ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

mizzima WEEKLY
Analysis & Insight



GENOCIDE VERDICT IN

Rohingya celebrate ICJ decision but long road ahead

SPECIAL ISSUE

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Analysis & Insight



DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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

A HISTORIC VERDICT BUT THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE IS FAR FROM OVER

The International Court of Justice's landmark ruling that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya is a historic moment for a community that has endured decades of persecution, discrimination and violence. But while the verdict represents an important victory for international justice, it does not mean the suffering of the Rohingya is over. Indeed, some of the greatest challenges lie ahead.

On 19 November 2026, the ICJ ruled, by nine votes to six, that Myanmar was responsible for committing genocide against the Rohingya during the military's 2017 clearance operations in northern Rakhine State. The court also found that Myanmar had failed in its obligations to prevent and punish genocide and to preserve evidence. It ordered the country to provide reparations, investigate those responsible and facilitate the safe, voluntary and dignified return of displaced Rohingya.

However, delivering justice and implementing it are two very different things. Myanmar remains under military rule following the 2021 coup, and the military responsible for the atrocities continues to wield enormous power. The junta has already expressed disappointment with the ruling, questioning its findings and pointing to the dissenting judges. There is little immediate indication that those responsible will face accountability through Myanmar's domestic institutions.

For more than a million Rohingya refugees living predominantly in Bangladesh, the question of returning home remains particularly difficult. Many have spent years in overcrowded refugee camps, dependent on international humanitarian assistance. Their homes and villages have been destroyed, while discrimination, restrictions on movement and the denial of citizenship remain fundamental obstacles to their future.

Any repatriation programme must therefore be approached with extreme caution. Returning people to a country where they cannot enjoy citizenship, security, freedom of movement and equal rights would risk exposing them to further persecution. Repatriation must be voluntary and supported by internationally monitored guarantees, rather than driven by political or economic pressure on Bangladesh.

Another major challenge is securing meaningful compensation for victims and their families. Financial reparations cannot restore murdered relatives, rebuild shattered communities or erase the trauma experienced by survivors. Nevertheless, compensation, reconstruction and access to healthcare and education are essential elements of rebuilding lives.

The international community must now ensure that the ICJ verdict does not become another symbolic declaration without practical consequences. Governments should maintain diplomatic pressure, support humanitarian assistance and pursue individual accountability through appropriate international mechanisms.

The Rohingya have finally received an authoritative international recognition of what happened to them. But recognition alone is not justice. Their future depends on whether the international community has the political determination to turn this historic judgment into protection, accountability, citizenship and the possibility of returning home with dignity.

The world must not allow the Rohingya to be forgotten again.

EDITORIAL

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Cover photo of Rohingya fleeing Myanmar in 2017 by AFP



Rohingya refugees in a camp in Bangladesh. Photo: AFP

GENOCIDE VERDICT IN

ROHINGYA CELEBRATE ICJ DECISION BUT LONG ROAD AHEAD

Myanmar committed genocide against its Rohingya minority, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) said on 19 November in a historic ruling, ordering refugees be given safe passage home and awarded compensation. But there is a long road ahead for this displaced and embattled community if they seek to settle down in peace in their long-standing homeland in Myanmar's currently war-ridden Rakhine State.

The ruling by the top UN court was the first time in its 80-year history that ICJ judges have determined that a state committed genocide, and is likely to be seen as justice for Rohingya victims of Myanmar's deadly 2017 crackdown on the mostly Muslim minority.

"The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has committed genocide against the Rohingya group in northern Rakhine state," said ICJ President Yuji Iwasawa, pronouncing the verdict in the court's Great Hall of Justice in The Hague.

Global and local response

The global response was largely celebratory, though mixed. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged Myanmar to allow exiled Rohingya to return home. Gambian President Adama Barrow, whose country brought the case in 2019, called it a "historic day for international justice". China and the USA appeared to urge caution, in part due to the precedent and implications.

As one Western analyst noted: The Myanmar ruling means a new standard for state accountability going forward. A nation can no longer hide behind the excuse of "counterinsurgency" when the totality of evidence - from mass killings and sexual violence to the destruction of villages - proves an intent to destroy a people.

In Bangladesh, hundreds of Rohingya followed proceedings on a giant screen in Cox's Bazar - the world's biggest refugee camp housing more than one million people - with many breaking down in tears when Iwasawa pronounced the verdict.

Mohammed Osman, whose parents and four siblings were killed by the Myanmar military, said the verdict had proved that "we were not lying about the genocide".

"I am overwhelmed ... But we have achieved only 50 percent of what we wanted. We will achieve 100 percent when we are repatriated with dignity," Osman, 20, told AFP.

Saifullah Muhammad, a Rohingya Canadian refugee advocate, told Mizzima that he is very happy to learn that the court has decided correctly.

"Now for countries around the world to act - the decision is historic the actions that follow must also be historic. To our fellow people of Myanmar, this judgment should not be seen as a victory of one ethnic community over another. It is an opportunity to confront historical injustice, reject hatred and build a future where Rohingya are recognized as equal members of society," he said.

Razia Sultana, Rohingya human rights activist and researcher, who has spent years collecting testimony for the case, told Mizzima that she welcomed the ICJ judgment.

"For the women who trusted me with their stories, it means the world finally said in its own voice: what was done to you was real, it was planned, and it was wrong. Yes, the missing Article II(c) matters. We must be honest about what the Court did not find. But this ruling gives us renewed energy, and the struggle for justice continues with the voices of survivors at the centre. A judgment is not an ending. Justice must now mean safety, accountability, reparations, and a safe and dignified return. And Rohingya still at risk in Rakhine today must be protected," she said.

The verdict explained by the ICJ president Iwasawa was not easy to follow, arguably due to its depth and complexity. For nearly three hours, he laid out searing evidence of Myanmar's atrocities against Rohingyas during the campaign, which forced hundreds of thousands to flee into neighbouring Bangladesh. Myanmar's security forces killed thousands of Rohingya civilians, committed "widespread sexual violence" against women and "extreme violence" against children, Iwasawa said.

The ICJ said the evidence pointed to around 10,000 killed in Myanmar's so-called "clearance operations" to repress the Rohingya community – operations that appeared to include violent attacks by some members of the Rakhine community, who appeared free to act as the security forces pursued their "clearance".

Rohingya villages were "systemically destroyed" and replaced with non-Rohingya inhabitants, said the ICJ, ruling that the "only reasonable inference" was that Myanmar intended to destroy the population - a key test for genocide.

During the years of investigation by the team employed by The Gambia, there was extensive evidence and testimony to confirm genocide against the Rohingya, though the final vote by the judges on this particular point was nine for and six against.

Seeking a safe return

The court ordered Myanmar to "allow and facilitate the safe, voluntary, and dignified return to their place of residence" for those who fled the violence.

Judges also told Myanmar it must investigate and punish anyone suspected of committing genocide, providing for compensation to be determined at a later date.

While the decisions of the ICJ are binding and cannot be appealed, the court has no way of enforcing its verdicts, and it remains to be seen whether Myanmar's rulers will adhere to the orders.

But the ruling will likely heap more international pressure on its leader Min Aung Hlaing, who commanded the military during the Rohingya crackdown before ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in a 2021 coup.

This year, he was installed as civilian president in what critics claim was a "sham" election, and is now waging a diplomatic campaign for legitimacy - which may be complicated by the ruling.

The diplomatic reverberations were immediate, with Britain saying it would expel Myanmar's defence attache, which it did.

The watershed ICJ judgment was also closely watched by legal experts for clues into how the court will rule in another high-profile case - whether Israel has committed genocide in Gaza.

The ruling provides "a significant precedent for victims of genocide, and other grave crimes, across the world in their own quest for justice," said Maria Elena Vignoli, senior international justice counsel at Human Rights Watch.

'They survived'

The case was brought by The Gambia in 2019 under the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, which allows any state to bring a case against another it suspects of breaching the international agreement set up after World War II.

The African country's justice minister told reporters at the court the verdict was a victory for the Rohingya, who had suffered great hardships.

"They survived. They testified. And today, they will believe," said Dawda Jallow.

Myanmar had always denied genocide, arguing that its actions targeted a military uprising from Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) insurgents after a series of attacks left a dozen security personnel dead.

"Myanmar was not obliged to remain idle and allow terrorists to have free rein," its representative Ko Ko Hlaing told judges during hearings in January.

The Myanmar authorities have responded, with a spokesperson claiming the ICJ verdict was "not fair".

A Rohingya activist in Yangon said they were "really satisfied" by the decision, but feared potential blowback against the community still in Myanmar.

"Many displaced Rohingya who left Rakhine because of fighting arrived in Yangon and other places in



The man behind the carnage. Photo: AFP

the country. We hope nothing serious happens," said the activist, who declined to be named for security reasons. "Everyone wants to live peacefully. We want the world to prevent any genocide here," the activist added.

Threats remain

Rohingya communities in Rakhine State remain at risk, writes Razia Sultana, who continues to document threats to the Rohingya community.

Allegations have surfaced that Arakan Army troops massacred hundreds of Rohingya civilians in Htan Shauk Khan village, known to Rohingya as Hoyya Siri, in Buthidaung Township on 2 May 2024, mentioned in a 2025 report entitled "Kill Them All" based on interviews with 19 Rohingya refugees.

Survivors described villagers being blocked while fleeing fighting between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army. According to their testimonies, Ms Sultana writes, civilians were forced to sit in rows with their heads bowed before an order to kill them was given over a walkie-talkie. Troops then opened fire.

The report also documented allegations of sexual violence, the burning of homes and mosques, and the detention of 12 young women who were reportedly subjected to sexual slavery at a nearby military base. These allegations concern different perpetrators and events from those examined in the ICJ case, she notes. They require independent investigation and accountability.

The ICJ judgment addresses Myanmar's responsibility for genocide during the 2017 operations. It does not resolve the atrocities that Rohingya civilians continue to face today. Justice must apply to every perpetrator, regardless of their affiliation, Ms Sultana says.

The decisions made by judges in The Hague matter, setting a precedent. But the situation on the ground in the badlands of Rakhine State indicate a solving of the Rohingya crisis is a long way off.

Sources: Mizzima, AFP, ICJ court transcript, Rohingya Khobor



Rohingya flee to Bangladesh in 2017. Photo: AFP



SCEF, NUG AND KNU RESPOND TO THE ICJ MYANMAR GENOCIDE VERDICT

Myanmar's National Unity Government (NUG), the Karen National Union (KNU), the Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union (SCEF) and the Arakan Army (AA) have welcomed the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) verdict in the genocide case against Myanmar, expressing support for justice for the Rohingya and calling for cooperation in implementing the court's decisions.

The SCEF highlighted the role of the United League of Arakan (ULA) and its armed wing, the AA, in the implementation process, given their current control of much of Rakhine State. It welcomed the court's verdicts and said it would work closely with the ULA/AA, other regional stakeholders and the international community to develop appropriate solutions.

NUG Acting President Duwa Lashi La also welcomed the court's decisions and pledged to implement them to the extent possible under his administration's capacity. He said the verdict was not only significant for the Rohingya but also for all those resisting military dictatorship and seeking justice and peace. He reaffirmed the NUG's commitment to working with the international community and stressed that ending the junta's violence against people across Myanmar was essential to achieving justice for the Rohingya.

NUG Foreign Minister Zin Mar Aung urged the people of Myanmar to stand with justice and humanity, saying that injustice was not confined to one ethnic group. She called for the ICJ process to become an initiative for restoring justice for all ethnic communities. She also

praised the Spring Revolution's commitment to justice and humanity, saying its efforts could help restore the country's dignity, which had been damaged by the military junta.

The AA said it was closely monitoring developments surrounding the ICJ verdict, guided by truth and justice. It said it would take appropriate action in the interests of the Arakan people as necessary.

In a statement issued the following day, the KNU urged the United Nations, ASEAN and the international community to work with Rohingya communities, relevant administrations and the ULA/AA to implement the court's decisions. It also stressed the importance of independent monitoring, preserving evidence, protecting survivors and witnesses, and conducting credible investigations.

The responses highlight growing recognition among Myanmar's resistance groups that accountability for crimes against the Rohingya must involve cooperation with those exercising authority in Rakhine State. However, translating political commitments into justice will require practical coordination, credible investigations and protection for affected communities.

Myanmar junta response to the ICJ Myanmar genocide verdict

Myanmar's military junta has rejected the International Court of Justice (ICJ) decision in the genocide case concerning the Rohingya, describing the proceedings as unfair and declaring that it will not comply with rulings it considers harmful to the country. Junta officials and pro-military supporters have also sought to discredit the court's decision, portraying it as a political attack against Myanmar.

The day after the ICJ decision, the junta leader's spokesperson dismissed the ruling as unfair during a press conference. She said Myanmar had submitted its arguments systematically but had been wrongly accused. She also questioned the decision by pointing to judges who had disagreed with the court's earlier findings.



Min Aung Hlaing's regime has rejected the ICJ verdict. Photo: AFP

The junta's Foreign Ministry issued a statement on the same day, saying Myanmar had submitted 13 reports in accordance with the court's instructions. It highlighted the dissenting opinions of the vice-president and five senior judges in the earlier proceedings, arguing that the findings were not unanimous. The ministry also questioned the reliability of evidence provided by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar and non-governmental organisations, claiming that their information did not meet the evidentiary standards required in such a serious case.

The statement further argued that the court's decision did not adequately consider the activities of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) in refugee camps in Bangladesh and Myanmar. It said the government would take time to study the ruling.

Pro-military voices quickly echoed the junta's position. The army-controlled Telegram channel Mhine Wai posted, "No need to care. Already we have expected," just minutes after the decision. Junta lobbyist Dr Aung Myo told BBC Burmese that Myanmar did not need to pay attention to the ruling and would not obey the court. Hla Swe, a Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) parliamentarian, meanwhile blamed the National League for Democracy (NLD) and its leaders, arguing that the military had merely been carrying out its duties during the NLD government's administration.

At a cabinet meeting on November 25, junta leader Min Aung Hlaing reportedly declared that his administration would not obey court decisions it considered inappropriate or damaging to national dignity. He claimed that the junta had already provided the necessary information, records and witnesses to the court.



Photo: AFP

Meanwhile, military sources told local media that the army was holding briefings within its units nationwide to counter the ICJ decision. The briefings reportedly portrayed the proceedings as political attacks, maintained that the military had conducted lawful counterterrorism operations and rejected the use of the term "Rohingya." One military source said the army would protect national sovereignty and accept only refugees whose identities had been verified.

The junta's response suggests that it intends not only to reject the court's findings but also to reinforce its position among military personnel and supporters. Its continued denial of Rohingya identity and rejection of international accountability could further complicate efforts to secure justice and address the long-running crisis.

Public response to the ICJ Myanmar genocide verdict

Civil society organisations, human rights groups and diplomatic representatives have welcomed the International Court of Justice (ICJ) decision in Myanmar's genocide case, calling for reparations for the Rohingya, recognition of their rights and accountability for those responsible.

A joint statement issued by 219 civil society organisations welcomed the court's decision and called for compensation for Rohingya victims. It also urged the recognition of Rohingya identity, restoration of citizenship rights and safe, dignified repatriation for refugees. The organisations called on the international community to ensure that the junta leader and those responsible for abuses are held accountable.

On the day after the verdict, the head of the United Nations General Assembly, alongside Bangladesh's foreign minister, urged Myanmar to allow Rohingya refugees to return. The Bangladesh foreign minister stressed the need for their return, saying, "Myanmar must bring the Rohingya home."

The Karen Worldwide Advocacy Network also issued a statement expressing solidarity with the Rohingya and other communities seeking justice, accountability and an end to impunity.

Myanmar Witness, an organisation that documents and analyses human rights violations, highlighted the importance of preserving evidence. It said the ICJ proceedings demonstrated why systematic documentation of abuses is essential. The organisation has provided 6,522 pieces of information to the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM).

The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) urged the international community to ensure the implementation of the court's decision and end impunity for junta forces. It also called for compensation for Rohingya victims, noting that violations committed against the Rohingya were connected to the ongoing abuses against civilians across Myanmar.

The Women's League of Burma reaffirmed its solidarity with Rohingya women, girls and survivors, emphasising the need for justice and accountability. The organisation has also documented conflict-related sexual violence and other gender-based violations committed against women from ethnic minority communities by junta forces.

Myanmar's Ambassador to the United Nations, Kyaw Moe Tun, described the court's decision as another step towards justice for all people who have suffered in Myanmar, not only the Rohingya.

Together, these responses highlight calls for the ICJ proceedings to lead to concrete action, including reparations, protection of survivors, preservation of evidence and accountability. They also underline the view among many civil society groups that justice for the Rohingya is closely connected to addressing wider violations across Myanmar.



Razia Sultana (centre)

I CAME WITH VOICES OF SURVIVORS

BY RAZIA SULTANA, ROHINGYA HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND RESEARCHER, ROHINGYA KHOBOR

From documenting the suffering of Rohingya women to witnessing the International Court of Justice's genocide judgment, Razia Sultana reflects on a long struggle for truth, recognition and accountability.

In 2019, I sat in The Hague when The Gambia brought its genocide case against Myanmar before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), a case many thought would never happen. I sat with my hand to my mouth, holding back tears. Every word in that room carried the voices of women who had trusted me with their stories.

It has been a long journey and a hard fight. From the voices of survivors to a historic judgment recognising the genocide committed against the Rohingya.

I did not go to The Hague alone. I came with the voices of survivors.

For years, I had listened to women describe what happened to them and their families: husbands and children killed, sexual violence, homes destroyed, and desperate journeys to safety. These were not simply testimonies for a report. They came from women who had lost almost everything and still found the courage to speak.

Where this began

Starting in 2014, I visited the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar with Kaladan Press Network, initially helping with interpretation as a member of the community. Through those visits, I began hearing accounts of sexual violence, abuse and harassment that I could not ignore.

