

MYANMAR'S WAY FORWARD

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA	- Arakan Army
AAPP	- Assistance Association for Political Prisoners
ABSDF	- All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ACLED	- Armed Conflict Location & Event Data
AFTA	- Articles of Federal Transitional Arrangements
AHA Centre	- ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management
AHRD	- ASEAN Human Rights Declaration
ALD	- Arakan League for Democracy
ANFREL	- Asian Network for Free Elections
ASEAN	- Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CDM	- Civil Disobedience Movement
CHRO	- Chin Human Rights Organisation
CNF	- Chin National Front
COAR	- Center for Operational Analysis and Research
CPA	- Common Political Agreement
CRPH	- Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw
DVB	- Democratic Voice of Burma
EAO	- Ethnic Armed Organisation
EROs	- Ethnic Resistance / Revolutionary Organisations
FDC	- Federal Democracy Charter
GSCs	- General Strike Committees
ICC	- International Criminal Court
ICCPR	- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICJ	- International Court of Justice
IIMM	- UN Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar
JCB	- Joint Coordination Body

KIO	- Kachin Independence Organisation
KNPP	- Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU	- Karen National Union
MEB	- Myanmar Economic Bank
MEC	- Multi-Ethnic Council
MOGE	- Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise
NCA	- Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement
ND-Burma	- Network for Human Rights Documentation – Burma
NDSC	- National Defence and Security Council
NLD	- National League for Democracy
NUCC	- National Unity Consultative Council
NUG	- National Unity Government
OHCHR	- UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PDF	- People's Defence Force
PPST	- Peace Process Steering Team
SAC	- State Administration Council
SAC-M	- Special Advisory Council for Myanmar
SNLD	- Shan Nationalities League for Democracy
SSPC	- State Security and Peace Commission
UEC	- Union Election Commission
UN	- United Nations
UNCT	- UN Country Team
USDP	- Union Solidarity and Development Party
VPN	- Virtual Private Network
WLB	- Women's League of Burma



Peaceful protesters at City Hall in Yangon flash three-fingered salutes against the coup on 6 February 2021. (Myanmar Now)

INTRODUCTION

Myanmar has reached a crossroads with two possible ways ahead of it. One way, the path being pursued by the Myanmar military and its principal patron, China, is the path deeper into crisis. It is a reversion to military dictatorship under the guise of a make-believe civilian government following an illegitimate election. The other way, being pursued by Myanmar's revolutionary federal democratic movement, is the path of the future. It is the embrace of the vision of a federal democratic Myanmar based on peace, justice and human rights. The choice of the way is the choice of Myanmar's peoples alone. It is not for the military or its neo-colonial patron to choose. It is a choice that will determine Myanmar's future for decades to come.

The military junta's way backwards begins with its plans to conduct general elections in Myanmar from December 2025 onwards. The planned polls will be the first elections in Myanmar since November 2020, when Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy (NLD) won a landslide democratic victory. The military refused to accept

the outcome of the 2020 elections, sought to overturn the results by attempting to seize power in a coup on 1 February 2021, and formed a junta in place of an elected government, abrogating Myanmar's 2008 Constitution in the process. The military junta is now framing its 2025-26 elections as a return to civilian rule. In fact, it would result in nothing more than a military dictatorship in civilian clothes.

The military junta initially planned to conduct elections within one year of the attempted coup but was unable to do so. Widespread peaceful protests, armed resistance and the formation of the "Spring Revolution" in response to the military's actions in February 2021 prevented the military junta from consolidating power and advancing its plans. The combined efforts of revolutionary forces have since liberated large areas of territory from the military junta's control and dismantled much of the junta-controlled central state.

In its place, revolutionary actors are seeking to build the foundations of a federal democratic Myanmar. A growing parallel state structure is delivering core services and institutionalising governance from the ground up through participatory, community-led models. An alternative constitutional process is also emerging, grounded in a revolutionary vision for Myanmar's future. Its priority aim is to enshrine civilian supremacy and ensure that the military is fully subordinate to a democratically elected government.

This paper is divided into two parts. Part I assesses the old way, the military junta's planned elections. Part II presents, in their own words, the vision that stakeholders in Myanmar's revolution have for the nation's future. This is the new way, the way forward. The paper concludes by considering these competing trajectories.

METHODOLOGY

This paper draws on a targeted consultation with key actors across Myanmar's revolutionary movement and secondary research.

Data Collection

Primary data were gathered through a written questionnaire distributed by SAC-M in September 2025 to leaders of 41 organisations and key individuals representing different components of the revolutionary landscape. The questionnaire comprised nine open-ended questions:

- 1) What is your organisation's vision for Myanmar? What are its key ingredients?
- 2) What actions are you taking to achieve this vision, and with whom?
- 3) What other conditions are required in Myanmar to achieve it?
- 4) What kinds of support do you need?
- 5) What impact might the military's planned elections have on Myanmar's future?
- 6) What are the root causes of the conflicts in Myanmar?
- 7) How can trust be built between groups and communities?
- 8) What should the international community do to support revolutionary actors?
- 9) Are there any other messages you wish to share with Myanmar audiences or internationally?

At the time of writing, responses had been received from 25 organisations, including consultative bodies, umbrella organisations and coalitions comprising dozens of constituent groups. They are:

National-Level Political Bodies

- Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH)
- National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC)
- National Unity Government (NUG)

EROs

- Arakan Army (AA)
- All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF)

- Chin National Front (CNF)
- Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO)
- Karenni Nationalities Defence Force (KNDF)
- Karen National Union (KNU)

State/Federal Unit and Ethnic-Based Councils

- Mon State Federal Council (MSFC)
- Sagaing Forum Federation (SFF)
- Ta'ang Land Council (TLC)

Coalitions and Strike Groups

- Generations' Solidarity Coalition of Nationalities (GSCN)
- Strategic Initiative Forum (SIF)

Civil Society

- Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)
- Arakan Rohingya National Council (ARNC)
- Arakan Youth Peace Network (AYPN)
- Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO)
- Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)
- Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)
- Mosaic Myanmar (MM)
- Network for Human Rights Documentation – Burma (ND-Burma)
- New Rehmonnya Federated Force (NRFF)
- People's Goal (PG)
- Women's League of Burma (WLB)

Responses were collected electronically in English or Burmese and logged in a central database. Basic thematic grouping and coding were applied to enable analysis.

Analysis

Responses were grouped into three categories for analysis:

- 1) The revolutionary vision and supporting elements (responses to questions 1-4)
- 2) Obstacles and trust building (responses to questions 6 and 7)
- 3) Calls to international action and messages to Myanmar audiences (responses to questions 8 and 9)

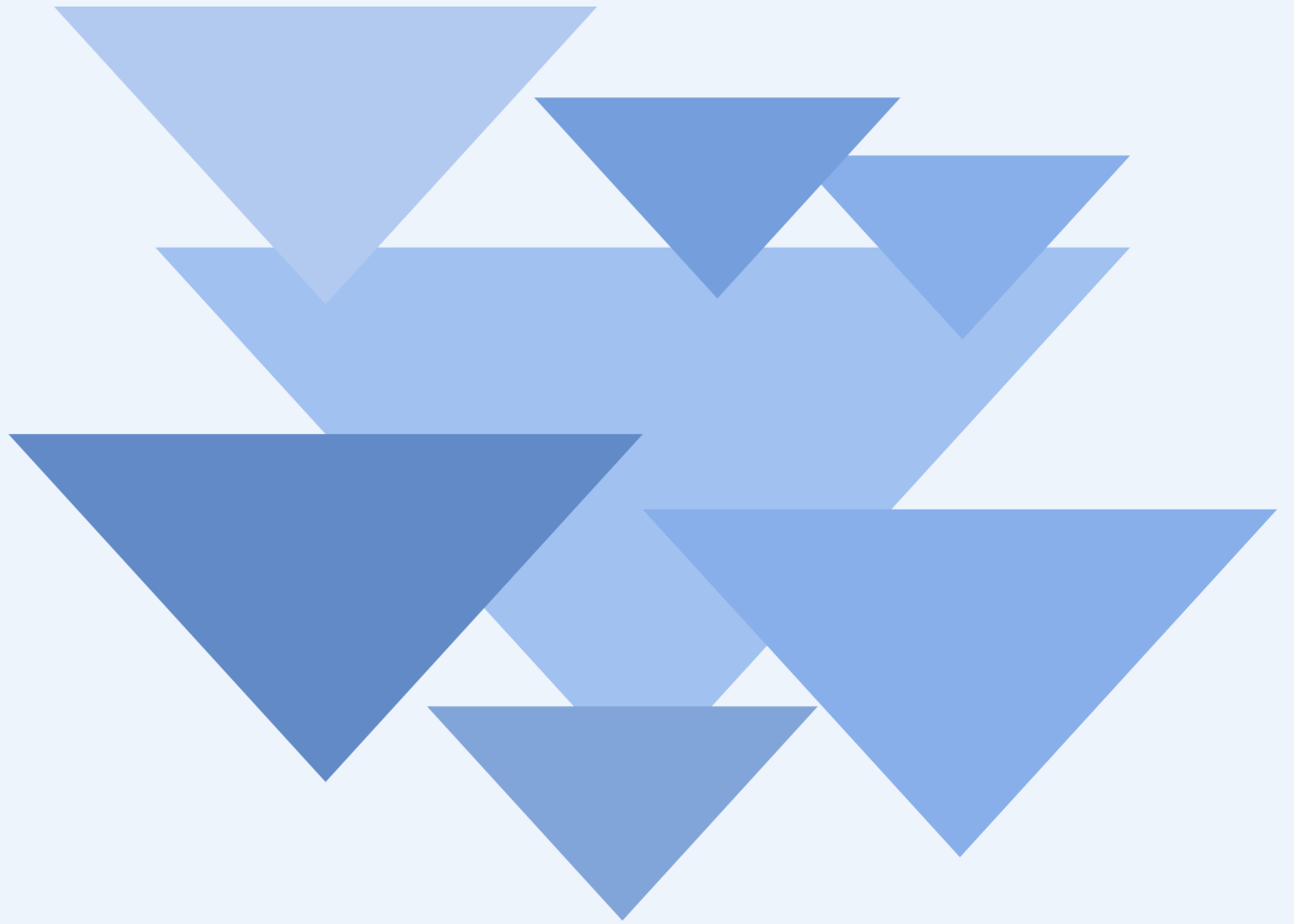
Responses to question 5 (the impact of the military's planned elections on Myanmar's future) informed the content of Part I of this paper.

Analysis followed a qualitative content approach, examining the frequency and salience of key ideas and the relationships between them. Themes were inductively identified, focusing on convergence in emphasis or priority.

The analysis reflects responses received to date. It is a partial but credible sample of revolutionary opinion. Security conditions, organisational capacity and timeframe prevented many actors contacted from participating, and in some cases, affected the depth of responses received. Verification of operational claims was beyond the scope of this study.

The findings should be interpreted as indicative of broader trends within the revolutionary movement rather than a comprehensive census of all revolutionary actors. Furthermore, not all respondents provided responses to all nine questions, and respondents varied in the issues they identified and addressed. There could be many reasons for this, including time constraints and the prioritised address of some issues over others. SAC-M does not interpret a respondent's decision not to answer a particular question or decision not to address certain issues as avoidance or opposition. Anonymised direct quotations are used selectively throughout this paper to illustrate representative views.

SAC-M hopes to use and build on the data collected from respondents to conduct further, in-depth analysis of stakeholder responses in follow-up to this paper. SAC-M welcomes the submission of responses from additional revolutionary stakeholders on an ongoing basis.



PART I: THE OLD WAY DEEPER INTO CRISIS

Part I of this paper discusses the Myanmar military junta's planned elections, slated to commence on 28 December 2025. It provides a background on previous elections in Myanmar, particularly in relation to the 2008 Constitution, and the constitutional break caused by the military's 2021 attempted coup. It then assesses the military junta's planned elections against international standards for free and fair elections, using the framework provided by the United Nations (UN) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Finally, it considers the outcome that the planned elections would likely produce.

1. BACKGROUND ON MILITARY JUNTA ELECTIONS

1.1 Previous Elections



We have already experienced the military's past elections, which were rigged and undemocratic.

– Respondent

Successive military juntas in Myanmar have used the staging of elections as an effective means of sustaining military control over state institutions since the military first seized power in a 1962 coup. Most of these electoral processes have been heavily orchestrated and non-competitive. On the three occasions in 63 years that meaningful competition in elections was permitted, the military's proxy parties suffered landslide defeats, underscoring the Myanmar public's consistent and widespread rejection of military rule. In only one of these cases were the results respected with winners allowed to fulfil their mandates.

In 1990, the NLD, Myanmar's most prominent democratic political party formed during the 1988 democratic uprising, secured a decisive victory in Myanmar's first multi-party elections in three decades. The NLD won an overwhelming majority over the military-backed party.¹ The Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) won the second most seats, followed by the Arakan League for Democracy (ALD). The ruling military junta refused to recognise the result. No further elections were held for another two decades, until 2010.

By that time, the military had drafted and adopted the 2008 Constitution.² The 2008 Constitution was developed in response to increasing domestic and international pressure for democratic reform. It was carefully designed to permit a limited role in government for elected representatives while preserving ultimate military control over the state. The 2008 Constitution reserved a decisive portion of seats in both houses of parliament for serving military officers,³ which, *inter alia*, gave the military an effective veto over any proposed constitutional amendment.⁴ Military appointees of both houses of parliament formed one of the three groups that each elect a Vice President, one of whom was then elected President by the full Union Parliament.⁵ The military also secured control of key government

¹ Myanmar Elections Watch, History of Elections in Myanmar, available at: <https://myanmarelectionwatch.org/en/history-of-elections-in-myanmar> (accessed 19 November 2025).

² The 2008 Constitution was adopted by a popular referendum that was considered by independent observers to be fraudulent. See Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), Burma (Myanmar): A Preliminary Report on the Referendum of May 10, 2008, available at: <https://anfrel.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Preliminary-Report-on-the-Referendum-of-May-10-2008.pdf> (accessed 19 November 2025).

³ Articles 109(b), 141(b).

⁴ Article 436.

⁵ Articles 60-61.

ministries: the Ministers of Defence, Home Affairs and Border Affairs were serving military officers appointed by the Commander-in-Chief⁶ and, as serving military, answerable to the Commander-in-Chief, not to the President. Through these provisions, the 2008 Constitution guaranteed that military figures dominated the National Defence and Security Council (NDSC).⁷

In preparation for the 2010 elections, the military junta transformed the Union Solidarity and Development Association – a paramilitary organisation run by senior military generals and members of the military junta – into a political party, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).⁸ Senior military officials, including General Thein Sein, were retired from the military to lead the USDP into the 2010 elections, which the USDP won. The elections were neither free nor fair, with multiple reports citing issues such as intimidation, censorship, and advance voting manipulation.⁹ NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi was under military house arrest at the time and the NLD did not participate along with other winning parties from the 1990 election. A government combining serving military and USDP officials was formed. Former General Thein Sein became President.

