as well as former personnel facing legal cases, while simultaneously expanding forced recruitment. The 28th batch of military-service training officially began on September 7.

The conscription system itself also indicates the depth of the manpower problem. Many young people are trying to avoid military service by leaving their hometowns, going abroad or moving to areas controlled by resistance groups and ethnic armed organisations. Some have joined revolutionary forces, although an unwillingness to serve in the junta military does not necessarily mean that a person is prepared to join an armed resistance group.

The junta is nevertheless continuing to pursue manpower through forced recruitment because it needs troops for active operations. Reports indicate that conscripts are now being used extensively on the frontline. A July deployment roster for Infantry Battalion 421, for example, reportedly showed 109 newly conscripted troops among 152 personnel, while another report said conscripts made up more than 70 percent of some frontline columns.

The consequences are particularly visible in the junta's current operations in Rakhine State. The Arakan Army (AA) controls about 92.6 percent of Rakhine State, according to ISP-Myanmar, and the junta launched a major multi-directional offensive in September to regain territory. The operation involves ground, naval and air operations, putting further pressure on the military's available manpower.

A recent battle in Kachin State provides another illustration. On September 13, KIA-led forces reportedly attacked a junta column near Kaung Ja Yang village in Bhamo Township. More than 40 junta troops were reportedly killed and more than 30 captured. The column was reported to consist largely of newly conscripted soldiers.

The contrast between regular soldiers and conscripts is significant. If experienced troops retreat while newly recruited personnel remain exposed to combat, the military may face not only battlefield casualties but also declining cohesion among its frontline forces. Such incidents should not automatically be interpreted as proof of widespread desertion, but they illustrate the risks created by relying heavily on inexperienced conscripts.

The junta has also sought to counter reports of defections by publicising claims that resistance members are surrendering. Its state media recently reported hundreds of PDF members entering what it calls the "legal fold," while resistance sources disputed the authenticity and scale of some of these claims.

Taken together, the reported desertions, continued recruitment drives, heavy reliance on conscripts and battlefield losses suggest that manpower is becoming a central constraint for the Myanmar military. The issue is therefore not simply how many soldiers have deserted, but whether the junta can continue replacing experienced personnel with newly recruited troops without further weakening battlefield effectiveness and unit cohesion.



Political prisoners. Photo: Supplied

Myanmar junta continues to hold thousands of political prisoners

The Myanmar junta continues to hold thousands of political prisoners, with prison authorities accused of imposing harsh conditions, restricting medical care and using punishment to further pressure detainees. According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), 14,817 people are confirmed to remain in detention, while another 7,874 are still being verified, as of September 15. AAPP says the actual number is likely higher.

Recent reports indicate that the problems extend beyond imprisonment itself. According to the Political Prisoners Network-Myanmar (PPNM), authorities at 13 prisons have been exploiting political prisoners and their families financially while restricting the delivery of medicines and other essential supplies. Prison officials have reportedly imposed unauthorized charges on money deposits, parcels and medicine deliveries. Obo Prison in Mandalay, as well as prisons in Meiktila and Taungoo, were among those identified as having serious problems.

Medicine restrictions are particularly concerning because political prisoners often depend on their families to provide medicines that are unavailable or insufficient inside prisons. PPNM has reported that at some prisons, including Obo, Daik-U, Myingyan and Myitkyina, families' medicine parcels are restricted or only partially delivered. Such restrictions can turn manageable health conditions into serious medical emergencies.

Political prisoners are also reportedly subjected to disproportionate punishment for minor rule violations. At Kyaikmaraw Prison, three political prisoners were reportedly beaten, forced to remain under the sun and then placed in solitary confinement for at least three months, without adequate basic necessities.

At Tharyarwaddy Prison, authorities have reportedly forced political prisoners to undertake a punishment known as "sitting jail" from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. and again in the evening after prisoners complained about basic needs. The reported punishment continued for more than 10 consecutive days.

Female political prisoners face additional forms of abuse. Rights groups have reported that women detained at Daik-U Prison have been subjected to solitary confinement and physical and psychological abuse. In August, PPNM reported that 27 female political prisoners were being held in solitary confinement, with five facing extended sentences.

Prisoners have also reportedly been forced to perform physically demanding work, including masonry and farming, while access to food supplied by families has been restricted. These conditions are particularly serious for prisoners who already suffer from illness or malnutrition.

Deaths in custody underline the consequences. On September 15, a political prisoner reportedly died of a heart attack in Myingyan Prison. PPNM reported in June that 282 political prisoners had died in prisons over the previous three years, including 148 whose deaths were linked to inadequate medical care, medicine shortages or delays in treatment.

Taken together, the figures and prison reports suggest that the junta's treatment of political prisoners involves not only prolonged detention but also restricted healthcare, financial exploitation, punitive isolation, forced labour and physical abuse.

What are the current challenges for fuel and gas in Myanmar?

Myanmar is facing renewed pressure on fuel supplies as prices rise and the junta tightens controls over imports and distribution. In Naypyitaw, fuel prices reached about 3,958 kyats per litre for Octane 92 and 4,055 kyats for Octane 95 on September 11, while diesel was 4,255 kyats and premium diesel 5,155 kyats. Prices had already risen sharply from the end of August.

The impact is being felt in everyday life and business operations. A civil servant in Bago Region told local media that generator fuel costs had increased from about 500,000 kyats to 700,000 kyats during power outages, forcing staff to reduce field trips and seek alternative transportation.

The underlying problem is Myanmar's heavy dependence on imported fuel. According to ISP-Myanmar, domestic production accounts for only about 3 percent of fuel demand, with roughly 97 percent supplied through imports. Fuel also represents about one-third of Myanmar's total import value, worth more than US\$5.4 billion based on available 2023 trade data.

This dependence makes the country particularly vulnerable to foreign-exchange shortages, international oil prices and disruptions in import and distribution systems. The junta has instructed that foreign fuel imports be reduced by 30 percent from September, saying increased domestic refining will help compensate for the reduction. A modular refinery project at Thanlyin is expected to begin phased production by the end of September, although its initial capacity is limited to about 500,000 tonnes annually.

At the same time, fuel distribution remains tightly controlled. The junta introduced QR-code-based purchasing and previously imposed an odd-even vehicle system to manage supplies. Although the odd-even restriction was removed on September 9, the QR-code system remains, creating difficulties for consumers and businesses trying to obtain sufficient fuel.

The effects extend across the economy. Transportation costs rise when fuel becomes more expensive, pushing up the prices of food and other goods. Agriculture is also highly dependent on fuel for machinery, irrigation and transportation. Small and medium-sized enterprises face additional pressure because unreliable electricity forces many businesses to rely on diesel generators.

The fishing industry in Mon State provides a clear example of the wider impact. Fuel-sales restrictions have left many fishing boats idle, while operators have been pushed toward expensive black-market supplies. The sector supports thousands of vessels and tens of thousands of families, meaning fuel shortages threaten both livelihoods and seafood supplies.

The fuel crisis therefore represents more than a temporary price increase. Myanmar's dependence on imported fuel, combined with foreign-exchange constraints and tighter junta controls, is creating a chain reaction across transportation, agriculture, businesses and fisheries. Unless supply and distribution become more stable, higher fuel costs are likely to continue feeding into the broader cost of living and economic difficulties.





MYANMAR JUNTA CLAIMS UN ENVOY **KYAW MOE TUN ILLEGITIMATE AHEAD OF CREDENTIALS DECISION**

The Myanmar junta said 13 September the UN ambassador - loyal to ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi - is occupying the office illegitimately, as the United Nations prepares to weigh his replacement.

Myanmar has been embroiled in civil war since a military coup in 2021 ousted the elected government of Nobel laureate Suu Kyi, ending the country's decade-long experiment with democracy.

The United Nations formed a credentials committee this month to decide whether to accept Naypyidaw's candidate for UN ambassador or stick with Kyaw Moe Tun, who has rejected the coup and for more than five years ignored the government's claims that he no longer represents Myanmar.

Myanmar's foreign ministry said Kyaw Moe Tun was "dismissed from civil service" effective February 27, 2021 for not complying with state orders, committing treason and colluding with "terrorist organisations", according to a statement published in the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper.

The day before his dismissal, he made an emotional plea during an address at the UN General Assembly

for the "strongest possible action" against the military coup.

The ambassador, who was appointed by Suu Kyi's government, broke with his country's rulers weeks after their putsch.

Leaders sanctioned

The ministry also accused Kyaw Moe Tun of misusing state funds and property, including the premises of the UN Permanent Mission of Myanmar in New York, and working with the exiled opposition National Unity Government (NUG), which the junta has branded a terrorist group.

"Kyaw Moe Tun's continued representation of Myanmar at the United Nations does not constitute formal recognition of his legitimacy," the ministry said.

"Rather, his continued status is merely a temporary arrangement, with the Credentials Committee's decision deferred annually."

The members of the UN committee - who will weigh whether to replace Kyaw Moe Tun - include the Bahamas, Belgium, Benin, China, Jamaica, Russia, Uganda, the United States and Vanuatu.

While China and Russia are cosy allies of the Myanmar government, supplying military arms, jets and diplomatic cover, the United States has sanctioned dozens of its leaders, including junta chief Min Aung Hlaing.

The committee generally announces its annual credentials decisions around November.

After the military snatched power, Myanmar authorities were persona non grata in many foreign capitals, but Min Aung Hlaing is making a diplomatic drive for recognition since retiring as armed forces chief and taking over as civilian "president" in April.

Since 2021, the civil war between the military and various pro-democracy fighters and ethnic minority armed groups has killed more than 100,000 people on all sides, according to monitor ACLED.

AFP

UK's Human Rights Ambassador,
Eleanor Sanders



UK STATEMENT FOR THE ENHANCED INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON MYANMAR

The following UK Statement for the Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on Myanmar was delivered on 7 September at the UN in Geneva by the UK's Human Rights Ambassador, Eleanor Sanders. It was delivered during the UN Human Rights Council 63.

Thank you, Mr Vice President.

These reports document a worsening crisis affecting the human rights of communities across Myanmar. Airstrikes remain the leading cause of civilian deaths, striking schools, hospitals and places of worship. The Myanmar military's use of forced conscription, arson and arbitrary detention have driven displacement beyond 3.6 million. The Mechanism's evidence of sexualised torture in military detention facilities, including of children, is deeply disturbing.

We are gravely concerned by violations against ethnic and religious minorities nationwide: forced labour, forced recruitment and the loss of land and homes.

The UK remains committed to accountability for all Myanmar's people. We have contributed £900,000 to the Mechanism, and have supported international efforts to collect and preserve evidence of the most serious crimes committed in Myanmar. We intervened jointly at the International Court of Justice and await the Court's judgment.