The arrival of refugees fleeing military operations in 2016 brought me face to face with the suffering of people from my ancestral homeland. I saw their injuries, listened to their experiences and witnessed the grief of families who had lost loved ones.

I felt that their stories needed to be documented before the evidence was lost or forgotten.

Witness to Horror

In December 2016, I began interviewing Rohingya women who had fled the Myanmar military's operations in northern Rakhine State.

Their accounts became Witness to Horror, published by Kaladan Press Network in February 2017.

The report documented testimonies from 21 women from nine villages in Maungdaw. Almost all had lost their husbands, who were either missing or had been killed. Eleven had lost one or more children during the attacks.

Fifteen women had personally experienced or witnessed sexual violence. Their testimonies provided evidence that at least 70 women and girls had been raped by Myanmar security forces.

They described soldiers entering villages, gathering civilians at gunpoint, taking women away and burning homes. Some women had witnessed their husbands and children being killed in front of them.

It was extremely difficult to listen to these accounts.

In the preface to Witness to Horror, I wrote about crying together with the women and feeling anger that the Myanmar authorities were denying what had happened.

The women had already experienced terrible suffering. To then be told that their accounts were false added another injustice.

When the report was released, I said: "Women have had the courage to speak out. The world must listen."

Rape by Command

Then came August 2017.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya fled another military operation, and we began documenting a much larger pattern of violence.

Our second report, Rape by Command, published in February 2018, drew on the testimonies of 36 refugees, including eight rape survivors.

The testimonies provided evidence that Myanmar troops had raped well over 300 women and girls in or near at least 17 villages across northern Rakhine State, as well as in Maungdaw town.

Women attempting to escape through the Mayu mountains towards Bangladesh were also targeted.



Razia Sultana offering testimony.

In Tula Toli, survivors estimated that more than 100 women and girls had been raped during the military attack. Many were also killed.

These were not isolated incidents. Similar patterns appeared across different locations, involving large numbers of soldiers.

Women and girls were raped, tortured, mutilated and killed because of their identity as Rohingya.

Our research concluded that sexual violence was being used systematically as a weapon against the Rohingya population.

We called for accountability not only for the soldiers who carried out these crimes but also for the commanders responsible for their actions.

I continued this work because every testimony represented a woman placing her trust in me and sharing some of the most painful experiences of her life.

Taking their voices to the United Nations

On 16 April 2018, I carried those voices to the United Nations Security Council.

Speaking on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, I described the systematic sexual violence committed against Rohingya women and girls.

I told the Council that the international community, particularly the Security Council, had failed the Rohingya. The warning signs had been there for years, yet the violence had been allowed to continue.

I also reminded Council members that women from other ethnic communities in Myanmar, including the Karen, Kachin, Chin and Shan, had suffered similar violence and impunity.

The suffering of Rohingya women was part of a wider history of military abuses against ethnic communities across Myanmar.

I called for accountability, protection for survivors, safe and dignified return for refugees, and referral of the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court.

In 2019, I received the International Women of Courage Award from the United States Department of State. I accepted that recognition on behalf of the women whose experiences had shaped my work.

When The Gambia filed its case against Myanmar in November 2019, I saw an opportunity for the suffering of Rohingya survivors to be recognised through international law.



Razia Sultana receives an award for her work.

The judgment: 19 November 2026

Seven years later, the International Court of Justice delivered its historic judgment.

On 19 November 2026, the Court found, by nine votes to six, that Myanmar had committed genocide against the Rohingya during its 2017 military operations in northern Rakhine State.

The Court concluded that the only reasonable inference from the evidence was that Myanmar intended to destroy a substantial part of the Rohingya group.

The judgment is final, binding on the parties and cannot be appealed.

The Court found that Myanmar's security forces carried out large-scale killings, widespread sexual violence and extreme violence against children. It also found that security forces systematically attacked Rohingya civilians fleeing towards Bangladesh.

The Court concluded that Myanmar had committed genocidal acts involving killings, serious bodily and mental harm, and measures intended to prevent births within the Rohingya group.

These findings included sexual violence and the discriminatory restrictions imposed on Rohingya marriages, births and registration of children.

The Court identified approximately 815,000 Rohingya living in northern Rakhine State before the 2017 operations as the substantial part of the group that had been targeted.

It also examined the systematic destruction of Rohingya villages. Satellite evidence showed that approximately 392 villages, around 40 per cent of the villages in the three northern Rakhine townships, had been partially or completely destroyed.

Many destroyed villages were subsequently cleared, bulldozed or replaced with new infrastructure.

The Court also found that Myanmar had failed to prevent genocide by individuals acting alongside its security forces, failed to punish perpetrators and failed to enact legislation fully implementing the Genocide Convention.

Importantly, it found that Myanmar had violated the Court's January 2020 order requiring the preservation of evidence.

The Court did not uphold every allegation. It did not find a separate breach involving direct and public incitement of private persons to commit genocide, nor did it find that the conditions of life examined met the specific legal test for genocide under Article II(c) of the Convention. Its genocide finding concerned the period around the 2017 operations.

These legal distinctions matter. But they do not diminish the central finding that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya.

For me, this moment belongs to the women who trusted me with their stories, and to those who did not live long enough to hear the judgment.

The numbers and the evidence

The Court considered the UN Fact-Finding Mission's estimate of at least 10,000 Rohingya deaths to be supported by the evidence.

That figure should not be mistaken for a final count of all those who lost their lives.

Médecins Sans Frontières estimated that at least 6,700 Rohingya died as a result of violence during the first month of the 2017 operations alone.

The Court also cited credible estimates that between 730 and 2,109 Rohingya children under five died as a result of violence during that period.

The Court examined extensive evidence of killings, sexual violence, destroyed villages and the deliberate destruction of evidence.

Myanmar's security forces burned or disposed of bodies, destroyed villages and cleared sites where atrocities had taken place. Such actions obstructed efforts to investigate the crimes and identify victims and perpetrators.

These findings underline why documentation remains important.

The numbers in our reports reflect the evidence we were able to collect from survivors. They were never intended to represent the full extent of the suffering.

Every documented death, injury, disappearance, destroyed home and lost property may matter as accountability and reparations move forward.

What the Court ordered

The judgment does more than recognise genocide. It establishes obligations that Myanmar must fulfil.

Myanmar must enact legislation giving full effect to the Genocide Convention and take immediate and effective steps to investigate individuals reasonably suspected of committing acts prohibited under the Convention during the 2017 operations.

Where warranted, those individuals must be prosecuted and punished.

Myanmar must also provide assurances and guarantees that similar violations will not occur again.

The Court ordered measures of restitution, meaning steps to repair the harm and restore what can be restored.

These include allowing the safe, voluntary and dignified return of displaced Rohingya to their places of residence, reuniting families, and returning or replacing lost or damaged property.

Myanmar must also facilitate the search for the disappeared, assist in recovering and identifying the dead, and support dignified reburial according to Rohingya traditions.

The judgment requires Myanmar to provide physical and psychological rehabilitation for those who were injured, and to ensure the protection of the Rohingya from discrimination and persecution. The Court did not order citizenship for the Rohingya, saying that went beyond what it could order in this case.

Where the harm cannot be fully repaired through restitution, Myanmar must provide compensation.

The amount and arrangements for compensation will be determined in a later phase of the proceedings.

Within two years of the judgment, Myanmar must report to the Court on the restitution measures it has adopted and, where full restitution is impossible, specify the amount and arrangements for compensation.

This makes the preservation of evidence especially important.

The reports we have produced, along with other survivor testimonies and documented evidence, must remain available to appropriate investigative and legal bodies, with survivors' safety and consent protected.

The violence has not ended

Even as we recognise this historic judgment, Rohingya communities in Rakhine State remain at risk.

My research has continued.

In September 2025, Kaladan Press Network published Kill Them All, based on interviews with 19 Rohingya refugees.

The report documented allegations that Arakan Army troops massacred hundreds of Rohingya civilians in Htan Shauk Khan village, known to Rohingya as Hoyya Siri, in Buthidaung Township on 2 May 2024.

Survivors described villagers being blocked while fleeing fighting between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army.

According to their testimonies, civilians were forced to sit in rows with their heads bowed before an order to kill them was given over a walkie-talkie. Troops then opened fire.

The report also documented allegations of sexual violence, the burning of homes and mosques, and the detention of 12 young women who were reportedly subjected to sexual slavery at a nearby military base.

These allegations concern different perpetrators and events from those examined in the ICJ case. They require independent investigation and accountability.

We called on the Arakan Army to take responsibility for alleged crimes committed by its troops, hold commanders and fighters accountable, release detained civilians and allow independent monitoring.

Those recommendations remain relevant.

The ICJ judgment addresses Myanmar's responsibility for genocide during the 2017 operations. It does not resolve the atrocities that Rohingya civilians continue to face today.

Justice must apply to every perpetrator, regardless of their affiliation.

What comes next

A court can recognise genocide and establish a state's responsibility. The next challenge is ensuring that its judgment leads to meaningful action.

Those responsible must face accountability. Survivors must have access to remedies and reparations. Rohingya refugees must be able to return to their homeland safely, voluntarily and with dignity.

And Rohingya people who remain in Rakhine must be protected.

For the women who shared their testimonies with me, justice cannot remain only a judgment written on paper.

It must mean safety, recognition, accountability and the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

I think again of the women I met in the refugee camps, of what they described and the courage it took to speak.

Their voices travelled from the camps to the United Nations Security Council and became part of the wider international struggle for justice.

The judgment of 19 November 2026 is a historic achievement. It confirms that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya and sets out obligations for accountability and reparations.

But the struggle is not over.

It has been a long journey and a hard fight.

I came with the voices of survivors. I will keep listening, and I will keep writing them down.

Reproduced by the permission of Razia Sultana, Rohingya human rights activist and researcher, Rohingya Khobor.



Khalilur Rahman. Photo: AFP

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY CHIEF TELLS MYANMAR TO 'BRING ROHINGYA HOME'

The head of the United Nations General Assembly urged Myanmar on 20 November to bring home hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees, a day after a landmark genocide ruling.

"Myanmar must bring the Rohingya home," Khalilur Rahman told thousands of refugees gathered at a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar in neighbouring Bangladesh, a day after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivered its judgment against Myanmar.

"A judgment on paper is not justice in life -- now it must be given effect," Rahman said, calling for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of those displaced by Myanmar's actions.

More than a million Rohingya live in Bangladesh, most having fled a brutal 2017 military crackdown in Myanmar.

The ruling marked the first time in the ICJ's 80-year history that it had found a state responsible for genocide, a victory for the mostly Muslim minority's long campaign for justice.

Hundreds of Rohingya watched the proceedings on a giant screen in Cox's Bazar on Thursday, with many breaking down in tears as the verdict was announced.

"I call upon Myanmar to fulfil these obligations in good faith, comply with international law and demonstrate that it can give meaningful action to the court's provisions," Rahman said.

"The international community also has a major responsibility to ensure implementation -- we must act together to press for full compliance... Only then will the judgment make a difference in the lives of the Rohingya."

'Road home'

Rahman, who is also Bangladesh's foreign minister, urged that aid to the refugees continue, but said Dhaka "cannot be expected to shoulder" the cost alone.

"The international community, particularly development partners, must scale up funding for the humanitarian response in these camps," he said.

Refugee Amanullah, 61, walked from his camp holding the hands of two young grandchildren, keen for them to witness what he described as a historic moment.

"These children were born in the camps of Cox's Bazar. I tried to make the children understand that they are not Bengalis, but Rohingya," he told AFP, using only one name.

"So I brought them with me to join this historic event."

The boys, Mohammad Omar, six, and Mohammad Osman, four, wore T-shirts reading: "We are Rohingya, we exist, we resist, we hope."

Rahman, a former Bangladeshi high representative on the Rohingya issue, called on Myanmar to investigate and prosecute those suspected of genocide, compensate victims and introduce safeguards to prevent further atrocities.

"Let history record that 19 November, 2026, was the day the road home began for you," he told the crowd.

AFP



THE GAMBIA V. MYANMAR VERDICT MUST TRIGGER IMMEDIATE ACCOUNTABILITY, AN END TO MILITARY IMPUNITY, AND REPARATIONS FOR THE ROHINGYA: CHRO

The genocide against the Rohingya is intrinsically connected to the Myanmar military junta's ongoing, systematic atrocities against civilians across Myanmar. Ending this entrenched cycle of violence requires holding military leaders criminally accountable for their wider pattern of crimes. To halt ongoing atrocities, the international community must immediately deny the military regime access to weapons and funds, resolutely refuse to recognise it as legitimate, and actively pursue individual criminal accountability through investigations, arrest warrants, and prosecutions before the International Criminal Court (ICC) and through universal jurisdiction in national courts worldwide.

"While the ICJ has definitively established Myanmar's responsibility as a State, this determination must now serve as the catalyst for individual criminal accountability. The spotlight must turn urgently to the military leaders who planned, ordered, enabled, and oversaw the atrocities – chief among them Min Aung Hlaing. These commanders must not be permitted to seek international acceptance; they must face criminal prosecution, while the Rohingya, who have endured unimaginable suffering, must receive full reparations and justice," said Salai Za Uk Ling, Executive Director of the Chin Human Rights Organization.

Any government that has taken steps to normalise relations with the military junta must reverse course immediately. In particular, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) must not re-engage or normalise relations with the Myanmar military junta, must deny it diplomatic legitimacy, and must suspend any steps towards representation or reintegration. Instead, ASEAN and international partners must support coordinated accountability.

The Chin Human Rights Organization respectfully calls on world governments, the United Nations, and regional bodies, including ASEAN, to:

Fully enforce the ICJ's judgment establishing Myanmar's State responsibility and impose direct diplomatic and economic consequences on the Myanmar military junta;

Pursue individual criminal accountability for Min Aung Hlaing and other military leaders who planned, ordered, enabled, or oversaw genocide and mass atrocities, including arrest warrants and prosecutions through the International Criminal Court (ICC) and universal jurisdiction in national courts;

Cease all efforts to normalise diplomatic relations with or grant legitimacy to the junta, with ASEAN specifically denying diplomatic legitimacy and suspending any steps towards representation or reintegration.



NGO HUMAN RIGHTS MYANMAR OUTLINES 10 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ICJ MYANMAR GENOCIDE RULING

The International Court of Justice's final judgment of 19 November ruled that Myanmar was responsible for genocide against the Rohingya. The 186-page judgment contains 10 findings and orders that are important for human rights in Myanmar and beyond.

The 10 main findings are as follows:

1.Myanmar is first State found responsible for committing genocide

The Court ruled that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya in northern Rakhine State, in violation of its obligations under the Genocide Convention (paras. 467–469). "Myanmar" refers to the State and its organs, including the military and government authorities, rather than the population of Myanmar as a whole.

It ruled that Myanmar was responsible for genocidal acts intended to destroy the Rohingya, including killings, causing serious bodily and mental harm, and imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group. The judgment refers to an estimated 10,000 killed, including between 730 and 2,109 children, and at least 1,834 subjected to rape or gang rape as part of its assessment of the evidence (paras. 418, 420, 422, 429, 467–469).

This is one of the most significant judgments in the Court's history. It is the first ever to find a State responsible for committing genocide. Previous judgments had only found States responsible for failing to prevent and punish genocide. It places genocide, rather than simply mass human rights violations, at the centre of Myanmar's historical and legal record.

2. Myanmar intended to commit genocide

The Court ruled that the evidence supported only one reasonable conclusion: that Myanmar intended to destroy a substantial part of the Rohingya population (para. 467).

In reaching this conclusion, the Court relied on evidence including the longstanding denial of citizenship and civil rights, restrictions on freedom of movement, employment, education, healthcare, marriage, and childbirth, as well as coordinated anti-Rohingya propaganda (paras. 400–404).

Proving genocidal intent is considerably more difficult than proving other criminal intent. The Court's conclusion that the destruction of part of the Rohingya group was the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn from the evidence is therefore one of the judgment's most important findings.

3. Myanmar's explanations of what happened were rejected

In ruling that genocide had occurred, the Court rejected the explanations offered by Myanmar:

Myanmar argued that it was conducting legitimate counter-insurgency operations against ARSA. However, the Court found that the military failed to distinguish civilians from fighters and that the scale of the killings and destruction in "clearance operations" far exceeded military necessity (paras. 451–453).

Myanmar argued that it was merely forcing people from the area. However, the Court found that if this had been the objective, civilians would have been protected during flight. Instead, Rohingya civilians faced landmines, attacks while fleeing, and the destruction of their villages (paras. 454–462).

Myanmar argued that the operations were punishment for ARSA attacks, but did not explain what "punishment" meant. The Court found that the scale and brutality of the violence, particularly against women and children, went far beyond any notion of collective punishment (paras. 420–422, 463–466).

The judgment therefore rejects the narrative that has been used for nearly a decade to justify what happened in northern Rakhine State.

4. Rohingya recognised as a protected ethnic group

The Court recognised the Rohingya as an ethnic group protected under the Genocide Convention. Recognition was based on the distinct culture, language, and institutions of the self-defined Rohingya (para. 310).

The Court ruled that the genocide could not be separated from decades of discrimination against the Rohingya. It highlighted discriminatory laws and policies, as well as anti-Rohingya rhetoric, including statements by Min Aung Hlaing and coordinated online campaigns linked to the military (paras. 399–404, 436).

For decades, Rohingya identity has been denied or delegitimised by successive authorities. The judgment therefore represents the strongest international judicial recognition of the Rohingya as a distinct people entitled to protection under international law.

5. Sexual violence and violence against children were central to genocide

The Court found extensive evidence of rape, gang rape, and other forms of sexual violence committed against Rohingya women and girls (paras. 418–420). It also found evidence of widespread killings and abuse of children, noting that some of the youngest Rohingya were among those deliberately targeted (paras. 421–422).