General elections were held again in 2015, in accordance with the 2008 Constitution. This time the NLD did contest, with Aung San Suu Kyi having been released from military detention. The NLD secured another decisive victory, winning 79% of all elected seats across both houses.¹⁰ While many were disenfranchised by ongoing armed conflict and discriminatory laws – foremost Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law – credible international and domestic observers assessed the 2015 elections to be largely free and fair.¹¹ A coalition government of serving military officials and elected NLD, USDP and independent representatives was formed. NLD representative Htin Kyaw was elected President. Aung San Suu Kyi was appointed Foreign Minister (securing her a seat on the NDSC) and State Counsellor, a role specially created for her as the 2008 Constitution barred her from becoming President.¹² In accordance with the 2008 Constitution, serving military officers held the Ministries of Defence, Home Affairs and Border Affairs.

⁶ Article 232.

⁷ According to article 201 of the 2008 Constitution, the members of the NDSC are the President (chair), two Vice-Presidents, Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw, Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw, Commander-in-Chief, Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Minister for Defence, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Home Affairs, Minister for Border Affairs.

⁸ The USDP is structurally, financially, and ideologically dependent on the military. Its electoral strategies, leadership appointments, and policy positions are consistently aligned with the military's command structure and interests. See Network for Democracy and Development, Burma: A Violent Past to a Brutal Future The Transformation of a Paramilitary Organization into a Political Party, available at: https://burmacampaign.org.uk/media/NDD_-_A_Violent_Past_to_a_Brutal_Future.pdf (accessed 19 November 2025).

⁹ ANFREL, Burma Elections 2010: An Election of Generals, February 2011, available at: <https://anfrel.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/13-report-general-elections-tacdb-anfrel-2010.pdf> (accessed 19 November 2025); International Crisis Group, Myanmar's Post-Election Landscape, March 2011, available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia-pacific/myanmar/b118-myanmars-post-election-landscape> (accessed 19 November 2025); BBC News, Pro-military party 'wins' Burmese election, 9 November 2010, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11715956> (accessed 19 November 2025).

¹⁰ BBC News, Myanmar's 2015 landmark elections explained, 3 December 2015, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-33547036> (accessed 19 November 2025).

¹¹ The Carter Center, Myanmar: 2015 General Elections Final Election Report, January 2017, available at: <https://electionstandards.cartercenter.org/2017/01/09/myanmar-final-election-report/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

¹² The 2008 Constitution prevented any individual with a foreign spouse or children from assuming the Presidency (article 59(f)), a provision specifically designed to bar Aung San Suu Kyi from the role.

General elections were held again in 2020 under similar conditions to 2015 and under the same Constitution. Issues related to conflict and exclusionary laws persisted, with additional logistical challenges linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³ However, independent observers again found the electoral process to be broadly credible.¹⁴ The NLD won an even larger mandate than in 2015, securing 82% of all elected seats.¹⁵

This time, the military refused to accept the result. Despite the structural limitations of the 2008 Constitution, the NLD had begun exploring potential avenues for constitutional reform.¹⁶ Combined with the scale of the party's popular mandate, these developments were perceived by the military as a direct threat to its entrenched power. The result also blocked the personal ambitions of the Commander-in-Chief, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. He wanted the Presidency and was negotiating this issue with NLD representatives up until January 2021. On 1 February 2021, the day the newly elected parliament was due to convene, the military, led by Min Aung Hlaing, attempted to seize power by staging a coup d'état, bringing the military's experiment with quasi-democracy to an abrupt end.



People cast their votes in the 1990 election. (Official photo)

¹³ Progressive Voice Myanmar, A Vote with No Confidence: Myanmar's 2020 General Elections and Rights of Ethnic and Religious Minorities, October 2025, available at: <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2020/10/26/a-vote-with-no-confidence-myanmars-2020-general-elections-and-rights-of-ethnic-and-religious-minorities/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

¹⁴ The Carter Center, Carter Center Preliminary Statement on the 2020 Myanmar General Elections, 10 November 2020, available at: <https://www.cartercenter.org/news/pr/2020/myanmar-111020.html> (accessed 19 November 2025).

¹⁵ The Asia Foundation, 2020 General Election: State And Region Hluttaws, November 2020, available at: https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Myanmar_2020-General-Election-State-and-Region-Hluttaws.pdf (accessed 19 November 2025).

¹⁶ ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Democracy First, Federalism Next? The Constitutional Reform. Process in Myanmar, November 2019, available at: https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/ISEAS_Perspective_2019_93.pdf (accessed 19 November 2025).

1.2 Constitutional Break

1.2.1 The Attempted Coup

During the attempted coup on 1 February 2021, the military detained senior NLD members of the government, including President Win Myint, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, and cabinet ministers. Military personnel secured key government sites in Naypyidaw and Yangon, suspended telecommunications and internet access, and halted banking operations, before declaring a state of emergency.

Both the basis and procedure for declaring the state of emergency fell outside the scope of the 2008 Constitution. The military invoked Article 417 of the 2008 Constitution to declare the emergency, citing unsubstantiated allegations of voter fraud in the 2020 general elections.¹⁷ These claims did not amount to a threat to national unity or sovereignty, as required under that provision. Under Article 417, only the President may declare a state of emergency following consultation with the NDSC. With the President unlawfully detained, the military-appointed Vice-President announced the emergency and transfer of all legislative, executive and judicial powers to Min Aung Hlaing,¹⁸ despite the Vice-President lacking this power and the President constitutionally remaining in his position. Parliament, which was constitutionally required to review the transfer of power, was barred from sitting. Min Aung Hlaing subsequently established the State Administration Council (SAC), an illegitimate military junta. The military's actions on 1 February 2021 overrode Myanmar's constitutional order, effectively abrogating the 2008 Constitution resulting in a constitutional breakage. Despite the military junta continuing to invoke the 2008 Constitution to justify its actions, every action the junta has taken since the attempted coup has been unconstitutional and illegal. Further discussion of the 2008 Constitution in this paper serves solely to give the military junta's explanation of its conduct and does not imply that the junta's actions have any constitutional or lawful basis.

1.2.2 The Five-Point Roadmap

In August 2021, Min Aung Hlaing announced a "Five-Point Roadmap" involving plans to reconstitute the Union Election Commission (UEC), review voter lists, and hold "free and fair multiparty democratic elections" after the state of emergency, with a subsequent transfer of power to an elected government.¹⁹ The military junta initially limited the state of emergency to one year, anticipating that it could quell any opposition to its plans within this timeframe. However, as at November 2025, it remains unable to consolidate control. Prevented by the countrywide pro-democracy Spring Revolution movement from proceeding with the Five-Point Roadmap, Min Aung Hlaing renewed the

¹⁷ BBC News, Myanmar coup: Does the army have evidence of voter fraud?, 5 February 2021, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/55918746> (accessed 19 November 2025).

¹⁸ Order Number 1/2021, 1 February 2021, available at: <https://www.gnfm.com.mm/republic-of-the-union-of-myanmar-office-of-the-president-order-number-1-2021/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

¹⁹ Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council, 8 August 2021, available at: <https://cdn.digitalagencybangkok.com/file/client-cdn/gnfm/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/8-8-20211.pdf> (accessed 19 November 2025). The term 'Five-Point Roadmap' seems intended to co-opt, manipulate and undermine the ASEAN 'Five-Point Consensus' on Myanmar.

state of emergency seven times between 2021 and 2025, in six-month increments, extending it to four-and-a-half years. This far exceeded the 2008 Constitution's maximum 18-month limit for a state of emergency and violated the Constitution's requirement of parliamentary approval for extensions.²⁰

Increasing pressure from China and other international actors, and possibly present and former senior members of the military displeased with the current situation, has compelled Min Aung Hlaing to move forward with his Roadmap now, despite the lack of conducive domestic conditions. Under the 2008 Constitution, a state of emergency must first be lifted for elections to take place, at which point the NDSC needs to appoint an interim government, with elections to be held within six months.²¹ Therefore, in July 2025, the SAC junta announced the end of the nationwide state of emergency and dissolved itself. Min Aung Hlaing assumed the role of Acting President and established the new State Security and Peace Commission (SSPC) to oversee elections.²² On 1 August 2025, a new state of emergency and imposition of martial law in 63 townships across Myanmar was announced, including large areas controlled by revolutionary forces in Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Rakhine and Shan states, as well as Magway, Mandalay and Sagaing regions, demonstrating the junta's lack of control and likely plans to use force against people in those areas.²³



The planned election could lead to the emergence of new institutions that replace the military [junta] in the future and legitimize systematic brutal oppression and campaign of terror against the people. As a result, Myanmar may face economic collapse, an increase in refugees and IDPs, upsurge of the illegal drug trade, and a rise in organized crimes, scam centers, and human trafficking.

– Respondent

For the reasons outlined above, the newly formed SSPC, like the preceding SAC, is an illegitimate military junta whose actions lack any constitutional basis or legal validity. It has no mandate to organise or conduct elections, which are manifestly rejected by the population. Any subsequent "government" convened on the basis of the elections will continue to be an illegitimate military junta.

²⁰ Articles 421(b), 425.

²¹ Articles 426, 429.

²² "State Security and Peace Commission", available at: <https://sacoffice.gov.mm/en/sspcmembers> (accessed 22 November 2025).

²³ International IDEA, International IDEA Statement on the Situation in Myanmar, 12 August 2025, available at: <https://www.idea.int/news/international-idea-statement-situation-myanmar> (accessed 22 November 2025).

2. ELECTION STANDARDS

2.1 International Standards



In Myanmar, peace remains elusive. Thousands are dead. Millions displaced. Humanitarian needs are soaring. And the Rohingya and other communities are trapped in cycles of persecution and flight. The Humanitarian Plan remains critically underfunded. We need urgent support. I strongly condemn the bloodshed and urge all parties to halt the fighting, protect civilians, allow unimpeded humanitarian access, and engage in an inclusive political process. The release of those arbitrarily detained, including democratically elected leaders, is essential. Under the current circumstances, any elections risk further exclusion and instability.

– UN Secretary-General António Guterres²⁴

International standards require that elections be periodic, genuine, and that voting be based on universal and equal suffrage to guarantee the free expression of the will of the people.²⁵ For individuals to fully exercise their right to vote, their fundamental freedoms – the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, freedom of movement and information, and freedom from coercion – must be realised.²⁶

Free and fair elections require that every citizen has the right to participate in government and stand for election.²⁷ There should be no discrimination with respect to the right to stand for election, such as by reason of political affiliation.²⁸ Voting should be held through a secret ballot that ensures freedom of choice²⁹ and an independent electoral authority should be established to supervise the electoral process and ensure that it is conducted fairly and impartially.³⁰

On 9 October 2025, Malaysian Foreign Minister Dato' Seri Utama Haji Mohamad bin Haji Hasan, in his capacity as Chair of ASEAN, affirmed these standards, stating that any election in Myanmar must be conducted "in accordance with the principles of free, fair, transparent, and credible processes" and "should be held throughout the country with the participation of all political parties and

²⁴ Secretary-General's remarks to the ASEAN-United Nations Summit [as delivered], 27 October 2025, available at: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statements/2025-10-27/secretary-generals-remarks-the-asean-united-nations-summit-delivered> (accessed 22 November 2025).

²⁵ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 21; ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD), article 25.

²⁶ Human Rights Committee General Comment 25.

²⁷ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), article 25; AHRD, article 25.

²⁸ Human Rights Committee General Comment 25.

²⁹ ICCPR, article 25; AHRD, articles 25, 26.

³⁰ Human Rights Committee, General Comment 25.

stakeholders".³¹ On 26 October 2025, ASEAN Leaders in their latest 'Review and Decision on the Implementation of the Five-Point Consensus' determined that "the cessation of violence and inclusive political dialogue must precede elections" in Myanmar, and pressed "the importance of free, fair, peaceful, transparent, inclusive, and credible general elections".³² The military junta's planned elections do not come close to meeting any of these standards. The junta's limited control and exclusion of large segments of the country, denial of fundamental freedoms, and lack of transparency in the elections are addressed in turn.

2.2 Limited Control

The military junta's elections will not and cannot be universal. Voting will not be held throughout the country as, by its own admission, the military junta does not control the country.³³ Due to the combined efforts of the resistance and revolution, the military junta never gained effective control of the state.³⁴ Since the attempted coup, it has had neither full control of the country's territory nor of its people, it is unable to effectively administer the functions of government and it is incapable of establishing a stable permanent order.³⁵

The rate of the military junta's losses accelerated in October 2023 when the Three Brotherhood Alliance of Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) launched "Operation 1027" with the tacit support of China. By mid-2024, some commentators estimated that the junta had stable control of as little as 21% of Myanmar.³⁶ China reportedly assessed that the junta risked collapse within months, an outcome of Operation 1027 that China seems not to have anticipated.³⁷ From mid-2024, China has intervened, increasingly aggressively, to stabilise the junta, providing diplomatic support and military equipment, and coercing oppositional armed groups within its sphere of influence to enter into ceasefires and territorial handovers. The junta launched a campaign of mass forced conscription around the same time.

³¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, Outcome of the Working Visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, 9 October 2025, available at: <https://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/-/outcome-of-the-working-visit-of-the-minister-of-foreign-affairs-to-nay-pyi-taw-myanmar-9-october-2025> (accessed 19 November 2025).

³² At paragraph 26, ASEAN Leaders' 'Review and Decision on the Implementation of the Five-Point Consensus' Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26 October 2025, available at: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Final-ASEAN-Leaders-Review-Decision-on-the-Implementation-of-5PC-2025-as-adopted.pdf> (accessed 19 November 2025).

³³ Reuters, Myanmar junta chief admits election won't be nationwide, as war continues, 15 October 2025, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-junta-chief-admits-election-wont-be-nationwide-war-continues-2025-10-15/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

³⁴ SAC-M, Briefing Paper: Effective Control in Myanmar, September 2022, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2022/09/briefing-effective-control-myanmar/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

³⁵ SAC-M, Briefing Paper: Effective Control in Myanmar 2024 Update, May 2024, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2024/05/briefing-paper-effective-control-in-myanmar-2024-update/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

³⁶ Global Conflict Tracker, Civil War in Myanmar, updated 1 October 2025, available at: <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/rohingya-crisis-myanmar> (accessed 19 November 2025); BBC News, Soldier-spies in Myanmar help pro-democracy rebels make crucial gains, 20 December 2024, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c390ndrny17o> (accessed 19 November 2025).

³⁷ International Crisis Group, Myanmar's Dangerous Drift: Conflict, Elections and Looming Regional Détente, July 2025, available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/b184-myanmars-dangerous-drift-conflict-elections-and-looming-regional-detente> (accessed 19 November 2025).

