

OLD GENERALS, NEW CLOTHES:

The Myanmar Junta's
Illegitimate 2025-26 Elections
and the Way Forward

10 April 2026



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Abbreviations

AAPP	: Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)
ACLED	: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data
AFTA	: Articles of Federal Transitional Arrangement
ANFREL	: Asian Network for Free Elections
ASEAN	: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CDM	: Civil Disobedience Movement
CHRO	: Chin Human Rights Organization
CNF	: Chin National Front
CRPH	: Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw
CPA	: Common Political Agreement
DPI	: deep packet inspection
ERO	: Ethnic Resistance Organisation
EU	: European Union
EVM	: electronic voting machine
FPTP	: first-past-the-post
GAD	: General Administration Department
HURFOM	: Human Rights Foundation of Monland
ICAPP	: International Conference of Asian Political Parties
ICC	: International Criminal Court
ICJ	: International Court of Justice
IDP	: internally displaced person
IIMM	: Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar
IMEI	: International Mobile Equipment Identity
JCB	: Joint Coordination Body
KIO	: Kachin Independence Organization
KNPP	: Karenni National Progressive Party

KNU	: Karen National Union
MEC	: Multi-Ethnic Council
MFDP	: Myanmar Farmers' Development Party
MUP	: Mon Unity Party
NDSC	: National Defence and Security Council
NLD	: National League for Democracy
NGO	: non-governmental organisation
NUG	: National Unity Government
OHCHR	: United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PR	: proportional representation
PSMS	: Person Scrutiny and Monitoring System
RFA	: Radio Free Asia
SAC	: State Administration Council
SAC-M	: Special Advisory Council for Myanmar
SCEF	: Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union
SNDP	: Shan and Nationalities Democratic Party
SNLD	: Shan Nationalities League for Democracy
SPDC	: State Peace and Development Council
SSPC	: State Security and Peace Commission
UEC	: Union Election Commission
UN	: United Nations
USDP	: Union State and Development Party
VPN	: virtual private network



Soldiers and armored personnel carriers are deployed in Naypyitaw on 2 February 2021, one day after the coup. (The Irrawaddy)

Executive Summary

In February 2021, the Myanmar military, resorting to its decades-old playbook, launched a coup d'état. Built on the baseless claim that the November 2020 general elections – which delivered the National League for Democracy (NLD) a landslide victory – had been fraudulent, it sought to upend the country's nascent democracy and restore military rule.

Engineered by alleged war criminal and former armed forces Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing, the power grab unleashed a polycrisis of atrocity crimes, political imprisonment, forced displacement, dire humanitarian need, and economic instability that continues to damage and divide the entire region. The coup attempt was met with widespread opposition across the country and, five years on, continues to be broadly rejected.

In December 2025 and January 2026, facing countrywide resistance from the pro-democracy Spring Revolution movement and in desperate need of international legitimacy, the junta finally staged its own elections, which it had been planning for years.

Those elections are the focus of this paper, which is co-authored by the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) and the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M), with election expert Amaël Vier as lead writer.

ANFREL is the leading regional network working to advance democratic elections in Asia, comprising 26 member organisations in 18 countries. SAC-M is an independent group of international experts working to support the people of Myanmar in their fight for human rights, peace, democracy, justice, and accountability.

The paper opens by examining in Chapter 1 the Myanmar military's years-long strategy to contest and eventually erase historical evidence of the 2020 elections and the overwhelming democratic mandate delivered to the NLD. In its place, the junta perpetuated an alternative narrative, according to which only it and its own staged elections could deliver a way out of the current political crisis. This crisis, of course, was of the junta's own making.

Chapters 2 and 3 scrutinise the junta-staged elections, which took place over three phases in December 2025 and January 2026, and show how they failed across the board to meet internationally recognised standards for genuine elections. The junta's elections were held in only 42% of Myanmar's territory, under a restrictive legal framework that barred legitimate political competition to the advantage and benefit of the military-aligned Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). Every aspect of the staged elections, from its election management body to the design of the electoral system and the selection of political parties, was carefully engineered to ensure a predetermined outcome. The junta not only set the rules of the game, but also chose the players and the referee.

Chapter 4 explores the atrocities, widespread violence, and assaults on fundamental freedoms that the junta has employed since its coup attempt to terrorise and punish perceived opponents. These deliberate and systematic attacks against civilians also sought to soften and reclaim lost ground ahead of the junta's illegitimate elections.

Chapter 5 discusses the fraudulent new "parliament" that has been constituted in Naypyitaw and what will likely come next now that Min Aung Hlaing's electoral charade has concluded. The junta's rebranding of itself as a civilian "government" is entirely superficial. At its head remains Min Aung Hlaing, whose relentless pursuit of the presidency has inflicted an incalculable toll on the country.

Finally, but of utmost importance, Chapter 6 explores the Spring Revolution movement which, while still in its foundational stages, represents the only legitimate and viable path toward a stable and inclusive federal democratic Union. Across this movement, there is meaningful consensus around a shared vision for a new constitution that enshrines civilian governance, equality, self-determination, and justice.

The Myanmar people have chosen and are actively forging a new democratic path, as their widespread rejection of the junta's illegitimate elections resoundingly demonstrated. For years, they have resisted the most brutal military in the region, whilst undertaking the immense challenge of building the foundations of Myanmar's federal democratic future. The

grave risk now is that through expediency, apathy, or both, countries will normalise their relationships with the junta and will give it the legitimacy it so desperately needs.