Together with restrictions on marriage and childbirth, sexual violence helped establish that Myanmar imposed measures intended to prevent Rohingya births, one of the acts specifically prohibited

by the Genocide Convention (paras. 370, 401, 418, 468–469).

The judgment therefore recognises harms suffered by women and children as central components of the genocide itself, not merely associated abuses.

6. Myanmar failed to prevent, investigate, and punish genocide

The Court ruled that Myanmar failed to fulfil several obligations under the Genocide Convention. It ruled that Myanmar breached its duty to prevent genocidal acts committed by non-Rohingya civilians who participated in attacks alongside security forces, despite having the means to restrain them (paras. 481–488).

The Court also ruled that Myanmar failed to properly investigate and punish genocide. It criticised the 2017 Inquiry Board, 2020 Independent Commission of Enquiry, and 2020 Criminal Investigation and Prosecution Body, and found that domestic court efforts were inadequate (paras. 535–554). For instance, the few individual soldiers convicted for the Inn Din massacre were pardoned after just eight months.

The Court rejected Myanmar's attempts to rely on military structures or constitutional arrangements to justify impunity, and confirmed that responsibility extends to military superiors and commanders (paras. 522–524). The judgment therefore establishes a clear agenda for future legal reform.

Finally, the Court ruled that Myanmar did not prohibit genocide in domestic law, and the legal amendments adopted after the Provisional Measures Order (2020) remained insufficient (paras. 562-574). For instance, the criminalisation of measures intended to prevent births included a significant loophole.

7. Investigators obstructed and evidence destroyed

The Court ruled that Myanmar violated the Provisional Measures Order (2020) requiring the preservation of evidence. It found that Rohingya village sites had been destroyed and security facilities built on former village land, altering or destroying potential crime scenes (paras. 641–642).

The Court also recorded that Myanmar denied United Nations investigators access to evidence and witnesses and failed to respond to requests for information from international investigative bodies (paras. 76, 128, 131). Recognising these obstacles, it relied on circumstantial evidence and reasonable inferences drawn from the overall record to establish genocide and genocidal intent (paras. 130–131, 467, 553).

This confirms long-standing concerns raised by human rights organisations that efforts to conceal evidence and obstruct investigations should not prevent accountability.

8. Court ordered reforms, restitution, and compensation

The judgment establishes a detailed framework for remedies. The Court ordered Myanmar to facilitate safe, voluntary, and dignified return; support family reunification; restore or replace property; help locate the disappeared; provide physical and psychological rehabilitation; and protect Rohingya from discrimination and persecution (paras. 615–617).

Importantly, the Court made clear that this protection extends to discrimination in access to citizenship, freedom of movement, self-identification as Rohingya, and livelihoods (paras. 616–617).

The Court also ordered guarantees of non-repetition, including legal and institutional reforms, human rights training, and effective civilian control of the security forces (paras. 601–604).

In addition, the Court held that Myanmar must provide compensation where restitution is not possible and required a further report within two years before a subsequent reparations phase (paras. 621–625).

Taken together, these remedies are not only about repairing past harm. They outline a framework through which the Rohingya can return to Myanmar as a recognised community protected from discrimination in law and practice.

9. What the judgment does not do

The judgment is historic, but it is important not to overstate its immediate effects. The Court did not:

determine the criminal guilt of individual military or political leaders;

sentence anyone to imprisonment;

conclude that direct and public incitement to genocide by private actors had been established under Article III(c) (paras. 502–506);

order the immediate payment of a specific amount of compensation (para. 625);

automatically grant citizenship to Rohingya people (para. 603); or guarantee implementation of its orders.

However, the Court did rule that Myanmar failed to investigate possible incitement to genocide, and it ordered protection against discrimination in access to citizenship and recognition of Rohingya identity (paras. 550, 616–617).

10. Judgment will influence cases beyond Myanmar

Although this case concerns Myanmar, parts of the judgment will have significance well beyond the country.

The Court confirmed that States such as The Gambia can invoke the Genocide Convention and seek remedies in the interests of victims even where they have not themselves been directly injured (paras. 585–590, 608–610).

The judgment also strengthens international jurisprudence relating to genocidal intent, command responsibility, reparations, and the binding nature of provisional measures ordered by international courts.

These developments are likely to influence future genocide and atrocity-crime litigation far beyond Myanmar.

A background note on the Court

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), based in The Hague, is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It decides disputes between States and interprets international law. Unlike criminal tribunals, it does not try individuals.

The judgment in The Gambia v. Myanmar was delivered by fifteen permanent judges together with two ad hoc judges appointed by the parties. While judges disagreed on some issues, majorities of the Court supported all of the principal findings discussed above.

The significance of the judgment lies not only in what it says about the past. It also establishes an authoritative framework for future debates about citizenship, discrimination, accountability, civilian control of the military, return, reparations, and the place of the Rohingya in Myanmar's future.

The significance of the judgment lies not only in what it says about the past. It also establishes an authoritative framework for future debates about citizenship, discrimination, accountability, civilian control of the military, return, reparations, and the place of the Rohingya in Myanmar's future.


Photo: AFP

CHINA SAYS MYANMAR GENOCIDE RULING 'NOT CONDUCIVE' TO SOLVING CONFLICT

China raised concerns of judicial overreach after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Myanmar committed genocide against its Rohingya minority, saying on 20 November "such practices are not conducive" to a resolution.

Beijing's statement comes after the top UN court determined Myanmar's deadly 2017 crackdown on the mostly Muslim minority amounted to genocide.

China is a rare enduring partner for Myanmar after Min Aung Hlaing's 2021 coup, which prompted Western nations to cut ties with the Southeast Asian nation.

"China is concerned about issues such as jurisdiction overreach and expanded interpretation, and believes that such practices are not conducive to the settlement of disputes," foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told news briefing when asked about the ICJ ruling.

"The international community should make joint efforts in this direction to avoid complicating this issue," he added.

One of the ICJ's judges is Chinese, and voted in Myanmar's favour on all but one count.

Asked whether Judge Xue Hanqin was acting on instructions from the Chinese government, Guo said the jurors "perform duties independently".

Xue "expressed views based on international law and the facts of the case while drawing on professional experience... which also demonstrates a commitment to fulfilling duties", he said.

The ruling was the first time in its 80-year history that the ICJ determined a state had committed genocide.

More than a million Rohingya live in Bangladesh, most having fled the brutal 2017 military crackdown in Myanmar.

The ICJ also ordered refugees be given safe passage home and awarded compensation, with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urging Myanmar to allow those exiled to return home.

AFP



MYANMAR SAYS INTERNATIONAL COURT'S GENOCIDE RULING 'NOT FAIR'

A historic ruling by the top UN court that Myanmar committed genocide against its Rohingya minority was unfair, the country's presidential spokeswoman said on 20 November.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Thursday laid out searing evidence of Myanmar's atrocities against the mostly Muslim Rohingya during a 2017 crackdown in western Rakhine state.

Myanmar's security forces killed thousands of Rohingya civilians, committed "widespread sexual violence" against women and "extreme violence" against children, the court found.

At a press conference in the capital Naypyidaw, spokeswoman Khaing Khaing Soe noted that the 9-6 ruling was "not a unanimous decision", and said it was "not fair".

Myanmar had always denied genocide, arguing that its actions targeted a military uprising from insurgents after a series of attacks left a dozen security personnel dead.

But the ICJ ruling dismissed Myanmar's argument that it was carrying out counter-insurgency operations.

"There is no evidence before the Court that, in the conduct of the clearance operations, Myanmar distinguished between civilians and alleged (Rohingya) fighters," the judgment said.

The ruling was the first time in the ICJ's 80-year history that its judges have determined that a state committed genocide.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya were forced to flee into neighbouring Bangladesh during Myanmar's violent campaign against the community, the court said.

Rohingya villages were "systemically destroyed" and replaced with non-Rohingya inhabitants, it said, ruling that the "only reasonable inference" was that Myanmar intended to destroy the population -- a key test for genocide.

Safe passage

The court ordered refugees be given safe passage home and awarded compensation, with specific sums to be determined later.

On Friday, the head of the United Nations General Assembly urged Myanmar to bring home hundreds of thousands of displaced Rohingya, speaking at a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh.

"A judgment on paper is not justice in life -- now it must be given effect," said Khalilur Rahman, calling for the Rohingya's safe, voluntary and dignified return.

In Rakhine late Thursday, 31-year-old Pyay Lynn agreed the repatriation of Rohingya refugees to his state "has to happen".

But he acknowledged bringing the displaced back to their war-ravaged homeland carried risks.

"In Rakhine state, many civilians are dying from military airstrikes" amid Myanmar's ongoing civil war, he said.

"Such mass killings of civilians also can be viewed as genocide."

The war, triggered by a 2021 coup, has killed more than 100,000 people on all sides, conflict monitor ACLED estimates.

Malaysia, meanwhile, said it was seeking to resettle 10,000 Rohingya migrants in Turkey, part of efforts to address an influx of foreign asylum seekers in the Southeast Asian nation -- most from Myanmar.

In September, Malaysia repatriated around 1,500 Myanmar nationals in a scheme that rights advocates say may endanger migrants by returning them to a country at war.

'No reason to sue'

The ICJ case was brought by The Gambia under the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, which allows any state to file suit against another it suspects of breaching the international agreement set up after World War II.

Spokeswoman Khaing Khaing Soe said Friday that the African nation had "nothing to do with" Myanmar.

While the decisions of the ICJ are binding and cannot be appealed, the court has no way of enforcing its verdicts.

But the ruling may heap more international pressure on Myanmar's leader Min Aung Hlaing, who commanded the military during the Rohingya crackdown before ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in the 2021 coup.

The ex-general Min Aung Hlaing was installed this year as civilian president following deeply restricted elections.

On Friday, China, a rare enduring partner for Myanmar after the putsch, raised concerns of judicial overreach after the ICJ ruling.

The United States has sanctions against Min Aung Hlaing, but has recently pushed back on a case at the court accusing US ally Israel of genocide in Gaza, and stressed the need to avoid "politicization" of the tribunal.

AFP



Photo: SCEF

SCEF SAYS IT WILL COOPERATE WITH ALL MYANMAR STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING AA, REGARDING ICJ RULING

The Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union (SCEF) issued a statement 22 November saying that in efforts to find solutions regarding the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya, it will work closely with all stakeholders - including the United League of Arakan / Arakan Army (ULA/AA), which currently stands as the main authority in Rakhine State - as well as the international community.

SCEF said the court's decision is a historic milestone in international justice and that it will continue to study and review the court's findings and any subsequent orders that may be issued to help advance justice and accountability.

The statement also pointed out that investigation and punishment processes under the ruling should not be undertaken by or placed under the authority of those suspected of committing genocide themselves.

SCEF said that because real-world conditions prove that the continuation of military rule in any form cannot provide guarantees against the recurrence of similar crimes, transforming political and military structures and establishing civilian governance and oversight over the military are necessary.

It also called on the international community to take effective action to ensure accountability and end the cycle of impunity, rather than protecting key officials - including the military junta leadership - or supporting them to continue their actions.

At the same time, the statement noted that SCEF pledged to carry out civilian protection, access to humanitarian assistance, and the prevention of hate speech in areas controlled by SCEF member organizations, as well as preserving and collecting evidence for alleged violations and enabling credible investigations.



NUG AND KNU WELCOME ICJ GENOCIDE RULING, URGE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ACT

The National Unity Government (NUG) and the Karen National Union (KNU) each issued statements welcoming the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) ruling that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya, and urged the international community to take practical action. The NUG issued its statement on 19 November, the day of the ruling.

NUG Acting President Duwa Lashi La said he welcomed the court's orders that displaced Rohingya be able to return safely, with dignity and voluntarily, and said peace is essential to that. He said justice for the Rohingya will be possible only when the military junta's violence against civilians across Myanmar ends for good, and he urged the international community and UN agencies to strengthen accountability for the junta's crimes, protect civilians and take effective steps to end the violence. He said every effort must be made to cut the flow of weapons, aviation fuel and money to the junta.

The NUG said justice cannot wait and pledged to work "quickly and effectively through all possible means" on the court's findings and orders.

The case was brought by The Gambia against Myanmar, and the junta-backed government, which the court treats as Myanmar's representative, took part in the hearing, so the NUG's role in carrying out the orders is not set out in the judgment. Duwa Lashi La said the NUG has held since June 2021 that the Rohingya deserve citizenship rights under international human rights standards and laws consistent with a democratic federal union, and is committed to ending military dictatorship and building an inclusive federal democracy in which the Rohingya enjoy justice, citizenship, equality and dignity.

The KNU said in a release that it is ready to work directly with Rohingya representatives, including women and displaced communities, to protect Rohingya rights and advance justice and accountability as part of a federal democratic transition. It said carrying out the verdict must include restitution, compensation and guarantees of non-repetition, and called on the international community to coordinate with Rohingya communities, relevant authorities, the United League of Arakan (ULA) and the Arakan Army to protect civilians, ensure humanitarian access and remedy survivors' grievances. It said that because the military that committed genocide against the Rohingya continues atrocities against the people of Myanmar, efforts for justice for all affected people must go on.



ICJ FINDS BURMA RESPONSIBLE FOR ROHINGYA GENOCIDE: GOVERNMENTS MUST ACT BEFORE ROHINGYA ARE ERASED FROM THEIR HOMELAND, SAYS BROUK

The Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK) on 19 November welcomed the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) landmark judgment finding Burma responsible for committing genocide against Rohingya, warning that governments must now act to prevent their permanent erasure from their homeland.

The Court also found that Burma failed to prevent and punish genocide and violated its 2020 order to preserve evidence. It ordered Burma to investigate and prosecute those responsible, prevent further violations and provide reparations, including compensation and measures allowing the "safe, voluntary and dignified return" of displaced Rohingya.

Tun Khin, President of BROUK, who attended the judgment in The Hague, said:

"This is an incredibly emotional moment for Rohingya everywhere. For decades, our people have been denied our very identity, stripped of our citizenship and rights, slaughtered, raped and driven from our homeland. We have endured unimaginable suffering while those responsible have enjoyed impunity.

"Today, the world's highest court has finally recognised the genocide against our people. But recognition alone will not protect Rohingya. Our people are still being systematically erased from Burma. The international community failed to protect us in 2017. It must not fail us again."

Governments must turn the judgment into action

"We know the Burmese military will reject these findings and refuse to comply with the Court's orders," said Tun Khin. "The ICJ has no independent enforcement mechanism. Without coordinated international pressure, this judgment alone will not protect our people."

BROUK called on the UK and other governments to strengthen targeted sanctions and cut off the Burmese military's access to weapons, aviation fuel, funding and military supplies.

"The guns and bullets used against our people do not come from nowhere," said Tun Khin. "International companies continue to help finance, arm and equip the Burmese military. Governments must act to stop that flow of weapons and money."

As UN Security Council penholder on Burma, the UK must push for a resolution to secure implementation of the judgment and work with the other intervening states to mobilise international pressure, including through the UN General Assembly. The prospect of a Chinese or Russian veto cannot be an excuse for inaction.

BROUK also warned against moves by the United States and some ASEAN governments towards normalising relations with the Burmese military while it continues killing civilians across Burma. Those responsible for genocide must face justice, not international acceptance. Legitimising the military would betray Rohingya and everyone fighting for democracy across Burma.

The genocide did not begin or end in 2017

BROUK warned that the judgment could trigger renewed violence against Rohingya and other Muslim minorities. Anti-Rohingya threats are rising, and the Burmese military has reportedly announced plans to arrest people it calls "illegal Bengali migrants". BROUK raised these concerns with members of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Burma ahead of the judgment.

Meanwhile, the Arakan Army, which now controls most of Rakhine State, is subjecting Rohingya to many of the same crimes committed by the Burmese military, including killings, sexual violence, forced labour and displacement. Rohingya homes and land are being seized and entire communities destroyed.

Before 2017, the world ignored escalating persecution by the Burmese military. Now history is repeating itself under new perpetrators. Without urgent action, there may be no homeland left for Rohingya refugees to return to.

Rohingya refugees must not be forced home

More than 1.2 million Rohingya remain refugees in Bangladesh, while others live in appalling conditions across the region, with no safe way home.

ASEAN and other refugee-hosting governments must not force or pressure Rohingya to return while persecution continues. International donors must maintain and increase humanitarian assistance and work with host countries on a sustainable, long-term response, including education and livelihood opportunities.

"Rohingya do not want to remain refugees forever," said Tun Khin. "But you cannot send genocide survivors back into the hands of their perpetrators."

Justice must mean accountability

The ICJ's finding of state responsibility must be followed by criminal accountability for individuals.

In the universal jurisdiction case initiated by BROUK in Argentina in 2019, an Argentine court issued international arrest warrants against Min Aung Hlaing and 24 others in February 2025. BROUK urged governments to press INTERPOL to act on the warrants and cooperate to secure arrests and extraditions wherever legally possible.

Accountability through the International Criminal Court and other mechanisms must also advance. Those responsible for crimes against Rohingya under the Arakan Army must face justice. Justice cannot be selective.

Justice must secure Rohingya survival in our homeland

The Court's orders on restitution and compensation must be implemented with Rohingya survivors and communities at the centre of decisions about reparations.

BROUK paid tribute to Rohingya survivors who have fought tirelessly for justice despite everything they have endured, expressed its deep gratitude to The Gambia for bringing the case and thanked the 11 intervening states, including the UK.

"Whenever I speak to survivors in Cox's Bazar, they always tell me the same thing: 'Brother, we want justice,'" said Tun Khin.

"We will not stop until those responsible are held accountable, our rights and citizenship are restored and our people can return home and live safely, with dignity, in our own homeland.

"Justice will mean very little if, by the time it comes, there are no Rohingya left in our homeland. This is not only about justice for the past. It is about our survival as a people."