China's interventions in 2025 have enabled the military junta to build its combat capacity, mount increased counter-offensives and reclaim some lost territory,³⁸ driven by a need to expand control ahead of the elections. Current assessments place junta control at less than 40% of the territory of Myanmar.³⁹ Election-related offensives have largely relied on forced conscripts, fragile logistics, unsustainable military operations⁴⁰ and deals with local militia groups to secure polling areas in exchange for freedom to conduct illicit activities.⁴¹ The military junta remains overstretched and continues to lose strategic ground.⁴²

“The junta is likely to use these elections to fabricate legitimacy, but this approach is unlikely to bring stability or security to most of the country's population. Furthermore, the junta is intensifying targeted airstrikes against civilians under the guise of these so-called elections.”

– Respondent

Within this context, the junta-appointed UEC has announced that voting in the elections will occur in three phases. This method has been used by previous military juntas to allow concentration of security forces in selected areas during voting. In the first phase, scheduled for 28 December 2025, voting will take place in 102 townships,⁴³ mostly in junta-controlled areas such as Yangon and Naypyidaw. In phase two, scheduled for 11 January 2026, the UEC claims that voting will take place in a further 100 townships.⁴⁴ As of 20 November 2025, voting in 72 townships remained unannounced.⁴⁵ Voting lists are based on a partial census conducted by the junta in 2024. The junta claimed the census covered only 145 townships fully, and 127 partially. It left at least an estimated 19 million people uncounted, around one third of the population.⁴⁶

³⁸ International Crisis Group, Myanmar's Dangerous Drift: Conflict, Elections and Looming Regional Détente.

³⁹ Center for Operational Analysis and Research (COAR), Actors and Control Tracker (Myanmar), available at: <https://coar-global.org/actors-and-control-tracker> (accessed 19 November 2025).

⁴⁰ Anthony Davis, Myanmar military surging to clear a path to elections, Asia Times, 19 September 2025, available at: <https://asiatimes.com/2025/09/myanmar-military-surging-to-clear-a-path-to-elections/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

⁴¹ Tun Aung Shwe, From Scam Centers to Scam State: The Road to Myanmar's Scam Election, The Diplomat, 16 September 2025, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2025/09/from-scam-centers-to-scam-state-the-road-to-myanmars-scam-election/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

⁴² International Crisis Group, Myanmar's Dangerous Drift: Conflict, Elections and Looming Regional Détente.

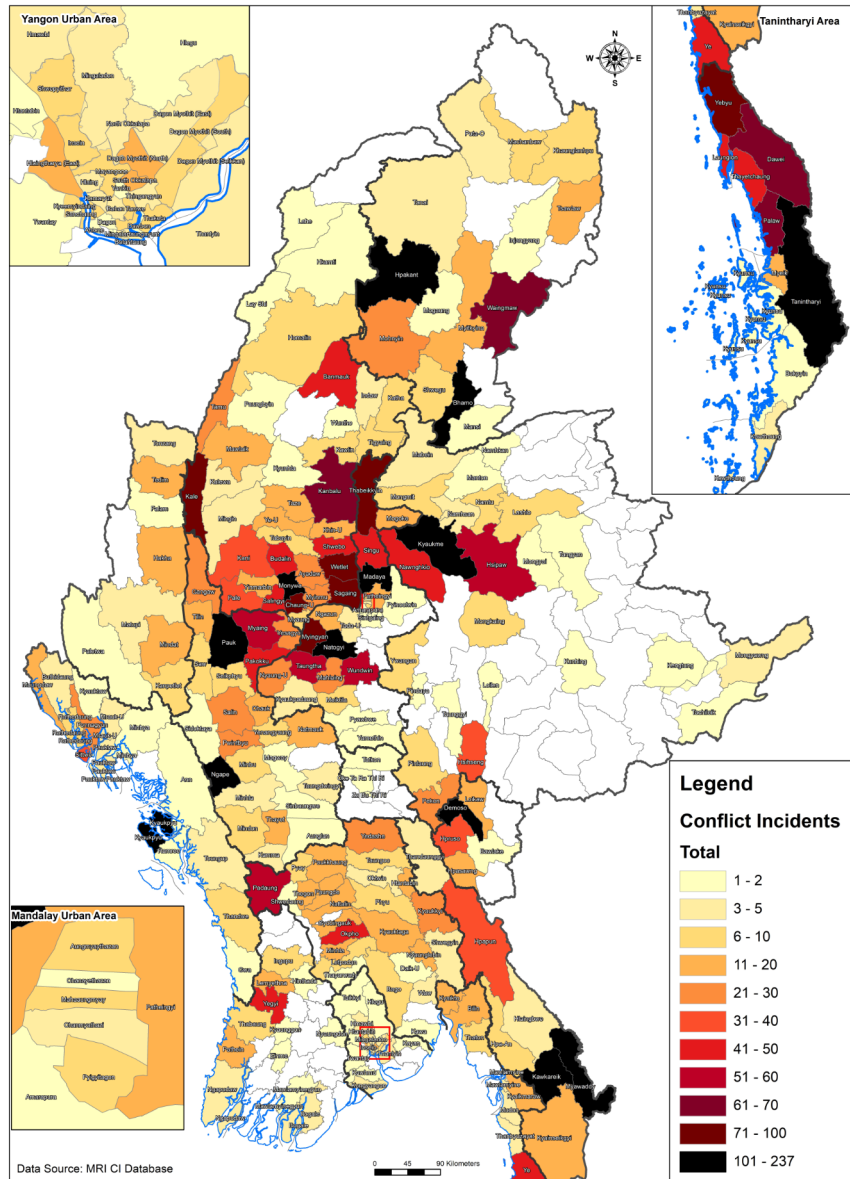
⁴³ A township is the primary administrative unit in the Myanmar governance structure.

⁴⁴ Shoon Naing, Myanmar to hold second phase of election in January, Reuters, 29 October 2025, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-hold-second-phase-election-january-2025-10-29/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

⁴⁵ Announcement 103/2025, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/republic-of-the-union-of-myanmar-union-election-commission-announcement-103-2025> (accessed 22 November 2025).

⁴⁶ ANFREL, Myanmar Junta's Planned Elections: Falling Short of Democratic Legitimacy, September 2025, available at: <https://anfrel.org/myanmar-juntas-planned-elections-falling-short-of-democratic-legitimacy/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

Total Conflict Incidents From 1 August to 31 October 2025



Planned 2025-26 Myanmar Junta Elections

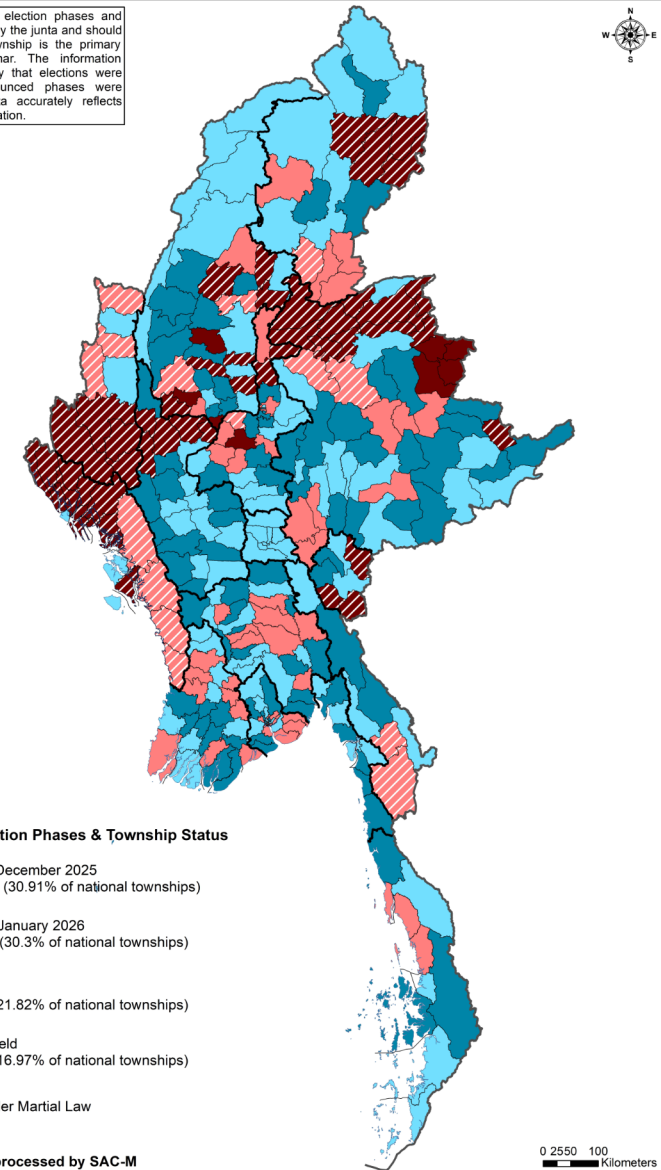
Disclaimer: This map reflects election phases and township status as announced by the junta and should be viewed with caution. A township is the primary administrative unit in Myanmar. The information presented here does not imply that elections were actually held, that the announced phases were implemented, or that the data accurately reflects ground realities or voter participation.

Legend

Junta-Announced Election Phases & Township Status

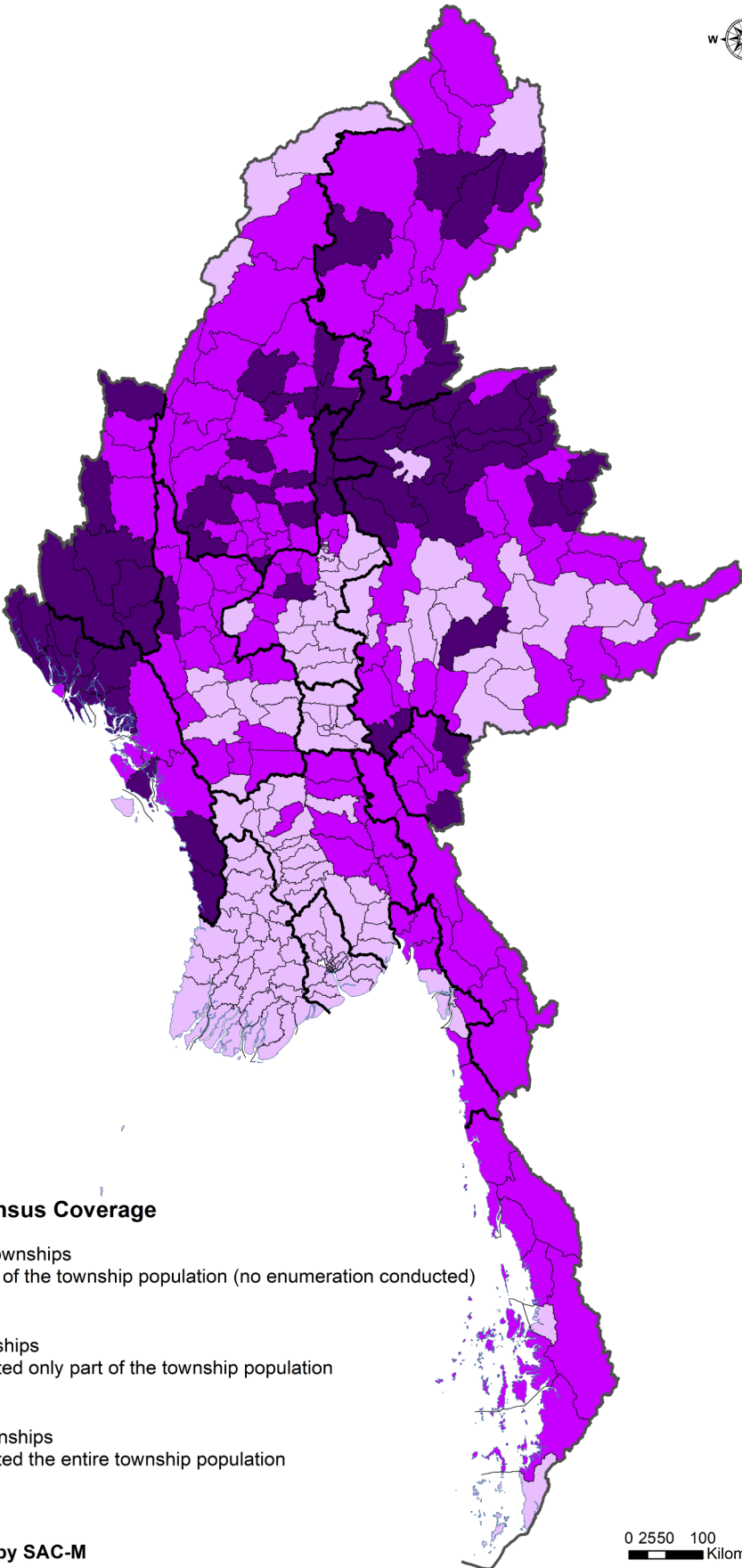
- Phase I — 28 December 2025
102 townships (30.91% of national townships)
- Phase II — 11 January 2026
100 townships (30.3% of national townships)
- Unannounced
72 townships (21.82% of national townships)
- No Elections Held
56 townships (16.97% of national townships)
- Townships Under Martial Law
63 townships

Data source: Junta UEC, processed by SAC-M






Produced by SAC-M, in collaboration with Myanmar Resilience Initiatives (MRI)

Assessment of 2024 Junta Census Claims



Legend

Reliability of Junta-Claimed Census Coverage

-  No Coverage Claimed — 58 townships
Junta reports only an estimate of the township population (no enumeration conducted)
-  Totally Unreliable — 127 townships
Junta claims to have enumerated only part of the township population
-  Partially Unreliable — 145 townships
Junta claims to have enumerated the entire township population

Data source: Junta MoIP, processed by SAC-M

0 2550 100 Kilometers

Produced by SAC-M, in collaboration with MRI

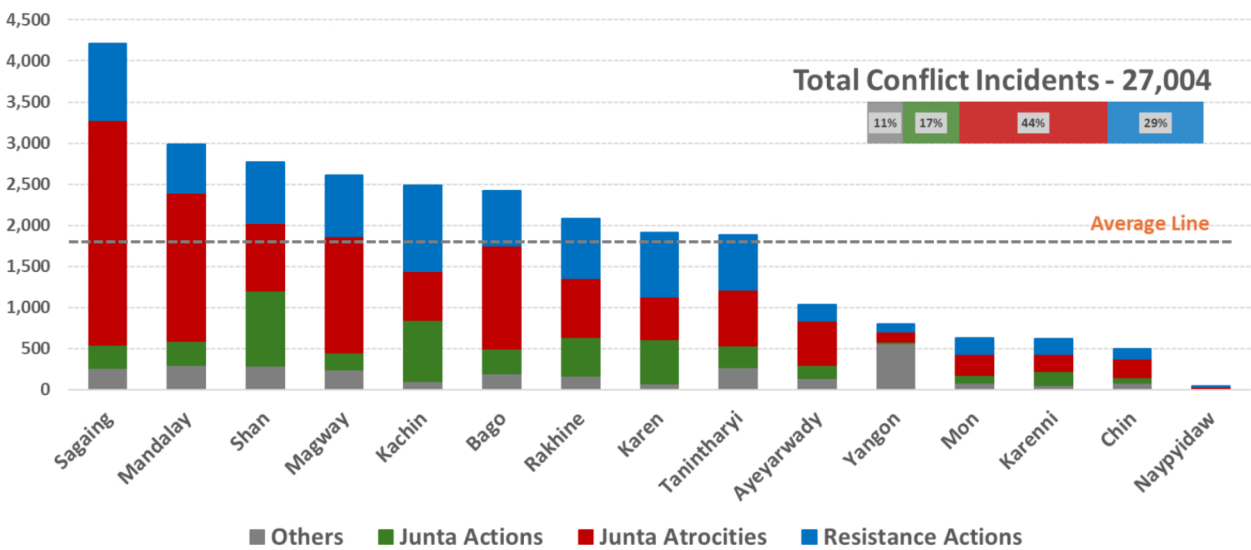
2.3 Fundamental Freedoms

Myanmar is ranked as one of the least free countries globally.⁴⁷ Extreme levels of conflict-related violence, humanitarian crisis, mass displacement, and the junta's weaponisation of the legal and justice systems mean that, even in areas where voting is possible, conditions necessary for the free exercise of the right to vote are non-existent.