Drawing on views expressed from within Myanmar’s revolutionary movement, the paper concludes by setting out actionable recommendations that the international community – including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), states, and United Nations organs and entities – must take to support Myanmar’s pro-democracy actors.

Among other actions, the international community must reaffirm its political, financial, material, capacity-building, and humanitarian support for legitimate pro-democracy actors and emerging federal democratic institutions, including the newly launched Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union (SCEF), ethnic organisations and councils, the National Unity Government (NUG), emerging state units and alliances, civil society, and minority communities. These actors are striving to build a genuine, inclusive, and sustainable new federal democratic Union, and to finally drive the military out of Myanmar politics for good.

At the same time, the international community must isolate the junta and stop its atrocity crimes, including by blocking its access to cash, munitions, jet fuel, dual-use items, and surveillance technology. States must also outright reject the outcome of the junta’s fraudulent elections and refrain from engaging in any act that may confer legitimacy on the junta and its illegitimate “government”.

Finally, the international community must also hold Min Aung Hlaing and other senior junta members to account and finally end the decades of military impunity that have enabled repeated cycles of violence and political upheaval without consequence.



NLD supporters celebrate the party's election victory in front of the party headquarters in Yangon on November 9, 2020. (Myanmar Now)

1

The Junta's Historical Revisionism

In February 2021, the Myanmar military, adhering to a decades-old playbook, staged a coup that aimed to upend the country's nascent democracy. It was built on the baseless claim that the general elections held in November 2020 had been fraudulent.

Under the direction of accused war criminal Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the military detained State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, both of whom remain political prisoners to this day, and placed around 400 newly-elected members of Parliament under house arrest.¹

In the more than five years since, this military junta has declared war on the Myanmar people and driven the country into a polycrisis of atrocity crimes, forced displacement, political imprisonment, dire humanitarian need, and economic instability. Yet the Myanmar people continue to resist and defend their federal democratic aspirations. The military's power grab will remain incomplete as long as its legitimacy is contested and its exercise of control remains partial.

Desperate for international legitimacy in the face of this countrywide resistance, the military junta staged elections in December 2025 and January 2026. These illegitimate elections are the focus of this chapter and this paper.

[A Personal Ambition for the Presidency](#)

Min Aung Hlaing pursued the presidency of Myanmar at any cost for years. Driven by ambition and fuelled by his personal animus for State Counsellor and National League for Democracy (NLD) leader Aung San Suu Kyi, he was reportedly further inflamed by the NLD's attempts² to review the military's powers under the 2008 Constitution.

The NLD's overwhelming electoral success in 2020 and the military-aligned Union Solidarity and Development Party's (USDP) derisory performance were the final straw for Min Aung Hlaing, who cried foul and deployed the full weight of Myanmar's war machine against the civilian population.

By crafting a false narrative that the 2020 general elections were fraudulent and by labelling democratically elected opponents as terrorists, Min Aung Hlaing and his junta set back more than a decade of democratic progress in Myanmar and defied the democratically expressed will and aspirations of tens of millions of people.

¹ Al Jazeera, Myanmar legislators remain held in 'open-air detention centre', 2 February 2021, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/2/nld-urges-myanmar-generals-to-release-leaders-restore-parliament> (accessed 25 March 2026).

² Reuters, Myanmar's parliament blocks bid by Suu Kyi party to reduce army power, 11 March 2020, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/myanmars-parliament-blocks-bid-by-suu-kyi-party-to-reduce-army-power-idUSKBN20X1JU/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

On 3 April 2026, Min Aung Hlaing was “elected” as Myanmar’s new “president” by the illegitimate parliament produced by the junta’s staged elections,³ changing from a military uniform into civilian clothes, in a real-life rendition of the “Emperor’s New Clothes” folktale.

As will be shown, the elections staged by the military junta were part of a years-long strategy to contest and eventually erase historical evidence of the 2020 elections and the NLD’s landslide victory.

Empty Claims of Fraud

The 2020 general elections were widely recognised by domestic⁴ and international⁵ election observers as free and fair, despite some procedural shortcomings and accusations of bias on the part of the Union Election Commission (UEC)⁶, which did not however impact the perceived legitimacy of the election management body.

The election’s most significant flaws pertained to undemocratic provisions embedded in the military-drafted 2008 Constitution and election laws, namely the reservation of 25% of parliamentary seats for the armed forces⁷. Overall, the quality of the 2020 elections was found to be on par with those held in 2015, a remarkable achievement under the challenging conditions set by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the integrity of the results was not challenged by observers.

Similarly, a Gallup poll conducted between October and December 2020 found that 82% of respondents in Myanmar had confidence in the honesty of the country’s elections.⁸ The governments of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and others recognised the outcome of the 2020 elections.

Yet the military and its proxy, the USDP, had begun to undermine the 2020 general elections before they even took place.

³ BBC, Myanmar’s coup leader who set off a brutal civil war becomes president, 3 April 2026, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1782nk0018o> (accessed 7 April 2026).