MYANMAR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS WELCOME THE ICJ JUDGMENT IN THE GAMBIA V. MYANMAR

We, the 219 undersigned Rohingya and other Myanmar civil society organizations, welcome and accept the final judgment issued (19 November) by the judges of the International Court of Justice in The Gambia v. Myanmar case concerning the application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Court has found that Myanmar, through its military's 2016 and 2017 "clearance operations" against the Rohingya, committed genocide, in breach of the Genocide Convention.

The highest court in the world has now confirmed what Rohingya survivors have told the world for nearly a decade, and what the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission found in 2018. The destruction of the Rohingya was not a tragedy or an excess of war. It was genocide, planned and carried out by the Myanmar military, and it can never again be denied.

We stand in solidarity with Rohingya victims and survivors. Not only do they live with the enduring trauma of those atrocities. For most of their community, they continue to live in exile and insecurity outside of their homeland, or face ongoing violence and persecution in Myanmar. (19 November's judgment belongs to them, and to those who did not live to hear it.

The struggle for justice will continue, and this judgment must now be enforced. We call on the international community to do everything in your power to secure the full implementation of the judgment, including reparations and guarantees of non-repetition; the full recognition of their identity and restoration of their citizenship; the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of the Rohingya to their homeland; and to secure criminal accountability for Min Aung Hlaing and the leaders of the Myanmar military. They have destroyed our lives for too long.

Help us end their decades of barbarism against the Rohingya and all peoples of Myanmar. Help us free our country from their terror. Continue to stand with us. Continue to stand with the Rohingya.

Signed by 219 Myanmar civil society organizations, including 32 organizations that have chosen not to disclose their names. Please check online story for list of names.



ROHINGYA REFUGEE LEADER EXPRESSES GRATITUDE AFTER GENOCIDE RULING

A leader of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh expressed his "deepest gratitude" on Thursday after the International Court of Justice ruled that Myanmar committed genocide against the minority group.

Hundreds of people gathered in Cox's Bazar refugee camp to follow the proceedings on a giant screen, many breaking down in tears when the verdict was read.

"We express deepest gratitude to Bangladesh, The Gambia and the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) who have been with us through all these years," Sayed Ullah, a senior leader and former president of the United Council of Rohingya, told AFP at the camp.

"We request everyone to be with us till we return home."

The case was brought by The Gambia under the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, which requires any state to bring a case against another it suspects of breaching the international agreement set up after World War II.

More than one million Rohingya currently live in bamboo-and-tarpaulin shelters in Cox's Bazar after fleeing a brutal crackdown in 2017 by the Myanmar military and Buddhist militias.

Survivors of the violence brought with them harrowing tales of rapes, mass executions and cruelty towards families and children.

Mohammed Osman, whose parents and four siblings were killed by the Myanmar military, said the verdict proved that "we were not lying about the genocide".

"I am overwhelmed... But we have achieved only 50 percent of what we wanted. We will achieve 100 percent when we are repatriated with dignity," the 20-year-old told AFP.

'Dignified return'

Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, Bangladesh's refugee relief and repatriation commissioner, also said he hoped the Rohingya would be able to return home after the ruling.

"The Rohingya community in Bangladesh had been eagerly waiting for this day for many years," Rahman told AFP.

"Now neighbouring countries should revise their policies to ensure the dignified return of the Rohingya."

While the ICJ has no way of enforcing the verdict, a Rohingya activist said it would pave way for justice to people around the world who have been victims of genocide.

"We wish and hope that this is the beginning of accountability, justice and right for the Rohingya... and people across the world who have survived genocide," said Ro Mayyu Islam, founding president of the Center for Rohingya Crisis Studies.

Ullah, the community leader, said the judgement had reinforced recognition of Rohingya identity, a sensitive issue because Myanmar refuses to recognise the community as one of the country's official ethnic groups and often labels them as Bengali migrants.

"The ICJ said that Rohingya is a distinct group and we have our own language and culture," he said.

"This is the recognition we have been demanding for ages."

AFP



Volker Turk

ICJ GENOCIDE FINDING MUST BECOME 'TURNING POINT' FOR ROHINGYA: UN RIGHTS CHIEF

The ICJ's landmark finding on 19 November that Myanmar committed genocide must become a turning point for the persecuted Rohingya minority, the UN rights chief said -- as he put others on notice.

The International Court of Justice "clearly concludes the State of Myanmar stands responsible for one of the most egregious crimes known to humankind", Volker Turk said.

"It sends a strong message to all states around the world that those responsible for genocide will be held to account.

"The judgement must be a turning point for justice for the Rohingya and all people of Myanmar, and the start of a meaningful process to end impunity for the ongoing grave violations and abuses in Rakhine State."

He said Myanmar must impose the wide range of remedies ordered by the ICJ, and hailed the UN rights mechanisms' long years of work documenting abuses in the country.

"The suffering, misery and humiliation inflicted on the Rohingya by the Myanmar State is a stain on the conscience of humanity," said Turk.

He said other countries must now reflect on their relationships with Myanmar, "immediately end the transfer of military equipment, jet fuel and other dual-use equipment that is still being used to commit horrendous crimes".

Turk said hate speech against Rohingya had fuelled the bloodshed, and social media platforms must be held accountable when failing to review their content meticulously.

AFP


Photo: AFP

'FUELLING HATRED': MYANMAR GENOCIDE RULING SPOTLIGHTS GENERAL TURNED PRESIDENT MIN AUNG HLAING

The top UN court's ruling on 19 November that Myanmar committed genocide repeatedly name-checked one man -- Min Aung Hlaing, the country's president who, as a general, led the military during the campaign against the Rohingya.

The International Court of Justice's findings concerned state culpability, not individual guilt over the Myanmar military's campaign of rape and killings against the mostly Muslim Rohingya minority in 2017.

But Min Aung Hlaing was called out for his speeches against the Rohingya while armed forces chief during the so-called "clearance operations" in western Rakhine state.

"The court considers that the Senior General's messages, as reported, were capable of fuelling hatred against the Rohingya," the ruling said.

It said he repeatedly portrayed them as "a violent threat to other ethnic groups that needed to be addressed".

He gave speeches during the violence praising the security forces' "brilliant efforts" and referring to "'solving' the 'unfinished job' of the 'Bengali problem'," the court said.

Min Aung Hlaing took power in a 2021 coup and was installed as civilian president this April. Since then, he has embarked on a tour of regional capitals in a bid for international recognition.

The court had "made him the most prominent agent of the genocide", said independent Myanmar analyst David Mathieson.

"By naming him several times, it definitely puts him even further in the crosshairs than he already was."

Richard Horsey, senior Asia adviser at the International Crisis Group, noted the ruling was not against Min Aung Hlaing personally.

"But he commanded the military during the 2017 operations, and he is now the head of a state found responsible for genocide," Horsey told AFP via email.

He did not expect it to stop the leader travelling, but it would "make his effort to be accepted as a normal head of state harder", he said.

"Any government that receives him will now be asked about it."

'Legal exposure'

The UN court's decisions are binding and cannot be appealed, but it has no way of enforcing its verdicts.

Min Aung Hlaing's "more serious legal exposure lies elsewhere", said Horsey.

In 2024, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, also based in The Hague, asked judges for an arrest warrant for Min Aung Hlaing over alleged crimes against humanity.

A case is also underway in Argentina under the principle of universal jurisdiction -- the idea that some crimes are so heinous they can be heard in any court.

The bespectacled Min Aung Hlaing became armed forces head in 2011, just as Myanmar broke with its history of iron-fisted martial rule and began an experiment with democracy.

He spent a decade jostling with civilian leaders, playing second fiddle to Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, the nation's internationally feted campaigner for popular rule.

Suu Kyi addressed the International Court of Justice at a hearing in 2019, saying the case risked reigniting the crisis that led to the Rohingya's expulsion and said there was no "genocidal intent" behind the crackdown.

She was accused of defending the generals, leaving her international reputation in tatters. She was not mentioned in the verdict.

Myanmar has always denied genocide, arguing that its actions targeted a military uprising from insurgents after a series of attacks left a dozen security personnel dead.

Min Aung Hlaing has always steadfastly rejected allegations of human rights abuses.

But he was sanctioned after the violence against the Rohingya by the United States over what Washington called "ethnic cleansing".

He was further sanctioned and Myanmar widely shunned after he led the coup just months away from mandatory retirement.

The putsch triggered a civil war that conflict monitor ACLED estimates has killed more than 100,000 people on all sides.

AFP



ICJ President Yuji Iwasawa

FIVE KEY POINTS FROM HISTORIC ICJ ROHINGYA GENOCIDE RULING

The International Court of Justice has ruled that Myanmar committed genocide against its Rohingya minority - the first time the UN top court has determined a state responsible for the world's worst crime.

Here are the key points from the 191-page ruling, which took nearly three hours to read out in court and is the second-longest in the ICJ's 80-year history.

Genocide

This was what the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya victims were waiting for: did the atrocities they suffered clear the high bar under international law to be labelled a genocide?

In the end, the ICJ -- known for dressing up its rulings in impenetrable legalese -- was refreshingly clear.

Myanmar "has committed genocide against the Rohingya group in northern Rakhine State", said the ruling, which was passed by nine votes to six.

By the same margin, the court found Myanmar had failed in its obligations under the 1948 UN Genocide Convention to prevent the crime.

The ICJ ordered Myanmar to take "immediate and effective steps" to prosecute and punish anyone suspected of genocidal acts.

Myanmar must stop any ongoing acts of genocide and prevent similar violations of the Convention in future.

To prove genocide, judges have to be satisfied not only that genocidal acts have occurred but also there was intention to destroy a given community -- a notoriously tricky legal hurdle.

However, the judges ruled that the "only reasonable inference" was that Myanmar intended to destroy "a substantial part" of the Rohingya people.

Safe return

Having concluded that genocide occurred, the court also issued rulings on the consequences for Myanmar -- so-called "remedies" in the legal jargon.

It ordered several actions from Myanmar.

The authorities must "allow and facilitate the safe, voluntary and dignified return" of refugees displaced either within Myanmar or abroad.

They must also "return or replace in kind all individual and collective property" that was lost in the violent crackdown.

The Rohingya must also be offered "physical and psychological rehabilitation" for the harms they suffered, the judges ruled.

Reparations

The Rohingya are entitled to "adequate compensation" for the harms caused by the genocide.

The ICJ did not set an amount, saying that would be determined at a later phase.

It gave Myanmar two years to file a report setting out the "amount and modalities" of compensation.

After receiving the report, the ICJ will decide whether Myanmar's proposal is sufficient.

Investigations

The ICJ is a court that settles disputes between countries, unlike its neighbour the International Criminal Court, which weighs individual responsibility.

However, the ICJ ruling tasks Myanmar with conducting a "prompt" investigation into anyone suspected of committing genocidal acts.

Judges ruled that previous efforts in Myanmar to probe atrocities were insufficient.

"Myanmar has not genuinely investigated or, if warranted, prosecuted its soldiers and commanders and punished them," the ICJ said.

Scale of killings

The court said that an estimate of at least 10,000 deaths in the crackdown, established by an independent UN fact-finding mission, was "supported by the record".

"The evidence before the court demonstrates the pervasive and lethal nature of the violence ... and establishes that thousands of Rohingya civilians were killed by the Myanmar security forces," said the ICJ.

The court said there were approximately 815,000 Rohingya in Rakhine State at the time of the crackdown, meaning those killed constituted 1.2 percent of the population.

The majority of the survivors fled to neighbouring Bangladesh.

The ICJ also said there were at least 1,834 acts of rape during the 2017 "clearance operations".

AFP



US WARNS AGAINST 'POLITICIZATION' OF ICJ, STUDYING MYANMAR RULING

The US State Department reacted with caution to the International Court of Justice's ruling that Myanmar committed genocide against its Rohingya minority, saying Washington was examining the decision while stressing the need to avoid "politicization" of the body.

Washington's wary response comes as the United States determined in 2022 that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya people.

But it has more recently pushed back on another case before the top UN court, involving accusations by South Africa that US ally Israel perpetrated genocide in Gaza.

"The proper interpretation of the Genocide Convention is of paramount importance, as is preventing politicization of the ICJ," said a State Department spokesperson on Thursday.

"We are studying the decision to fully assess its implications," the official added, referring to the Myanmar ruling.

The US statement comes as the top UN court ordered refugees to be given safe passage home and awarded compensation.

The decision marked the first time in its 80-year history that ICJ judges determined a state committed genocide. It is likely to be viewed as justice for Rohingya victims of Myanmar's deadly 2017 crackdown on the mostly Muslim minority.

The US official said Thursday: "We express our support for the people of Burma and share the grave concerns over the continued abuses of human rights against Rohingya Muslims and members of other minority groups."

The official also called for more burden-sharing in the humanitarian response for Rohingya refugees.

For more than one million Rohingya living in the world's largest refugee camp over the border in Bangladesh, the landmark ruling offered hope for accountability.

AFP

INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP OUTLINES THE KEY POINTS OF THE ICJ MYANMAR GENOCIDE JUDGEMENT

On 19 November, the International Court of Justice found that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya. In this Q&A, Crisis Group expert Richard Horsey explains what the ruling means for Myanmar and for the Rohingya.

What did the International Court of Justice decide?

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) found, by nine votes to six, that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya in northern Rakhine State during the 2017 "clearance operations" – the first time it has found any state responsible for committing genocide. By the same margin, it ruled that Myanmar had failed to prevent genocide by non-Rohingya civilians who took part in the "clearance operations" alongside state forces. It also found that Myanmar had failed to punish genocide (by eleven votes to four); that it had failed to enact the legislation the convention requires (fourteen to one); and that it had breached a 2020 order of the court by failing to preserve evidence (eleven to four). It rejected, by a margin of fourteen to one, the claim that Myanmar had directly and publicly incited genocide. The judgment and the court's summary are on its case page. The judgment concerns the responsibility of the state: no individual stands accused, and no one will be arrested or sentenced as a direct result.

The case focused on the Myanmar military's "clearance operations" in northern Rakhine State in 2016 and 2017, while Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government was in office. These "operations" drove more than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims into Bangladesh amid widespread reports of mass killing, rape and burning of entire villages. In November 2019, The Gambia filed a case at the ICJ, the UN's principal judicial body, alleging that Myanmar had breached the Genocide Convention. Aung San Suu Kyi led Myanmar's defence in person at the first hearings in December 2019; her government contested both the court's jurisdiction and The Gambia's standing to bring the case, arguing that it was a proxy for the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The Gambia is an OIC member, and the organisation's member states had helped fund the case. But in July 2022 the court rejected Myanmar's objections, holding

among other things that any party to the convention may bring such a case, because the duty to prevent and punish genocide is owed to all parties alike – what lawyers call an obligation erga omnes partes. In other words, The Gambia did not need to have been harmed itself in order to seek a ruling.

What was the road to judgment?

The court took seven years to reach its final decision. In January 2020, the court unanimously ordered "provisional measures" – the equivalent of an injunction – requiring Myanmar to prevent genocidal acts against the Rohingya, preserve evidence and report on its compliance every six months. Three governments have defended the case: Aung San Suu Kyi's elected administration; the military regime that seized power in February 2021; and, since April, the nominally civilian administration of Min Aung Hlaing, who was commander-in-chief in 2017. Eleven states, mostly European, intervened to give the court their reading of the convention. The hearings on the merits – the substance of the case – with witnesses, were held in January 2026. The Gambia asked the court to declare Myanmar in breach of the convention, order reparations for Rohingya victims – including the safe return of those who fled – and require guarantees of non-repetition, among them granting the Rohingya full citizenship.

The crux of the case was intent. What sets genocide apart from other mass atrocities in legal terms is the requirement to prove the existence of specific intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group in whole or in part – what lawyers call dolus specialis. In the absence of direct proof, the court held that such intent can be inferred from the facts only if it is "the only reasonable inference" to be drawn. Historically, that bar has proven high. In its two previous genocide judgments, the court found Serbia responsible for failing to prevent and punish the 1995 Srebrenica genocide, but not for committing it (2007), and rejected both Croatia's genocide claim against Serbia and Serbia's counterclaim against Croatia (2015).

Myanmar thus did not need to prove that genocide had not occurred, only that one or more other reasonable explanations for the state's actions that did not involve genocidal intent could be drawn from the evidence and explain its conduct. Its lawyers argued that the "clearance operations" in question were counter-insurgency measures against the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), prompted by the group's attacks on security posts in 2016 and 2017. They also argued that the findings of the UN fact-finding mission created in 2017 to determine the facts about alleged abuses by state forces, which were central to The Gambia's case, were unreliable. Several intervening states argued that a military aim does not rule out genocidal intent.

In its 19 November decision, the court applied the "only reasonable inference" test. It made clear that the test is satisfied when genocidal intent coexists with other aims so long as an inference of genocidal intent is the only reasonable way to explain the evidence as a whole. On that basis, it rejected each of Myanmar's alternative explanations. The military's operations made no distinction between civilians and ARSA fighters, and the executions, mass rape, attacks on children, methodical burning of villages and attacks on fleeing civilians were inconsistent with counter-insurgency. There was no plan to move the population, and state forces attacked Rohingya as they fled, which was inconsistent with an aim of merely driving them out. The scale of the violence, moreover, went well beyond punishment. The court found the UN fact-finding mission's reports rigorous and impartial, saying it could draw inferences more readily because Myanmar had blocked investigators and destroyed evidence. It also cited Min Aung Hlaing's description, while the operations were under way, of the "Bengali problem" as an "unfinished job".

What does the ruling change, given that the court cannot enforce it?

A great deal, even without enforcement. Genocide – a term coined in the shadow of the Holocaust – is often called the crime of crimes, and the court had never before found a state responsible for committing it. That stigma is a sanction in itself: it attaches to Myanmar, and to the man who commanded the operations and is now the country's president. Moreover, the ruling is final and binding: there is no possibility of appeal, and the UN Charter obliges Myanmar to comply.