2.3.1 Conflict-Related Violence

Myanmar has been ranked among the world's top three most extreme conflicts by Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) since 2022.⁴⁸ The targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure is standard practice for the Myanmar military. Under Min Aung Hlaing, military attacks had already been found to constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and probable genocide, prior to 2021,⁴⁹ compelling the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to seek a warrant for Min Aung Hlaing's arrest.⁵⁰

**General Conflict Incidents
Oct 2024 to Oct 2025
All States and Regions**



Produced by SAC-M, in collaboration with MRI. Data Source: MRI

⁴⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World: Myanmar, available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/myanmar> (accessed 19 November 2025).

⁴⁸ ACLED, Conflict Index Results: July 2023, available at: <https://acleddata.com/report/conflict-index-results-july-2023> (accessed 19 November 2025); ACLED, Conflict Index Results: January 2024, available at: <https://acleddata.com/report/conflict-index-results-january-2024> (accessed 19 November 2025); ACLED, Conflict Index Results: July 2024, available at: <https://acleddata.com/report/conflict-index-results-july-2024> (accessed 19 November 2025).

⁴⁹ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Myanmar: UN Fact-Finding Mission releases its full account of massive violations by military in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan States, 18 September 2018, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2018/09/myanmar-un-fact-finding-mission-releases-its-full-account-massive-violations> (accessed 19 November 2025).

⁵⁰ International Criminal Court, Statement of ICC Prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan KC: Application for an arrest warrant in the situation in Bangladesh/Myanmar, 27 November 2024, available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-application-arrest-warrant-situation-bangladesh> (accessed 19 November 2025).

Following its coup attempt, in response to growing resistance and territorial losses, the military junta has escalated indiscriminate attacks. Military forces act with impunity, and any form of political expression, association or mobilisation carries with it the risk of lethal violence. Individuals perceived as supporting the resistance are subjected to arbitrary detention, torture, sexual violence, disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Entire communities suspected of sympathising with resistance forces are targeted with aerial and artillery bombardments, massacres and mass burnings as punishment.⁵¹ These operations have destroyed entire towns and caused widespread civilian casualties.⁵²

The UN Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) has reported mounting evidence of grave international crimes committed by the military and its affiliated militias, noting an escalation in both the frequency and severity of war crimes and crimes against humanity year on year since the coup attempt. More recently, some resistance forces have also been implicated.⁵³ Given the lack of independent access, military attacks on independent media and civil society, and internet and telecommunications shutdowns, gathering accurate data on casualties is extremely challenging. Recorded civilian deaths range from between at least 6,000⁵⁴ and 9,500⁵⁵ since February 2021 depending on verification method used, but these are certainly under-estimates. ACLED recorded 19,847 total conflict-related deaths in Myanmar in 2024, making Myanmar the third deadliest conflict they recorded globally that year.⁵⁶

“For the military, this legitimacy [derived from the elections] will become an approval to escape accountability for the killings they have committed and a license to continue to commit more killings in the future.”

– Respondent

⁵¹ Radio Free Asia (RFA) Burmese, Air, artillery strikes set grim benchmark for civilian casualties in Myanmar in 2024, 31 December 2024, available at: <https://www.rfa.org/english/myanmar/2024/12/31/myanmar-year-of-airstrikes/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

⁵² OHCHR, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar A/79/550, October 2024, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/a79550-report-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-myanmar-thomas-h> (accessed 19 November 2025); OHCHR, Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar A/HRC/60/20, August 2025, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc6020-situation-human-rights-rohingya-muslims-and-other-minorities> (accessed 19 November 2025).

⁵³ IIMM, October 2024 Bulletin: The Mechanism at HRC 57 and UNGA 79, October 2024, available at: <https://iimm.un.org/en/october-2024-bulletin-mechanism-hrc-57-and-unga-79> (accessed 19 November 2025); Fortify Rights, International Criminal Court: Investigate Arakan Army War Crimes Against Rohingya, July 2025, available at: <https://www.fortifyrights.org/mya-inv-2025-07-23/> (accessed 19 November 2025).

⁵⁴ OHCHR, Update on the Human Rights Situation in Myanmar: Overview of developments in 2024, January 2025, available at: https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025-02/AnnualUpdateontheHumanRightsSituationinMyanmar2024v_final_.pdf (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁵⁵ Institute for Strategy and Policy (ISP) – Myanmar, 80 Civilian Massacres In Post-Coup Myanmar, May 2024, available at: <https://ispmyanmar.com/80-civilian-massacres-in-post-coup-myanmar/> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁵⁶ The ACLED conflict index dashboard is available at: <https://acleddata.com/platform/conflict-index-dashboard> (accessed 21 November 2025).

The conflict is not slowing down, it is worsening. The planned elections are driving the military to expand its military offensives and violence directed at civilians, including through aerial attacks that deploy aircraft, drones and paramotors. 2024 was the deadliest full year to date, with civilian casualties from the military's air and artillery strikes exceeding those of the previous three years combined.⁵⁷ That rate was sustained into mid-2025.⁵⁸ Since mid-2025, military junta offensives have intensified further, with the explicit aim of reclaiming a degree of control sufficient to stage voting in towns along trade routes.⁵⁹ The election is therefore already a direct driver of increased violence, and it is highly likely that the threat of further violence will be used to force participation and to punish and terrorise perceived opponents. The right to vote cannot be freely or meaningfully exercised under such conditions.

2.3.2 Humanitarian Crisis

Myanmar is also ranked among the most severe humanitarian crises in the world.⁶⁰ As of September 2025, the UN estimated that 3.6 million people were displaced across Myanmar and that 19.9 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance.⁶¹ Community-based sources suggest that actual figures are significantly higher.

The scale of the humanitarian crisis is a direct and intentional outcome of the military junta's counter-insurgency strategy, which involves deliberately targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, destroying means of food production and livelihood, and then obstructing humanitarian access to punish and weaken communities perceived to support resistance forces.

The military junta has repeatedly weaponised natural disasters in support of this strategy, including Cyclone Mocha in 2023,⁶² Typhoon Yagi in 2024⁶³ and the devastating March 2025 earthquakes, which overnight pushed an additional two million people into humanitarian need. The military continued air and ground attacks in affected areas, despite announcing a ceasefire, and prevented humanitarian aid from reaching those in need.⁶⁴

The rights to food, water, shelter, medicine and security are integral to the exercise of fundamental

⁵⁷ Myanmar Peace Monitor, Ongoing Dashboard – Military Junta's Airstrikes in Myanmar, available at: <https://mmpeacemonitor.org/en/ongoing-dashboard/military-regimes-airstrikes-in-myanmar-1-feb-2021-current/> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁵⁸ Myanmar Peace Monitor, Ongoing Dashboard – Military Junta's Airstrikes in Myanmar.

⁵⁹ Anthony Davis, Myanmar military surging to clear a path to elections.

⁶⁰ Assessment Capacities Project (acaps), Inform Severity Index, available at: https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.acaps.org%2Ffileadmin%2Fdataset%2FData_Link%2F202509_inform_severity_-_september_2025.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁶¹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Myanmar - Humanitarian Update No. 49, 23 September 2025, available at: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-update-no-49-23-september-2025> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁶² Human Rights Watch, Myanmar: Junta Blocks Lifesaving Cyclone Aid, 20 June 2023, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/06/20/myanmar-junta-blocks-lifesaving-cyclone-aid> (accessed 23 November 2025).

⁶³ SAC-M, International Cross-Border Response to Typhoon Yagi Urgently Needed, 17 September 2024, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2024/09/international-cross-border-response-typhoon-yagi/> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁶⁴ OHCHR, Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar A/HRC/60/20.

freedoms and, by extension, the right to vote. The right to vote cannot be meaningfully exercised where people lack access to basic necessities or live under threat of violence or displacement. Moreover, given the military's well-documented blocking of aid as a means of collective punishment, there is a credible risk that the junta will withhold humanitarian assistance to coerce communities into participating in the elections against their will.

2.3.3 Legal Framework

The military junta holds no lawful executive or legislative authority, but since the attempted coup it has exercised control over the police and judiciary in its territory and has systematically weaponised Myanmar's already repressive legal system to silence dissent and eliminate political opposition. It has announced expanded and amended laws to criminalise peaceful resistance, restrict political activity and punish criticism.⁶⁵

Revolutionary actors have been designated terrorists and unlawful organisations, with broad and vague legal provisions carrying heavy penalties used to prosecute anyone for perceived support of or even contact with them. Shutdowns and censorship limit media and online expression, while the rights to privacy, movement and association are heavily curtailed through surveillance, registration requirements and arbitrary arrests.⁶⁶ Since the coup, the junta has arrested almost 30,000 people on political grounds with more than 22,600 still detained,⁶⁷ including President Win Myint and State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi. Opponents are detained arbitrarily without fundamental due process and routinely subjected to torture, sexual violence and other grave violations.⁶⁸



You must have seen this year that they have already manipulated the process even before the election began – by creating laws, rules and regulations solely in their own favour.

– Respondent

In mid-2025, the military junta adopted two new laws to further suppress dissent ahead of the elections. The 2025 Cyber Security Law prohibits the use of virtual private networks (VPNs) for the internet and eliminates key privacy protections, effectively criminalising access to social media platforms from behind a firewall.⁶⁹ The 2025 Law on the Protection of Multiparty Democratic General

⁶⁵ For a comprehensive review of the military junta's weaponisation of the Myanmar legal system, see AAPP, Justice, the Judiciary and the Weaponization of Law to Repress Civilians in Burma, March 2025, available at: https://aappb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/law-report.eng_ebook_.pdf (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁶⁶ AAPP, Justice, the Judiciary and the Weaponization of Law to Repress Civilians in Burma.

⁶⁷ AAPP, Political Prisoners Post-Coup, available at: <https://aappb.org/> (accessed 24 November 2025).

⁶⁸ IIMM, Statement by Mr. Nicholas Koumjian at the 60th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 8 September 2025, available at: <https://iimm.un.org/en/statement-60th-regular-session-human-rights-council> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁶⁹ FULCRUM Analysis on Southeast Asia, Myanmar's Fake Election Is a Trap, Not a Transition, 15 September 2025, available at:

Elections from Obstruction, Disruption, and Destruction uses broad and vague provisions to criminalise any speech, protest or distribution of material, online or offline, deemed critical of the election. This could include participation in or advocacy for electoral boycotts. Sentences range from three to 20 years and include the death penalty if a prohibited act causes death.⁷⁰ As of 21 November 2025, 120 people were reported to have been arrested under the law,⁷¹ including for acts as trivial as posting emoji reactions to online posts criticising the elections, and it is anticipated that its provisions will be used as another tool to force people to vote against their will.

2.4 Participation and Exclusion

The military junta has employed a systematic program of manipulation and exclusion that has blocked any meaningful opposition to the USDP, its own political party, from participating in and contesting the election. The 2023 Political Parties Registration Law⁷² enacted by the junta bars anyone with a criminal conviction from political party membership. This applies to the tens of thousands of the junta's political opponents who have been tried and convicted in military-controlled courts since the attempted coup.

“The elections risk deepening divisions, escalating violence, and entrenching authoritarianism by excluding major stakeholders, ethnic political organizations including Rohingya political organisations and Rohingya community.

– Respondent

The NLD refused to register under the 2023 Political Parties Registration Law, accurately citing the military junta's lack of authority to pass legislation. It was subsequently “dissolved” along with more than 43 other political parties, including major state and region-based parties, such as the SNLD,⁷³ and smaller parties that could not meet the Law's onerous financial and administrative requirements. 57 political parties are registered under the Law, most of them pro-military or small groups without

<https://fulcrum.sg/myanmars-fake-election-is-a-trap-not-a-transition/> (20 November 2025).

⁷⁰ Mizzima, Min Aung Hlaing warns of harsh penalties for disrupting upcoming election, 1 August 2025, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2025/08/01/24960> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁷¹ Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), At least 25 more Myanmar citizens charged under new 'Election Protection Law', 11 November 2025, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/at-least-25-more-myanmar-citizens-charged-under-new-election-protection-law/> (accessed 21 November 2025).

⁷² Political Parties Registration Law 2023, available at: <https://www.moi.gov.mm/moi:eng/laws/9320> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁷³ DVB, The NLD and 39 other political parties dissolved by the regime, 29 March 2023, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/the-nld-and-39-other-political-parties-dissolved-by-the-regime/> (accessed 20 November 2025); Myanmar Now, Myanmar military regime dissolves four more political parties, 20 September 2025, available at: <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-military-regime-dissolves-four-more-political-parties/> (accessed 20 November 2025).

real public support. Only six, including the USDP, will contest nationwide, down from 87 in 2020.⁷⁴ The USDP has flooded the field with over 1,000 candidates, more than one-fifth of all contenders and nearly double its nearest rival.⁷⁵ A number of them have been directly implicated in atrocity crimes, and as early as October 2025 more than 28 USDP candidates had already been declared winners given that there was only a single candidate registered in their constituency.⁷⁶ More USDP candidates may be declared victors prior to and without any polling, as competing candidates continue to be disqualified.⁷⁷

Under a newly engineered hybrid proportional and first-past-the-post system, these numbers guarantee USDP dominance in the polls and subsequent parliament.⁷⁸ The system also enables USDP candidates to win constituencies covering areas outside the military's territorial control.