⁴ PACE, 2020 General Elections Observation Report, 16 March 2021, available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/197JpXoGdhgZ2OUhnatsUWkEFv5lvgZRC/view?usp=sharing> (accessed 25 March 2026) and Joint Statement by Domestic Election Observer Organizations, 29 January 2021, available at: <https://www.pacemyanmar.org/mmobservers-statement/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁵ The 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 25 March 2026), and ANFREL, The 2020 Myanmar General Elections: Democracy Under Attack. ANFREL International Election Observation Mission Report, 17 May 2021, available at: https://anfrel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ANFREL_Democracy-Under-Attack-F.pdf (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁶ PACE, *ibid.*, p. 18 and ANFREL, *ibid.*, p. 56

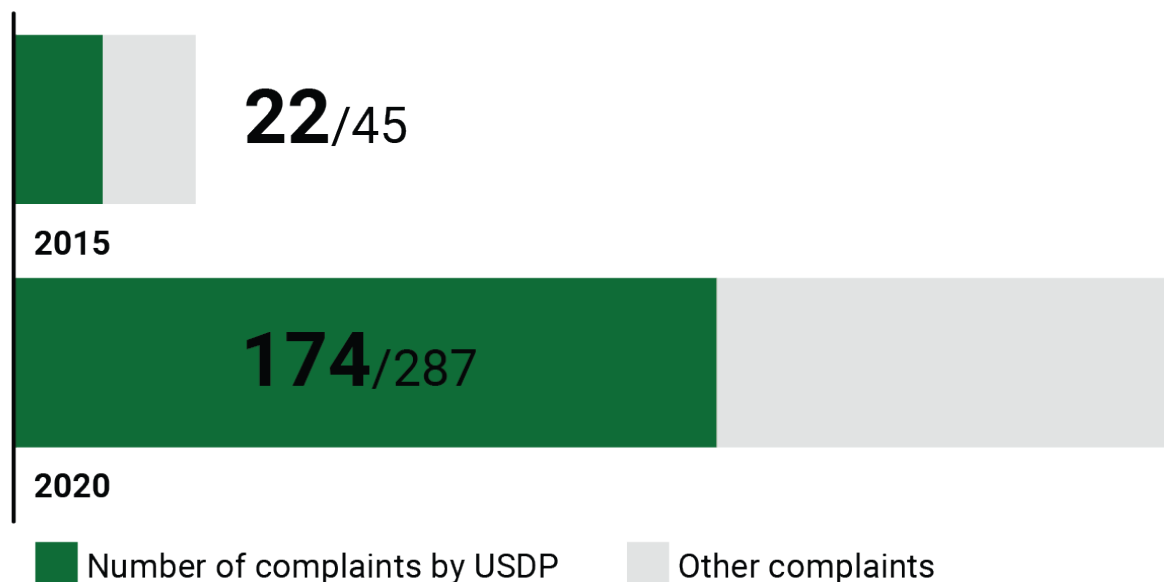
⁷ Sections 14, 109, 141 and 161 of the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar and Section 3 of the election laws for *Amyotha Hluttaw*, *Pyithu Hluttaw* and state and region *hluttaws*.

⁸ RJ Reinhart, Gallup, Economy, Not Election, Troubled Myanmar Before Coup, 5 February 2021, available at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/329405/economy-not-election-troubled-myanmar-coup.aspx> (accessed 25 March 2026).

As Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, Min Aung Hlaing openly criticised the NLD-led government and the UEC for “weakness and deficiencies which were never seen in the previous elections”.⁹ He claimed widespread “intentional and unintentional mistakes of the Commission at its different levels”, including mismanagement of voter lists, improper envelopes and ballot boxes, and a lack of enforcement of campaign rules. USDP spokesperson Nandar Hla Myint also said the military had “a duty to arbitrate if there are violations of constitutional mandates”, setting the stage for the post-election complaints that would follow and the eventual power grab on 1 February 2021.¹⁰

Upon the release of preliminary results indicating a landslide victory for the NLD, the USDP immediately called for new elections to be held in cooperation with the military.¹¹ It launched a nationwide campaign in coordination with other military-aligned parties to flood the UEC with complaints, resulting in 287 election cases being filed, including 174 by the USDP and more by individuals acting as its proxies.

Complaints Filed with the UEC After the 2015 and 2020 General Elections



The military, however, did not give the Commission a chance to resolve these complaints according to legal procedure. Bypassing legal avenues for election dispute resolution, the USDP and 15 other political parties simultaneously called for the formation of a commission

⁹ RFA, Myanmar Military Chief Hits Out at Election Mismanagement Ahead of Vote, 3 November 2020, available at: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/election-mismanagement-11032020193400.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁰ RFA, *ibid.*

¹¹ San Yamin Aung, The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Opposition Party Demands Election Rerun With Military Involvement, 11 November 2020, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-opposition-party-demands-election-rerun-military-involvement.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

of inquiry comprised of political parties and “institutions and entities responsible to safeguard the Constitution” – a clear reference to the military – to investigate election fraud.¹²

On 30 November 2020, the military announced that it was looking into the conduct of electoral processes in 218 townships and had requested cooperation from the UEC and its sub-commissions, despite lacking a legal mandate to make such a request.¹³ The USDP and other military-aligned parties also appealed for the Speaker of Parliament,¹⁴ the Constitutional Tribunal, and the Supreme Court¹⁵ to hear election complaints, although the authority to do so rested exclusively with the UEC.