High Commissioner, Mr Vice President, Perpetrators of the violations documented must be held to account.

Thank you

UN RIGHTS CHIEF CALLS FOR 'REALITY CHECK' ON BURMA AS BROUK WARNS ROHINGYA FACE ERASURE

The Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK) on 8 September warned that Rohingya are being driven towards erasure from their homeland, as a new UN report documented continuing persecution by both the Burmese military and the Arakan Army.

BROUK President Tun Khin addressed the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva as part of an Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the report by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk.

Tun Khin said there is no lack of evidence, international law or recommendations.

"What has been missing is action by Member States."

Rohingya being erased from their homeland

The report documents widespread abuses against Rohingya by both the Burmese military and the Arakan Army, including arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual violence, forced labour and forced recruitment. Restrictions on movement, food and livelihoods are compounding the persecution and making it increasingly difficult for Rohingya to survive in their homeland.

Tun Khin said: "Rohingya now face two oppressors: both denying their identity, their rights and their future in their homeland."

Land seizure is entrenching Rohingya displacement and closing off the possibility of return. The report documents Rohingya being prevented from returning to their land while other communities are settled on it, with some Rohingya forced to build the new settlements. The High Commissioner warned that the Arakan Army's seizure of Rohingya land was making return even more difficult.

For those forced to flee, there is still nowhere safe to go. Around 1.2 million Rohingya remain in refugee camps in Bangladesh, where international aid cuts are worsening already desperate conditions, while persecution makes safe return to Burma impossible.

Decades of international failure

For decades, the UN has documented the persecution of Rohingya and called for action. Member States failed to act, persecution escalated into genocide and Rohingya are still paying the price today.

In his opening statement to the Council, the High Commissioner described the situation as "a matter of the greatest international concern" and said years of international efforts had failed. He called for a "reality check" from States in their approach to the situation.

He challenged governments over their approach to the Burmese military, warning that "so-called 'calibrated engagement'" was not enough. Any engagement with the military must demand

meaningful progress in complying with international law, protecting civilians and allowing humanitarian access, with States applying political pressure for change.

The consequences of that failure extend far beyond the Rohingya. The same military that committed genocide against Rohingya went on to seize power and commit atrocities against communities across Burma. Accountability is not only about justice for past crimes. It is about stopping atrocities now and preventing further violence.

International law must be enforced

The High Commissioner called on States to stop transfers of arms and jet fuel and reiterated his call for the UN Security Council to refer the full situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court.

Tun Khin called on the UK, as penholder on Myanmar, to lead efforts at the Security Council to secure an ICC referral. He also called on States to enforce the 25 international arrest warrants issued through BROUK's universal jurisdiction case in Argentina, including against Min Aung Hlaing.

"Court decisions must be upheld. Arrest warrants must lead to arrests."

"International justice takes time. Rohingya do not have time. Justice and accountability delivered years too late will mean nothing if there are no Rohingya left. The international community cannot allow Rohingya to be erased from Myanmar and promise us justice afterwards. Member States must act now to stop the genocide, end impunity and ensure Rohingya have a future in our homeland."



IIMM RAPS MYANMAR JUNTA FOR CONTINUED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE

Speaking at the 63rd Regular Session of the Human Rights Council Body on 7 September, Nicholas Koumjian, Head of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM), expressed serious concern about the level of human rights abuse in Myanmar, over five years after the military coup.

The following is his statement:

Mister President,
Excellencies,

It is an honour to present the eighth Annual Report of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.

Unfortunately, I must report that the situation in Myanmar continues to deteriorate. Serious international crimes are being committed with greater frequency and intensity.

The Myanmar military is increasingly relying on aerial attacks, and civilians are the principal victims. Attacks escalated in the run-up to the elections completed in January and have continued unabated. Two weeks ago, the military bombed a monastery in Sagaing Region during a Buddhist retreat – one of more than 600 aerial attacks on religious buildings since the military coup. Schools and hospitals are also frequently hit.

The Myanmar military is making greater use of paramotors and drones, which are harder to detect than planes, giving people less time to seek shelter. We have also observed an increase in “double tap” strikes, where a second attack hits first responders and those helping the wounded.

Our investigations are progressing. We have identified a number of units involved in these attacks and the airbases from which they operate.

We have also advanced investigations into torture in military-run detention facilities and identified commanders and interrogators. Our evidence includes accounts of horrific sexual and gender-based crimes, including gang rape and the burning of genitals with cigarettes.

Mr. President,

Our mandate from this Council is to investigate serious international crimes committed in Myanmar. We collect evidence of such crimes regardless of the political loyalty, ethnicity or religion of the perpetrators or the victims.

In Rakhine State, the conflict has intensified significantly, and we are investigating allegations of killings, arbitrary detention, torture and forced displacement committed by various armed groups.

All ethnicities in Rakhine State have suffered from these crimes. Many Rakhine and other groups have been victims of aerial bombings, artillery attacks and obstructions to humanitarian assistance. Rohingya and other minorities caught between the combatants continue to take enormous risks to escape the violence. Since early 2024, more than 154,000 Rohingya have crossed into Bangladesh, joining close to a million others who cannot safely return home as the violence and insecurity in Rakhine continues.

We have collected substantial evidence from more than 1,600 sources, including videos, photographs, geospatial imagery, social media posts, and information on bank transactions and weapons supply chains. We have collected over 750 testimonies from witnesses.

This evidence is helping us establish what crimes happened, who was responsible and who may have financed, facilitated or benefited from these crimes.

The Mechanism has shared extensive evidence and analysis with authorities pursuing accountability for crimes committed against the Rohingya, including at the International Criminal Court and in Argentina. We have also shared information concerning crimes committed since the 2021 military takeover with authorities from several States.

Earlier this year, the International Court of Justice held hearings concerning Myanmar's obligations under the Genocide Convention. The Mechanism provided much of the evidence now before the Judges in that case.

I am grateful to the many brave individuals who take enormous risks to share information with the Mechanism. They do so because they want the truth to be known and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

Our responsibility is to ensure that their courage is not in vain.

The Mechanism will continue working to collect evidence that will prove the crimes and identities of those responsible and help national and international authorities use this evidence to bring those responsible to justice.

Thank you.



Photo: Supplied

S2S URGES UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL TO PRIORITIZE MYANMAR SITUATION AS TOP CONCERN

During the Enhanced Interactive Dialogue held at the 63rd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Sisters2Sisters (S2S) group presented the current situation in Myanmar and urged global policymakers to treat the Myanmar crisis as a top priority.

S2S issued a statement last night saying it had directly addressed and discussed these issues with the Council 7 September.

The group primarily demanded effective accountability for the ongoing war crimes in Myanmar,

while also highlighting the discrimination faced by women, young girls, and the LGBTIQ community as a result of the conflict.

The dialogue session followed the presentation of reports by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk and IIMM Head Nicholas Koumjian. The S2S Program Director participated in the discussion alongside Türk, Koumjian, and other civil society representatives.

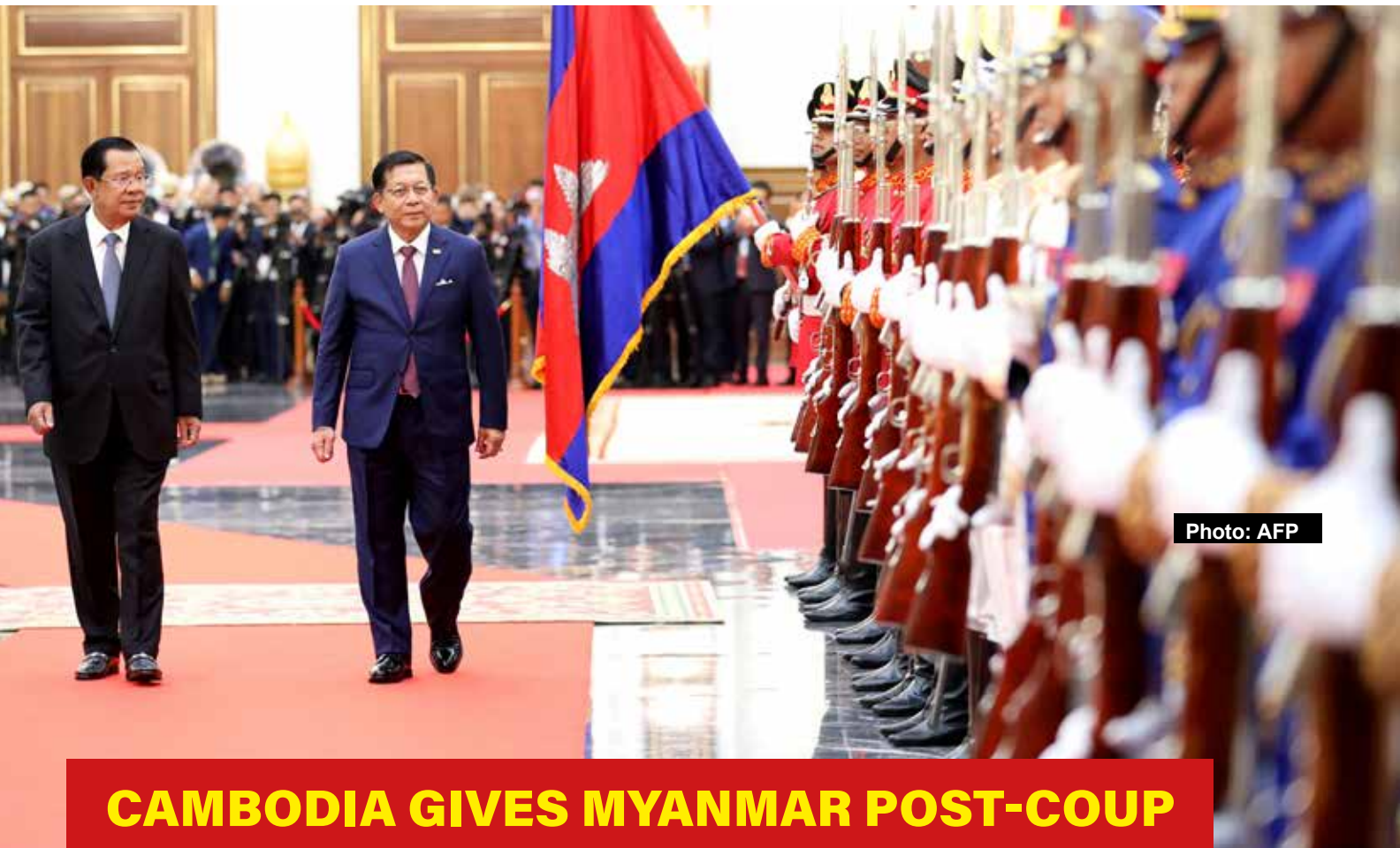


Photo: AFP

CAMBODIA GIVES MYANMAR POST-COUP LEADER RED-CARPET RECEPTION

Cambodia gave Myanmar's coup leader turned civilian president a red-carpet welcome on 11 September, images from his office showed, as another nation embraced the ex-junta chief back into the diplomatic fold.