Khin Yi, Chair of the Union Solidarity Development Party, raises his fist at a junta election rally. (USDP)

2.5 Transparency

There is no currently independent electoral authority in Myanmar. The UEC was the body mandated by the 2008 Constitution as responsible for election-related procedures and activities, including

⁷⁴ The Irrawaddy, Myanmar's 2020 General Election Results in Numbers, 11 November 2020, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/election-2020/myanmars-2020-general-election-results-numbers.html> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁷⁵ DVB, Arakan Army denies camp seized by Rohingya militants; Regime files charges against ethnic armed groups, 26 September 2025, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/arakan-army-denies-camp-seized-by-rohingya-militant-group-regime-files-charges-against-ethnic-armed-groups/> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁷⁶ DVB, Union Election Commission says pro-military party wins 28 seats, 30 October 2025, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/union-election-commission-says-pro-military-party-wins-28-seats-myanmar-gets-bypassed-as-asean-2026-chair/> (accessed 22 November 2025); The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Regime Bars PPP Leader From Election, 27 October 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/myanmar-regime-bars-ppp-leader-from-election.html> (accessed 22 November 2025).

⁷⁷ The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Regime Bars PPP Leader From Election, 27 October 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/myanmar-regime-bars-ppp-leader-from-election.html> (accessed 22 November 2025).

⁷⁸ ANFREL, Myanmar Junta's Planned Elections: Falling Short of Democratic Legitimacy.

organising elections and verifying and announcing election results. It was legally empowered to dissolve parties and disqualify candidates at will. The UEC initially rejected the military's claims of electoral fraud in the 2020 election.⁷⁹ It was immediately reconstituted after the attempted coup with military junta appointees⁸⁰ and subsequently endorsed the military's claims without producing credible evidence.⁸¹ The UEC was reconstituted again by the junta in 2025. The current UEC is fully junta-appointed and subservient to the junta.⁸² UEC members have been sanctioned by Canada,⁸³ the European Union,⁸⁴ the United Kingdom,⁸⁵ and the United States.⁸⁶

The military junta has introduced electronic voting machines for the 2025 elections through a unilateral process that falls far short of international standards on electoral reform.⁸⁷ The machines are being produced by the military, likely based on designs from Bharat Electronics Limited, an Indian state-owned arms manufacturer with longstanding links to the Myanmar military. No public tenders or technical specifications have been released, and the procurement process for component parts has not been subject to independent oversight or audit. The total lack of transparency suggests that the voting machines will be used to manipulate the election results.⁸⁸

Transparency is further undermined by advance voting controlled by the junta for military and overseas voters, whose votes may be counted ahead of election day and used to influence outcomes. There is also a risk that displaced populations will be used to inflate turnout figures, potentially including in locations where the military completely lacks territorial control, while voter lists compiled by the junta rely on unverifiable population estimates gathered during the very limited census.⁸⁹ Aside from votes cast under threat of violence, coercion and in the absence of fundamental freedoms already lacking credibility, independent verification of the election results will be impossible.

⁷⁹ Nan Lwin, Myanmar Election Body Rejects Military Allegations of Electoral Fraud, The Irrawaddy, 28 January 2021, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-election-body-rejects-military-allegations-electoral-fraud.html> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁸⁰ Order No. 9/2021, available at: <https://www.myanmaritv.com/news/state-administration-council-commander-chief-office-issues-order-no-92021> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁸¹ ANFREL, Six Months after Myanmar Coup: A Summary of the Junta's Continuous Attempts to Undermine Electoral Democracy, August 2021, available at: <https://anfrel.org/six-months-after-myanmar-coup-a-summary-of-the-juntas-continuous-attempts-to-undermine-electoral-democracy/> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁸² ANFREL, Myanmar Junta's Planned Elections: Falling Short of Democratic Legitimacy.

⁸³ Government of Canada, Canadian Sanctions Related to Myanmar, available at: https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/sanctions/myanmar.aspx?lang=eng (accessed 22 November 2025).

⁸⁴ EU, Sanctions against Myanmar, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions-against-myanmar/> (accessed 22 November 2025).

⁸⁵ Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation, Current list of designated persons: Myanmar, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/financial-sanctions-burma> (accessed 22 November 2025).

⁸⁶ U.S. Department of State, Marking Two Years Since the Military Coup in Burma, 31 January 2023, available at: <https://2021-2025.state.gov/marking-two-years-since-the-military-coup-in-burma/> (accessed 22 November 2025).

⁸⁷ The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Junta's New Voting Machines are Also Vote-Rigging Machines: Observers, 14 February 2023, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-juntas-new-voting-machines-are-also-vote-rigging-machines-observers.html> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁸⁸ ANFREL, Myanmar Junta's Planned Elections: Falling Short of Democratic Legitimacy.

⁸⁹ As above.

3. GROUND-UP ASSESSMENT



Nobody trusts or accepts this election, and such an unacceptable election will bring nothing good for the people or the future of the country.

– Respondent

Respondents to SAC-M's questionnaire were unanimous in their opposition to the junta's planned elections. One described it as "a dangerous and illegitimate attempt to disguise tyranny as democracy". A number said they see no possibility that the process – which "denies the participation of all Myanmar citizens, especially excluding key democratic and ethnic actors, such as the NUG, NUCC, ethnic councils, and resistance groups" – could provide a pathway to genuine peace or federal democracy. Instead, respondents said the elections would intensify and prolong the conflict and reinforce authoritarian rule. At the same time, one respondent reported that the junta was already "intensifying targeted airstrikes against civilians under the guise of these so-called elections".

The outcomes of past military-led political processes were cited in multiple responses, described by one respondent as "rigged and undemocratic". Another respondent recalled that the military's violent rejection of the results of the 2020 election, held under the now defunct military-drafted 2008 Constitution, "triggered the current crisis". They warned that "any attempt to force another election under [military] control will only prolong instability and deepen the cycles of violence".

Respondents also expressed concern that States that accept or support the elections would embolden the junta and, in the words of one respondent, "weaken demands for accountability". Another respondent warned that, "for the military, this legitimacy will become an approval to escape accountability for the killings they have committed and a license to continue to commit more killings in the future." Multiple respondents expressed fear that the elections would prolong the suffering of millions.

Respondents were also adamant that the junta elections "will not be able to change the course of the revolution" and that it will instead "reinforce the people's determination to resist".



In short, it is absolutely impossible to solve Myanmar's current problems under a context where the military sits in the political leadership role and imposes its own political agenda as it wishes. Therefore, it is necessary to start seeking new forms of solutions and approaches now.

- Respondent

4. A SINGLE OUTCOME MANUFACTURED BY VIOLENCE

The military junta's planned elections are designed solely to secure and legitimise dominance for the military, and Min Aung Hlaing specifically, over the state. The elections would guarantee a win for the USDP, ensuring the military's proxy party holds a majority of elected seats in both houses of parliament. Furthermore, with the military holding its directly appointed seats, its control over the parliament would be total and unchallenged. Min Aung Hlaing will ensure that the new legislature is dominated not only by military loyalists, but by his own political supporters. Many USDP candidates are current Min Aung Hlaing-appointed junta ministers and senior generals, and retired officers instructed directly by Min Aung Hlaing to run.⁹⁰

Any expectation that forthcoming polls might reopen the limited democratic space of the 2010s is deeply misplaced. Min Aung Hlaing has made clear that he does not intend to permit such space to ever re-emerge. He is not abiding by any constitutional framework and is acting only in the interests of securing lasting power for himself and the military – greater than that ever permitted by the 2008 Constitution and reforms of the past decade.

The planned elections mark the culmination of a strategy that Min Aung Hlaing set in motion with the attempted coup on 1 February 2021. They do not signal a softening on the part of the military junta or a change of course. Rather, they represent a hardening of its position and a doubling down on a plan that was met with unprecedented resistance. The elections are being imposed by force on an unwilling population and have already driven an increase in violence, displacement and insecurity. The elections would not provide the “offramp” that the junta's international backers seek. If they proceed, the elections would foreclose prospects for dialogue, deepen Myanmar's political crisis and worsen instability.



[The elections] will only serve to prolong military dictatorship and the rule of SAC/SSPC, Min Aung Hlaing and his associates. But it will not be able to change the course of the revolution in Myanmar.

- Respondent

⁹⁰ The Irrawaddy, Ruling Generals, Ministers to Dominate Myanmar Military's Proxy Party Candidate List, 16 September 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/ruling-generals-ministers-to-dominate-myanmar-militarys-proxy-party-candidate-list.html> (accessed 20 November 2025).



PART II: THE NEW WAY FORWARD

Revolutionary actors from across Myanmar have universally and repeatedly rejected the military junta's planned elections as a sham and called on Myanmar's neighbours, ASEAN and international actors not to engage with the process. Between them, they represent an overwhelming majority of Myanmar's peoples that seek a new way forward. The revolution's aspirational and emerging political order is the clear alternative to the junta's planned election and is the subject of Part II of this paper. Based on consultation with a broad range of revolutionary actors, it seeks to capture, in respondents' own words, how revolutionary actors conceive of the country's transformation, what actions they are undertaking to support that transformation, points of convergence and coordination, what obstacles they face and what support they consider necessary to realise a genuinely inclusive federal democratic Myanmar. A detailed methodology, including a list of respondents, is provided on pages 5 and 6.



Anti-coup protestors call for the abolition of the military-drafted 2008 Constitution during a peaceful protest in Bago on 13 February 2021. (Htawmonzel / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY 4.0)

1. BACKGROUND ON THE REVOLUTION

1.1 Formation

The military's February 2021 attempted coup was met with immediate, widespread non-violent resistance that prevented the newly formed military junta from consolidating power. Civil servants, teachers, health workers and private-sector employees launched the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), a mass strike and protest campaign that paralysed state functions. General Strike Committees (GSCs) were formed to coordinate and organise the movement, which became known more broadly as the Spring Revolution.⁹¹

A group of ten of Myanmar's ethnic armed organisations (EAO) that were signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA),⁹² known as the Peace Process Steering Team (PPST), issued a statement that expressed support for the CDM, condemned the military junta's use of violence against peaceful demonstrators, suspended dialogue with the military under the NCA, and pledged collaboration with national and regional actors to end military dictatorship and seek a durable solution to the political crisis.⁹³

⁹¹ Progressive Voice Myanmar, Civil Disobedience Movement: A Foundation of Myanmar's Spring Revolution and Force Behind Military's Failed Coup, May 2023, available at: <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2023/05/25/civil-disobedience-movement-a-foundation-of-myanmars-spring-revolution-and-force-behind-militarys-failed-coup/> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁹² The NCA was signed in 2015 between the military and EAOs, purportedly to establish a framework for political dialogue towards peace negotiations. However, it never gained genuine trust as the military routinely violated its terms by continuing to seize land, expand troop deployments, and encroach on ethnic territories. Along with the 2008 Constitution, the NCA is widely considered a tool to sustain military rule, rather than a genuine mechanism for peace and reconciliation.

⁹³ NCA-Signatory EAOs, Special Meeting of the PPST Statement, 20 February 2021, available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/>

At the same time, elected parliamentarians, mainly from the NLD, that evaded military capture formed the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) to preserve the democratic legitimacy of the 2020 elections and coordinate the democratic response.⁹⁴ On 31 March 2021, the CRPH announced that the 2008 Constitution was formally abolished, having been nullified by the military's actions in attempting the coup, and pledged to adopt a Federal Democracy Charter (FDC).⁹⁵ The PPST issued a joint statement welcoming the moves and pledging support for the Spring Revolution.⁹⁶ Other EAOs also issued statements and made speeches in support of the revolution. Major EAOs subsequently rebranded themselves as ethnic resistance/revolutionary organisations (EROs).

On 16 April 2021, the CRPH announced the appointment of an interim National Unity Government (NUG), the formation of the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) as an inclusive advisory body, and the adoption of the FDC.⁹⁷ Once again, the PPST issued a joint statement welcoming the moves and pledging continued support and collaboration.⁹⁸ The NUG therefore became the legitimate government of Myanmar, having been duly formed on the basis of the 2020 elections and being endorsed across political and ethnic divides.⁹⁹ The FDC sought to address the constitutional break until a new constitution is drafted and provided a roadmap for the revolution's initial phase.¹⁰⁰

1.2 Armed Resistance

Armed resistance to the military junta grew in response to the junta's escalating use of force. This was led by EROs including the Karen National Union (KNU), Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) and Chin National Front (CNF), newly formed People's Defence Forces (PDF) – largely operating under the command of the NUG Ministry of Defence – and independent local defence forces. On 7 September 2021, following repeated mass shootings by the military of unarmed demonstrators, the NUG Acting President announced a "people's defensive war" against the junta.¹⁰¹ Joint coordination mechanisms were established

[1KviSlzfXNPlm_mXKmBn-Nrr-W34ok1Gh/view](#) (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁹⁴ CRPH, available at: <https://crphmyanmar.org/history-and-formation-of-crph/> (accessed 20 November 2025). CRPH Chairman U Aung Kyi Nyunt is also a member of the NLD's Central Executive Committee.

⁹⁵ Burma News International (BNI), The Shadow CRPH Government declares 2008 Constitution abolished and pledges a Charter for Federal Democracy, 2 April 2021, available at: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/shadow-crph-government-declares-2008-constitution-abolished-and-pledges-charter-federal> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁹⁶ NCA-Signatory EAOs, PPST Meeting (14/2021) Statement, 4 April 2021, available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sLuYdGtrXwKLFjydrD_U3_mmOam987ia/view (accessed 22 November 2025).

⁹⁷ CRPH, Press Release No. (11), 16 April 2021, available at: <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2021/04/16/%E1%80%95%E1%80%BC%E1%80%8A%E1%80%BA%E1%80%91%E1%80%B1%E1%80%AC%E1%80%84%E1%80%BA%E1%80%85%E1%80%AF%E1%80%9C%E1%80%BD%E1%80%BE%E1%80%90%E1%80%BA%E1%80%90%E1%80%B1%E1%80%AC%E1%80%BA%E1%80%80%E1%80%AD-7/> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁹⁸ NCA-Signatory EAOs, PPST Meeting (15/2021) Statement, 27 April 2021, available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dwX6CYeYVDZTCbYAZOUdg8GQEGyIHEnV/view> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁹⁹ SAC-M, Briefing Paper: Recognition of Governments, August 2021, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2021/08/briefing-paper-recognition-of-governments/> (accessed 20 November 2025).

¹⁰⁰ See Leena Grover, Out of the shadows: Illuminating the distinctiveness and exceptional use of interim constitutions, January 2024, available at: <https://academic.oup.com/icon/article/22/1/83/7632663> (accessed 21 November 2025).

¹⁰¹ Al Jazeera, Myanmar shadow government calls for uprising against military, 7 September 2021, available at: <https://www.>

between the NUG and a core group of EROs to enable operational collaboration.¹⁰² Other EROs joined the armed resistance less directly, incubating and arming PDF and local defence forces. Some joined the fighting more actively as the revolution proceeded. As addressed in Part I of this paper, the armed resistance has claimed significant territory from the military junta, expanding the territories already held by EROs, and, combined with the civil resistance, has brought down much of the military-controlled central state.