During closed-door negotiations that took place over four days, the military then leveraged its allegations of large-scale fraud to try to strongarm the NLD-led government into acceding to its demands to delay the convening of the new Parliament, disband the UEC, and examine election results under military supervision.¹⁶ After failing to reach a favourable agreement, the military staged its coup attempt on 1 February 2021 and detained elected officials and members of the UEC. It has since repeatedly claimed that up to 30% of entries on the voter lists used in the 2020 elections were fraudulent without, however, providing any compelling evidence of election irregularities.¹⁷

ANFREL has steadfastly rejected the junta’s claims of election fraud, which are based on misrepresentation of facts and fabrications, and continues to assert that the results of the 2020 general elections were, by and large, representative of the will of the people of Myanmar.¹⁸

¹² USDP-Taungthar, Joint Statement by 16 Political Parties on the Outcome of the 2020 General Election, 11 November 2020, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/USDPTTA/posts/pfbid02rggegCVAizRfpDubR6tzTrCzWo9aepCeLPiRfWGQW3P4584fxLi3wg7aSM781VZHI> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹³ RFA, Myanmar’s Armed Forces Questions Balloting After Proxy Party’s Poor Results, 1 December 2020, available at: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/military-questions-balloting-12012020180455.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁴ San Yamin Aung, The Irrawaddy, Speaker Rejects Myanmar Military, Proxy Party’s Call for Special Parliament Session, 12 January 2021, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/speaker-rejects-myanmar-military-proxy-partys-call-special-parliament-session.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁵ RFA, Myanmar Army-Linked Parties Challenge Election Defeats in Supreme Court, 5 January 2021, available at: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/supreme-court-01052021193026.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁶ Poppy McPherson, Reuters, Insight: ‘Rude and insolent’: fraught talks preceded Myanmar’s army seizing power, 9 February 2021, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/rude-insolent-fraught-talks-preceded-myanmars-army-seizing-power-2021-02-09/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁷ UEC, Findings on the Investigation of Electoral Frauds and Malpractices in 2020 Multi-party Democracy General Election, available at: <https://2020election.uec.gov.mm/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁸ ANFREL, The 2020 Myanmar General Elections: Democracy Under Attack. ANFREL International Election Observation Mission Report, *ibid.* and Myanmar Junta’s Planned Elections: Falling Short of Democratic Legitimacy, 30 September 2025, available at: https://anfrel.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ANFREL_2025-Myanmar-Report_final_29-Sept-2025.pdf (accessed 25 March 2026).

Roadmap to an Illegitimate Junta Election

In the build-up to and following its coup attempt, the junta doubled down on its manufactured claims of election irregularities and sought to establish its legitimacy via two approaches - setting a roadmap for new elections and labelling its opponents as terrorists.

On the day of his coup attempt, Min Aung Hlaing promised that “a free and fair multiparty general election” would be held in the future and that power would be handed over to the winning party.¹⁹ According to this narrative, the military had seized power and formed its self-appointed State Administration Council (SAC) in response to fraudulent elections and only until new elections were held. This meant that the junta’s entire legitimacy rested on its ability to deliver these new polls.

This strategy was reflected in the five-point roadmap²⁰ enacted by the junta following the coup, albeit with elections listed as the final item. By August 2023, “ensuring peace and stability of the whole Union” to hold elections had been elevated to the first item on a revised roadmap.²¹

Initially, the junta announced a one-year deadline for these new elections to be held. This was soon postponed to August 2023,²² and then again several more times until the elections were ultimately staged in December 2025 and January 2026, only days before the coup’s fifth anniversary.

Ironically, the junta claimed that its elections would take place under the military-drafted and fundamentally undemocratic 2008 Constitution, which the coup itself abrogated. While there is a provision in the Constitution for a lawful takeover of power by the military in the event of a state of emergency²³, a state of emergency can only be declared by the President in coordination with the National Defence and Security Council (NDSC), which had not been the case. Legal examinations of the coup have consistently concluded that it was unconstitutional, along with all subsequent decisions by the SAC.²⁴

¹⁹ Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Notification No. 1/2021, 1 February 2021, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/republic-of-the-union-of-myanmar-office-of-the-commander-in-chief-of-defence-services-notification-no-1-2021/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁰ Global New Light of Myanmar, Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council, 3 May 2021, available at: https://www.moi.gov.mm/nlm/sites/default/files/newspaper-pdf/2021-05/3_May_21_gnlm.pdf (accessed 25 March 2026).

²¹ Ministry of Interior, Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council, August 2023, available at: <https://www.moi.gov.mm/moi%3Aeng/sites/default/files/2023-08/5.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²² Al Jazeera, Min Aung Hlaing says no Myanmar elections until 2023, 1 August 2021, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/1/min-aung-hlaing-promises-myanmar-multi-party-elections-2023> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²³ Section 418 of the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar

²⁴ For instance see Melissa Crouch, The Illegality of Myanmar’s Coup, 7 February 2021, available at: <https://melissacrouch.com/2021/02/07/the-illegality-of-myanmars-coup/> (accessed 25 March 2026) and International IDEA,

As the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar and the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M) have pointed out, the junta could not claim de facto authority either via the international law doctrine of “effective control”, as it did not exert control over the greater part of Myanmar’s territory, have the obedience of the population, have a reasonable prospect of permanence, or comply with its obligations under international law.²⁵

Through its power grab, the military junta has violated international standards such as Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government, and Article 2(2) of the ASEAN Charter, which requires member states to adhere to the rule of law, good governance, the principles of democracy and constitutional government.

Furthermore, in a particularly callous move, the junta invoked the memory of independence hero General Aung San to drum up support in the months leading up to its illegitimate elections, while keeping his daughter Aung San Suu Kyi imprisoned on trumped-up charges. It published selected quotes like the ones below in its propaganda outlets every day.