Min Aung Hlaing touched down in Phnom Penh at the start of a two-day state visit to meet acting head of state Hun Sen and his son, Prime Minister Hun Manet.

"The leaders of the two countries will discuss ways to strengthen their close relations and expand mutually beneficial cooperation," said a Cambodia foreign ministry statement.

Myanmar's authorities were persona non grata in many foreign capitals after the military snatched power and triggered civil war with a 2021 putsch ousting Aung San Suu Kyi's government.

But Min Aung Hlaing is making a diplomatic drive for recognition since retiring as armed forces chief and taking over as civilian president in April.

The 11-member regional Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has frozen Myanmar's leaders out of high-level summits since the coup.

But Cambodia is the fourth ASEAN country -- following Thailand, Laos and Vietnam -- to welcome Min Aung Hlaing since he took over as civilian leader.

He made the transition following deeply restricted elections organised by his junta starting in late 2025, which returned a walkover win for pro-military parties.

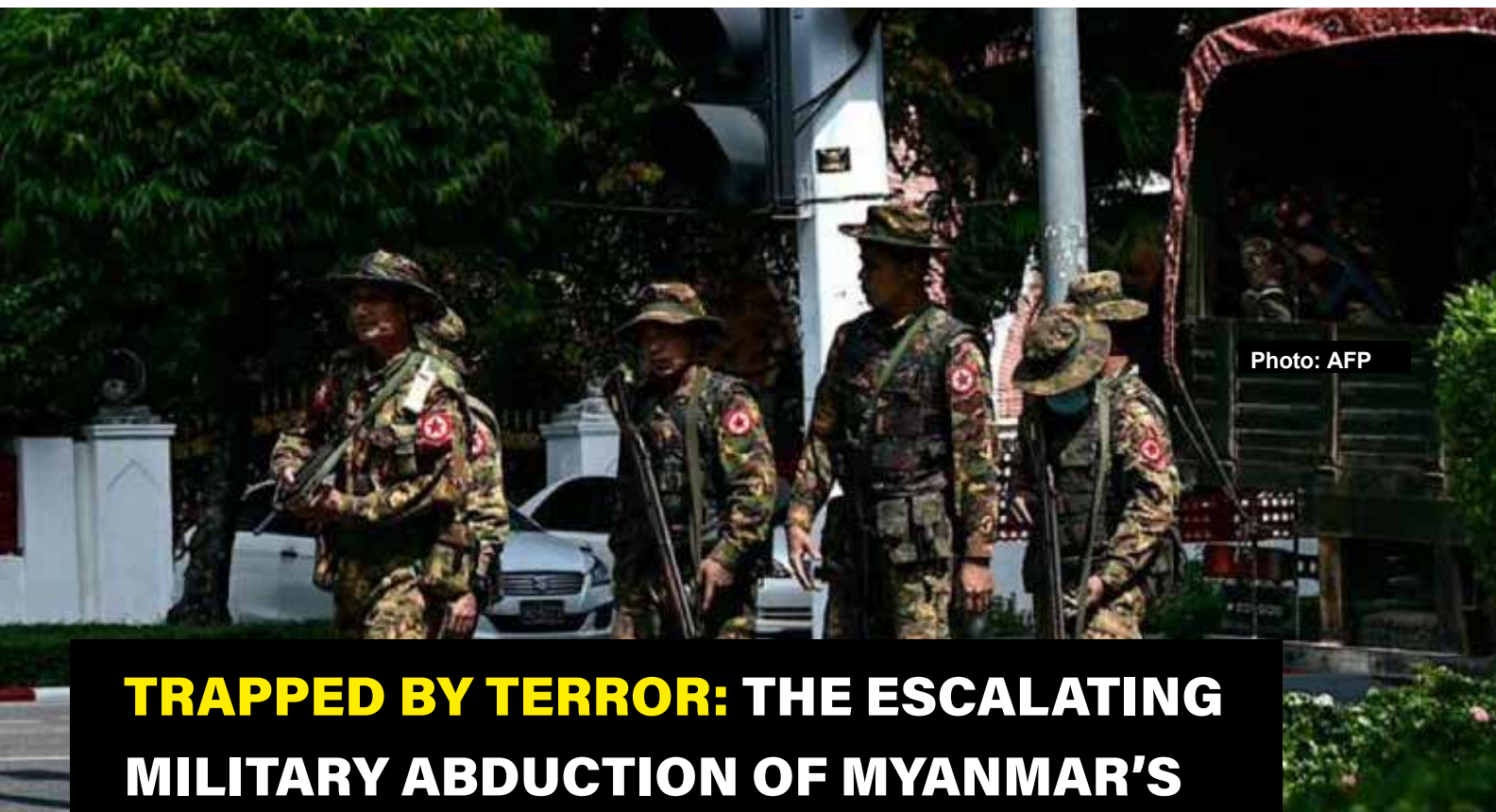
Suu Kyi's party was sidelined, she remains jailed and protest or dissent over the vote was made punishable by prison time.

The poll was also blocked from huge tracts of territory held by rebels in the civil war, which some monitors estimate has killed more than 100,000 across all sides.

While Min Aung Hlaing advertised the vote as a return to diplomatic norms, democracy watchdogs described it as window dressing to disguise his ongoing rule.

Nonetheless, analysts say it has proven effective at breaking Myanmar's diplomatic isolation by giving other nations an excuse to reboot their relations.

AFP



TRAPPED BY TERROR: THE ESCALATING MILITARY ABDUCTION OF MYANMAR'S YOUTH: PROGRESSIVE VOICE

The Myanmar military has essentially formalized a human trafficking racket under the guise of military service, with ward administrators, police, auxiliary fire brigades, and soldiers operating as localized cartels, according to Progressive Voice 11 September.

No one in Myanmar is safe from the illegal military junta's predatory conscription campaign. It has violently expanded beyond its original demographic targets to sweep up students, women, urban civilians, migrant workers, and even newly released political prisoners. Facing catastrophic battlefield defeats, defections, and heavy casualties, the illegal junta is aggressively escalating forced recruitment. Through brazen daytime kidnappings, mafia-style extortion, and severe mobility restrictions, it hunts youth to use as human shields and cannon fodder on its depleting frontlines. To protect these young people and end the military junta's absolute impunity, the international community—particularly ASEAN and Myanmar's neighboring countries—must take decisive action. This includes ensuring robust protection for those seeking temporary refuge and completely cutting off the junta's access to the financial resources, weapons, and aviation fuel that drive its terror campaign.

To fill its quotas for Conscription Batch 28 in September 2026, the junta has abandoned all legal pretenses in favor of a vast, lawless toolkit of abduction. As documented by monitoring groups, the junta's methods now include violent home invasions, fraudulent job postings designed to traffic youth, and the deliberate targeting of early-morning and nighttime commuters, including gas station workers and cargo conductors. The Myanmar military has essentially formalized a human trafficking racket under the guise of military service, with ward administrators, police, auxiliary fire brigades, and soldiers operating as localized cartels. In Mon State, junta forces abducted 222 youths for Batch 28, bringing the total number of forced conscripts from the state to at least 5,800 since Batch 1. These abductees—who include underage youth and overage men arrested under the pretext of curfew violations—were held at the No. 46 Naval Flotilla in Mawlamyine. The junta is increasingly weaponizing false charges to coerce enlistment. During rural raids, troops falsely label civilian youths as People's Defense Force (PDF) members, forcing them into a lethal ultimatum: face imprisonment and torture, or join the military. This extortion is mirrored in urban centers. In Yangon, for example, a motorcycle taxi driver stopped for a minor licensing violation was threatened with

prison and coerced into enlistment under the false promise that his mother would receive three million kyats. He was immediately abducted, and his family received nothing.

Operating as an extension of this criminal enterprise, the military-backed “Eagle Group” in Yangon abducts youth and sells those who cannot pay ransom directly to the army. Meanwhile, an auxiliary fire brigade officer in Insein lured and trafficked youth with false job promises. These coordinated sweeps led to the disappearance of at least 12 young men in Yangon in August 2026 alone. The desperation to escape this nightmare is fatal. At the Danyingone recruitment center in Yangon, several abducted youths have reportedly died while attempting to flee their captors. The terror reaches even the military junta’s stronghold: in Naypyidaw, a major from Light Infantry Battalion 2030 personally abducted the sole-breadwinning son of a military family on 4 September 2026, threatening the victim’s mother and pregnant wife at gunpoint. Simultaneously, in Mandalay Region, daytime sweeps have paralyzed towns like Kyaukpadaung and Taungtha, where junta troops drag commuters from passing vehicles and extort arbitrary military service fees from travelers over the age of 35. Official military documentation indicates that these abducted youths are sent directly into front lines, while administrative traps prevent them from fleeing. Captured operational records from Light Infantry Battalion 421, dated 2 July 2026, and retrieved during clashes in Moby, show that 109 personnel (71.71 percent) out of a 152-person frontline combat column were forced conscripts. This demolishes the junta’s propaganda claims that recruits would only be assigned to logistical support.

To trap youth within its reach and sustain this pipeline to the frontlines, the illegal military junta has systematically criminalized domestic and international mobility. Following the mandatory implementation of the Unique Identification Number system and the blanket ban on overseas work permits for draft-age men and women in 2024, the junta has blocked draft-age men from legal overseas employment. Desperate to expand its recruitment net, the central committee in Naypyidaw has directed local authorities to catalog men aged 18 to 35 living abroad using the National Service Information Management System (NSIMS).

This database tracks destination countries, enforces punitive measures against families at home, and flags returnees for immediate detention. Inside Myanmar, the trap is tightening further in places like Rakhine State, where youth face a dual-draft nightmare between junta sweeps and forced recruitment under the Arakan Army’s emergency provisions. Meanwhile, in Hpa-an, Karen State, villages emptied of young people are extorted for a monthly tax by junta-aligned militias.