Duwa Lashi La, the Acting President of Myanmar's National Unity Government, inspects a People's Defense Force emplacement at a frontline camp in an undisclosed location in Myanmar, May 19, 2022. (Facebook/Acting President Duwa Lashi La)

1.3 The Pluralistic State

Alternative forms of local governance are being developed and expanded by revolutionary actors in areas liberated from military junta control. The functions of local government in these territories are administered by ERO governance departments, many of which have existed for decades, and by newer community-led administrative bodies that are being formed in areas where there is little or no traditional ERO presence. These operate both in direct coordination with the NUG and EROs and independently.¹⁰³

[aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/7/myanmar-shadow-government-launches-peoples-defensive-war](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/7/myanmar-shadow-government-launches-peoples-defensive-war) (accessed 20 November 2025).

¹⁰² Billy Ford; Ye Myo Hein, For Myanmar, the Only Path to Stability Runs Through its Web of Resistance Forces United States Institute for Peace (USIP), December 2022, available at: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/12/myanmar-only-path-stability-runs-through-its-web-resistance-forces> (accessed 20 November 2025).

¹⁰³ SAC-M, Briefing Paper: Effective Control in Myanmar.

Revolutionary local government administrations deliver core state functions such as healthcare, education, security, justice and humanitarian relief, often alongside tax collection, infrastructure repair, social services and crisis response. Civil society organisations and community networks play a critical role as part of the revolutionary government infrastructure. Governance is more established in some areas than in others, largely depending on the legacy of existing ERO governance and the intensity of military junta attacks experienced. Councils representing federal units (states and regions) or ethnic groups have been emerging since 2021 to bring diverse representative organisations together. These in turn have been working to form governing institutions and deliver services to their populations. The entire network – the pluralistic state – is growing and continues to formalise.¹⁰⁴

1.4 Building From the Ground Up

Ground up political processes have emerged as the principal means through which the revolution is seeking to institutionalise. Often referred to as “bottom-up federalism”, this is the process of building a federal democratic system from local and state/region levels upward, rather than top-down imposition by a central authority. The emergence of the state/federal unit and ethnic-based councils represents a key step in the process. Having been established by local civil society and resistance actors through extensive consultation and coalition-building, their structures reflect local legitimacy and self-determination. The intention is that, once formed, state/federal unit and ethnic-based councils will be linked horizontally with other state/federal unit and ethnic-based councils and vertically with Union-level bodies to gradually form a new, inclusive national political order grounded in consent and popular participation. These processes of forming state/federal unit and ethnic-based councils and linking them with one another and with national-level bodies are happening simultaneously.¹⁰⁵

At the national level, there are multiple processes and bodies for convening and coordinating a diversity of revolutionary stakeholders, including state/federal unit and ethnic-based councils, EROs, political parties, civil society, elected members of parliament and groups formed in the wake of the attempted coup.¹⁰⁶ Processes taking place at the national level include dialogue towards the Common Political Agreement (CPA) and the Articles of Federal Transitional Arrangements (AFTA), which build on the FDC and will have the effect of a federal transitional constitution.¹⁰⁷ Key bodies include the Joint Coordination Body (JCB) and the Multi-Ethnic Council (MEC).

¹⁰⁴ For a comprehensive assessment of the pluralistic state, see Stella Naw, Maw Naw and Dustin Barter, Making Myanmar: Humanitarianism amid revolutionary state-building, Overseas Development Institute (ODI) Global Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG), September 2025, available at: https://media.odi.org/documents/HPG_State_led_action_Myanmar_final_comp.pdf (accessed 20 November 2025).

¹⁰⁵ Stella Naw, Maw Naw and Dustin Barter, Making Myanmar: Humanitarianism amid revolutionary state-building.

¹⁰⁶ Since the revolution began, stakeholders and key bodies have regularly communicated their policy positions and provided updates on progress in various national- and state-level political processes through public statements in English and Burmese. Many can be found archived here: <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/resources?type=statement> (accessed 22 November 2025).

¹⁰⁷ EROs and Federal Councils Representing State/Nationalities, Joint Statement (01/2025), 12 February 2025, available at: <https://wp.progressivevoicemyanmar.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Joint-statement.pdf> (accessed 20 November 2025).

2. THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC VISION

“

[Our] vision is to build a federal democratic Union where every citizen can live with dignity, equality, and freedom. This vision is grounded in a genuine federal system, inclusive democracy, equality among all ethnic nationalities, strong protection of human rights and rule of law, and the pursuit of lasting peace and reconciliation through dialogue and trust.

– Respondent

The responses across all questions and from each category of revolutionary actor demonstrate a clear coherence around a shared vision for Myanmar's future. Despite differences of mandate, constituency, ethnicity and geography, respondents converge around the same ideological, political and structural destination: the creation of a peaceful federal democratic union that permanently ends military rule, guarantees equality and self-determination for all peoples, and upholds justice, human rights and civilian governance.

This vision is not presented as a reform of the existing Myanmar state but as its fundamental rebuilding from the bottom up. The military-dominated Myanmar state is posited as antithetical to the revolutionary vision. Federal democracy is identified as both a constitutional design and a moral principle, described explicitly as a system in which government authority derives from the consent of diverse communities rather than through coercion by the military. Under the revolutionary vision, the federal democratic union is held together through equality and power-sharing, rather than domination, control and marginalisation.

2.1 The Pillars of Federal Democracy

“

A new federal democratic constitution must be drafted and ratified, and transitional justice processes must be implemented to hold perpetrators accountable for the crimes they committed during wartime.

– Respondent

Respondents outlined several interlocking and overlapping ingredients that together begin to form the new structures of an aspirational Myanmar. Federal democracy provides the overarching organisational concept, with several core pillars that uphold it.



An official KNU sign indicates an entrance to territory under its administration. (KNU)

The first is a system of government, established by a new constitution, that permanently ends military rule and guarantees civilian supremacy, including over the military. Respondents described it as ensuring the representation and participation of all peoples, “achieving equality and self-determination” through power sharing between the states/regions and the Union, and creating democratic institutions founded on the rule of law.

Ethnic equality and self-determination form the second pillar. Respondents emphasised that lasting unity can only exist through recognition of autonomy and shared sovereignty, “where all can live together in unity and equality”. Equality in this sense is understood as both institutional and existential: it is seen as the right of all communities not only to participate in governance but to define the character of the state itself.

The third pillar is the realisation of justice, human rights and fundamental freedoms, with gender equality also raised as a core component. Respondents stress that democracy cannot exist with impunity, and that accountability and truth-telling are essential for reconciliation and non-recurrence of violations and abuses. Multiple respondents linked justice to the restoration of dignity. For many, reformed institutions that protect and respect the rights of all communities equally are central to the vision.

2.2 An Ecosystem of Revolution

“

We work to build the federal democratic union by collaborating with others to plan the future transition and institutions and to implement governance on the ground today.

– Respondent

Respondents described a broad, collaborative and interdependent range of actions that are already being taken to realise the shared vision of a federal democratic Myanmar. Some reported working “with all the stakeholders who oppose dictatorship”, as well as each other, to coordinate dialogue and consensus-building and establish interim governance. One respondent described engaging in military coordination, local service provision and international diplomacy.

Other respondents focused on armed resistance, carried out in collaboration “with other resistance forces across the country”. Respondents also emphasised their work on political dialogue and coordination, referring specifically to “developing constitutional frameworks, including the FDC and AFTA”, and “[p]articipation and collaboration in the MEC”, while additionally reporting activities in local administration and service provision.

“Through these collaborative engagements, [we] ... aim to strengthen democratic participation, resilience, and meaningful community representation as essential pillars of Myanmar's federal transition at both institutional and grassroots levels.

– Respondent

Respondents described how these national-level initiatives will link state and region state/federal unit and ethnic-based councils together through the process of bottom-up federalism.

“In the states, state-level administrative councils and governments have begun to emerge, and over the past two years, efforts have also been underway in the predominantly Bamar regions to establish similar state-level councils and governments. It is believed that once these efforts are fully realized, the formation of Union-level political structures will naturally follow through the consolidation of these unit-level entities.

– Respondent

Some respondents also addressed monitoring, documentation, advocacy and education work, as well as efforts to preserve an evidentiary record of violations as “not only a tool for truth-telling, but a foundation for justice”. Select respondents reported engaging with international mechanisms to advance accountability, collaborate with other resistance actors on rights training and institutional reforms, and empower individuals and communities through capacity- and awareness-building. Coalitions, youth and community groups are involved in public education and humanitarian coordination, also seeking to bridge divides between diverse communities. Civil resistance and social movements complement armed resistance through non-violent mobilisation.

2.3 Conditions for Success

“First and foremost, there must be an end to military rule and systemic impunity. Genuine democratic transition is impossible while the military continues to commit widespread and systematic atrocities with total disregard for international law.”

– Respondent

Respondents identified a consistent set of structural, political and ideological conditions that do not yet exist but must be established for Myanmar's revolutionary vision to succeed.

Foremost among these is that the military must “step down” or be “removed” entirely from politics and placed under civilian control. Respondents consistently viewed the military's ongoing role in politics as not only incompatible with the federal democratic vision but as the principal barrier to a genuine transition. For many, transformation requires not just reform of the military but its complete dismantling and reconstitution under federal democratic oversight. There is also a need to “eliminate Burmese (Burman) chauvinism and patriarchy, and put an end to violence and discrimination against women”.

A second essential condition is unity and coordination among revolutionary forces, with unity framed as both a revolutionary means and an end. Respondents repeatedly referred to the need for “dialogue and collaboration” between revolutionary stakeholders and a common framework for decision-making. Respondents stressed that collaboration and mutual recognition between political, ethnic and armed organisations are prerequisites for effective governance and for preventing fragmentation.

The third condition is justice and the rule of law. Numerous respondents cited both accountability for past abuses and institutional reform as critical for rebuilding trust and ensuring non-recurrence of violence. Justice is framed as both moral redress and social stabilisation. Once again, this condition is considered not just a destination of the revolution, but a means of getting there: as one respondent put it “justice should be a central part of the process to achieve our vision”.

Several respondents also highlighted the need for an inclusive constitutional process that guarantees equality among all nationalities. One respondent said that the revolution “must adopt a new constitution, as the previous one became void when the junta staged a coup on 1 February 2021”.

“Firstly, the coup clique must be removed. Secondly, there must at least [be] a working unity [built] amongst all key Revolutionary stakeholders. Thirdly, the military junta must stop atrocities, unconditionally release all political prisoners, and offer a genuine dialogue for peaceful transfer of power toward a peaceful transition.”

– Respondent

Finally, numerous respondents said that security, humanitarian aid and a supportive international environment that recognises legitimate revolutionary institutions and isolates the junta diplomatically and economically are essential.

2.4 Support Required



We need solidarity, mutual support, and resources.

– Respondent

Respondents outlined a clear and practical set of support needed to advance the revolutionary vision. Their emphasis was not on external intervention, but on solidarity, resources and recognition to strengthen the revolution's capacity to govern, protect and rebuild on the one hand, and to deny support to the military junta on the other. Explicit calls on the international community are addressed in section 6.

2.5 Peace



Our vision is built on the belief that justice, equality, human rights and mutual respect are the foundations of lasting peace.

– Respondent

Peace was consistently referenced as part of the revolutionary vision, but respondents largely presented achieving federal democracy, justice and equality as necessary precedents, rather than peace being pursued as a primary objective in itself. Many highlighted the need for dialogue, reconciliation and an inclusive constitution-drafting process that ensures the participation of women, youth and ethnic nationalities as essential pathways toward that end. However, respondents also expressed a stark assessment of current conditions: given the junta's ongoing violence, armed resistance is seen as the only viable means of creating the space for a comprehensive political dialogue that will eventually lead to genuine peace.

2.6 Inclusion



The junta's power must end, and every community, including the Rohingya, must enjoy full rights and protection.

– Respondent

A number of respondents expressed their commitment to inclusion and pluralism and explicitly called for the participation of women, youth and religious minorities in shaping Myanmar's future. However, others acknowledged that representative politics tied primarily to ethnic identity as a central principle of federalism raises potential challenges for protecting minorities within states and regions, whose rights may not always align with majority sentiment at the subnational level. Several respondents explicitly mentioned the Rohingya, while numerous others invoked broader principles of equality and non-discrimination.



Rohingya students are seen marching during the 1988 pro-democracy student uprising in Myanmar.
(Loatthar People's Daily)

3. OBSTACLES



At the heart of Burma's violence and political repression is the military's relentless drive to cling to political power and economic dominance.

– Respondent

Major obstacles to genuine peace and democracy persist in Myanmar. Responses reflected the widespread view that the Myanmar military is the primary driver of conflict. Other identified root causes include ultra-nationalism, denial of human rights, political suppression, a lack of accountability for past crimes, economic inequality and foreign intervention. Decades of conflict have also contributed to mistrust between communities in Myanmar.



Myanmar junta soldiers are seen marching during a parade to mark Armed Forces Day in Myanmar on 27 March 2021. (Mil.ru / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY 4.0)

3.1 The Military

The current Bamar-dominated junta military continues to assert its right to dominate and control national politics and to shape the socio-cultural landscape of the country, despite being wholly unsuited to this role beyond their self-serving interests.

– Respondent

Respondents identified the military's use of systematic violence over many decades to maintain political, economic, religious and ethnic hegemony in Myanmar. They characterised the military's influence as authoritarian, dictatorial, corrupt, brutal, exploitative and chauvinistic. Several pointed to its persecution of ethnic and religious minorities, suppression of democracy and exploitation of natural resources as entrenching violence and conflict and necessitating armed resistance in Myanmar. Describing the junta's actions since the attempted coup, one respondent said the junta has unleashed an unprecedented campaign of atrocities against the entire population, creating a multi-faceted crisis that is destroying the country and destabilising the region. Under these circumstances, a number of respondents saw the removal of the military from politics as the first step towards "ending cycles of violence and repression" and building "a federal democratic union".

Removing the military, which is creating both internal and regional problems/crises, is the starting point for rebuilding the nation.

– Respondent

3.2 Trust Is Fragile

Trust is in a really fragile state. You can break it in one go and then it's really hard to rebuild it.