General Aung San Declares Firm Stand Against Election Disruption

“Our Government shall not permit any disruption of the forthcoming election. The electoral process shall remain free and fair, and no interference shall be exercised upon those who participate in it. Yet, let it be firmly declared that any attempt to disturb or sabotage the election shall be met with the full weight of authority”.

(An excerpt from the radio address regarding the election, delivered by General Aung San on 13 March 1947)



ရွေးကောက်ပွဲဖျက်မယ်ဆိုတဲ့လူတွေကို ဒီတိုင်းကြည့်နေမှာမဟုတ်

ရွေးကောက်ပွဲဖျက်မယ်ဆိုတဲ့လူတွေကိုတော့ ကျုပ်တို့အစိုးရကလည်း ဒီတိုင်းကြည့်နေမှာမဟုတ်ဘူး။ အပြင်းအထန်နှိပ်ကွပ်ရမှာပဲ။ ရွေးကောက်ပွဲမှာ လွတ်လပ်စွာ ယှဉ်ပြိုင်ရွေးကောက်တဲ့နေရာမှာတော့ ဘယ်သူ့ကိုမှ ကျုပ်တို့အစိုးရက နှောင့်ယှက်မှာ မဟုတ်ဘူး။ သို့သော် ဖျက်လိုချက်ဆီးလုပ်တဲ့လူမှန်သမျှကိုတော့ အာဏာကုန် နှိမ်နင်းပစ်မှာပဲဆိုတာ ရှင်းရှင်းကြီးသတိပေးထားပါရစေ။

(၁၉၄၇ ခုနှစ်၊ မတ်လ ၁၃ ရက်နေ့တွင် ရွေးကောက်ပွဲနှင့်ပတ်သက်၍ စိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း ပြောကြားခဲ့သည့် အသံလွှင့်မိန့်ခွန်းမှ ကောက်နုတ်ချက်)



Top image source: Global New Light of Myanmar
 Bottom image source: The Mirror Daily

Unconstitutionality of the 2021 military coup in Myanmar, 29 March 2022, available at: <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/unconstitutionality-of-the-2021-military-coup-in-myanmar.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁵ Tom Andrews, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Illegal and Illegitimate: Examining the Myanmar Military’s Claim as the Government of Myanmar and the International Response, 31 January 2023, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/mm/2023-01-27/infographic-sr-myanmar-2023-01-31.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026) and SAC-M, Briefing Paper: Effective Control in Myanmar, 5 September 2022, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2022/09/briefing-effective-control-myanmar/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

Framing Political Opponents as Terrorists

The junta's strategy to present itself as Myanmar's legitimate authority was also built on relentless attacks against its political opponents and the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), and placing blame for the country's increasing instability on them. The CDM was an organic, loosely coordinated, and largely non-violent protest movement that emerged in the wake of the coup.²⁶

Over 500 people, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint, members of the NLD and the UEC, and numerous election workers, were prosecuted for election misconduct following the coup.²⁷ "Trials" then took place in junta-appointed tribunals that denied due process protections, turning politically motivated charges into self-fulfilling prophecies and convictions.

The Committee Representing *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw* (CRPH), a group formed by lawmakers-elect after the coup attempt, was declared illegal by the junta on 21 March 2021.²⁸ This similarly became the case a month later for the National Unity Government (NUG), the government appointed by the CRPH, which had strong claims to democratic legitimacy.²⁹ In May 2021, both bodies were declared terrorist organisations by the junta for allegedly "inciting" the CDM to commit acts of violence,³⁰ along with the NUG's newly established People's Defence Forces (PDF).³¹ As SAC-M pointed out shortly after the coup, it was in fact the military that had been engaging in egregious acts of terrorism against its own

²⁶ See Progressive Voice, Civil Disobedience Movement: A Foundation of Myanmar's Spring Revolution and Force Behind Military's Failed Coup, 25 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 25 March 2026).

²⁷ RFA, Aung San Suu Kyi sentenced to a further three years on election fraud charge, 2 September 2022, available at: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/suu-kyi-sentence-09022022040050.html> (accessed 25 March 2026) and The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Junta Fines Election Officials for Alleged Fraud Over 2020 Poll, 4 February 2022, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-fines-election-officials-for-alleged-fraud-over-2020-poll.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁸ Human Rights Watch, Myanmar: Elected Lawmaker Group Declared Illegal, 25 March 2021, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/25/myanmar-elected-lawmaker-group-declared-illegal> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁹ Reuters, Myanmar activists hold 'blue shirt' protests; report says junta chief to attend summit, 21 April 2021, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-sees-blue-shirt-protests-over-detentions-junta-outlaws-unity-govt-2021-04-21/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

³⁰ Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Anti-Terrorism Central Committee, Declaration of Terrorist Groups, Notification No 2/2021, 8 May 2021, available at: <https://www.moi.gov.mm/moi:eng/news/3948> (accessed 25 March 2026).