Worsening the situation, the military junta is violently expanding conscription to target young women and dismantle community resilience, sparking widespread panic among female factory workers via pre-conscription census drives in Mon, Karenni, and Shan states. As young men hide to survive, women increasingly shoulder exhausting manual labor, such as commercial water transport in Sagaing Region. To strip populations of support, the junta is cracking down on civil society in Nyaungshwe and Inle, arresting aid workers to smother lifelines that help youth evade forced recruitment. The junta’s deliberate shift toward mafia-style abductions and transnational surveillance reflects a calculated strategy to weaponize terror and replenish its collapsing ranks. This machinery of forced recruitment destabilizes the entire region—a crisis directly enabled by ASEAN’s failed policy of non-interference and the deadlocked Five-Point Consensus.

The UN Security Council and ASEAN must act immediately to dismantle the military junta’s capacity to commit atrocities. ASEAN and the broader international community must explicitly recognize that Myanmar is not a safe country for return. Regional governments—particularly Malaysia and Thailand—must halt forced deportations and uphold the principle of non-refoulement to prevent delivering refugees, migrants, and undocumented individuals into military hands for forced conscription. Furthermore, the international community must urgently establish protection pathways that ensure legal status and humanitarian assistance for fleeing youth, while simultaneously severing the junta’s access to financial resources, weapons, and aviation fuel. Finally, global actors must end partnerships with the junta and engage directly with the National Unity Government (NUG), Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs), and local civil society groups working to build a genuine, inclusive federal democracy in Myanmar.



MYANMAR PRO-DEMOCRACY REBELS CLAIM DRONE ATTACK ON MANDALAY AVIATION HUB

Myanmar pro-democracy guerillas on 11 September claimed a drone attack that shut the nation's second-biggest airport, saying they targeted military jets stationed at the aviation hub.

Mandalay airport in central Myanmar was raided by six "suicide drones" on 10 September afternoon, the military-backed government said in a statement, causing no casualties but disrupting flight schedules.

The statement accused rebels of targeting "a non-military, public transportation system".

The People's Defence Forces rebel group, claiming responsibility for the attack, said they had targeted Russian-made Yak-130 fighter jets housed by the runway.

The People's Defence Forces are the largest pro-democracy guerilla group to form after the military triggered civil war with a 2021 coup ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

A statement shared on the group's Facebook page said three of its members had been killed staging the attack.

It accused the government of "disseminating deceptive propaganda to make it appear as though civic Mandalay International Airport, located opposite the airbase, was the target".

A security source told AFP the airport was "closed protectively" for most of Friday before being reopened around 4:00 pm (0930 GMT).

Mandalay airport is an international and domestic travel hub, but civilian air raid warning groups frequently identify it as a runway for military jets launching sorties in the civil war.

After five years of conflict, the military is now on the offensive against the myriad of pro-democracy and ethnic minority guerrilla groups it is battling.

Thursday's apparent drone raid was a rare acknowledged rebel attack in one of Myanmar's large urban areas, which have generally remained a stronghold for the military.

It was not possible to verify the civilian or military nature of the attack site, but AFP reporters have in the past seen military aircraft flying over Mandalay airport.

Rebel groups and Myanmar's military are both now using drones in the civil war, which some monitors say has killed more than 100,000 people.

However, the military's air force, stocked with Chinese- and Russian-made jets, has proven vital in fending off opposition factions, analysts say.

The air wing has also been accused of targeting civilians at schools, monasteries and public festivals -- inflicting mass casualties flagged by rights groups as potential war crimes.

AFP



CNF SAYS NO INVITATION RECEIVED FROM NSPNC, CALLS IT A MOVE FOR POLITICAL EXPLOITATION

Salai Htet Ni, spokesperson for the Chin National Front (CNF), stated that the National Solidarity and Peace Negotiation Coordination Committee (NSPNC), formed by the military junta, has not invited them to peace talks, characterizing reports of such an invitation as a move aimed solely at political exploitation.

Salai Htet Ni made these remarks to Mizzima 11 September in response to inquiries regarding rumours that the NSPNC had sent invitation letters to the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), and the CNF to engage in peace negotiations.

When asked whether an invitation letter had been sent and what their stance was, he replied, "No, we know nothing about it. We view this as a move by the SAC (State Administration Council) for political exploitation, attempting to weaken the trust of the public and the international community in us."

Reports of the military junta sending invitation letters to these armed groups for peace talks have emerged amid intense ongoing clashes in Kachin and Rakhine States.

The KIA and ABSDF, which had previously signed ceasefire agreements with the military but joined the

revolution following the 2021 military coup, have also stated that they have not received any invitations for peace talks.

KIA spokesperson Colonel Naw Bu told media outlets that they were unaware of the military junta's invitation, adding that any action regarding such matters would depend on the decision of the central committee, and no directives have been issued yet.

Similarly, Comrade Min Htay of the ABSDF told BBC Burmese in an interview, "We haven't heard anything, and no letter has been sent. The whole country needs peace, but if they truly want peace, they need to demonstrate it through practical actions."

He added that if they genuinely wish to build peace, they must stop killing civilians, conducting airstrikes, and launching military offensives; otherwise, symbolic gestures cannot be accepted.

Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing had previously claimed that they had invited groups to discuss a ceasefire within 100 days after holding elections, and that they had managed to hold talks with 13 groups in total—comprising six signatory groups and seven non-signatory groups.

The military junta announced on 27 August that it had formed an advisory group to successfully implement national solidarity and peace-building processes.

The advisory group is reportedly led by U Aung Min, who served as a minister during U Thein Sein's administration, and includes former minister U Thein Zaw, U Aung Naing Oo, Dr. Min Zaw Oo, and U Thet Naing.

On 15 July, the Steering Council for the Emergence of Federal Democracy (SCEF), formed by Karen, Kachin, Karenni, and Chin groups along with the National Unity Government (NUG), released a statement outlining practical steps required to conduct meaningful political dialogue.

The statement demanded an end to indiscriminate airstrikes targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure including hospitals, schools, and religious buildings and called for the immediate release of all political prisoners.

Furthermore, it called for humanitarian aid to reach affected populations and demanded the demonstration of trust-building measures that reflect a genuine commitment to a political resolution.



Photo: Supplied

LOUDSPEAKERS USED TO PRESSURE WARDS IN MANDALAY'S MYINGYAN TO PROVIDE ONE RECRUIT EACH FOR MILITARY CONSCRIPTION

Ward administrators in Myingyan, Mandalay Region, are reportedly patrolling neighbourhoods and using loudhailers to pressure residents into providing one recruit per ward for the military, according to local sources.

A resident stated that the loudspeaker announcements began in every ward on the night of 6 September, adding that households are also being forced to pay monthly conscription fees.

"Since they can no longer easily abduct pedestrians on the streets of Myingyan, they are now going around with loudhailers, announcing that every ward must provide one person for military service. We also had to pay money in previous months," a Myingyan local told Mizzima.

Depending on the ward, households in Myingyan are reportedly forced to pay between 30,000 and 40,000 MMK (Myanmar Kyat) per month.

Furthermore, if married children live in the same house as their parents, they are classified as two separate households - one for the married couple and one for the parents - meaning they are forced to pay double the amount.

Despite these financial collections, local residents reported that junta forces still frequently abduct and

conscript youths sitting at teashops and passersby on the streets.

"It's not just youth they are taking; even underage kids of 14 or 15 are being abducted. Thida Yu Mon, a pro-junta influencer, claims that they don't collect military service fees or abduct people for forced conscript service, but they have arrested so many people lately. They have been sent to Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 15," a local resident told Mizzima.

Out of fear of forced conscription, the majority of military-service-eligible youth in Myingyan have fled abroad. Consequently, only a small number of young people remain in the town, and even they avoid going outside after evening falls.

Currently, the military junta has imposed a "Four Cuts" style blockade on Myingyan Town and surrounding villages, restricting the movement of people, motorcycles, and cars. Additionally, they have banned the purchase of fresh produce, dry grocery, and other commodities from the villages, while also blocking villagers from traveling to the town to buy rice.

Up to this September, the military junta has been frequently conducting forced recruitment drives not only in Myingyan, Meiktila, and Sagaing, but also in major cities like Yangon and Mandalay.



SEVEN RESTRICTIONS ISSUED FOR REFUGEES AND FOREIGNERS IN INDIA'S LAWNGTLAI DISTRICT

The district administration of Lawngtlai in Mizoram State, on the India-Myanmar border, issued a seven-point order on 7 September restricting the movement and residence of refugees and foreigners.

The order was based on decisions made during a law-and-order meeting on 31 August, chaired by Lawngtlai District Deputy Commissioner Donny Lalruatsanga, and attended by district-level government officials, the Assam Rifles, and representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs).

A Myanmar refugee living in Lawngtlai town told Mizzima that they need to monitor how these orders are implemented and remain cautious regarding their movement. "The rules have indeed tightened, but we have to wait and see how far they will be enforced. In the meantime, we need to exercise caution in our daily living and travel," the resident said.

According to the order, refugees and foreigners are barred from renting houses in Lawngtlai town starting this September, and are strictly prohibited from going outdoors after 8:00 PM, except in emergencies.

Those relocating to wards and villages must present a relocation permission letter from their original local council. Refugees who are working must obtain a work permit from the respective local council and the Lai Youth Association (LYA), and authorities will continue to conduct inspections.

Ward and village councils must maintain registry records of non-locals and house renters. Every household is required to report any guest staying at their home who does not possess Indian citizenship identity documents to ward authorities.

Hotels and homestays are prohibited from accommodating individuals of unverified identity and must collect copies of official identification such as Voter ID cards, Aadhaar cards, or driver's licenses from guests. Guest logs and weekly reports must be systematically submitted to the Lawngtlai District Superintendent of Police, according to the order.

A Myanmar national living in Lawngtlai town said that despite the order being issued, Myanmar nationals currently renting houses in the town have not received any official notification yet, suggesting the restrictions might only apply to those attempting to move in after the order's release. "We haven't received any notification so far. I think it means they won't accept new tenants after the order. If they don't accept those already living here, we won't know where to go, and we will face a lot of difficulties," they said.

It is believed that refugees will have nothing to worry about if they abide by the laws and regulations. However, it could pose significant difficulties for merchants from Rakhine State who rent houses to order and store goods.

The Myanmar citizen added that while refugees are settled and working, the term "foreigners" in this context refers to Rakhine merchants, and the measures are likely aimed at controlling the high influx of people.

Around 30,000 Myanmar war-displaced people are taking shelter across 11 districts in Mizoram, with Lawngtlai District hosting the second-highest number at 6,328. They are currently living in displacement camps in villages and in rented houses in towns.