– Respondent

Trust between communities in Myanmar remains fragile. Multiple actors emphasised the divide and rule tactics, introduced under British colonial rule and perpetuated by the military since independence, as having undermined broad-based unity across ethnic, class, cultural and religious lines. Some respondents pointed to lingering mistrust of Bamar political leaders by minorities, while others

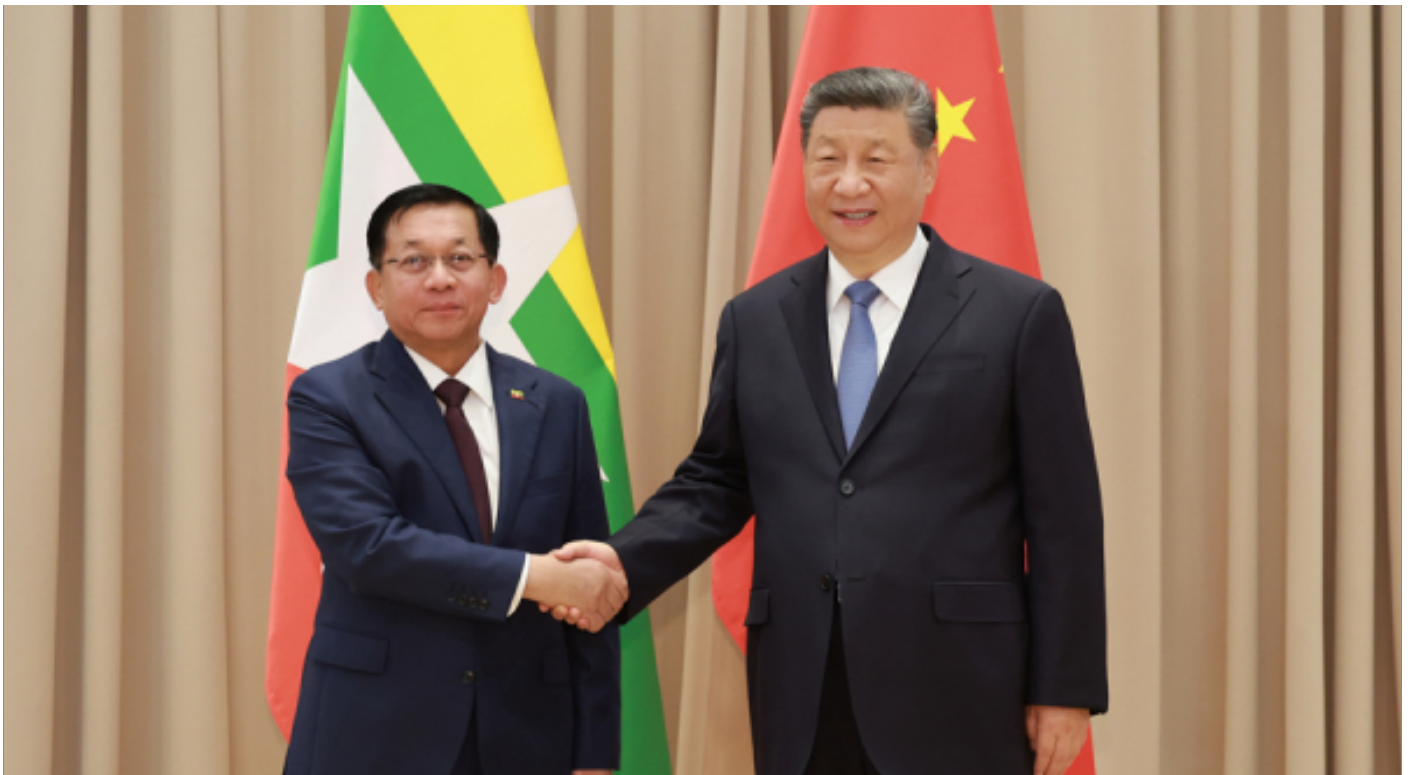
identified a lack of mutual recognition between some ethnic groups as a key challenge that needs to be overcome. One respondent said distrust of the military runs exceptionally deep: “[w]e have already learned enough lessons to know that this junta is not trustworthy. What is worse, the junta is deeply self-centred in its pursuit of power. It seems to me that the junta views unity among the people of Burma as a threat to its control”. Some respondents argued that trust among all communities cannot be rebuilt without first removing the military from politics.

3.3 Intervention From Powerful Neighbours

“It is clear that some countries view the Burma crisis and the junta’s presence in power as an opportunity – and this has undermined unity and become a serious concern.

– Respondent

Some respondents said that “intervention” and “domination and control of powerful neighbouring countries” undermines trust and unity among communities in Myanmar, with China named specifically by several respondents. As one respondent explained, “China’s geopolitical interests have also empowered the military junta. Through direct interference and strategic support, China has protected the military from meaningful accountability and emboldened a crackdown on the people.”



Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing shakes the hand of Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of Russia's Victory Day celebrations in Moscow on 9 May 2025. (Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

4. BUILDING TRUST AND UNITY

Respondents described ways to build trust, foster reconciliation and address the structural and historical root causes of conflict.

4.1 Reconciliation Through Inclusive Dialogue

Genuine reconciliation between the Rohingya and Rakhine communities is vital – through truth, justice, and inclusive dialogue. When these communities can live together peacefully again, it will [ensure] the foundation for lasting trust and harmony across all of Myanmar.

– Respondent

Inclusive dialogue was reported by many respondents as being critical to building trust between communities. Respondents stressed the importance of fostering genuine understanding, acknowledging past experiences and promoting reconciliation between all ethnic and religious groups. This dialogue, one respondent said, must therefore extend “beyond armed factions to include civil society, women, youth, and marginalised minorities”. Respondents emphasised that trust is built “step by step” through collaboration, shared goals and agreements that “demonstrate commitment and reliability”. Rebuilding trust between the Bamar and non-Bamar was identified by one respondent as being of “supreme importance”. As another respondent explained, “if we have justice and accountability in place, and also dialogue and collaboration between different ethnic groups, then we can tackle any struggle to achieve the vision”.

Respondents also highlighted that the international community can play a constructive role in trust-building, with one respondent saying “if we genuinely desire peace and stability in Burma, there must be a unified and collective effort from the international community to help us build unity and trust”.

4.2 Ending Impunity

Transparent governance and accountability are essential, with mechanisms to address corruption, human rights abuses, and past injustices, while holding perpetrators of violence accountable to strengthen faith in the rule of law.

– Respondent

Lack of “accountability” and “justice” were identified by multiple respondents as key drivers of conflict. One respondent explained that “the military has never faced accountability. Decades of impunity, corruption, and the absence of checks and balances have allowed repeated cycles of violence without consequence. Communities know that when soldiers commit abuses, there is no justice, only silence”. Respondents identified a range of transitional justice initiatives, including truth-telling, acknowledgment of past injustices, and accountability, that will help rebuild trust and restore faith in the rule of law. One respondent emphasised that ending impunity was essential to breaking cycles of violence and conflict. This sentiment was echoed by another, who said, “only when justice is fair and equal for all will trust slowly begin to return, and without it, peace will always remain fragile”.

4.3 Recognition of Ethnic Rights



During the Spring Revolution, we can see that there are many ethnic nationalities striving to gain recognition for themselves.

– Respondent

Respondents consistently pointed to the impacts of longstanding, systemic marginalisation, discrimination, and persecution of ethnic and religious minorities in their responses. Multiple respondents saw the denial and erasure of the rights and identities of ethnic minorities, driven primarily by the Myanmar military and central governments, as root causes of conflict and entrenched inequality. As some respondents identified, the Rohingya are subject to ongoing “genocide”. Several respondents highlighted that recognising and upholding the rights of all ethnic minorities is essential to ending divisions and laying the foundation for lasting peace. Others emphasised that guarantees of self-determination and equality for all minorities are vital to building a functional and inclusive federal democracy.

4.4 Economic Equity



Natural resources and land are treated as tools of control. Land grabs, extractive industries, and infrastructure projects are often designed not for community benefit, but to strengthen military power and weaken dissent.

– Respondent

One respondent described conflict as being “fuelled by structural inequality”. Another pointed to the military’s exploitation of land and natural resources as having enriched a small elite at the expense of the entire country. A third respondent explained that communities in resource-rich ethnic regions,

rather than benefiting from their own resources, face exploitation, land grabs and forced displacement, which in turn fuels further militarisation. To break this cycle, respondents emphasised the need for equitable economic development, including transparent and fair sharing of natural resources among all ethnic peoples, alongside investment in local infrastructure, education and healthcare.



Old rare earth mines at a border town in Kachin State. (Myanmar Now)

4.5 Inclusive Political Frameworks

“

Trust can be strengthened when all stakeholders work together to draft a new federal democratic constitution at both the federal and federal unit levels.

– Respondent

Respondents outlined the importance of formalising trust through inclusive decision-making processes and agreements at all levels. As one respondent explained: “this process is already organically emerging in liberated areas, where grassroots communities, ethnic organisations, and local administrations are working together to promote the common good and public welfare.” The same respondent added that these locally driven initiatives are “shaping the foundations of a genuine federal system from the ground up”. Multiple respondents emphasised that trust can be strengthened through a federal democratic framework at state and national levels that guarantees equality, autonomy and shared governance for all ethnic groups and minorities.

5. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: A CALL TO ACTION

A striking degree of commonality emerges across the spectrum of respondents in their calls for international action. These calls sought international action to formally recognise revolutionary actors, stop the junta's atrocities and secure the release of political prisoners, isolate and target the junta with sanctions and embargoes, denounce the junta's sham election, withhold recognition from the junta in its current or any subsequent form, endorse ground-up political processes, enlarge justice and accountability, deliver desperately needed humanitarian assistance, demand principled engagement on Myanmar, and respect the will of the people.

5.1 Formal Recognition and Support

You have let down the people of Myanmar. They have been fighting for democracy, identity, and freedom for decades. They deserve more than what they are currently receiving in international support.

– Respondent

There was a near universal call by respondents for direct recognition of and increased support to Myanmar's revolutionary movement. For respondents, recognition must be a political act by the UN, ASEAN and individual states – "... amplify our voice and defend our right to exist".



NUG Foreign Minister Daw Zin Mar Aung meets Australian Foreign Minister Senator the Hon Penny Wong at Parliament House in Canberra on 17 November 2025. (Facebook/Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Myanmar – NUG)

Multiple modalities of direct assistance were identified by respondents, including “technical and flexible financial support to groups who are delivering services, defending rights on the ground and working to build a federal democracy”, capacity-building support that reaches “local networks and community defenders, not only formal organizations”, “safe channels for civil society and local activists” and multifaceted and effective support to sustain and strengthen the “institutional capacities” of revolutionary forces.

One respondent stressed that support must also reach the “many areas controlled by resistance forces” where “there is much hope that the international community will engage with the people ... and provide them with assistance”.

5.2 Stop the Atrocities and Demand the Release of Political Prisoners

“It is very upsetting that the international community, despite being aware that the violent military is using excessive force and heavy weaponry to kill civilians daily, and repeatedly bombing schools and hospitals, has remained largely indifferent.”

– Respondent

The human toll of the military junta's escalating war against its own people is a lived reality for revolutionary actors. Respondents urged the international community to issue “a strong and powerful call for stopping atrocities such as ... incessant airstrikes and artillery attacks on civilian targets” and “not to turn a blind eye to these acts” that have killed “countless civilians”.

Added to this, one respondent emphasised the need to “recognise that the military junta is the root cause of the current human rights, humanitarian crises and mass displacement in Burma”. Another respondent implored the international community to act: the junta's “brutality, daily bombings and killings of civilians must be brought to an end”. A third respondent urged the international community to also demand “the immediate release of political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Win Myint”.

5.3 Non-Cooperation, Sanctions and Embargoes

“The international community must take bold, coordinated action to diplomatically isolate the military and support the forces of democratic resistance in Burma.”

– Respondent

Respondents identified non-cooperation, economic sanctions, weapons and fuel embargoes, and a denial of recognition as part of a package of essential actions that the international community must implement against the junta.

Respondents stated that sanctions must be strengthened and “coordinated” against key individuals and institutions and military-owned or affiliated economic entities, including against financial institutions such as the Myanmar Economic Bank (MEB). Multiple respondents emphasised that junta income sourced through extractive industries, including oil and gas revenues, must also be targeted. Additionally, one respondent stressed that sanctions should be consistent and combined with international condemnation and isolation of the junta.

Several respondents said that a comprehensive arms embargo must be joined by a refusal by neighbouring states to sell weapons and aviation fuel to the junta or to provide “aircraft, aircraft parts, maintenance supplies, munitions, technologies, training or other technical assistance or services”. Along with economic sanctions, one respondent proposed that embargoes be combined with the severing of “all formal and informal ties with the junta” to “diplomatically isolate them”.

5.4 Reject the Junta's Sham Election



The international community should take decisive action to uphold democracy and human rights in Myanmar. This includes refusing to recognize or legitimize the SAC/SSPC and its sham elections.

– Respondent

As an extension of non-cooperation, respondents called on the international community to outright reject the junta's planned election — described by one respondent as “a sham designed to manufacture legitimacy”. Another respondent added, “there should be no recognition without real political change, and no participation that risks giving [the junta] credibility”.

Instead, the international community must endorse ground-up political processes, which one respondent characterised as having formed “powerful political developments and tools to counteract the ... sham-election”.

5.5 Endorse Ground-Up Political Processes

“There must be stronger political and diplomatic recognition of the legitimate pro-democracy and ethnic revolutionary actors who are building alternative governance structures and delivering essential services on the ground. These actors represent the true aspirations of the Myanmar people and should be supported politically and financially.”

– Respondent

As addressed earlier, revolutionary actors offered strong and viable alternatives to the junta's electoral path. These include the drafting of the AFTA and the CPA process between the NUCC, NUG and other key resistance stakeholders. One respondent highlighted emerging “federal unit governance structures in Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway” and pointed to the “Anti-sham election action plan” that is being implemented “together with EROs, Federal units and ethnic-based councils and ground forces throughout the country”.

Another respondent pressed for patience: “the call for ‘federal democracy’ has now become a widespread political slogan. However, shaping a slogan into a system will require time, understanding, negotiations, and agreements among the political revolutionary forces. It is also necessary to find a common ground and agree on the foundational principles for establishing a new federal union that is acceptable to everyone.”

5.6 Enlarge Justice and Accountability

“Use everything at your disposal – ... hands, intellect, voice, heart, and whatever means available – to help us protect justice and stand with the oppressed of the world.”

– Respondent

As addressed before, multiple respondents called for enlarged justice and accountability with the support of the international community. One respondent said that this support must extend to the prosecution of individuals: “hold Min Aung Hlaing accountable under international law for commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity.”

Respondents proposed a suite of actions, including “universal jurisdiction cases, support for the UN's evidence-gathering mechanisms, and referral to the International Criminal Court”.

Multiple respondents stressed that action on accountability should also see the international community “listen to and support local and civil society organisations in their efforts to document human rights abuses ... and advocate for justice and accountability,” alongside “measures to protect vulnerable communities and human rights defenders”.



ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan announced on 27 November 2024 that he was filing an application for a warrant of arrest for junta leader Min Aung Hlaing for crimes against humanity committed against the Rohingya in Myanmar. (ICC)

5.7 Deliver Humanitarian and Technical Assistance

“Real support has to reach local networks and community defenders, not only formal organizations. The hope for Myanmar’s future survives because of resilient grassroots truth-tellers who continue their work even under fire.”

– Respondent

Respondents called for the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance, including by cross-border means and in “practical and effective” ways. One respondent emphasised that international assistance must include “medical care, and shelter for conflict-affected populations, including internally displaced persons and refugees, while respecting their safety and dignity”. Another respondent called for technical assistance for civil society and support for independent local media.