³¹ According to the NUG, PDFs were formed to "end the 70-year long internal conflict by extinguishing the terrorist acts and aggressive attacks of the SAC", "perform effective reforms in the security sector", and "participate as an essential forerunner for establishing the Federal Union Forces". See <https://mod.nugmyanmar.org/en/peoples-defence-force/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

population,³² and that should be designated a terrorist organisation.³³

The junta's eagerness to label its opponents as terrorists, especially legitimate representatives of the people's will, such as the CRPH and NUG, reveals its own insecurity and struggle for legitimacy, both within and outside of Myanmar. In an attempt to convince the international community of its legitimacy, the junta's Ministry of Foreign Affairs compiled reports on so-called "terrorist acts" committed by opponents,³⁴ while continuing to refute its responsibility for precipitating the country's descent into crisis.

Erasing Historical Evidence

In July 2021, a new junta-installed UEC (addressed in detail in chapter 2) annulled the results of the 2020 general elections,³⁵ despite lacking the legal authority to do so. Even a lawfully constituted election commission cannot cancel elections in bulk, but only in individual constituencies on a case-by-case basis if malpractice or other shortcomings have been established.³⁶ Again, no credible evidence of election fraud had been provided by the junta. This decision was reminiscent of the annulment of the 1990 elections by a previous junta – the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) – in 2010, 20 years after those polls were held and convincingly won by the NLD.³⁷

After staging its own recent elections in December 2025 and January 2026, the current junta went even further and formed a 14-member committee in Naypyitaw tasked with overseeing the destruction of all historical records of the 2020 elections as well as the 2015-2020 parliamentary term under the NLD-led government.³⁸ History was to be erased.

Independent media reported that staff of the junta-installed UEC in Yangon, Mandalay, and Naypyitaw were ordered in early February 2026 to burn voter lists, ballot papers, and other materials related to the 2020 general elections, with officials claiming that the legally

³² SAC-M, SAC-M says Myanmar Military is Engaging in Terrorism and calls for Global "Three Cuts" Strategy, 28 March 2021, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2021/03/sac-m-says-myanmar-military-is-engaging-in-terrorism-and-calls-for-global-three-cuts-strategy/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

³³ SAC-M, The illegal junta should be designated a terrorist organisation, 15 December 2021, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2021/12/sac-m-the-illegal-junta-should-be-designated-a-terrorist-organisation/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Terrorist Acts of CRPH, NUG and PDFs (As of 18 April 2022), 10 May 2022, available at: <https://www.mofa.gov.mm/en/terrorist-acts-of-crph-nug-and-pdfs/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

³⁵ RFA, Myanmar's Junta Annuls 2020 Election Results, Citing Voter Fraud, 26 July 2021, available at: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/annulled-07262021204753.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

³⁶ Section 71 of the election laws for *Pyithu Hluttaw*, *Amyotha Hluttaw*, and state/region *hluttaws*.

³⁷ Reuters, Myanmar junta annuls election held 20 years ago, 11 March 2010, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/myanmar-junta-annuls-election-held-20-years-ago-idUSTRE62A15L/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

³⁸ DVB, Naypyidaw 'orders' destruction of 2020 election-related documents, 5 February 2026, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/naypyidaw-orders-destruction-of-2020-election-related-documents/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

mandated retention period had expired.³⁹ Administrative offices in other parts of the country reportedly received similar orders, in what was most likely a nationwide operation. Further reports have claimed that authorities have since moved on to destroying parliamentary records from the 2015-2020 term, and that photography of the burning was prohibited.⁴⁰

On a related note, the website of the junta's UEC was inaccessible almost continuously between December 2025 and March 2026, making any election results or announcements only accessible via state media. Progressive Voice executive director Khin Ohmar said of the outage: "It's not because of a lack of technical skill. It is an intentional act. I think this is another way for the junta to make sure that the UEC doesn't make any stupid move because once it's out on the website, it's hard to retract".⁴¹ The website went back up in March, but it is geo-blocked to users outside Myanmar.

This extensive purge of records illustrates the junta's persistent desire to erase then rewrite history according to its own version of events, and to strike from memory the period of tentative democratic governance in Myanmar between 2015 and 2020. Despite repeatedly making allegations of fraud in the 2020 elections, junta authorities have provided scant evidence to substantiate these claims, did not allow independent groups to audit or verify the allegations, and ultimately destroyed relevant electoral records, presumably because they contradicted the military's narrative.

³⁹ DVB, *ibid.* and Eleven, Election materials from 2020 Election destroyed in parts of Yangon and Mandalay Regions, 12 February 2026, available at: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/election-materials-from-2020-election-destroyed-in-parts-of-yangon-and-mandalay-regions> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁴⁰ DVB, ၂၀၁၅ လွှတ်တော်မှတ်တမ်းများကို မီးရှို့ဖျက်ဆီးရန် စစ်ကောင်စီ ညွှန်ကြား, 15 February 2026, available at: <https://burmese.dvb.no/post/746298> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁴¹ In ANFREL, Unpacking Myanmar's Junta-Planned Elections | The Election Observer S03EP02, 21 January 2026, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_W_0JlCuTs (accessed 25 March 2026).



Junta-leader Min Aung Hlaing at a demonstration of an electronic voting machine on 9 February 2023. (Official junta photo)

2

"Elections" Staged by the Junta, for the Junta

Genuine elections enable political competition through a level playing field, a diversity of options available to voters, a free campaign period, neutral election administration, and participation from the media and civil society organisations, among other criteria. Scrutiny of the elections staged by the junta shows that none of these were met.

Instead, every aspect of the elections orchestrated by the junta, from its election management body to the design of the electoral system and the selection of political parties, was carefully engineered to ensure a predetermined outcome. In a nutshell, the military not only set the rules of the game, but also chose the players and the referee.