If Myanmar did comply, there would be a lot to do.

If Myanmar did comply, there would be a lot to do. The court ordered Myanmar to enact legislation giving full effect to the convention; to investigate everyone reasonably suspected of genocidal acts during the 2017 operations and, if warranted, to prosecute and punish them; and to provide guarantees of non-repetition. It also ordered restitution, including the safe, voluntary and dignified return of displaced Rohingya, whether inside Myanmar or abroad, and the reunification of families, as well as compensation for the Rohingya group and its members. The court declined to order full citizenship for the Rohingya, as The Gambia had asked, but it required Myanmar to return or replace their property, search for the disappeared, provide rehabilitation and protect the Rohingya from discrimination and persecution, including in access to citizenship and freedom of movement. As further guarantees of non-repetition, it pointed to legal and institutional reform, training for state forces and effective civilian control over them. For the breach of the 2020 order, it found its declaration sufficient.

But the court has no means of enforcing its rulings. If The Gambia considers that Myanmar is not complying, it can turn to the UN Security Council, which under Article 94(2) of the UN Charter may "make recommendations or decide upon measures" to give effect to the judgment. But the Council has never used this power to enforce an ICJ judgment, and in this instance, attempting to do so would almost certainly prompt a Chinese and Russian veto. Compliance therefore depends on Naypyitaw's own calculations, as well as on the pressure others are prepared to apply.

Myanmar's reaction to the court's 2020 order (which required it to prevent genocidal acts against the Rohingya, preserve evidence and report back every six months) may provide some indication of what to expect. Naypyitaw complied in form, but not in substance. In April 2020 – under the then-civilian government – it issued presidential directives instructing officials and the military not to commit genocidal acts, to curb hate speech and to preserve evidence. It has subsequently filed all thirteen required reports on time, both before and after the coup.

But these measures did little to improve conditions for the Rohingya. They remain largely stateless, and hundreds of thousands of them continue to be displaced. Domestic accountability for the 2017 atrocities committed against the community has gone no further than a handful of courts martial of low-ranking officers and soldiers; and even the regime's most recent report to the ICJ concedes that the body set up to investigate and prosecute cases "has been unable to operate". When the court itself questioned Myanmar in October 2024 about how the first of its directives – on compliance with the Genocide Convention – was being applied, Naypyitaw replied that no new mechanism had been created.

One place where the decision could have near-term impact is in shaping the actions of other courts. While the ICJ ruling concerns Myanmar as a state, the criminal responsibility of individuals in the brutal crackdown against the Rohingya a decade ago is being pursued elsewhere. In November 2024, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) requested an arrest warrant for Min Aung Hlaing for the crimes against humanity of deportation and persecution; the judges have yet to rule publicly on that request. Asserting universal jurisdiction, a federal court in Argentina also issued warrants for 25 people in February 2025, Min Aung Hlaing and Aung San Suu Kyi among them, on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. Neither court is bound by the ICJ decision, and crimes against humanity is a distinct charge from genocide; nevertheless, the ICJ's findings are likely to be carefully studied.

The judgment also has implications for other pending ICJ cases. The court's handling of intent in the 19 November decision now forms part of the backdrop for the four other genocide cases before it, among them Ukraine v. Russia and South Africa v. Israel. Washington has made clear that it sees those wider stakes: in October, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, Mike Waltz, accused The Gambia's judge ad hoc and 2026 Nobel peace laureate Navi Pillay of seeking to "lower the legal threshold for proving genocide" in the Myanmar case. That stance sits awkwardly with Washington's own 2022 determination, under the Biden administration, that the military committed genocide against the Rohingya, which it has never rescinded. Nor was that an isolated incident: the U.S. government – under administrations

of both parties – has made genocide determinations in situations where the evidence of specific intent was in question, including, for example, the Obama administration's finding that ISIS committed genocide against Christians and the first Trump administration's finding that China did so against the Uighurs.

How will Naypyitaw respond, and what does the ruling mean for the regime's push for international acceptance?

The ruling will create a political shock wave in Myanmar. The regime may well react with outrage and reject the genocide finding; it is unlikely to provide the restitution ordered by the court. Such a stance would be more than political positioning. It would reflect a real disconnect between how the military, and the Naypyitaw elite more broadly, see themselves and a finding that they have been implicated in what is widely seen as the most appalling of international crimes. Many in the country, particularly among the Burman majority, will have a similar reaction, whatever their view of the regime. They will see the court's ruling not only as a judgment on the military, but as a stain on the country itself – one that many will find hard to reconcile with their sense of Myanmar as a devout, tolerant Buddhist society, however much decades of ethnic conflict belie it. That contradiction ought to prompt national soul searching as to why there was enthusiastic social support for years of Rohingya ghettoisation and vilification that created the conditions for the military-perpetrated genocide, as well as broad backing for the "clearance operations" themselves.

The response [from the regime] is likely to be one of denial and indignation.

Instead, the response is likely to be one of denial and indignation. The situation today is different from 2019, when then-leader Aung San Suu Kyi went to The Hague to defend the military at the court's provisional measures hearings, amid what Crisis Group described at the time as "a wave of nationalist fervour". The military regime that seized power in 2021 tried to keep that sentiment in check as the case moved forward. During the January hearings, it used state television to warn its supporters not to criticise the court or its judges, or to use hate speech, while the case was pending.

Now that the ruling has come down, it will no longer feel the need for such restraint. Aung San Suu Kyi's role in 2019 is also a reminder that the court's finding of genocide passes judgment on a period when her government was in office and defended the army. At the time, members of her administration publicly supported the military's "clearance operations" and used anti-Rohingya hate speech, some of which was even posted on her official government webpage. Here there has been some change. In 2022, the parallel National Unity Government, which has Aung San Suu Kyi as its leader and includes members of her ousted government, accepted the court's jurisdiction; in January, it also acknowledged past "failures" that had enabled atrocities against the Rohingya.

The anger in Naypyitaw and among many in Myanmar is likely to be directed first and foremost at the court and its judges, a sentiment that undoubtedly will be encouraged by Washington's own attacks on international justice mechanisms and on Pillay in particular. It is also likely to further prejudice the regime against the UN. Naypyitaw has long cast the UN human rights bodies as biased against it. This ruling may result in further constraints on the work of the UN's humanitarian and development agencies in the country. Naypyitaw's desire to get back its UN seat in New York, currently occupied by the Aung San Suu Kyi-appointed representative, who is an outspoken critic of the regime, may however be a moderating factor.

As for Myanmar's foreign relations, the judgment is unlikely to do much to slow Min Aung Hlaing's diplomatic rehabilitation, particularly in Asia. Since he was sworn in as president in April, following highly flawed elections, he has embarked on a whirlwind series of trips abroad, including to India, China and five fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). He received a red-carpet welcome in October from Malaysia, an OIC member which until recently had been one of his sharpest critics, particularly on justice for the Rohingya. Washington also dispatched a senior official to Naypyitaw in September, and shortly afterward lifted sanctions on the daughter of a military-linked tycoon.

Governments that have hosted Min Aung Hlaing with full honours despite a potential ICC arrest warrant hanging over his head are unlikely to change course as

a result of this judgment. Cambodia, an ICC member, received him in September regardless. The regime's principal backers, China and Russia, have not stated a position on the case. China, which has a judge on the court, does not accept its jurisdiction over genocide disputes involving itself, and Russia (whose president, Vladimir Putin, is wanted by the ICC) signed an agreement with Naypyitaw in 2025 on mutual protection from "abuses in the field of international justice". At the same time, some governments may now find warmer ties harder to justify. Bangladesh, which needs Naypyitaw's cooperation on refugee repatriation, is in a particularly delicate position, as it has less room to keep its distance.

Where does the ruling leave the Rohingya?

They are left with vindication, as well as a court-ordered right to return and compensation – but no early prospect of either.

For the Rohingya, the ruling is the first formal recognition by an international court that they were the victims of genocide. But their circumstances are dire and getting worse. Nearly 1.2 million Rohingya now live in camps in Bangladesh. Since April, the UN's World Food Programme has had to reduce food rations, leaving some refugees with as little as the equivalent of $7 per month. As Crisis Group has reported, hopelessness and aid cuts have made the camps fertile recruiting ground for criminal networks and Rohingya armed groups, while refugees are undertaking risky sea journeys to countries such as Malaysia in ever-growing numbers. Bangladesh's government, which has kept up engagement with Naypyitaw since the coup, still considers repatriation the only durable solution, but concedes that it cannot begin while conflict continues in Rakhine State, where the refugees came from. The ruling sharpens that dilemma. Dhaka will have to keep negotiating returns with a state the court has now found responsible for genocide, and increasingly also with the Arakan Army, an ethnic Rakhine armed group that has wrested nearly all of Rakhine State from the military since late 2023 and holds the areas to which most refugees would return.

In Myanmar itself, an estimated 400,000 Rohingya remain in Rakhine State, most of them in areas controlled by the Arakan Army. As the conflict between the latter and the state intensified, the Rohingya were caught between the two sides. On one hand, the military forcibly recruited thousands of Rohingya into militias and made common cause with Rohingya armed groups against the Arakan Army – a strategy that, as Crisis Group has described, fanned communal tensions between the Muslim minority and the majority Rakhine Buddhists. On the other hand, human rights groups have accused the Arakan Army of serious abuses against Rohingya civilians, including razing more than 30 villages in Buthidaung township in 2024, a charge it denies. The Gambia itself put Arakan Army conduct before the court as evidence of the Rohingya's continuing vulnerability. It also put the military's forced recruitment of Rohingya before the court. In August, a UN human rights report documented systematic violations against Rohingya by both the state military and the Arakan Army.

Because of the Arakan Army's rise in Rakhine State, an awkward gap persists between the judgment and the ground realities. The ruling binds Myanmar, the state, but even if it wanted to, Naypyitaw does not have the means to apply any remedy that involves allowing return, restoring property or lifting restrictions on movement in northern Rakhine State, since it no longer controls the territory the Rohingya refugees fled from. Many Rakhine people, who constitute the group's support base, believe that the world has overlooked their suffering, and the Arakan Army may read a ruling centred on the Rohingya as further proof of that. In any event, how the Arakan Army responds will have a greater impact on the Rohingya's wellbeing in Rakhine than anything Naypyitaw says.

What happens next?

The task now is to ensure that the finding is neither ignored nor buried by diplomatic normalisation. That will not happen by itself, given that the court cannot enforce its ruling, Naypyitaw is likely to disregard it, and several of the governments with the most influence over the Rohingya's fate have shown little inclination to use it. Yet it remains important to set out what each

should do to keep faith with the judgment. That list, however aspirational, should be the benchmark against which actions are measured.

The first obligation lies with Naypyitaw. It should state publicly that it will comply with the judgment, cooperate in the reparations phase and start with what lies within its power: lifting restrictions on Rohingya in the areas it still controls, beginning with the camps around Sittwe, capital of Rakhine State. It now has not only a moral but also a legal obligation to act.

The Gambia and the eleven intervening states should press for implementation, including through a UN General Assembly resolution calling on Myanmar to comply. Members of the OIC, which backed the case from the outset and, with the EU, leads the Assembly's annual resolution on the Rohingya, are well placed to lead that effort and should sustain their support for The Gambia in the reparations phase to come. All should keep backing the parallel accountability tracks at the ICC and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.

Those governments that have access to Naypyitaw should use it. ASEAN members, China, India and Japan, in particular, should press for protection of the Rohingya and for humanitarian access in Rakhine and across the country. Malaysia should raise the judgment directly in its renewed dealings with Min Aung Hlaing. The U.S. should not let transactional re-engagement, or its view of the court, obscure its own determination that the military committed genocide. As for the UN, a senior official should travel to Naypyitaw to try to preserve what limited operational space the organisation retains, and the incoming Secretary-General should give Myanmar a higher priority than it has had.

The Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh's sprawling camps need sustained support. The 2026 Rohingya appeal, already slimmed down to reflect budgetary constraints, is only about 70 per cent funded as of mid-November. The EU and its member states, the UK, Australia, Canada, Japan and Türkiye should step up to close the gap – as should the Gulf Arab states, whose governments and charities have together given less than $10 million, about 2 per cent of the total. As Crisis Group has argued before, Bangladesh should, for its part, review some of its policies, particularly in allowing refugees to earn a living. It should also take steps to curb armed-group recruitment in the camps and hold political-level talks with the Arakan Army.

The Arakan Army, given that it now controls most of the areas where the Rohingya who remain in Myanmar live, also has a role to play. It should distinguish between Rohingya fighters and civilians, end reprisals, bring more Rohingya into its administration and support an independent investigation of alleged abuses by some of its troops. The National Unity Government should accept the judgment and reaffirm its 2021 commitment to replace the discriminatory 1982 Citizenship Law.

The court's finding that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya must translate into more than a recognition of past atrocities. It must prompt concerted global action to ensure that their plight is not forgotten and that they receive the support they desperately need. Their future will be decided less in The Hague than in Rakhine State and in the camps of Cox's Bazar. The Rohingya tragedy must not be obscured in the unseemly rush to re-engage Naypyitaw.

Source: International Crisis Group


Photo: AFP

BRITISH GOVERNMENT MUST LEAD RESPONSE TO ICJ ROHINGYA GENOCIDE RULING, SAYS BURMA CAMPAIGN UK

Burma Campaign UK on 19 November called on the British government to lead the international response following the Rohingya genocide ruling.

The Burmese military regime rejected the ruling even before it was made.

"This is a historic victory for the Rohingya, but it must lead to practical action," said Anna Roberts, Executive Director of Burma Campaign UK. "The British government must now bring forward a UN Security Council resolution on enforcing the court judgement and also implement new rounds of sanctions to cut off money and arms reaching the Burmese military."

Immediate steps the British government must implement:

. Urgently convene a meeting of the United Nations Security Council to discuss steps that can be taken to protect the Rohingya population in Burma, and table a resolution to enforce the ruling.

. Resume the policy of systematically sanctioning sources of revenue, arms and equipment to the Burmese military, including new sanctions on the jet fuel sector and the oil and gas extraction sector. Limiting access to money and arms will help protect the population from airstrikes and other attacks by the Burmese military.

. Expel the Burmese military attaché from the UK. Captain Soe Aung, a serving member of the Burmese military, currently lives and works from two houses in Wimbledon, South London.

. Reverse cuts in aid to the people of Burma and to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

. Reverse recent moves to soften policy towards the Burmese military regime.

. Encourage INTERPOL to issue red notices for Gen (Rtd) Min Aung Hlaing and other Burmese military leaders subject to arrest warrants from a court in Argentina investigating Rohingya genocide.

The court's decision came despite US government threats that it would sanction ICJ judges if they supported a ruling of genocide. In making these threats the USA is attempting to undermine international justice and protect the perpetrators of genocide.

The Burmese military regime has been using proxy nationalist groups to incite increasing anti-Rohingya prejudice, leaving Rohingya and all Muslims in Burma fearing violent attacks. They are also threatening ICE style mass arrests of Rohingya across the country.

Any response to this ruling must not include the withdrawal of trade privileges, which would have a significant impact on ordinary people. There are numerous targeted sanctions which can be implemented that would directly impact the Burmese military and the Burmese oligarchs which support them, rather than on the general population.

The British government must also end its policy of not criticising the Arakan Army, which controls many areas of Rakhine State where Rohingya live, and is committing similar human rights violations against the Rohingya, including massacres, rape and sexual violence, mass detention, and executions and disappearances. British government silence encourages the Arakan Army to have a sense of impunity and continue human rights violations.

It has been more than two years since the British government brought in any new sanctions to cut off money and arms to the Burmese military. Since then, the number of airstrikes by the Burmese military has dramatically increased. According to data from ACLED, they average one airstrike every two and a half hours. According to data from UNICEF, a child dies from Burmese military attacks every 29 hours.

The British Foreign Office has faced growing criticism in recent weeks for its gradual softening of policy towards the Burmese military regime, including allowing ministers to be photographed with representatives of the military regime, and softening language towards the military.

In February 2025 a court in Argentina issued 25 arrest warrants in a case relating to genocide of the Rohingya. The case was brought by the Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK using universal jurisdiction laws. It was not possible to bring a universal jurisdiction case in British courts because universal jurisdiction laws in the UK are highly restrictive and outdated.

"The Burmese military are responsible for genocide and are planning five billion dollars of military spending next year, despite more than half the population living in poverty," said Anna Roberts. "The international community must stop financing the bombs and the bullets used by the Burmese military and stop supplying the jet fuel they use to bomb schools and hospitals."


Photo: AFP

ROHINGYA GENOCIDE SURVIVOR SAYS JUSTICE DONE IN INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

The following is a statement by Yasmin Ullah, Founder and Executive Director of the Rohingya Maìyafuìnor Collaborative Network, Genocide Survivor and member of The Gambia's delegation at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the wake of the court verdict.

The following is her statement:

The Hague. 19 November 2021

Today is a day of justice. I am a survivor of genocide, and I stood in the Court as part of The Gambia's delegation. Today the world's highest court has looked at what was done to the Rohingya and named it for what it was. Genocide. Let me say that again ..genocide, the crime of crimes. This was killing on an industrial scale: villages burned, families destroyed, women gang raped, babies thrown into the flames of their burning homes as helpless mothers looked on, a people driven out of the only homes they have ever known. The Rohingya never needed a court to tell us what happened to us. We needed the world to hear it, and today it has. This is a great day for the Rohingya, and it is a great day for all oppressed people, everywhere, who have been told that their suffering does not count and that no one is listening.

The man in charge of Myanmar's genocidal killing machine was and is Min Aung Hlaing. Now he sits at the top of a genocidal state, having stolen the presidency through sham elections and called it democracy. For years the world watched, and the Rohingya waited. A judgment on paper protects no one. It will only mean something if governments act on it, and so I say to every UN member state: take robust steps to implement the ICJ judgment. Sanction Min Aung Hlaing as the head of Myanmar's genocidal killing machine. Sanction the generals' economy, and cut off the military machine that did this. Make Myanmar pay reparations to the people it destroyed. Give us back our lives. Give us a future. We want to be part of a stable, prosperous and thriving Myanmar.