A third respondent explained that the provision of assistance should also be humanised: “bring the stories from ... Bago, Mon, Karen, and Tanintharyi to global platforms like the UN, international governments, Burma focus groups, ASEAN, and donor meetings. Local networks also should be treated as partners, not just observers.”

5.8 Demand Principled Engagement by the UN, ASEAN and Neighbours With Legitimate Myanmar Actors

“The peoples of Myanmar are bearing the brunt of the consequences of some countries exploiting the situation for their own interests based on their stakes in Myanmar. Therefore, countries and organizations that wish to support Myanmar must look beyond short-term gains and focus on long-term solutions.”

– Respondent

Respondent calls for international support were accompanied by strong sentiments of abandonment by the UN, neighbours, ASEAN and the international community. As one respondent highlighted, the junta is “exploiting the weaknesses of the international community’s fragmented approaches to the situation in Myanmar to consolidate its power.”

Respondents called on ASEAN to be decisive. The UN should ban the junta from all UN meetings and, as one respondent proposed, foster “an international process that supports Myanmar’s cause”. Another respondent called on neighbouring countries to “likewise reconsider their current stances, as they are the ones most directly affected by Burma’s ongoing conflicts as long as the conflicts in Burma persist, our neighbouring countries will continue to suffer the consequences.” Respondents also called for fairness from the international community, particularly in ways that would “... help create a level playing field that will enable the people of Myanmar to shape their own destiny and secure the rights they deserve, as soon as possible.”

“Only through principled action, solidarity, and sustained support for the revolution can the international community help Myanmar move from oppression toward freedom and justice.”

– Respondent

5.9 Respect the People's Will

“Without listening to the voices of the Burma people, addressing the root causes of the conflict in Burma, and ending the culture of impunity, sustainable peace, full human rights, and a democratic federal union will remain out of reach.

– Respondent

Respondents stressed that respect for the will of the Myanmar people must be a crucial component of international support and a precondition for dialogue. As one respondent explained, “dialogue cannot be unconditional, there should be no normalization until there is real progress on human rights, the release of prisoners, and a credible transition.”

Another respondent emphasised that the Myanmar peoples' self-determination in “building a new system” requires “multifaceted support and assistance” from the international community. The same respondent added that “a process-oriented approach, grounded in responsibility and accountability and aimed for sustainable and lasting solutions that align with the will of the Myanmar people, should be pursued.”



Anti-coup protestors are seen holding signs and raising three-fingered salutes during a peaceful protest against the attempted military coup in Mandalay on 28 April, 2021. (Sai Han One/Shutterstock)

6. MESSAGES TO MYANMAR AUDIENCES: CHANGE FROM WITHIN

Respondents reflected on their own essential roles in delivering change. This included minority empowerment, the need for solidarity, cooperation and coordination, and sustaining the revolution.

6.1 Minority Rights and Empowerment

“ True progress will come only when the voices of oppressed peoples, especially the Rohingya, are recognized and empowered in shaping Myanmar’s democratic future.

– Respondent

Respondents identified the fight for minority rights and empowerment as a “root causes” driver of the revolution as well as a key unifier across the peoples’ movement. Respondents urged “Myanmar citizens ... to stand united across ethnic and religious lines to safeguard democracy and human rights”.

6.2 Solidarity, Cooperation and Coordination

“ During five years of this revolution, we have struggled and learned many lessons. It has been a period where we moved forward with the support and assistance of a diverse group of people, ethnicities and religions and we also have the vision to work not just for our own ethnic group but for the entire country.

– Respondent

One respondent highlighted the critical importance of “collaboration, cohesion, and unity among revolutionary forces” and “engagement with ethnic organizations, civil society, and pro-democracy forces is essential to strengthen coordination and advance inclusive political agreements”.

“ Reject division and embrace solidarity for a shared and just future.

– Respondent

Some respondents, speaking to a Myanmar audience, gave assurances that “despite the most difficult circumstances, elected MPs, together with revolutionary stakeholders, are tirelessly working

to protect your rights, maintain unity, and advance the vision of a federal democratic union where all communities are included and respected." At the same time, these respondents underscored the essential role of the people, with one respondent saying that: "citizens should maintain hope and work toward a shared vision of a federal, democratic, and inclusive Myanmar where all communities have a voice, using safe and secure methods of communication and organizing."

Respondents identified reconciliation and defections as two other unifiers. On reconciliation, one respondent explained that "engagement in inclusive dialogue and support for federal democracy and reconciliation are critical for a lasting peace, alongside measures to protect vulnerable communities and human rights defenders." Another respondent said that defections "should remain a key strategy in our evolution. Defection and defiance ... would be a no bloodshed strategy to bring down the junta regime from inside."

6.3 Staying Resolute

“Revolutionary actors across the country are doing everything they can to build a future rooted in federal democracy and to protect civilians in the face of ongoing brutality. The people of Burma must not give up. As long as they continue to resist, organize and fight for justice, the question of victory is not if, but when.

– Respondent

Resilience and resolve were threads that ran through respondent submissions. As put succinctly by one respondent: "the contribution of each and every person will determine the destiny of the country". In this same spirit is a recognition of the extraordinary sacrifices of the Myanmar people.

“To the people of Myanmar, we salute your commitment and sacrifices. We stand with you and will continue the revolution until we succeed fully.

– Respondent

“We honor the courage of every citizen, the strength shown in suffering, the patience in the face of hardship, and the many ways you continue to resist oppression. We especially pay tribute to the leadership of young people and women who are at the heart of today's revolution.

– Respondent

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A Path Deeper Into Crisis

The military junta does not have the power to unilaterally shape events in Myanmar, as it once might have. The attempted coup, and the revolution formed in its wake, have fundamentally changed the country and created new realities that did not exist before. Myanmar's peoples have emphatically rejected the military's path.

The military is weaker now than at any other point in the last 75 years. It has traded Myanmar's sovereignty for its own survival, becoming increasingly dependent on China. The planned elections will not alter this. They will not reverse the military's territorial and political losses and nor satisfy the revolution's demands. Even if the elections proceed and China continues to sustain the junta and its successors, the Myanmar military will remain a hollowed-out power reliant on violence, repression and the deliberate perpetuation of humanitarian crisis to maintain limited control. Instability and criminality will deepen, the economy will collapse even further and poverty will spread, and the population will continue to suffer. This, in effect, is the military junta's vision for Myanmar. It is the old way, the way backwards.

A New Way Towards Hope

The revolution offers hope and a viable new way forward. Across the revolutionary movement, there is meaningful consensus around a shared vision for a federal democratic Union upheld by a new constitution that enshrines civilian governance, equality and self-determination, justice, human rights and the rule of law. The vision is not theoretical – it is already being constructed from the ground up by a broad ecosystem of revolutionary stakeholders working collaboratively through overlapping platforms and processes to realise shared goals. Joint armed resistance against the military is creating the space in which new political and administrative structures can take root. None of this would be possible without broad public endorsement. The peoples of Myanmar have chosen, and are actively forging, a new path.

However, the conditions required for the revolution to achieve its objectives are not yet fully in place and significant obstacles remain. Foremost among these is the military junta itself – its intransigence to the will of the Myanmar people and its reliance on violence to sustain itself. The planned elections only reinforce this stance. Until the military accepts that it must withdraw from politics, relinquish power and negotiate the terms of a genuine transition, Myanmar's crises, already among the gravest in the world and still worsening, will persist.

A Decisive Crossroads

Rather than pursuing short-term interests by shielding Min Aung Hlaing from justice and sustaining

his junta through elections and other means of engagement, China and other international actors with influence should use their leverage to bring about this acceptance as swiftly as possible.

Myanmar stands at a decisive crossroads. The military junta's unlawful attempt to entrench its rule through elections cannot resolve the country's crisis, because it is itself the source of that crisis. The revolution, albeit still in the foundational stages, represents the only legitimate and viable way forwards toward a stable and inclusive union. Its success will depend not only on the courage and unity of the revolution, but on whether the international community chooses to align its actions with the principles it professes – democracy, equality, justice, human rights and the self-determination of peoples.

Recommendations

To Governments, including in their capacities as members of the UN and ASEAN and as States Parties to the Rome Statute:

- Intensify diplomatic efforts to secure:
 - an immediate end to all attacks, particularly airstrikes
 - a total countrywide ceasefire supported and enforced by ASEAN and the UN Security Council and monitored by international observers
 - the immediate release of all political prisoners
 - unhindered humanitarian access
 - formal engagement with legitimate Myanmar representatives and actors and emerging federal democratic institutions, including the NUG, NUCC, CRPH, EROs and state/federal unit and ethnic-based councils, and engage accordingly, including on humanitarian and development assistance
- Reject the military junta's planned elections and any outcome, do not engage with the process or in any act that may otherwise encourage, support or legitimise the process
- Do not engage in any act that may confer legitimacy on the junta or any successor body established by the military, including on the basis of its planned elections
- Cease and prohibit the sale, transfer and diversion to the military of arms, munitions, aviation fuel and other military equipment and components for arms production; prohibit the sale, transfer, provision and licensing of intellectual property and technical design for the production of arms and munitions
- Impose, strengthen and coordinate financial restrictions on the military junta including sanctions on senior military officials, military-owned and crony companies and their subsidiaries, and on Myanmar's state-owned banks and military crony private banks; prioritise sanctioning Myanmar Economic Bank and freezing offshore assets of the Central Bank of Myanmar; and, where

applicable, apply secondary sanctions to any individuals or entities dealing with the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) and Myanmar's state-owned banks

- Cooperate fully with all properly constituted courts and mechanisms, including the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Criminal Court (ICC), the IIMM and national courts and mechanisms exercising universal jurisdiction, such as courts in Argentina and Türkiye, in their investigations of and proceedings against the Myanmar military, including by facilitating access and enforcing arrest warrants and other orders of the courts, and consider launching new prosecutions applying universal jurisdiction in domestic courts
- Consider submitting an article 14 State Party referral of the situation in Myanmar to the ICC Prosecutor
- File declarations of intervention in The Gambia's case against Myanmar under the Genocide Convention at the ICJ
- Support the legitimate actors identified above in their negotiation of a new federal democratic constitution for Myanmar in accordance with the will and interests of the people and inclusive of all communities, including Rohingya and other minorities and those among them forced to leave Myanmar. As a core condition, the Myanmar military, in whatever form it exists, must be made permanently subordinate to a democratically elected civilian government and parliament
- Reverse funding cuts and scale-up financial support for humanitarian assistance. Expand coordination with legitimate Myanmar representatives and actors, emerging federal democratic institutions, civil society and minority communities, including those who have been forced to leave Myanmar, as well as with neighbouring countries, ASEAN and UN agencies, to support urgent, impartial and unobstructed delivery of humanitarian and material assistance by all available means, including cross-border channels, to all communities in need in Myanmar, and to ensure aid is not weaponised. Increase financial support to bolster recovery and reconstruction efforts and to address the broader humanitarian crisis. Full and unimpeded access must be granted to humanitarian agencies and actors
- Provide technical, capacity-building and financial support to legitimate Myanmar representatives and actors and emerging federal democratic institutions to bolster governance capacity and expand service provision
- Sustain and increase technical, capacity-building and financial support to Myanmar civil society and independent media to strengthen humanitarian response, access to information, rights monitoring, documentation, education and advocacy and accountability processes

Additionally, to ASEAN:

- Delegitimise the military junta or any successor body established by the military, including on the basis of its planned elections

- Maintain the ban on military junta representatives participating in ASEAN meetings and confirm a series of graduating punitive steps that ASEAN will take if the junta continues to refuse to abide by ASEAN decisions, fails to end its attacks on civilians and to release political prisoners, or continues to withhold and manipulate access to humanitarian assistance
- Build on recent Stakeholder Engagement Meetings on Myanmar by creating a formal ASEAN platform to support legitimate Myanmar representatives and actors in their negotiation of a new federal democratic constitution for Myanmar, without setting pre-conditions or prescribing pre-determined outcomes

Additionally, to UN Organs:

Security Council

- Adopt a new resolution on the situation in Myanmar in follow-up to resolution 2669 (2022) to:
 - impose an immediate total country-wide ceasefire in Myanmar and include provisions to enforce the military's compliance with the ceasefire
 - impose a comprehensive arms and aviation fuel embargo with a mechanism to monitor and enforce it
 - demand the immediate release of political prisoners
 - demand unhindered humanitarian access for UN agencies and other international organisations
 - impose targeted financial sanctions on senior military officials, military-owned and crony companies and their subsidiaries and on Myanmar's state-owned banks and military crony private banks
 - confirm that all national institutions, including the military, must serve under a democratically elected fully representative civilian government
 - refer the situation in Myanmar to the ICC
 - call for scaled-up financial support to Myanmar to address the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar
 - formally place Myanmar on the Security Council's agenda through a regular reporting mechanism by the UN Secretary-General and the UN Special Envoy on Myanmar

General Assembly

- If efforts at the Security Council continue to stall, the General Assembly must adopt a new plenary resolution on the situation in Myanmar that:
 - builds on previous Security Council, General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions, including by incorporating the elements proposed to the Security Council above
 - establishes a special international criminal tribunal for Myanmar if the Security Council fails to refer the situation to the ICC

- recognises the role of legitimate Myanmar representatives and actors in realising the federal democratic will and aspirations of the Myanmar people
- Renews and elaborates on the mandate of the UN Special Envoy on Myanmar, which is currently placed in the annual resolution on the situation of human rights of the Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar
- Accredite NUG representatives as full representatives of Myanmar in UN organs and bodies, consistent with the accreditation of Myanmar's permanent representative in New York

Human Rights Council

- Continue to strengthen the Human Rights Council's address of the situation in Myanmar and the situation of the Rohingya and other minorities, including through the Council's annual resolutions

To the UN Country Team (UNCT), ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and other international humanitarian and development agencies:

- Avoid actions that could grant or be perceived as granting legitimacy to the military junta or any successor body established by the military, including on the basis of its planned elections
- Increase formal engagement and partnership with legitimate Myanmar representative and actors, recognising their role and integrating governance approaches. Divert programmes to legitimate emerging federal democratic institutions. Increase presence and humanitarian provision in and to non-military junta-controlled areas
- Expand coordination with legitimate Myanmar representative and actors, emerging federal democratic institutions, civil society and minority communities, including those who have been forced to leave Myanmar, as well as with neighbouring countries, to support urgent, impartial and unobstructed delivery of humanitarian and material assistance by all available means, including cross-border channels, to all communities in need in Myanmar, and to ensure aid is not weaponised. Ensure flexibility and accommodate the role of informal networks and actors
- Continue to scale-up the cross-border humanitarian response



SAC-M is an independent group of international human rights experts working to support the peoples of Myanmar in their fight for peace, genuine democracy, justice and accountability.

For information about SAC-M and details of our work, please visit -
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