[An Election Commission Installed by the Military](#)

On 1 February 2021, the day Min Aung Hlaing launched his coup, the military arrested the chair and two members of the Government-appointed UEC, along with other legitimate officeholders. The same day, military-installed “acting president” Myint Swe declared that the UEC “had not only failed to perform their duties but also neglected to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections”.⁴²

After the junta’s SAC was formed the next day, it immediately installed its own UEC,⁴³ as part of a first wave of appointments to state positions along with the Attorney-General, the Auditor-General, the Chief of Police, the Governor of the Central Bank, and region/state administrative councils.

The junta’s new election management body supplanted the lawfully appointed Commission and was chaired by former major general U Thein Soe, who infamously headed the UEC at the time of the 2010 elections, which were widely denounced as neither free nor fair, and from which international media and observers were barred.⁴⁴ On 31 January 2024, U Thein Soe was replaced as chair by U Ko Ko,⁴⁵ who was the SAC’s Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture from 2021 to 2023⁴⁶ and the chair of the Yangon Election Sub-Commission during the 2010 and 2015 general elections. Ko Ko was himself replaced as chair on 31 July

⁴² Global New Light of Myanmar, Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the President Order Number (1/2021), 1 February 2021, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/republic-of-the-union-of-myanmar-office-of-the-president-order-number-1-2021/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁴³ State Administration Council, Order No (7/2021), 2 February 2021, available at: <https://www.burmalibrary.org/sites/burmalibrary.org/files/obl/GNLM2021-02-03-red.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁴⁴ See for instance Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma, Burma Election 2010: An Election of Generals, November 2010, available at: <https://anfrel.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/13-report-general-elections-tacdb-anfrel-2010.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁴⁵ The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Junta Replaces Election Body Chief, 1 February 2024, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-replaces-election-body-chief.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁴⁶ The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Junta Leader Reshuffles Cabinet Days After Extending Emergency Rule, 4 August 2023, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/myanmar-junta-leader-reshuffles-cabinet-days-after-extending-emergency-rule.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

2025 by U Than Soe,⁴⁷ a retired major general who had been a member of the junta-appointed UEC since February 2021. U Than Soe had also been the leader of the military-appointed members of parliament (*Hluttaw*) during the 2015-2020 parliamentary term.⁴⁸

These changes reflect the sustained pressure and attention that the junta placed on the body it had tasked with delivering the elections it so desperately needed for legitimacy.

Most of the 18 members⁴⁹ of the junta-appointed Commission – which ultimately supervised the junta’s elections – are former military officers. At least nine have been placed under international sanctions⁵⁰ by the EU, Canada, Switzerland, or other entities. The EU describes them as being “directly involved in actions undermining democracy and the rule of law in Myanmar/Burma”.⁵¹

International standards establish that election management bodies should be independent⁵² and that appointments of their members should be based on a just, impartial, and transparent process.⁵³ The junta’s UEC fails to meet these criteria.

[An Electoral System Based on Gerrymandering and Token Representation](#)

The junta also pursued changes to the electoral system, promising a shift from the historically used first-past-the-post (FPTP) method to a proportional representation (PR) method. Electoral systems based on single-member districts, and especially FPTP, accentuate voters’ preferences and are more likely to create outright majorities. On the other hand, under PR, seats are allocated in proportion to each party’s vote share, which tends to favour coalition-building.

PR and hybrid electoral systems combining both PR and FPTP have gained traction around

⁴⁷ Eleven, New chairman and members appointed to Union Election Commission, 1 August 2025, available at: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/new-chairman-and-members-appointed-to-union-election-commission> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁴⁸ BBC, ဦးသန်းစိုး - တပ်ကိုကာကွယ်သူ ကော်မရှင်ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ”, 25 October 2025, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/burmese/articles/cd042r10dvgo> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁴⁹ 14 members were appointed by the National Defence and Security Council on 31 July 2025. Four additional members were appointed on 8 September 2025.

⁵⁰ Justice for Myanmar, The majority of the illegal Myanmar junta’s Union Election Commission (UEC) are sanctioned, 1 December 2025, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/justiceformyanmar.org/posts/pfbid02iDtv6MGPzK7xhgHUesgPqxPm3SJ1zcWScp7EYWPUvWYCXrpbEQtkGnKq6h7o46QPI> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁵¹ For instance for UEC member U Ko Ko Lwin: Council Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/2177, 8 November 2022, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022R2177> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁵² See for instance UN Human Rights Committee, CCPR General Comment No. 25, paragraph 20, 12 July 1996, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/hrc/1996/en/28176> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁵³ Asian Electoral Stakeholder Forum II, Dili Indicators of Democratic Elections, item III(a)(1), 19 March 2015, available at: <https://anfreel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/2015-Dili-Indicators-of-Democratic-Elections.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026).

the world for increasing the representation of minority groups and women in parliaments, especially in highly diverse countries. However, these methods need to be carefully considered and debated among all political stakeholders to ensure maximum opt-in, and their complexity means that they can sometimes be manipulated through obscure legal provisions.

The junta's introduction of PR failed to meet international standards on both counts, as the new electoral system was enacted unilaterally, and the claimed benefits of PR were subverted by features favourable to the military-aligned USDP. The military imposed the FPTP method in the 2008 Constitution, but that did not produce the results it wanted, so the junta designed a new system to ensure a predetermined preferential outcome.