And guarantee the Rohingya a safe and dignified return to their homes, with their rights and citizenship restored. Justice is not complete while a people remains in exile. To everyone around the world who has stood with the Rohingya, the lawyers, the investigators, the governments that brought and backed this case, the journalists, the activists and the ordinary people who refused to look away, thank you. You kept our story alive when we had no power to do it ourselves. Today we honour the dead, and we recommit ourselves to the living. We will not stop until every Rohingya can go home, in safety and in dignity.



UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS ROHINGYA RESOLUTION WITH OVERWHELMING SUPPORT; BANGLADESH CALLS FOR URGENT ACTION ON REPATRIATION

The United Nations General Assembly on 18 November adopted the annual Third Committee resolution titled "Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar" by an overwhelming majority, with 128 votes in favour, 6 against and 33 abstentions.

Delivering Bangladesh's statement before the adoption, Chargé d'Affaires of Bangladesh to the United Nations Ambassador Sanchita Haque underscored the urgency of resolving the protracted Rohingya crisis. She stated that nine years after the mass displacement, no meaningful progress had been made towards repatriation, while the prolonged displacement continued to place enormous social, economic, environmental and security pressure on Bangladesh and its host communities.

Ambassador Haque also highlighted the importance of the forthcoming judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Gambia v. Myanmar case which is expected to mark an important milestone in advancing justice and accountability for the Rohingyas.

This year's resolution addresses grave human rights violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims by the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army. It calls for an end to violence, ensure unhindered humanitarian access, and justice and accountability for the Rohingyas. The resolution also emphasizes the need for adequate humanitarian funding, including for the 2026 Joint Response Plan, ensure the political rights of the Rohingya including their voting rights and the creation of conditions conducive to their voluntary, safe, dignified and early repatriation to Myanmar.

To ensure the effective implementation of this resolution, Ambassador Sanchita Haque called for strengthened collective efforts by the international community and regional stakeholders emphasizing that the Rohingya crisis originated in Myanmar and its solution lies in Myanmar.

The United States called for a vote on the resolution citing its reference to the International Criminal Court (ICC). In its explanation of vote, the US clarified its general position on references to the ICC in all respective resolutions and stressed that its position on human rights violations in Myanmar remained unchanged. It also commended Bangladesh for its generosity in hosting over 1.2 million displaced Rohingya for more than a decade.


Photo: AFP

WLB STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH SURVIVORS, INCLUDING ROHINGYA WOMEN

The Women's League of Burma (WLB) has issued a statement declaring its solidarity with Rohingya women, girls, and all survivors.

This was stated in a press release issued 21 November welcoming the ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The ICJ found that the military junta committed widespread sexual violence against Rohingya women and girls, as well as acts of extreme violence against Rohingya children. WLB noted that this finding was one of the key grounds on which the court based its ruling of genocide.

WLB reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring justice and accountability for the Rohingya people, adding that it has also been documenting and condemning conflict-related sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence committed against ethnic minority women. The statement further emphasized the urgent need to end these violations and secure justice and accountability.

Although WLB does not recognize the military junta as a legitimate government, the organization stated that because they are the perpetrators who violated the Genocide Convention, Myanmar's obligations under international law must remain binding.

WLB also urged emerging federal democratic leadership structures to assume their respective responsibilities to protect civilians, prevent genocide, conflict-related sexual violence, and other atrocity crimes, and advance justice and accountability.



US SANCTIONS MYANMAR ARMED DKBA LEADER OVER SCAM LINKS

The United States has frozen the assets of the leader of an ethnic armed group in Myanmar and one of his lieutenants, accusing them of facilitating cyberscammers who target Americans.

Organised criminal gangs have for years carried out fake romance and cryptocurrency investment schemes from compounds in Southeast Asian nations, defrauding victims around the world of tens of billions of dollars annually.

The industry is adapting its operations in the wake of much-publicised crackdowns in Myanmar and Cambodia following Chinese pressure, often dissipating into smaller facilities in new locations.

The US Treasury Department said on Thursday it had imposed an asset freeze on General Saw Shwe Wah, commander-in-chief of the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), and one of his top officers, and banned Americans from dealing with them.

The DKBA is one of the myriad armed groups operating in Myanmar's borderlands, some of which have been fighting the government for decades.

It has signed a ceasefire with Yangon and is accused by the United States, which earlier sanctioned the organisation, of supporting scam centres.

"DKBA actors not only provide security for scam compounds and permit their continued operation, but also actively participate in violence against victims of human trafficking trapped inside the compounds," the US Treasury said.

The DKBA's Colonel Saw A One, responsible for security in the Three Pagodas Pass area in Karen state near the Thai border, was also designated by the US on 19 November.

Jason Tower, senior expert at the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, told AFP last week the Three Pagodas Pass region has been a "major expansion area" for scam compounds.

The latest US Treasury measures also sanctioned Zhao Hui, a China-born, naturalised Cambodian accused of running cyberscam compounds in Cambodia, and two of his companies.

Zhao, 35, also leased a scam centre owned by the Cambodian conglomerate Prince Group, which Washington accuses of running a multibillion-dollar scam operation, the Treasury said in a statement.

Prince's China-born founder Chen Zhi was extradited by Phnom Penh to China in January, months after the conglomerate was sanctioned by the US and UK governments for scamming.

Requests for comment sent to listed email addresses for the companies went unanswered on Friday.

AFP



MYANMAR MILITARY COLUMN BURNS TWO MORE VILLAGES IN KYAIKTO

Myanmar military troops advancing from the town of Thein Za Yat in Kyaikto Township, Mon State, have burned and destroyed civilian homes in two villages within the territory of Battalion 3, Brigade 1 of the Karen National Union (KNU), according to local sources.

Since November 3, a military column comprising more than 1,000 troops has advanced into territory controlled by KNU Brigade 1, Battalion 3, from military bases in Thein Za Yat town, Kyaikto Township.

Information available as of the evening of November 18 indicates that military troops had been burning civilian homes in Kyauk Phyar and Nat Sin villages. The same column also burned and destroyed homes in Kaw Khat village on November 7.

"Yesterday, they were setting fires in at least four locations in Kyauk Phyar. We could not go and put them out. They were destroying all the houses belonging to civilians, including shops. The shops have been completely wiped out," a local source said.

Thousands of residents from more than 20 villages in the area, including those whose homes have been burned, have been forced to flee due to military advances, airstrikes and artillery shelling by military units based in Thein Za Yat and Kyaikto, including those under Light Infantry Division 44.

A source close to the KNU said residents were unable to take their belongings with them because military troops had blocked access routes. With shops destroyed, people also had no way to buy food and were in urgent need of food and other humanitarian assistance.

Local sources said the military column had split into at least three groups and was moving through villages in Battalion 3's territory, carrying out destruction. Other groups were also advancing towards Shwegyin Township in Nyaunglebin District, Brigade 3, which borders the territory of Brigade 1, Battalion 3.

The KNU said on November 17 that residents from 15 villages in Shwegyin Township had also been displaced by military advances and airstrikes.

Meanwhile, clashes between military columns moving through Kyaikto Township and joint forces of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) continue to intensify, according to local sources.

Sources said military columns currently operating in Kyaikto Township were attempting to retreat towards Zee Baung (5) village, where their column commander had established a base. However, they remained trapped by attacks and blockades imposed by joint resistance forces and had suffered significant casualties.

During the two-week offensive, the military has reportedly seized at least 10 resistance positions, including the headquarters of KNU Brigade 1, Battalion 3, and a Special Operations Command military outpost, as well as other military camps and medical facilities. The military has released photographs documenting the seizure of weapons, ammunition and medical supplies.

However, officials from the respective forces have disputed these claims, saying the positions were only temporary frontline outposts.

The route along which the military is currently advancing is one of the connections linking KNU Brigades 1, 3 and 5, making it strategically important for logistical support.

A local source told Mizzima that the military was launching a major offensive along this route to regain full control of lost bases and positions, reinforce its troops and restore its military presence in areas including Thaton District under Brigade 1, Nyaunglebin District under Brigade 3, and Mutraw District under Brigade 5. These include military units and positions under siege, such as the Hpapun military command base.



UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR CURRIE CALLS MYANMAR'S RULERS "GANGSTERS" AND WARNS OF FRESH VIOLENCE AS THE WORLD COURT PREPARES TO RULE ON ROHINGYA GENOCIDE

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Kelley E. Currie, warned on 18 November that escalating armed conflict in Myanmar, lawlessness inside the refugee camps and shrinking donor funding are deepening a crisis that stretches from western Myanmar into southeastern Bangladesh, where more than a million Rohingya and other refugees from Myanmar are sheltering, as she closed her first country visit to Bangladesh on the eve of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgment on whether the state of Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya in 2017.

Currie said 19 November would be an important moment for the Rohingya, for Myanmar and for the international community, and that she hoped the court would recognise the crimes committed and open a path towards justice. Should the ruling fall short of those hopes, she said, the evidence placed before the court, survivor testimony, forensic material and satellite imagery, remains on the record, and a finding on state responsibility would still leave other avenues open to pursue individual perpetrators.

Ahead of the ruling she voiced deep concern about the risk of renewed violence inside Myanmar, and urged governments with influence over the authorities in Naypyidaw to intervene immediately. She also pressed countries that maintain business and other engagement with the military leadership to reconsider it, saying states that describe themselves as democracies while continuing to back the regime are undermining their own human rights commitments, a position she called unconscionable.

Beyond those governments, Currie singled out China and Russia for shielding Myanmar at the UN Security Council and for ranking among the military's largest arms suppliers, while noting they are not its only backers. The military authorities, she said, are not partners in peace or in development, describing them instead as "a gang, a mafia" and as "gangsters".

Once the judgment is delivered, she said, all UN member states carry a duty to support its full implementation. States party to the Genocide Convention have their own obligations to act and can impose sanctions on the regime and on the entities and individuals involved in atrocities, she said, while the Security Council could consider an arms embargo or a referral to the International Criminal Court. She also called for stronger support for the countries carrying the weight of the crisis, particularly Bangladesh and other neighbours of Myanmar hosting refugees.

Inside the camps in Cox's Bazar, Currie found insecurity and lawlessness falling hardest on the most vulnerable, with women and children worst affected and gender-based violence and serious crimes against children on the rise. Donor cuts to protection, education, livelihoods and non-emergency health services, alongside a narrowing focus on lifesaving aid, have pushed refugees and host communities towards drug use and trafficking, smuggling, recruitment by criminal and armed groups, and online gambling, she said, warning that further cuts risk leaving a generation of young people without hope. That insecurity, she added, feeds back into the armed conflict in Myanmar that keeps refugees from returning safely.

Currie visited Dhaka, Cox's Bazar and camp sites in Cox's Bazar District between 11 and 18 November, meeting officials, civil society representatives, survivors and refugees. She had formally requested access to Myanmar and was told by the junta that it was not ready to receive her. Appointed by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2026, she took up the mandate on 1 May, succeeding Thomas Andrews.

The case at The Hague was filed by The Gambia in November 2019 over the military offensive that drove at least 730,000 Rohingya into Bangladesh in 2017. The court ordered provisional measures in January 2020 and rejected Myanmar's preliminary objections in July 2022. The judgment, which the court began reading at 8:00 GMT on 19 November, is final and cannot be appealed.



DIPPING INTO THE CHALLENGES OF RARE EARTH MINING IN THE BADLANDS OF MYANMAR

The Transnational Institute (TNI) recently published an insightful commentary on "Rare Earth Mining in Myanmar: Navigating Competing Narratives for Social Movements" that examines the growing exploitation of the country's mineral resources, particularly in Kachin State and northern Shan State, and the devastating consequences for local communities, the environment and the country's already fragile political situation.

A central theme of the commentary written by Myint Zen and published on 13 November is the contradiction between the global push towards renewable energy and the environmental destruction taking place in countries supplying the minerals needed to make that transition possible. Rare earth elements are essential components in electric vehicles, wind turbines, batteries and other advanced technologies. Myanmar has become an increasingly important supplier of these minerals, particularly to neighbouring China, which dominates much of the world's rare earth processing industry.

The mining industry has expanded rapidly in areas bordering China, especially in Kachin State, where heavy rare earth elements are extracted on a substantial scale. These operations have become particularly important since China reduced some of its domestic mining activities because of environmental and health concerns. Mining companies and other commercial interests have consequently turned increasingly towards Myanmar, where environmental regulation and enforcement are extremely weak.

The commentary highlights the destructive methods used to extract rare earth minerals. One particularly concerning technique is in-situ leaching, which involves drilling holes into mountains and injecting chemicals into the ground to dissolve and recover the minerals. Chemicals including ammonium sulphate and oxalic acid are used in this process. They can contaminate groundwater, rivers and agricultural land, threatening drinking water supplies, farming and the livelihoods of communities living downstream.

These environmental consequences are compounded by the political instability and armed conflict that have affected Myanmar for decades. Since the February 2021 military coup, the country's political and territorial situation has deteriorated considerably. The military has lost control of significant areas to ethnic armed organisations and other resistance groups. Some of these organisations and local militias have

become involved in mining operations, either directly or through arrangements with Chinese businesses.

The result is a complicated political economy in which mineral extraction provides revenue for different armed and commercial interests. Although mining can generate substantial income, the financial benefits rarely reach ordinary communities in proportion to the environmental and social costs they bear.

The commentary also raises serious concerns about land rights. Myanmar's history of land concessions and resource exploitation has frequently involved the appropriation of land that governments or investors classify as unused or undeveloped. In reality, these areas are often essential to local communities, particularly ethnic minority populations who depend on forests, rivers and agricultural land for their survival. Mining expansion has therefore contributed to displacement, loss of traditional livelihoods and growing tensions between communities and those controlling the resources.

Workers employed in the industry face similarly difficult conditions. Many are exposed daily to toxic chemicals without adequate protective equipment, workplace safety standards, pension arrangements or other basic employment rights. Migrant workers are also drawn into mining areas by the prospect of higher wages, despite the dangerous working environment. Landslides and other mining-related accidents have resulted in deaths, demonstrating the human cost of poorly regulated extraction.

An important aspect of the commentary is its recognition that the problem cannot simply be attributed to the Myanmar military. Ethnic armed organisations and resistance groups that control territory have also become involved in resource extraction. Some depend on mining revenues to finance their political and military activities. This creates a difficult dilemma for opposition movements: while they are fighting military dictatorship, their involvement in environmentally destructive industries risks undermining their credibility and alienating the communities they claim to represent.

The author argues that China has a particularly important responsibility because it is the principal destination for Myanmar's rare earth exports. Chinese businesses benefit from access to relatively inexpensive minerals, while much of the environmental damage and social disruption occurs on the Myanmar side of the border. China could exert pressure on suppliers to adopt safer extraction techniques, improve working conditions and introduce meaningful environmental safeguards.

However, responsibility extends beyond China. The international market for electric vehicles, wind turbines and other renewable technologies creates demand for these minerals. Countries and companies benefiting from the global transition to cleaner energy must therefore examine where their raw materials originate and under what conditions they are produced. Greater transparency and traceability throughout international supply chains are essential if consumers and manufacturers are to avoid indirectly supporting exploitation and environmental destruction.

The commentary also questions whether alternative economic initiatives, including carbon offset projects, necessarily provide a fair solution. Such schemes can restrict communities' traditional access to forests and natural resources while allowing outside investors to profit. The authors argue that genuine environmental protection must respect local land rights and give communities meaningful control over decisions affecting their territories.

Ultimately, the commentary calls for greater accountability, democratic oversight and international cooperation. Mining should not be allowed to continue unchecked simply because armed groups or commercial interests control the territories where minerals are found. Local communities must have a meaningful voice in determining whether mining takes place, how it is conducted and who benefits.

The broader message is that the global transition towards renewable energy must not create another form of exploitation. Myanmar's rare earth resources may help power a cleaner future internationally, but that future cannot be considered sustainable if it depends on poisoning rivers, destroying farmland, displacing ethnic communities and exposing workers to dangerous conditions.

Source: Transnational Institute



MYANMAR AIRSTRIKES KILL 14 CIVILIANS IN RAKHINE AND PALETWA OVER FOUR DAYS

The Myanmar military carried out four consecutive days of airstrikes on civilian areas that were not military targets in Rakhine State and Paletwa Township in Chin State from November 14 to 17, killing 14 civilians and injuring 28 others, including children and a pregnant woman, according to a statement issued by the Arakan Army (AA)'s News and Information Department.

At around 11:30 am on November 17, the military launched two airstrikes using two fighter jets on the former Government Technical Institute (GTI) school and surrounding areas in Ward No. 1 of Thandwe Township. Two civilians were killed and four others injured. School buildings and several nearby homes were also damaged.

Similarly, at around 11:30 pm on November 16, three fighter jets simultaneously bombed the former Agricultural Science Institute in Kyauktaw town and surrounding areas. All the school buildings were completely destroyed, while three civilians sustained shrapnel injuries.

At around 1 am on the same day, the military also carried out an air attack lasting nearly an hour on areas around Kwan Taung village in Ponnagyun Township, using five fighter jets and one Y-12 aircraft, according to the statement.

The deadliest attack occurred near Htee Htauk Kone village in Paletwa Township on November 14, from 7:57 pm to 9:15 pm. Four fighter jets and one Y-12 aircraft carried out an attack lasting more than an hour, dropping nearly 50 munitions, including 500-pound, 300-pound and 200-pound bombs, rockets and drop bombs.

The attack killed 12 people, including a three-year-old child sheltering from the conflict and a woman who was five months pregnant. The dead comprised six men and four women, in addition to the child and the pregnant woman. A further 21 civilians — 11 men and 10 women — were injured, while numerous homes were damaged or destroyed.