Photo: Supplied

KIA AND KPDF ATTACK AND DESTROY UP TO FOUR MILITARY VESSELS NEAR BHAMO

Joint forces of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the Kachin People's Defense Force (KPDF) attacked a military junta flotilla returning after delivering reinforcements, weapons, ammunition, and rations to Bhamo, Kachin State, on 8-9 September, resulting in the sinking and burning of several vessels, according to military sources.

The military flotilla encountered attacks from the KIA and KPDP joint forces while departing after delivering reinforcements, weapons, ammunition, and food supplies from Shwegu to Bhamo.

During the two-day clashes, at least 40 military junta troops were killed, and a large cache of weapons and ammunition was seized, military sources said.

In addition, the destroyed vessels included combat and cargo boats, with up to four vessels damaged or destroyed in total, according to the sources.

Currently, intense clashes continue on both land and waterways between the military junta forces trying to reinforce Bhamo Township and the KIA-KPDF joint forces.

Military sources added that during the clashes, besides casualties on the military junta's side, some junta troops were captured as prisoners of war, and weapons and ammunition were seized.



NEARLY 15,000 MYANMAR NATIONALS REJECTED AND SENT BACK FROM MANIPUR, SAYS MINISTER

Out of 24,475 Myanmar nationals who entered India's Manipur State, 14,992 were rejected and deported, State Minister Konthoujam Govindas said on 7 September.

The minister made the remarks while responding to a query from an opposition Congress Party lawmaker during an ongoing session of the State Legislative Assembly.

According to the minister, those turned back were among the 24,475 people who entered Chandel, Kamjong, and Tengenoupal districts in Manipur along

the India-Myanmar border due to the ongoing conflict in Myanmar.

Breaking down the figures, the minister said that in Chandel District, 9,600 of 14,370 entrants were turned away; in Kamjong District, 4,770 of 6,545 were sent back; and in Tengenoupal District, 14 of 3,560 were rejected.

The minister added that 9,483 Myanmar nationals currently remain in various shelter camps.

A displaced Myanmar man told Mizzima that the minister's statement reflects the attitude of the neighbouring country, adding that they would return home as soon as the situation stabilizes. "We came to seek shelter temporarily during our time of crisis, and pushing us out like this reveals their true attitude. If our country becomes peaceful again, we will return immediately. It's not as if we are living here in comfort," he said.

It is understood that it is primarily the Meitei ethnic community in Manipur that pushes for the deportation of Myanmar nationals, while the border-dwelling Kuki and Zo ethnic communities have been providing aid and protection to displaced populations.

Although the Manipur State Government has provided some limited humanitarian assistance, the displaced population largely relies on support from local civil society organizations and informal local jobs to survive.

Efforts are currently underway to collect biometric data from the remaining Myanmar nationals in the camps. However, due to instability in the border regions, only 1,308 individuals in Chandel District have had their data recorded so far, with the process still ongoing elsewhere.

The minister also said district administrations have been instructed to register illegal immigrants separately to prevent them from blending in with local Indian citizens, and that the repatriation process is being facilitated through diplomatic channels.

The state government has also proposed establishing 1951 as the base year for implementing the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the state,

and is currently in communication with the central government to obtain authorization. The NRC-1951 is an official registry of Indian citizens compiled from the first census conducted after India's independence, designed to document legitimate citizens and identify illegal immigrants by registering detailed household information across villages nationwide.

Since India is not a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, the Manipur government does not recognize displaced Myanmar nationals as "refugees," categorizing them instead as "illegal immigrants."

During the assembly session, regarding an attack on four villages in Kamjong District on 7 May, the minister dismissed the possibility of external aggression or invasion, saying compensation is being arranged for the victims and an official investigation is underway. The attack reportedly destroyed 23 houses, injured one person, and caused property damage estimated at approximately 8.4 crore rupees (approx. USD 880,000).

Myanmar nationals arrested in Manipur for lacking legal residency documents are being prosecuted, sentenced to prison terms, and deported to Myanmar. However, nearly 100 individuals who refuse to return due to safety concerns remain detained at Imphal Central Jail.

To bolster regional security, combat drug trafficking, and curb illegal migration, India is currently fencing its 1,643-kilometer border with Myanmar. Of the 398-kilometer segment bordering Manipur State, nearly 55 kilometers have already been fenced, with the remaining sections targeted for completion by 2028.



AA EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES STUDENTS IN PALETWA CAN CHOOSE TO STUDY EITHER RAKHINE OR BURMESE LITERATURE

Following criticism over the replacement of the Grade 12 Burmese literature curriculum with a new Rakhine literature curriculum in Paletwa Township, Chin State, the Arakan Army (AA) Education Department has announced that students will be allowed to choose between Rakhine and Burmese literature.

The AA Education Department's response came after the Global Khumi Organization (GKO) issued a protest on 6 September, claiming the curriculum was being forcibly taught in the Rakhine language in Paletwa Township without the consent of the local population.

According to the AA Education Department's statement, although the newly drafted Grade 12 Rakhine literature curriculum has replaced Burmese literature, it will not be compulsory. Students will be permitted to choose either Burmese or Rakhine literature based on their preference.

The AA Education Department said that among the 158 students attending Grade 12 in Paletwa Township this year, 138 are Rakhine, 16 are Khumi, three are Daingnet, and one is Mro. Only the Grade 12

Burmese literature subject has been replaced with the Rakhine curriculum; curricula for other grades remain unchanged.

The GKO objected to the forced instruction of the new Rakhine curriculum in Paletwa Township, saying in its statement that such actions undermine the linguistic and cultural rights of the Khumi Chin and other Chin ethnic minorities, and risk sowing division among ethnic groups.

The GKO also argued that implementing educational policies without the consent of the local population violates the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and strongly condemned the AA's actions.

According to census data, Paletwa Township is home to 88,577 Chin and Chin ethnic sub-tribes, and 18,234 Rakhine and Rakhine sub-tribes.

After taking complete control of Paletwa Township, which borders Rakhine State, in February 2024, the AA has been collaborating with local revolutionary forces to deliver administration, judicial, educational, and healthcare services.

Photo: AFP



EIGHTH GRADE STUDENT DIES AFTER STEPPING ON LANDMINE WHILE FISHING IN KALAY TOWNSHIP

An eighth-grade student, around 16 years old, died on 6 September after stepping on a landmine while fishing in a village in Kalay Township, Sagaing Region, according to the Khana Tar Ayeik (Temporary Shade) Hospital, Prometheus.

Since schools were closed that day, the incident occurred when four friends, including the male victim, went to search for fish in pools and ponds located near their village.

"The patient arrived at our hospital more than two hours after the incident. The primary obstacle was the difficult travel conditions along the route," Dr. Phyo Kyaw, the medical officer in charge of the Khana Tar Ayeik Hospital, told Mizzima on the evening of 8 September.

Upon arrival at the hospital, the patient had sustained severe injuries, was semi-conscious, and was suffering from extreme blood loss.

Although hospital doctors performed emergency life-saving procedures, the patient could not be saved, Dr. Phyo Kyaw added.

The area where the incident occurred had previously been mined by revolutionary forces to block military junta columns during offensives. The junta forces had also reportedly laid landmines when they patrolled through the area.

Later, when the revolutionary forces regained territorial control, they cleared the landmines they had

planted and also conducted sweep operations in areas where junta-planted mines were suspected to be.

"From what we gathered, the revolutionary group had issued warnings. Even though they cleared the area, they warned that there could still be residual abandoned landmines and urged people to avoid those spots. This means that although the threat exists along paths to the farmlands, local farmers usually bypass these dangerous areas. But on that day, instead of going to their usual spots, the boy reportedly took that specific route. That is how the incident happened, according to what we heard," the doctor explained.

Dr. Phyo Kyaw added that including this latest victim, three civilian landmine casualties had been admitted to the hospital, two of whom passed away. He noted that landmines have also caused severe physical disabilities and limb loss in other cases. He urged the public to strictly avoid areas where relevant organizations have warned of potential landmine hazards.

Since the 2021 military coup, civilian casualties due to landmines have skyrocketed across the country. According to UNICEF Myanmar data monitoring landmines and other explosive ordnance (EO) incidents, a total of 327 incidents were recorded nationwide in the first six

months of this year, January to June, resulting in 487 civilian casualties with both deaths and injuries.



Photo: AFP

MYANMAR STILL MAKING AND USING CLUSTER MUNITIONS BUT GLOBAL TREATY REVIEW LOOMS

Myanmar produced and used cluster munitions over the past year, placing it among a shrinking group of countries still manufacturing the internationally banned weapon even as global civilian casualties from cluster munitions climbed to among the highest levels on record in 2025.

According to the Cluster Munition Monitor 2026, the 17th annual report from the Cluster Munition Coalition, a global coalition of nongovernmental organizations co-founded by Human Rights Watch, Myanmar produced cluster munitions during the reporting period spanning mid-2025 to mid-2026, alongside China, India, Israel, North Korea, Poland, Romania, Russia and South Korea. The report also documented Myanmar's use of the weapon during the same period, alongside Iran, Russia, Thailand and Ukraine, none of which are parties to the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Cluster munitions killed or injured at least 1,063 people worldwide in 2025, among the highest annual totals the Monitor has recorded. Myanmar was named among nine countries where new casualties occurred

during the year, alongside Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon, Russia, Syria and Ukraine. Civilians accounted for 87 percent of casualties where their status could be determined, the report found.

Myanmar's military was first documented producing and using a domestically made cluster munition in a 2023 Monitor briefing, which found attacks in Chin, Kayah, Kayin and Shan states dating back to the 2021 coup. Myanmar has never joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which prohibits the production, use, transfer and stockpiling of the weapon and currently counts 112 states parties and 12 signatories.

The findings were released ahead of the convention's Third Review Conference, scheduled for 14 to 18 September in Vientiane, Laos. Human Rights Watch has called on the treaty's 124 member states to use the meeting to condemn continued production, transfer and use of cluster munitions by countries that remain outside the convention.



The banner features a scenic view of Prague's Old Town Bridge and Charles Bridge over the Vltava River. In the foreground, there is a glass teapot, a cup of coffee with latte art, and a cup of tea. The Mizzima S.R.O. logo is in the top left corner. The main title 'Asian Tea & Coffee Festival Prague 2026' is prominently displayed. Below it, a green bar reads 'IMPORT FROM THAILAND & ASIA TO EUROPE'. The date '23 OCTOBER 2026' and location 'PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC' are clearly marked. On the right, a vertical section identifies 'OPERO PRAGUE' as the 'OFFICIAL VENUE PARTNER' and shows an interior view of the venue. A bottom green bar lists five key themes: 'For the Burmese Diaspora in Europe', 'For Thai & Asian Companies', 'Premium Products from Thailand & Asia', 'Business Networking', and 'Global Connections'. Contact information for WhatsApp (+420-608616688) and email (mizzima@mizzima.com) is provided. A small map of Europe highlights Prague. A bottom text block describes the festival's purpose: connecting producers, entrepreneurs, importers, and investors from Thailand, Asia, and Europe for a unique platform of trade, networking, and cultural exchange.