The statement also said that the military fired heavy artillery from naval vessels at Taungngu Su Ward in Sane town, Kyaukphyu Township, on November 14. At around 3 pm on November 15, it launched another attack using drones, setting fire to and destroying several homes belonging to local residents.



BRI APPLAUDS US SENATE'S $121 MILLION FOR BURMA, CALLS ON CONGRESS TO PASS FUNDING AND ENSURE TRANSPARENCY

On November 16, 2026, the United States Senate Appropriations Committee released its final five FY2027 funding bills, according to the Burma Research Institute (BRI). They include the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs bill, which provides not less than $121 million in assistance for Burma for the fiscal year running October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027.

The BRI says it applauds the Senate Appropriations Committee for its continued support for the people of Burma and urges Congress to pass this funding and the President to sign it into law. BRI also calls for full transparency on how and where the funds are spent.

Section 7043(a)(1) of the Senate bill maintains the funding level Congress has provided in prior years, which aligns with BRI's recommendations. It states that "not less than $121,000,000 shall be made available for assistance for Burma for the purposes described in section 5575 of the Burma Act of 2022."

Section 7043(a)(2) allocates the funds as follows:

$75 million for assistance programs, including in Thailand and India, and cross-border programs

$10 million for governance and federalism programs, including at the local and state levels

$7 million for atrocities prevention and accountability, including documentation and preservation of evidence

$1 million for accountability and justice for crimes against the Rohingya

$25 million for non-lethal assistance

$1.5 million for current and former political prisoners

$1.5 million for deserter programs

The Committee's explanatory statement clarifies that "non-lethal assistance" shall include equipment and associated training to support (1) atrocities prevention; (2) the protection of civilians from military attack; (3) the delivery of humanitarian assistance; (4) investigations into genocide and human rights violations committed by the Burmese military; (5) local governance and the provision of services in areas outside the control of the Burmese military; and (6) medical trauma care, supplies, and training.

"Providing equipment and training, especially to support local governance and services in areas outside the military's control, will make a real difference," said Zo Tum Hmung, President & CEO of BRI.



U.S. MISSION TO BURMA: WHEN OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS ON MYANMAR'S POLITICAL DOOR

NICHOLAS KONG

As ASEAN leaders gather in Manila for the 49th ASEAN Summit (November 15–17, 2026), Myanmar's political crisis remains an important test of regional diplomacy. Their November 15 review reaffirmed the Five-Point Consensus as ASEAN's main reference for addressing the crisis, while maintaining restrictions on Myanmar's political representation pending meaningful progress and adopting a calibrated, phased and progress-based approach to engagement.

Against this regional backdrop, Washington's newly published U.S. Mission to Burma (Myanmar) strategy marks a significant development in America's approach to a country whose political crisis has long resisted international resolution. Approved on August 31, 2026, and issued for public release by Embassy Rangoon, it sets out four goals linking security, trade, peace diplomacy and regional influence to advancing American interests.

The strategy creates opportunities for Myanmar's competing political actors but also risks. The same opening could become either a poison or a potion, depending on how Washington, Naypyidaw and the democratic resistance respond.

Understanding its implications requires looking beyond the stated objectives to what they mean for the parties expected to engage with it.

Washington's America First Agenda

The first goal is homeland security: disrupting scam operations and narcotics trafficking through law-enforcement cooperation, while reducing Myanmar nationals' U.S. visa overstays to zero and expanding repatriation.

The second seeks to reduce the U.S. trade deficit through at least three commercial or investment deals exceeding US$5 million each and a tripling of American goods and agricultural exports to Myanmar by 2030.

The third advances President Trump's Peace Agenda: a cessation of hostilities, a durable ceasefire and a lasting peace agreement by 2030. It also proposes multistakeholder forums on fiscal federalism and territorial demarcation to reduce divisions among opposition entities and prepare for nationwide peace discussions.

The fourth aims to expand U.S. regional influence through diplomacy, public messaging, humanitarian assistance and coordination with ASEAN, the Asia Quad and the Asia Troika. It explicitly includes countering China's influence and reaching at least three million vulnerable people through U.S.-supported assistance.

Together, these goals show that Washington is seeking more than diplomatic access. It wants security cooperation, commercial returns, progress toward peace and greater influence in Myanmar relative to other regional actors.

Naypyidaw's Appetite for Opportunity—and Its Limits

Naypyidaw may see an opportunity to make itself useful to Washington without resolving the political conflict. Its institutional access and control

over administrative and economic channels give it advantages in responding to American priorities.

Law-enforcement cooperation is an obvious starting point. The military could stage highly visible operations against scam centers and narcotics networks to demonstrate its usefulness. But success must be measured by dismantling networks, financiers and protection structures, not simply raids and arrests. Where military-linked actors have enabled these operations, the military risks presenting itself as the fireman who helped create the fire.

Immigration cooperation offers another opening. By facilitating repatriation of undocumented Myanmar nationals, the junta could align itself with the White House's enforcement priorities. It could become a double-dipped diplomatic win for Naypyidaw: gaining favor in Washington while potentially exposing returnees to persecution or forced conscription.

The commercial agenda offers a more tangible opportunity. Yet American exports and investment could inadvertently provide channels for laundering regime-linked wealth, circumventing sanctions or enriching military-connected businesses and cronies.

The Self-Appointed President's flirtation with Washington could also complicate his dependence on Beijing. These relationships cannot necessarily be exploited independently. The rare-earth question illustrates the dilemma: Washington's interest in critical minerals intersects with China's strategic interests and dominance in processing and refining.

Asymmetric Access

The strategy creates an opening for both Naypyidaw and the democratic resistance, but their access to Washington's preferred channels is unequal. The military controls much of the administrative machinery and existing economic and diplomatic channels. Resistance has different assets: territorial influence, grassroots networks, political legitimacy among its constituencies and relationships with ethnic organizations. Neither side possesses everything Washington seeks.

The military can offer administrative access and transactional cooperation, but the resistance's diverse political and ethnic stakeholders including the Steering Council on the Emergence of a Federal Union of Myanmar (SCEF), the ethnic resistance organizations (EROs), political parties and civil society are indispensable to a credible nationwide political process. Their challenge is to turn these assets into coordinated strategic leverage.

Access and visibility are not influenced. A seat at the table provides visibility; strategic credibility determines whether an actor can shape what happens there. Resistance cannot assume political legitimacy automatically translates into bargaining power. It must demonstrate its capacity to coordinate, govern and deliver.

The Resistance: Political Unity to Strategic Credibility

For SCEF and other EROs partners outside the coalition, the strategy demands a timely, coordinated response.

SCEF must broaden engagement across resistance stakeholders and establish common principles for dealing with Washington and other international partners, while respecting the distinct interests and responsibilities of individual EROs. Competing approaches and commitments would weaken collective leverage.

SCEF and participating EROs should prepare a policy document outlining practical cooperation against scam operations, trafficking and narcotics networks. A working-level liaison mechanism could facilitate cooperation without legitimizing military authorities or undermining legitimate local administrations.

On immigration, SCEF should not oppose U.S. enforcement policy. It should document credible risks facing people returning to military-controlled areas, including persecution and forced conscription.

SCEF must also address its commercial and financial weaknesses through an economic blueprint demonstrating transparency, stability and predictable governance to prospective partners.

The resistance should develop a framework for federal resource governance. Fiscal federalism and territorial demarcation concern political authority, ownership, environmental protection and revenue-sharing. These fundamental decisions must emerge from an inclusive, Myanmar-led settlement, not be shaped by external powers. This is particularly important because the U.S. Mission links its proposed forums to access to rare-earth resources.

Myanmar's rare-earth deposits, particularly in Kachin State, where the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) controls significant mining areas, are strategically important. Mining has also expanded into other ethnic-controlled territories. China dominates processing and refining, and its economic and political leverage over ethnic organizations cannot be discounted. The KIA

and other stakeholders must protect their interests without becoming instruments in a Washington-Beijing contest.

SCEF and the EROs also need a common position on ceasefire negotiations. They should remain open to a genuine political settlement, but a ceasefire must not give the military time to recruit, reorganize and consolidate. It requires independent monitoring, verifiable commitments, enforceable safeguards, civilian protection and humanitarian access.

The military and its civilian administration must not be treated as the indispensable central authority or allowed to monopolize the definition of stability. A ceasefire must address the roots of conflict: military domination of politics and the economy, democratic representation and ethnic equality. Otherwise, it risks suspending fighting while preserving the conditions that caused it. The resistance must not be portrayed as an obstacle to peace simply because it rejects an inadequate agreement.

SCEF must also demonstrate reliable governance through transparent, accountable and independently monitored aid delivery via trusted local networks. It should engage Washington without becoming its proxy against Beijing. Cooperation is possible where interests converge, but its political identity must remain grounded in Myanmar's federal democratic aspirations.

What the Mission Means—and What It Could Mean

The strategy advances American interests; it does not automatically advance Myanmar's or guarantee a sustainable political settlement. The challenge is to distinguish practical cooperation from political endorsement and arrangements that could entrench the causes of conflict.

Washington's experience with authoritarian partners in counter-narcotics and counterterrorism offers a caution: cooperation on immediate security priorities does not necessarily produce accountable governance or lasting stability.

Washington should not allow commercial opportunities in Myanmar to enrich the machinery and networks responsible for the country's decades-long crisis. It must look beyond contracts signed and goods imported. Beneficial ownership transparency, verification of funding sources and rigorous sanctions compliance are essential safeguards against reinforcing military patronage networks.

The Embassy in Rangoon has experience with aid diversion, military interference and lack of transparency. It should recognize the importance of independent delivery through trusted local organizations. Reaching millions of vulnerable people depends not only on funding but on whether assistance reaches them safely and effectively.

A ceasefire pursued primarily as a diplomatic deliverable risk confusing reduced hostilities with conflict resolution. Without monitoring, enforceable guarantees and a political framework addressing the causes of war, it could allow the military to consolidate while diminishing the resistance's leverage.

An Opportunity—and a Challenge

The U.S. Mission strategy should neither be celebrated as a breakthrough nor dismissed as a predetermined shift toward the military. It is an operational plan for advancing American security, commercial and geopolitical interests. Washington appears intent on restoring its influence after years of limited engagement while challenging China's predominance in strategically important sectors.

Its implementation will create opportunities for Naypyidaw and the resistance, provided the latter can demonstrate that it can contribute meaningfully to Myanmar's future political order.

Washington must recognize that transactional cooperation on law enforcement, immigration and trade does not necessarily produce political change. Commercial deals without safeguards may strengthen military networks; a ceasefire without enforceable guarantees may prolong conflict. U.S. regional ambitions must also respect the political agency of Myanmar's ethnic communities rather than treat them as instruments of competition.

For SCEF and the EROs, the task is clear: to turn political unity, territorial influence and grassroots legitimacy into strategic credibility. Engage Washington, remain independent of both Beijing and Washington, and insist that peace rests on a genuine political settlement.

Do not judge the opening only by whether Washington's policy is right or wrong. Recognize the opportunity, understand the risks, and act before the other side shapes the outcome. When opportunity knocks, open the door. But be prepared for what lies beyond it.

The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of Mizzima Media.

SCAM CENTRES IN BURMA ARE HURTING PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD — AND THE UNITED STATES IS TAKING ACTION

The United States is offering a reward of up to $10 million for information that helps recover money connected to the Tai Chang scam centres in Burma, according to a press release from the US embassy in Yangon.

These criminal operations steal money from Americans and exploit people who have been trafficked and forced to work in scam centres.

If a person has information about these operations, they can contact the FBI at TaiChangTIPS@fbi.gov.

The FBI has stepped up its efforts to dismantle the sprawling network of cyber-scam centres operating across Myanmar and Southeast Asia, working alongside the US Department of Justice, the Secret Service and law enforcement agencies in Thailand and other countries.

A central part of this campaign is the Scam Center Strike Force, established in November 2025, which targets the criminal syndicates responsible for large-scale cryptocurrency investment fraud, romance scams and other sophisticated online schemes. The FBI is pursuing the financial networks behind these operations, identifying their leaders, seizing fraudulent websites, freezing cryptocurrency assets and working with technology companies to shut down social media accounts and digital infrastructure used by the criminals.

FBI agents have also been deployed to Bangkok to work directly with the Royal Thai Police, investigating compounds along the Myanmar–Thailand border, including notorious operations such as Tai Chang. In April 2026, the US Department of Justice reported that more than US$700 million in cryptocurrency linked to suspected scam-related money laundering had been restrained, while investigations had resulted in criminal charges against alleged operators and the seizure of hundreds of fraudulent websites.

However, the operation faces enormous challenges because many compounds operate in Myanmar's conflict zones, where armed groups, corrupt officials and transnational criminal organisations complicate enforcement. Another major concern is that thousands of people working inside these compounds are themselves victims of human trafficking, having been lured by false employment offers and forced to carry out fraud under threats of violence.

Consequently, the FBI's campaign is not simply about recovering money stolen from American citizens; it is also an attempt to disrupt an international criminal industry that exploits vulnerable people and flourishes in areas where effective law enforcement and government accountability have largely collapsed.



ASEAN LEADERS REVIEW AND DECIDE ON A WAY FORWARD FOR THE FIVE-POINT CONSENSUS ON MYANMAR

On 15 November, the ASEAN leaders came out with a review and decisions on the Five-Point Consensus agreed in 2021 following the military coup in Myanmar.

The following is the statement:

ASEAN LEADERS' REVIEW AND DECISION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIVE-POINT CONSENSUS

Manila, Philippines

15 November 2026

1. We reviewed the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus (5PC) and took note of the recommendations of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meetings on 21 July and 14 November 2026.

REVIEW

2. We discussed the developments in Myanmar and expressed deep concern over the conflicts and humanitarian situation in the country, as well as encouraged substantive progress in the implementation of the 5PC and underscored the need for ASEAN to calibrate its engagement with Myanmar based on developments on the ground, in a manner that encourages further progress in the implementation of the 5PC. We denounced the acts of violence in Myanmar against civilians and public facilities, and urged all parties involved to take concrete action to immediately halt indiscriminate violence, denounce any escalation, exercise utmost restraint, ensure the protection and safety of all civilians and civilian infrastructures, and create a conducive environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people in need in Myanmar and inclusive national political dialogue.

3. We reaffirmed ASEAN's continuous commitment to assisting Myanmar in finding a peaceful and durable solution to the ongoing situation, as Myanmar remains an integral part of ASEAN.

4. We appreciated the ASEAN Chair's efforts to ensure progress on the implementation of the 5PC in its entirety, with the sole objective of restoring peace, stability, and democracy, through a Myanmar-owned and -led approach.

5. We welcomed the visits of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs H.E. Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro, in her capacity as the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar, to Nay Pyi Taw on 6 January 2026 and 29 October 2026, as part of her mandate to meet with all parties concerned in Myanmar. We welcomed the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) ASEAN Monitoring Team Mission to Myanmar that was led by the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar, on 28 October 2026, which marked the start of a month long distribution of humanitarian support to

over 11,000 households including in four new priority townships not previously reached by the AHA Centre, as well as Myanmar's openness to further expand humanitarian access to other areas.

6. We commended the work of the ASEAN Chair, through its Special Envoy, in establishing inclusive engagements with all relevant stakeholders in Myanmar by promoting national inclusive dialogue, reaching out to parties concerned, including regional and international organisations, in a sustainable manner, towards reaching a Myanmar-owned and -led resolution to the situation in Myanmar. We further commended the Special Envoy's engagements with Myanmar stakeholders, either bilaterally or through specific platforms such as the Myanmar Stakeholders' Meeting in Tagaytay, Philippines from 19 to 20 January 2026 and the Informal Meetings of the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar with Myanmar Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) and representatives of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee (NSPNC) on 13 July 2026 in Pattaya, Thailand. We also noted the Special Envoy's remaining planned engagements before the end of her term.

7. We acknowledge the ongoing efforts by Myanmar, including the sustained dialogue with Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signatories and some non-NCA signatories, political parties, peace facilitators, and other relevant stakeholders and welcome Myanmar's will to move towards national reconciliation.

8. We further recognised that a sustainable, objective and inclusive ASEAN approach is a crucial step to building trust and bridging differences among different stakeholders, facilitating the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people in need in Myanmar without discrimination, and promoting cessation of violence and establishing inclusive national dialogue.

9. We appreciated the contributions by ASEAN Member States, external partners, the United Nations (UN), the private sector and the continued support from all stakeholders in Myanmar that have enabled the AHA Centre to ensure an effective response and continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar in an inclusive manner to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Myanmar, according to the Joint Needs Assessment (JNA).

10. We welcomed the progress of the provision of ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance under Phase 2 (Life-Sustaining) by the AHA Centre in coordination with Myanmar to implement Point 4 of the ASEAN Leaders' 5PC.

11. We noted with appreciation the continued support from the international community, particularly the UN, for ASEAN's efforts in the implementation of the 5PC, as it remains critical in helping the people of Myanmar to achieve a Myanmar-owned and -led peaceful and durable solution through inclusive national dialogue. We took note of the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar's briefing before the United Nations Security Council on 6 March 2026.

12. We recalled the informal meeting on 12 July 2026 in Bangkok, Thailand, guided by the mandate to continue constructive and principled engagement with Myanmar consistent with the 5PC. We also noted the conclusion of the three phases of Myanmar's general elections and the succeeding developments, including the formation of Myanmar's ASEAN Affairs Committee on 29 September 2026. We also took note of Myanmar's communication dated 14 October 2026 on Myanmar's efforts towards peace, stability and development.

13. We noted that the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar briefed on the Progress on the Implementation of the Five-Point Consensus during the Extended Informal Consultations on 28 January 2026, 12 July 2026, 21 July 2026 and 14 November 2026.

14. We acknowledged the Chair's comprehensive report on the 5PC implementation and, in line with the assessment of the report, reiterated our deep concern over the insufficient progress in the implementation of the 5PC, while noting limited progress in the provision of humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre. Therefore, we agreed on the following:

DECISIONS

15. Reaffirm the 5PC as the main reference for addressing the political crisis in Myanmar and urge its full implementation to help the people of Myanmar achieve an inclusive and durable peaceful resolution that is Myanmar-owned and -led, towards the betterment of the people of Myanmar, hence contributing to peace, security, and stability in the region.

16. Urge all parties and stakeholders concerned in Myanmar, in particular the armed forces, security forces, and armed groups, to de-escalate violence and stop targeted attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and enhance trust- building efforts. We reiterate our call for the cessation of violence and underscored the importance of a sustained nationwide ceasefire in Myanmar, towards creating a safe and

conducive environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid and assistance to all those in need and for an inclusive national dialogue, consistent with the 5PC.

17. Advance the safe, effective, and transparent delivery of ASEAN humanitarian assistance based on the Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) by the AHA Centre with the continued support of relevant stakeholders in Myanmar. Ensure that assistance can directly reach IDPs affected by the ongoing armed conflicts, while adapting to the evolving humanitarian needs and challenges on the ground.

18. Encourage our regional and external partners and other international partners to scale up their financial support towards ensuring the continuation of efforts undertaken by the AHA Centre in extending delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar.

We also call on Myanmar to continue facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Myanmar, and to ensure the safe, timely, effective and transparent delivery of humanitarian assistance without discrimination, such as by allowing the AHA Centre and other humanitarian organisations to expand the provision of humanitarian assistance for unserved communities in need, including those in the list of priority townships identified by the AHA Centre.

19. Continue engagements with all relevant stakeholders in Myanmar by the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair, with the support of ASEAN Member States and Myanmar's neighbouring countries as relevant and appropriate in line with the 5PC to build trust toward convening an inclusive national dialogue, with the aim of achieving a durable peaceful resolution to the crisis that is Myanmar- owned and-led.

20. Task the Foreign Ministers to continue constructive and principled engagement with Myanmar, including by convening informal discussions in accordance with the 5PC. We also encourage efforts by individual ASEAN Member States through constructive engagement with all relevant stakeholders, in consultation with the ASEAN Chair, to advance substantive progress in the implementation of the 5PC.

21. Encourage close coordination between the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair and the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Myanmar. We further underline the importance of ASEAN Member States being informed and engaged in such processes.

22. Enhance continued coordination among the previous, current and incoming Chair of ASEAN to ensure policy coherence, seamless transitions, and sustained follow-through on the implementation of the 5PC, as well as with other ASEAN Member States.

23. Acknowledge the efforts of the Senior Officials in deliberating the proposal on a longerterm ASEAN Special Envoy on Myanmar to ensure continuity in the role as well as elements for assessing progress in Myanmar. We task Senior Officials to build on these deliberations and continue exploring possible ways forward to advance the implementation of the 5PC.

24. Continue to uphold the collective ASEAN decision of the 40th, 41st, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th and 48th ASEAN Summits regarding Myanmar's non-political representation at ASEAN Summits and ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meetings until there is meaningful progress in the implementation of the 5PC. Myanmar's participation in other meetings of ASEAN sectoral ministerial bodies or mechanisms should be unrestricted at all levels.

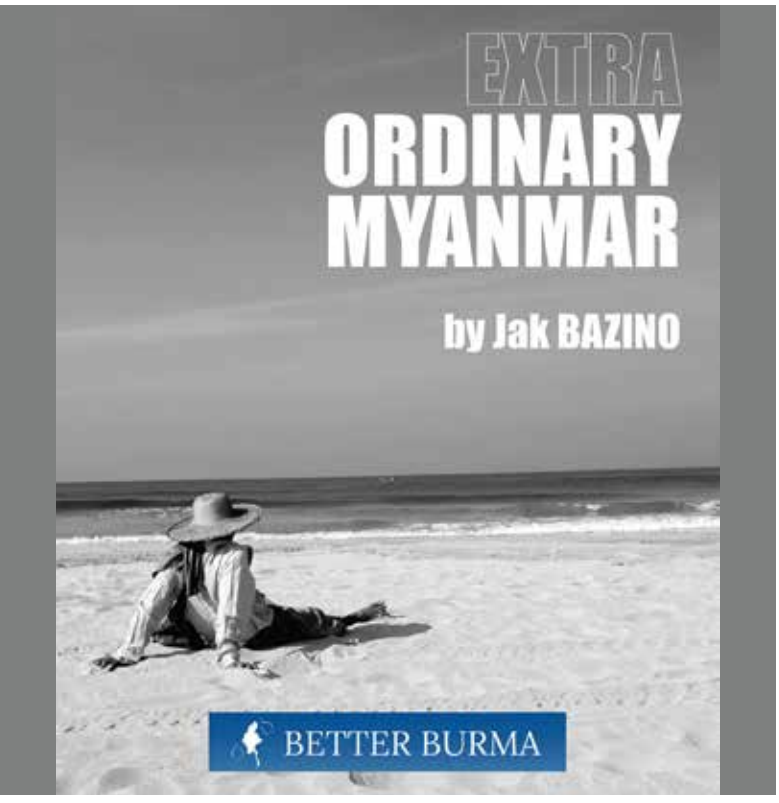
25. Pursue a calibrated engagement with Myanmar through a phased and progress-based approach, taking into account developments on the ground. Subject to sustained and concrete progress in the implementation of the 5PC by Myanmar, ASEAN may consider the gradual restoration of Myanmar's full political representation.

26. Reiterate that the crisis in Myanmar should not affect the ASEAN Community-building process and decision-making, as we pledge to continue working together in the maintenance and promotion of peace, security, and stability.

27. Maintain that following the Singapore Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2027, subsequent rotation of Chairmanship shall continue to be based on alphabetical order, until a different decision is made.

28. Reaffirm our commitment to strengthen cooperation among ASEAN Member States, and between ASEAN and its External Partners, as well as with neighbouring countries of Myanmar, and the UN with a view to supporting ASEAN efforts to address the crisis in Myanmar and in combating transnational crimes including human trafficking, drugs trafficking, displacement, cyber threats, online scams and other security risks.

29. We shall review the above decision at our future sessions and mandate the ASEAN Foreign Ministers to continue monitoring progress and report to the next ASEAN Summit.



CAPTURING THE WONDER AND DIVERSITY OF MYANMAR

"Extra Ordinary Myanmar" is a photography book by Jak Bazino published in partnership with the nonprofit Better Burma just published.

It features pictures Mr Bazino took between 1998 and 2018, and the book offers a personal portrait of Myanmar through its people, places and everyday moments. Having lived in the country for more than ten years, the photographer wanted this collection not only to celebrate its everyday beauty, but also to give something back.

Available on Amazon in print and digital editions, the book has a clear humanitarian purpose: all proceeds from sales will go to Better Burma to support its humanitarian projects in Myanmar.

Better Burma (www.betterburma.org) is a U.S.-based nonprofit supporting people affected by conflict in Myanmar and amplifying Myanmar voices through independent media. Its work reaches communities inside Myanmar, along the borders, and across the wider diaspora. With a team on the ground and a trusted network of local partners, Better Burma works alongside communities to identify needs, guide implementation, and reach areas that are difficult to access.

HOW TO ORDER ON AMAZON IN YOUR COUNTRY: search on your local Amazon website using the title "Extra Ordinary Myanmar" or the ISBN: 9798902430421

More information: https://www.betterburma.org/extraordinary-myanmar











AN UPDATE TO MIZZIMA READERS AND FRIENDS

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

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

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

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

- YouTube and digital monetization
- Training and Mizzima Media Training Institute
- AI Technology through Mizzima EAE for research, content regeneration and production
- Repackaging content across TV, Facebook, YouTube and digital platforms
- Mizzima Weekly, Mizzima English and policy products
- Home Away From Home - HH Channel and diaspora community services
- Production services, events, partnerships and sponsorships
- Non-media business initiatives.

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

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

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

Truth. Voice. Future.

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



CHINA PAINTS XI AS MAKER OF HISTORIC TALKS WITH TRUMP, PUTIN

The unprecedented three-way meeting between US, Chinese and Russian leaders in Shenzhen last week has dominated headlines in China, with media painting it a "fruitful" and historic event made possible by Xi Jinping's devotion to peace.

China's foreign ministry labeled the trilateral between Presidents Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Xi as "groundbreaking" before it even happened -- a narrative echoed by state media in the run up to talks and their aftermath.

The state-backed Global Times published an editorial on 20 November headlined: "China-Russia-US summit is unprecedented and makes history".

"China, Russia and the US have different national conditions, but this doesn't mean confrontation is inevitable," the editorial said.

"Many analysts believe that without China's sustained efforts and its role as the host, this 'historic gathering' would probably have been difficult to achieve," it said.

"While we will not engage in hypothetical analysis, it is undeniable that China played an important role in facilitating the meeting."

Splashed across the front page of Friday's Shenzhen Evening News was a photo of three men at the round table, with Xi at the centre, along with the headline "Xi hosts China-Russia-US leaders' meeting".

China carefully choreographs official events such as state visits or global summits, and media combed through the optics of the trilateral for evidence of its success.

'Subtle' moments

People's Daily, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, ran a piece unpacking the "subtle" moments of the three-way meeting.

"The foreshadowing of shifting eras often lies within subtle and gradual change," began the piece titled "Micro-observations from the first China-Russia-US heads of state meeting".

Trump and Putin emerged "almost simultaneously" from waiting lounges to greet Xi before their meeting, "and offered friendly smiles", the piece read.

The men were "calm and resolute" as they walked "side-by-side" towards the spot for their group photo-op, the newspaper added.

It also played up China's role as host: "That this historic chapter unfolded in China came as no surprise to the world," it said.

The leaders "parted ways with warm farewells", with Xi escorting Trump and Putin to their cars, it added.

The trilateral also dominated discussions on Chinese social media, which is subject to heavy censorship.

The topic "China-Russia-US leaders' meeting yielded fruitful results" was the number one trending topic on domestic social media platform Weibo on Friday morning.

But some users were equally enthusiastic about events elsewhere.

SpaceX and Tesla CEO Elon Musk's trip from Shenzhen to Shanghai, where he visited the car company's huge factory, was the second trending topic on Weibo on Friday morning.

Trump and Putin's departure from Shenzhen airport, in contrast, received less limelight in local media.

AFP



DEFINED ELSEWHERE

"In my book, I call community a 'category of empire.'" Prof. Judith Beyer, a legal and political anthropologist, whose long-term ethnographic fieldwork in Yangon covered the period from 2012 until 2020, uses that proposition to unsettle one of the most ordinary concepts – not only in Myanmar, but in academia as well. In Myanmar, Beyer elucidates in her book Rethinking Community in Myanmar (published by University of Hawai'i Press, 2024), "community" usually implies a bounded ethno-religious group, with membership that seems 'natural' precisely because law, property, administration, and everyday speech have made it so.

During long stays among Muslim and Hindu residents in Yangon, as Beyer spent time with families and listened to the trustees of religious institutions, she explored the question how members sustained these ethno-religious "communities" in an ethno-nationalist Buddhist state and how do they understood belonging. Complementing her fieldwork, she also investigated the historical trajectory of the category 'community' which she traces back to British India and colonial Burma, where legal engineering helped turn religion into an administrative way of classing people into bounded groups. Migrants from India arrived with distinctions of region, class, profession, language, and wealth, yet colonial rule tended to organize them by religious categories. Land grants for mosques, temples, and shrines helped materialize this ethno-religious categorization in place: so-called sacred or "green" property could be held on behalf of a religious group, and so trustees of these sites acquired the power to speak for that group. The buildings in these sites thus did more than shelter worship: They fixed collective identities into the city and transplanted legal structures that remain consequential to this day, including Personal Status Laws that govern matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance.

That history complicates the common picture of colonial Rangoon as a "plural society" in which groups simply lived beside one another. For Beyer, the problem lies in treating the groups themselves as self-evident. Colonial Rangoon was built through imperial migration and administration, and the "communities" used to explain it were also partly products of the same categorial system. But this bureaucratic imagination came to be seen as natural not only by state actors, but also the people who were so classified. Among some of the Burmese Indian families she worked with, the colonial past was remembered with ambivalence and even warmth because their ancestors had enjoyed status and influence that diminished after independence.

CATCH THE PODCAST

Read more and listen to the Insight Myanmar Podcast here: https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2026/10/27/episode-631-defined-elsewhere


Photo: AFP

BURMA CAMPAIGN UK WELCOMES EXPULSION OF MYANMAR MILITARY ATTACHÉ FROM UK

Burma Campaign UK on 19 November warmly welcomed an announcement by British Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband that the Burmese military defence attaché will finally be expelled from the UK. Burma Campaign UK has been calling for his expulsion since the military coup in 2021.

Captain Soe Aung, a serving member of the Burmese military, currently lives and works from two Burmese government owned houses in Wimbledon, South London.

The announcement came following a historic judgment by the International Court of Justice that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya. It is the first time the court has made such a judgement.

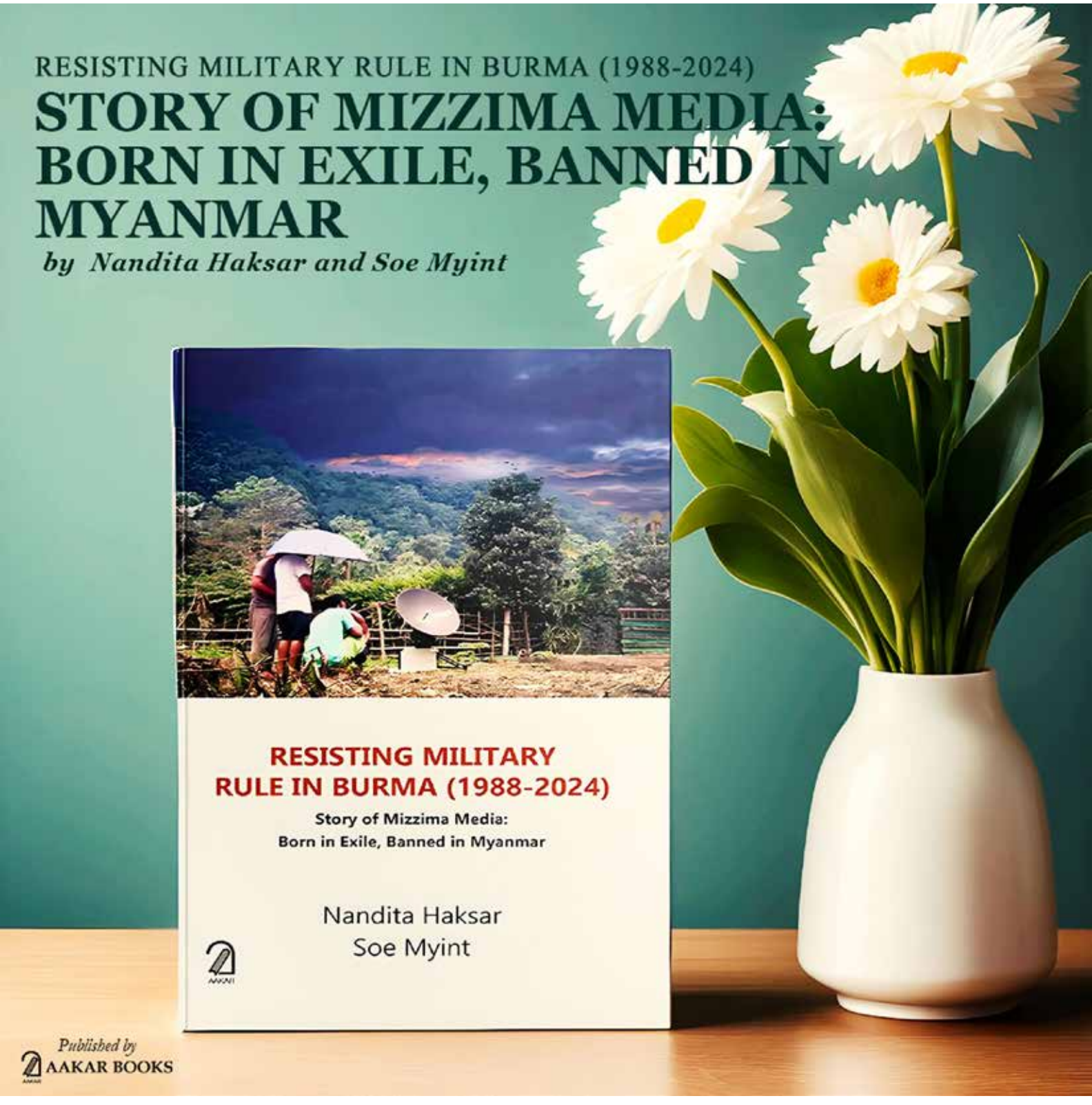
The presence of a serving member of the Burmese military in the UK created concern among the Burmese community in the UK regarding their security and the safety of their families back in Burma if they took part in anti-military regime protests or activities in the UK.

"A serving member of a military which has committed genocide should not be allowed to remain in the UK, and this expulsion is very welcome, as well as making the Burmese community in the UK feel safer," said Anna Roberts, Executive Director of Burma Campaign UK.

Burma Campaign UK also welcomes Ed Miliband announcement that he will convene a UN Security Council meeting. UN human rights experts and Rohingya representatives must be among those invited to brief the council. In recent years it has largely been envoys and representatives of humanitarian organisations who have briefed the council, meaning there has been less of a focus on violations of international law.

With Burmese military social media accounts announcing that Myanmar will no longer cooperate with the ICJ, a resolution must be tabled to compel enforcement.

Regular rounds of targeted sanctions to reduce Burmese military access to revenue and arms must also be introduced. These play a vital role in protecting all civilians in Burma.



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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.