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UWSA fighters.
Photo: AFP

ICG REPORT SHOWS HOW CRITICAL MINERALS LINK MYANMAR'S CIVIL WAR TO THE WORLD

The International Crisis Group's new visual investigation, "How Critical Minerals Link Myanmar's Civil War to the World," released 10 September, examines the links between Myanmar's widening civil war and its gold, jade, rare-earth and tin industries, which supply global sectors ranging from green energy and weapons manufacturing to luxury goods.

Combining field research with algorithmic analysis of satellite imagery and conflict, night-light, price and trade data, ICG found that:

Tin: Satellite data confirms a substantial restart at Man Maw, one of the world's most important tin concentrate mines. As AI-driven demand for tin surges, supply now depends on opaque politics in a militia-run enclave at the Myanmar-China border.

Gold: Alluvial gold mining in parts of Sagaing Region has expanded by more than 160 per cent since the 2021 coup.

Jade: Fieldwork identified new territorial control lines and smuggling routes from Myanmar's main jade-mining hub, Hpakant, into China.

Rare Earths: Mining has more than doubled in Kachin State, while an initially small mining area in

eastern Shan State tripled in just one year, an expansion quantified in their report for the first time.

The ICG investigation comes ahead of the Trump-Xi summit on 24 September and the expiry of the U.S.-China export-control ceasefire on 10 November, with rare earths central to the talks.

Richard Horsey, Crisis Group's Senior Adviser on Myanmar, says: "As Washington and Beijing bargain over rare earths, both sides know where a lot of the supply actually starts: unregulated mines in an active civil war. That's not a supply chain anyone should be comfortable deepening."

Thomas Kean, Crisis Group's Senior Consultant on Myanmar and Bangladesh, says: "Natural resources aren't the cause of Myanmar's conflicts, but they help sustain them by generating vital revenue for both the military and its armed opponents. Local communities often pay the price for this war economy, facing greater risks of violence, environmental destruction and loss of other livelihoods, such as agriculture."

From AI data centres to makers of electric vehicles, jewellery and missile systems, industries around the world depend on minerals extracted in Myanmar, the report notes.

Myanmar possesses some of the world's most valuable deposits of jade, tin, gold and heavy rare earth elements. These minerals underpin industries ranging from electronics and artificial intelligence to clean energy, defence and luxury goods. Yet many are extracted in conflict areas in one of the world's longest-running civil wars, under way since independence in 1948, and contribute to shaping the battlefronts in some of the country's most remote areas.

Myanmar's conflicts are not driven primarily by natural resources – they are political struggles over power, autonomy and identity. But control of valuable mineral deposits has become an important source of revenue, leverage and strategic influence for both the military and its opponents. Decisions taken by armed groups in Myanmar's borderlands can reverberate through global commodity markets, while international demand helps sustain local war economies. Using satellite imagery, field research and interviews, this series examines how four critical resources connect Myanmar's expanded civil war to the global economy.

The following stories highlighted in the ICG report show how four globally important resources – Tin, Gold, Jade, and Rare Earths - have become intertwined with the country's civil war.

TIN: The Mine that Moves the Market

When a single mine in north-eastern Myanmar suspended operations in 2023, global tin prices spiked and smelters in China scrambled for supply. The shock rippled through supply chains, raising costs for

electronics and semiconductor manufacturers across the world. Mining has since restarted, but output remains well below pre-suspension levels – and tin hit a record high above \$53,000 a tonne in January 2026 as demand surged with the AI data centre boom.

Tin, in the form of solder, is a critical component in servers and data centre infrastructure.

The Man Maw mine is located in an enclave near the Chinese border controlled by the United Wa State Army (UWSA), a powerful non-state militia of more than 20,000 fighters with high-tech weaponry that has maintained a ceasefire with the Myanmar military since 1989. Mining is not its only source of income. It has been under U.S. sanctions since 2003 for narcotics trafficking, while a grand jury later indicted eight senior leaders in absentia on heroin and methamphetamine charges.

At its peak in the late 2010s and early 2020s, Myanmar became the world's third-largest tin producer, behind only China and Indonesia, with the vast majority of the metal coming from Man Maw. In the peak years, Myanmar supplied over 90 per cent of China's tin ore imports, making it a critical upstream source for global solder, electronics and semiconductor supply chains.

Production at the mine expanded rapidly through the 2010s. Satellite imagery shows roads, ore pads, tailings dumps and worker housing spreading across previously forested hillsides.

The UWSA governs this territory as a de facto mini-state, largely insulated from Myanmar's civil war



even after the 2021 coup, as the decades-old ceasefire between the group and the military remains in place. That stability translated into predictable tin output and growing global dependence on supplies from the region. Tin concentrate exports from Myanmar to China were worth over \$1 billion annually at their peak. For a single armed group, control over such enormous flows gives it not only substantial revenue, but also political leverage in both Myanmar and China.

Then, in April 2023, Wa authorities announced a suspension of mining at Man Maw, ostensibly for a resource audit. Production essentially halted in August that year. Benchmark tin prices on the London Metal Exchange immediately jumped by more than 10 per cent, an abrupt price shock for an industrial metal. Smelters warned of tightening concentrate supply. Analysts described the global market as “beholden” to the fortunes of a single Myanmar mine.

The suspension also revealed an unforeseen vulnerability in the supply chain. As mentioned, the Wa justified the interruption in mining in Man Maw on the grounds of an audit, but Crisis Group interviews suggest that the real reason was internal Wa dynastic politics.

Man Maw was operated by seven companies, all controlled by senior Wa leaders. The closure coincided with a leadership transition within the UWSA, as a generational shift brought new individuals to the fore – including the sons of ageing leaders – and reopened disputes over informal power and revenue sharing arrangements. Tensions over revenue distribution from the mine – both among leaders and with the UWSA treasury – appear to have driven the prolonged halt in mining and the suspension of those companies’ permits.

The armed group opened applications for new mining licences in February 2025 and issued the first permits that July, on payment of sharply increased fees. Ore is moving again: China’s tin ore imports from Myanmar climbed through late 2025, and by the next June Myanmar was once more China’s largest single supplier, at 37 per cent of the total. But the recovery is partial. The deepest, highest-grade deposits have been flooded since 2023, and in February 2026 the Wa authorities issued rules sharing the cost of pumping them out among eleven mine portals. Satellite imagery shows large new buildings going up, and night-time illumination around the site has returned to higher

levels after falling sharply following the suspension.

The reasons for the slow restart remain unclear. Industry and media reports point to several possibilities, ranging from normal lead times for restarting underground mines, flooding in shafts, administrative delays and potential depletion of higher-grade ore bodies. Whatever the cause, a central concern in the tin market is the lack of reliable information.

Smelters drew down inventories and sought alternative sources of concentrate, but no supplier has fully replaced Man Maw’s output. Three years on, the market is tighter than ever, with tin being the best-performing non-ferrous metal of the past year, and analysts anticipate the first global supply deficit since 2021. Industry insiders still see a full resumption at Man Maw as important to the market’s long-term stability.

Mines typically open and close in response to global market signals. In this case, the market is reacting to the decisions of a militia. As tin demand surges with the AI data centre build-out, a critical input for advanced computing depends on opaque politics in a militia-run enclave beyond state control at the Myanmar-China border.

GOLD: Funding the Grassroots Resistance to Military Rule

Gold mining has long been a lucrative source of income in Myanmar for both the government and non-state armed groups. But since the 2021 coup, worsening conflict, economic collapse and soaring global prices have triggered a new gold rush in parts of central and northern Myanmar. Official figures put Myanmar’s gold production at just 500kg, but informal production is likely to be at least ten times higher – valuing the industry at close to \$1 billion a year. The sector also provides jobs for hundreds of thousands of people.

The dredging operations have triggered protests by nearby communities concerned about the impact on their livelihoods. The sandbanks that emerge in the Chindwin River during the dry season are prized for their fertile soil, but once miners churn them up, they can no longer be cultivated.

Resistance groups in the area say taxing gold extraction is one of the few ways they can buy weapons and ammunition. But residents accuse some local leaders of profiting personally from the industry, including by running dredging boats themselves.

Residents also fear the mining will draw military attacks from a regime determined to cut off its opponents' revenues.

Local regime officials have also benefited, collecting bribes and informal taxes from miners in exchange for not attacking their operations. But after battlefield losses and a shake-up in Sagaing Region's military command in November 2025, pro-regime social media accounts began calling for airstrikes on mining sites in resistance areas to prevent these armed groups from getting funds.

Over the past nine months, local media has reported dozens of strikes against gold mining sites spanning at least eight townships. "Some unlucky rafts will be hit, equipment will be lost and workers will die. But it doesn't take long for the rafts to restart operations – they take the hits and go back to work", said one resistance source. "And for the military commanders, it's all just for show".

Much of this mining has spread from riverbanks into forests and paddy fields – even right up to the edge of houses. Farmers say armed groups pressure them to sell land to miners, leaving communities with polluted water and damaged fields.

Control of areas rich in underground gold seams has also become a military objective for both the regime and

its opponents. In Banmawk Township, resistance forces seized the town and nearby mining areas in September 2025 before the military and Shanni Nationalities Army counterattacked. The resistance later abandoned the town, but still oversees many mines in the surrounding area.

Gold from mining operations is sent by boat, plane or road to refineries in Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city. Domestic demand is high because of the instability of the kyat, the national currency, capital controls and demand for safe-haven assets. But because gold fetches a higher price in neighbouring India and Bangladesh, traders also smuggle it across Myanmar's porous borders.

Gold mining provides jobs in a devastated economy and revenues for armed groups fighting the regime. But it also destroys farmland, pollutes waterways, enriches local powerbrokers and makes nearby communities targets in the war. "I'm not opposed to all mining, particularly if the revenues really support the revolution", said a Banmawk resident. "But the authorities need to manage the impact on the environment and communities. Now there are no rules – they mine anywhere".



Gold mining. Photo: ICG

JADE: Fighting for Profits from the "Stone of Heaven"

For centuries, jade has been treasured in China as the "stone of heaven", a symbol of nobility, protection and good fortune. Most of the world's finest jade – including the vivid green stone known as imperial jade – comes from one place: Hpakant in northern Myanmar's Kachin State. Every year, stones worth billions of dollars move from these mines toward China. The money enriches mining firms, traders and investors, but also the armed actors who control the extraction sites, nearby roads and border crossings. Since Myanmar's 2021 coup, fighting has intensified around Hpakant as the military and its opponents vie for control of one of the country's most lucrative industries.

The 1994 ceasefire between the Myanmar military and the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), one of the country's oldest ethnic armed groups, transformed jade mining at Hpakant from artisanal

to industrial. Satellite imagery from 1990 onward shows the scale of the transformation. The mines

attracted hundreds of thousands of migrant workers from across the country, many hoping to find a life-changing stone among the waste piles.

But the boom came at immense human and environmental cost. Drug addiction among workers became widespread. Landslides repeatedly killed scores of itinerant miners and industrial extraction literally moved mountains, turning large parts of Hpakant into a dusty wasteland. Meanwhile, military and KIO officials – and their business partners – grew rich from the proceeds.

As China's economy grew through the 2000s and 2010s, so did the profits from jade. But official figures capture only a small part of the trade. The best stones often bypassed formal gem sales and moved across the Chinese border through informal networks, with payments made to officials and armed groups along the route. Global Witness estimated the jade industry to be worth up to \$31 billion in 2014 – roughly half of Myanmar's official GDP. Mining continued despite the collapse of the Kachin ceasefire in 2011, with the



Jade merchant. Photo: ICG

military, the KIO and other ethnic armed groups all profiting from the trade.

The bigger shock appears to have come from Chinese President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign from late 2012, which made conspicuous luxury purchases riskier in China. Though revenues have almost certainly fallen from the 2014 peak, the industry is still worth billions of dollars a year.

The 2021 coup brought an uptick in conflict in Kachin State. The KIO has not just been one of the military regime's most formidable opponents, but it has also provided training and support to newly formed People's Defence Forces, resistance groups fighting to overthrow the junta. For the first few years after the coup, the military retained direct control of the jade mines. But in March 2024, the KIO launched a major offensive, capturing large stretches of the Chinese border, including trade gates and rare earth mining sites. These gains shifted control of some of Kachin State's most profitable and strategic locations – and set the stage for renewed fighting around Hpakant, which until then was mainly under military control.

RARE EARTHS: Outsourcing the Green Transition and Rearmament Imperative

The magnets inside electric vehicles, wind turbines and advanced weapons – including munitions and missile defence systems used in the 2026 U.S.-Israeli war with Iran – increasingly depend on rare earths extracted using toxic chemicals injected into hillsides in a Myanmar conflict zone.

Myanmar has become one of the world's most important sources of heavy rare earth elements (HREEs), particularly dysprosium and terbium. These are essential for high-performance magnets used in electric vehicle motors, wind turbines and smart weapon guidance and control systems. The U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran transformed what is often regarded as a concern for the green transition supply chain – given their importance for renewable energy technologies – into one for the defence industry.

Replenishing the advanced munitions and missile defence interceptors consumed during the conflict will take years and depend on access to HREE supply



Rare earths mining. Photo: ICG

chains that are both limited in capacity and vulnerable to geopolitical disruption.

While China dominates the market, its own HREE extraction has been curtailed by tightened environmental regulation since the early 2010s. In 2016, Jiangxi province shut down much of its heavy rare earth mining, the core of China's production, along with smaller deposits extending into southern provinces including Yunnan. Extraction then shifted across the border into Myanmar, where the armed group in control of the area imposed few if any environmental safeguards.

By 2021, Myanmar had become the single largest source of heavy rare earth feedstock for China, with exports growing dramatically from roughly \$1.5 million in 2014 to around \$780 million in 2021.

Control of these deposits has shifted with the expansion of Myanmar's civil war after the 2021 coup. Previously, the area was under the sway of Border Guard Forces aligned with the Myanmar military. But the coup and the upsurge in conflict that followed upended the balance of power. In late 2024, the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), one of the country's oldest and strongest ethnic armed groups, overran the area and assumed de facto control of the main mining belt. The revenue now flows to this group rather than Naypyitaw and its proxies.

For a time after the KIO took control, China closed the border for rare earth imports, as well as for exports of materials needed for mining. The importance of these rare earth supplies to Beijing meant that it soon relented, however, allowing a reduced flow of the minerals over much of 2025 and full reopening of the trade by late October. China has also applied much less pressure on the KIO to stop fighting the Myanmar military, compared with other armed groups along the border, such as the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, both of which were forced into ceasefires with Naypyitaw. The differential treatment is at least in part due to the leverage the KIO has as a supplier of a strategic resource.

But rare earth deposits are a double-edged sword for the armed group. Beijing remains highly sensitive to disruptions in rare earth supply, and it is unlikely to tolerate prolonged interruptions or behaviour it views as threatening the reliability of exports. The same deposits that provide the KIO with revenue and leverage

therefore also constitute a geopolitical vulnerability for the group.

The Shan sites are also responsible for environmental harm. Pollution from leaching operations has affected tributaries feeding into the Mekong River system, raising concerns in downstream countries, particularly Thailand.

The environmental impact is visible from space. Satellite imagery shows rapid vegetation clearance on steep hillsides, expansion of leaching ponds and waste areas, and a growing concentration of mining activity near waterways. But the consequences extend far beyond the mine sites themselves. Thai authorities have recorded persistent arsenic contamination in rivers flowing from Myanmar, while regional monitoring has detected pollutants crossing into both Thailand and Laos. Researchers have linked much of the recent contamination to the dramatic expansion of mining in eastern Shan State, which also includes gold mining.

The outsourcing of mining to Myanmar means that environmental damage occurs outside China's borders while preserving Beijing's control of processing, refining and manufacturing.

Decarbonising energy systems is vital to addressing global warming, but it has created externalities of its own. The supply of critical inputs for clean energy now depends on territories governed by armed groups in Myanmar's borderlands, and their extraction is causing major environmental harm, with cross-border repercussions.

With no good alternatives, the green energy sector and government regulators have tended to close their eyes. Now the push for rearmament is increasingly entangled with the same supply chains.

As Western governments seek to bolster their defence capabilities and rebuild stocks of advanced missiles, interceptors and other weapons systems expended in recent conflicts, demand for heavy rare earths will grow. A strategic material sourced from Myanmar's conflict zones now sits at the intersection of two defining global priorities: clean energy and rebuilding military stockpiles.

Kyaw Moe Tun

THE PEOPLE'S CREDENTIALS

INSIGHT MYANMAR PODCAST INTERVIEW

WITH MYANMAR UN AMBASSADOR

KYAW MOE TUN

"I won't be disappointing the people." Before Kyaw Moe Tun took the floor of the United Nations General Assembly on February 26, 2021, that was as much as he had disclosed about the position he intended to take. Myanmar's permanent representative - its ambassador to the UN - had entered the diplomatic service in 1993 and assumed the New York post in October 2020. The coup forced him to decide whether representing his country meant obeying the generals who seized its government or remaining answerable to the people whose elected government they removed. His answer made him Myanmar's democratic voice at the UN; preserving that voice has since required a quieter form of defiance.

Before the coup, his work followed instructions from Myanmar's elected government. Under the National League for Democracy administration, the mission addressed development, humanitarian needs, human rights, armed conflict, and the Rohingya crisis. The role gave him little license to improvise, making February 2021 a rupture not only in Myanmar's political order, but also in the chain of authority on which a diplomat depends.

During the final week of January, he learned that negotiations between the military and Aung San Suu Kyi's government had broken down. After the February 1 seizure of power, the junta sent cables through its military attaché in Washington, instructing missions to circulate its account. Kyaw Moe Tun regarded the

material as propaganda. A February 12 Human Rights Council session showed him how Myanmar could sound abroad if its diplomats repeated the junta's position. When a UN special envoy briefing was announced in New York, he sent a routine draft for review while privately preparing what he would actually deliver.

Only a handful of people knew where he stood, and almost nobody knew his precise language. One staff member learned the truth in the car on the way to the UN. Minutes before the meeting, Kyaw Moe Tun shared his statement with a few relevant figures; after speaking, he stopped to address Myanmar demonstrators outside. When he returned to the mission, many colleagues congratulated him. Secrecy had protected the decision long enough for it to become irreversible, and he delivered a speech which some later suggested to be one of the most important ever spoken on the United Nations floor.

But that exposure carried a physical cost. In July 2021, a man who had joined volunteers safeguarding the mission admitted accepting an offer connected to a plan to assassinate Kyaw Moe Tun. The FBI moved the ambassador to a secure location and arranged round-the-clock Secret Service protection for about a month. He later waived diplomatic immunity to testify in the resulting federal case. The threat reached beyond him: his parents and some siblings fled Myanmar because of the position he had taken.

The junta also tried to remove him institutionally. After it told the UN in March 2021 that he was no longer Myanmar's representative, Kyaw Moe Tun wrote to the secretary-general and General Assembly president that he still represented the elected government. Legal specialists helped him navigate the contest. When both sides submitted credentials for the next session, he lobbied the nine-country Credentials Committee to retain the existing mission. The committee's opaque language deferred the dispute, allowing him to remain, and later sessions largely repeated the arrangement.

Deferral came with restraint. Before the 2021 high-level week, Kyaw Moe Tun withdrew Myanmar from the General Debate speakers list as part of an unwritten understanding; he says the same pattern has continued each year. He has remained active in committees while limiting major media appearances and the highest-profile UN platform. "Sometimes I also have to be a diplomat," he says. The public restraint is deliberate: a forceful appearance can satisfy an immediate demand to speak, yet unsettle the consensus that keeps the junta's nominee outside the chamber.

Entering a sixth year under challenge, he does not treat another deferral as automatic. United States diplomats have told him their position remains unchanged, while China has publicly called for "fair" treatment of Myanmar's representation. He can be certain only that China, Russia, and the United States will sit on the committee; the other six members may not be known until the General Assembly session begins. Assurances stop short of a decision. "But who knows?" he says. The answer will emerge through informal bargaining.

The procedure explains his caution. "There is no debate within the Credentials Committee. There is no debate at all." Members discuss contested cases among themselves, sometimes in corridors, and the formal meeting may not occur until November, when language is ready for adoption. Kyaw Moe Tun has no right to address them. Once the report reaches the General Assembly, approval can take seconds. Credentials must also pass through the official e-delegate portal controlled by each mission. A decision with national consequences is shaped through access, precedent, and consensus long before the gavel falls.

For Kyaw Moe Tun, the seat is not merely one vote. He defines the mission by two objectives: prevent the junta from occupying Myanmar's place at the UN, and use that place to convey the people's aspirations while seeking international action. Giving the seat to military representatives would silence that channel and confer

legitimacy on forces that are actively committing atrocities. It would also confront the institution with a question about "whether the United Nations is for the people or for the dictators." The credibility at stake is inseparable from the civilians whose protection and justice the UN is meant to serve.

The mission carrying that burden has contracted from fourteen people before the coup to five. Kyaw Moe Tun was the only member of the pre-coup New York mission to join the Civil Disobedience Movement; the current delegation includes other defecting civil servants and community members who sometimes serve as interns. It survives on funds already held by the mission and uses an office and ambassadorial residence owned by Myanmar. The team withholds operational details the junta could exploit while maintaining the machinery of representation.

The Rohingya crisis remains part of that claim. Kyaw Moe Tun points to the National Unity Government's position statement and says he has urged the International Court of Justice to decide the pending case quickly. He frames the Rohingya crisis as part of Myanmar's wider crisis and military dictatorship as its root cause, while declining to say precisely how the issue affects every member state's view of Myanmar's credentials.

His appeal to the diaspora rests on unity and consequence. International actors watch whether Myanmar's democratic forces can present a common goal, he argues, while the effects of military rule now travel across borders through transnational crime and online scam centers. "The military is not the answer." The sentence is directed beyond Myanmar: so long as the junta remains, he warns, its violence and criminal economies will continue to affect neighboring states and the wider region.

If the junta gains the seat, the institutional loss will become personal at once. Kyaw Moe Tun says the military has already sentenced him for treason, carrying the threat of death. He must weigh continued service against the safety and future of his wife and two children. "Definitely, I will not return to Myanmar in that scenario," he says. The mission's status may be decided in a committee room he cannot enter; whatever the delegates decide, the country he represents is also the country to which he cannot safely return.

LISTEN TO THE INSIGHT MYANMAR PODCAST

<https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2026/9/1/episode-600>



BRICS leaders. Photo: AFP

CHINA, RUSSIA, INDIA SEEK ECONOMIC COOPERATION AT BRICS

BRICS leaders including China, Russia and India concluded a second and final day of talks in New Delhi on Sunday, discussing "inclusive global growth", after reaching a rare agreement calling for calm in the Middle East.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for "cooperation" within the bloc, which he has said represents "50 percent of the world's population, 40 percent of global GDP and more than 25 percent of global trade".

"The power of BRICS lies in our diversity and cooperation," Modi told leaders, including Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, on the final day of talks.

BRICS was created in 2009 as a forum for major emerging economies seeking greater influence in

institutions dominated by Western powers. The group is seeking to bolster its global influence and address conflict, trade turbulence and energy security.

"We have tried to push inclusive global growth," Modi said.

"We may be rooted in different realities, but together we rise through cooperation and blossom for humanity," he said.

Putin said the bloc was working to create a "new, more just, multipolar world order".

Xi said that a "world without rules is like an intersection without traffic lights; chaos and disorder are inevitable".

'Maximum restraint'

The first day of the summit on Saturday was dominated by the conflict in the Middle East.

BRICS foreign ministers had failed to agree on a joint statement in New Delhi in May, with Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates divided over the war that began with US-Israeli strikes on February 28.

However, leaders -- who also included Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian -- issued a statement after intense diplomatic efforts by host India.

"We express deep concern over the continued escalation of tensions in Middle East/West Asia," the joint statement said, adding that the BRICS countries "call for exercising maximum restraint".

Modi maintains cordial relations with both Iran and US ally Israel, but is also careful to strike a delicate balance in India's ties with Washington.

India has navigated the energy crisis caused by the US-Iran war in part by turning to Russia, despite Moscow's war in Ukraine and pressure from Washington and other Western capitals.

'Advancing together'

Xi's participation in BRICS was also important because it was his first visit to neighbouring India since 2019, and the biggest step yet in a cautious thaw between the nuclear-armed rivals.

His visit came six years after a deadly military clash along the disputed Tibetan border between China and

India, with ties gradually improving through restored flights, visas and high-level contacts.

"Although our two countries are different in many respects, they are fully capable of complementing each other's strengths, supporting one another, achieving mutual success and advancing together," Xi said as he met Modi, according to a video released by New Delhi.

The underlying territorial dispute remains unresolved, and both sides retain heavy military deployments along their roughly 3,500-kilometre (2,175-mile) high-altitude border.

India's foreign ministry said in a statement after the meeting that "the two leaders expressed commitment to a fair, reasonable, and mutually acceptable resolution of the boundary question".

Deep mistrust remains, with a widening trade deficit and strategic rivalry complicating ties.

"Both sides should... work hand-in-hand to promote high-quality major financial cooperation, advocate an equal and sustainable global order, and foster an economic globalisation that is open and inclusive," Xi said.

Xi's visit was the target of protests by dozens of Tibetans in New Delhi, exiles like their Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, who has lived in India since fleeing a Chinese crackdown in 1959.

AFP



ABANDONING THE BARRACKS

Su Thit is the founder of Spouses of People's Soldiers, an organization supporting Myanmar military defectors and their families with escape support, basic assistance, and livelihood training while running advocacy aimed at breaking the institution's internal "brainwashing." Her work sits inside a simple, grinding tension: Leaving the military can mean losing salary, housing, status, and safety in a single day; while staying can mean remaining inside a system that demands obedience, violence, and silence. She describes that choice as the hardest part of her own story, and everything after it as the long work of surviving the consequences without abandoning the reason for leaving.

This is Su Thit's second time on the Insight Myanmar podcast. She initially spoke back in 2021, soon after defecting, where she described how she was able to transform her depression into purpose by supporting military defectors and their families, all while continuing to believe that sustained resistance and solidarity can eventually free Myanmar from military rule.

Looking back on the years since her husband defected, Su Thit treats the decision as a threshold. "Our most difficult time is to decide to defect," she says, measuring that moment against what followed: two months hiding

in Yangon during a COVID wave, then flight to a liberated area where daily life is defined by scarcity. She frames the material drop in blunt terms. Before, she had a good job, a salary, a position; her husband had rank and stability. After defection, "we didn't have any possessions," and the loss was not only economic but also psychological. In the forest, without reliable water or electricity, she describes heat that makes the body feel unrecognizable, depression that turns into homesickness, and the corrosive feeling of being cut off from family, routine, and the ordinary markers of identity. She links those conditions to mental health strain for both of them, then holds the strain against the pressure to keep moving.

What prevents people from defecting, in her view, is rarely ideological confusion. It is the arithmetic of survival. "The most hesitation, the most challenge, is [what would] they do for their living," she says, returning to the same concrete questions—how they can eat, how they can earn, where they can stay—because the military provides those things even as it demands loyalty. She adds the coercive frame around that dependence: laws and punishments inside the institution, including prison time for attempting to run away from the compound, and even harsher penalties for fleeing a frontline battalion. That structure is meant to make defection feel like a leap into hunger and prosecution at the same time.

CATCH THE PODCAST

Read more and listen to the Insight Myanmar Podcast here: <https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2026/8/11/episode-587-abandoning-the-barracks>



AS MIN AUNG HLAING SIGNED DEALS IN PHNOM PENH, HIS FORCES BURNED OIL WELLS AND PUSHED INTO KARENNI

While Myanmar junta leader Min Aung Hlaing was in Phnom Penh last week signing trade and investment agreements with Cambodia's leaders, his forces were destroying oil fields in Magway Region and advancing on resistance-held territory along the Shan-Karenni border, continuing offensives that have run for months with no public mention in his office's account of the trip.

Min Aung Hlaing traveled to Cambodia on 11-12 September, meeting Senate President Hun Sen and Prime Minister Hun Manet in what state media described as an effort to strengthen cooperation within ASEAN. The two governments signed four agreements covering the elimination of double taxation, reciprocal investment protection, an amendment to a cultural cooperation pact, and a memorandum of understanding on media and information. Cambodia is the fourth ASEAN member state after Laos, Thailand and Vietnam to host Min Aung Hlaing since he stepped up diplomatic outreach this year, following stops in Russia, India, China and Belarus outside the bloc.

Cambodia's exiled opposition movement, the Khmer Movement for Democracy, condemned the visit, saying it should not become another way for Min Aung Hlaing to sidestep ASEAN's diplomatic pressure.

On the same days, fighting entered its fourth consecutive month on the Shan-Karenni border, where junta forces pushed through Moby town toward

the foot of Lwe Yin Mountain in an attempt to retake territory in Karenni State, according to a source with resistance forces in the area.

"The fighting is intense and has been ongoing all morning. One of my comrades was injured," the source said on 11 September, the day Min Aung Hlaing landed in Phnom Penh. The junta column involved is backed by drones and heavy artillery, the source said, and Karenni-based defense forces have repeatedly warned civilians to avoid roads near the fighting as clashes intensified through late August.

In Magway Region's Myaing Township, junta troops spent the same period destroying hand-dug oil wells in villages along the Myaing-Pauk border, detonating landmines inside the wells and burning oil workers' huts, shops and homes, according to local sources. The operations, part of an offensive by a Pakokku-based Light Infantry Division column that has run since May against resistance-controlled oil fields, continued through 9 September, days before Min Aung Hlaing's departure for Cambodia. At least 20 villages have been displaced by the fighting, and junta troops burned roughly two-thirds of Te Gyi village, where they are stationed, in late August.

Min Aung Hlaing's office and Cambodian state media, in their accounts of the visit, made no public reference to fighting in Magway, Shan or Karenni during the two days he was abroad.



MYANMAR SOCIAL MEDIA REACTS TO WAVE OF CONSCRIPTION ARRESTS

A video showing a young man forcibly seized in Mayangone Township, Yangon, dominated Myanmar's social media conversation this week, reviving public anxiety over military conscription enforcement in the city.

Myanmar's military introduced a conscription law in February 2024, three years after seizing power in a coup, requiring young people to serve in the armed forces. Enforcement has relied heavily on street detentions, extortion, and the seizure of people from public transport, according to citizen monitoring groups.

The footage, filmed on 7 September, shows a man being dragged away in an alley while resisting. It spread quickly across Facebook and Telegram, where users linked it to separate reports circulating the same day: a former political prisoner detained in Paungde,

Bago Region, after his family could not pay for his release, and a joint operation by a local gang and police in Hlaing Tharyar allegedly seizing people from streets and buses. Many posts noted this followed a similar wave of street detentions the Rangoon Scout Network reported across four Yangon townships just five days earlier.

The pattern has fuelled online discussion about which neighbourhoods and bus routes carry greater risk.

The human rights ministry of the National Unity Government, or NUG, has recorded more than 33,000 youth recruitments since May 2025, including nearly 2,000 forcible abductions, underscoring how conscription continues to shape daily life more than two years after the law took effect.

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.