The new electoral system was enacted by the junta with little regard for input from political parties or civil society. While the junta's UEC did invite political parties to submit feedback on a tentative PR system back in 2021, 38 parties, including the NLD and the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD), boycotted meetings with the Commission⁵⁴ and refused to provide input, given its illegitimacy. The parties that did attend the discussions remained cautious about whether the junta's stated intent would actually translate into greater representation.⁵⁵

It took years for the junta to eventually "amend" election laws in late July 2025,⁵⁶ which rolled out the new electoral system less than six months before the junta's polls would take place. This likely gave the military-backed USDP an additional undue advantage over other parties, as its close ties to the junta probably gave it insider knowledge and enabled it to prepare accordingly. Regardless, the introduction of a new electoral system was an entirely illegitimate reform because it was enacted unilaterally by a junta that had no legal mandate to do so

The junta's electoral system is also deliberately complex. As is often the case with laws passed by authoritarian regimes, the devil is in the detail. The junta did not fully replace the FPTP system with proportional representation, as ethnic parties had hoped for, but instead introduced PR alongside it. Under the junta's revised election "laws", 50% of *Amyotha Hluttaw* (upper house of Parliament) and state/region *hluttaw* seats were to be filled via closed-list PR (a vote for a list of candidates in a predetermined order), while the other half

⁵⁴ The Irrawaddy, Myanmar's NLD Rejects Military's Call for Proportional Representation Election System, 4 March 2021, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmars-nld-rejects-militarys-call-proportional-representation-election-system.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁵⁵ Development Media Group, Overseen by junta-appointed UEC, debate continues over election system change for Myanmar, 14 January 2022, available at: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/overseen-junta-appointed-uec-debate-continues-over-election-system-change-myanmar> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁵⁶ SAC Laws No. 47/2025, 48/2025 and 49/2025, enacted on 29 July 2025. They amended the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, *Amyotha Hluttaw* and state/region *hluttaws* election laws respectively.

and the entire *Pyithu Hluttaw* (lower house) would continue to be elected through FPTP.

Despite assurances from junta leader Min Aung Hlaing that the PR system would be “all-inclusive” and allow for constituents’ voices to be better represented,⁵⁷ several peculiar features expose that it was designed to entrench USDP domination:

1. Keeping 50% of seats elected through FPTP in the *Amyotha Hluttaw* and state/region *hluttaws* favoured larger parties, and especially the USDP, which had the most resources and enjoyed the military’s support. It also helped to ensure a more predictable outcome than a purely proportional system would have.
2. Although the junta’s system introduced a second election for PR alongside FPTP for *Amyotha Hluttaw* and state/region *hluttaws*, voters were unable to cast a ballot directly for these PR seats. Instead, FPTP votes were extrapolated to calculate seats allocated under PR.

This unusual system, inspired by the one introduced by the Thai military junta in 2017,⁵⁸ meant that political parties needed to field as many FPTP candidates as possible to be competitive for PR. This again favoured larger parties with greater operational capacity, as smaller and regional parties have pointed out.⁵⁹ An accurate and genuine representation of the people’s will was obviously not the junta’s motivation when it designed this system.

The table below shows the number of FPTP candidates for the *Amyotha Hluttaw* and state/region *hluttaws* fielded by the 10 largest political parties competing in the junta’s elections. In locations where parties were unable to field FPTP candidates, they also forfeited any potential PR votes, therefore compounding the advantage held by the USDP, which was the only party to have coverage across nearly all constituencies.

⁵⁷ Myanmar Now, Myanmar coup leader considers shift to electoral system favoured by military, 25 August 2021, available at: <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-coup-leader-considers-shift-to-electoral-system-favoured-by-military/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁵⁸ The military-drafted 2017 Constitution of Thailand introduced a similar system where voters were provided with only one ballot for two elections. It was used only once in the 2019 general election before being repealed in 2021.

⁵⁹ Than Lwin Times, ဆန္ဒမဲတစ်မဲဟာ ကိုယ်စားလှယ်လောင်းအပြင် ပါတီကိုပါ မဲပေးတဲ့ပုံစံနဲ့ ဆောင်ရွက်မယ်လို့ UEC ပြော, 28 August 2025, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/thanlwinetimes9/posts/pfbid02gD9fshTKZU4KakqvToCTUEg4hAKs26xX6hne25kv3UEZ5bSUs82jyuuJuGktE51PI> (accessed 25 March 2026).

Political Parties	Amyotha Hluttaw		State/Region Hluttaws	
	Number of FPTP candidates (maximum: 75)	Percentage of constituencies covered	Number of FPTP candidates (maximum: 266)	Percentage of constituencies covered
Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP)	74	98.7%	265	99.6%
People's Pioneer Party (PPP)	63	84.0%	149	56.0%
National Unity Party (NUP)	54	72.0%	161	60.5%
People's Party (PP)	31	41.3%	131	49.2%
Shan and Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP)	30	40.0%	142	53.4%
Myanmar Farmers' Development Party (MFDP)	22	29.3%	97	36.5%
Federal Democratic Party (FDP)	6	8.0%	23	8.6%
National Interest and Development Party (NIDP)	6	8.0%	10	3.8%
Mon Unity Party (MUP)	6	8.0%	9	3.4%
Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party	6	8.0%	7	2.6%
Others	65 (from 25 political parties)	N/A	170 (from 27 political parties)	N/A

This data does not reflect election cancellations announced in January 2026.

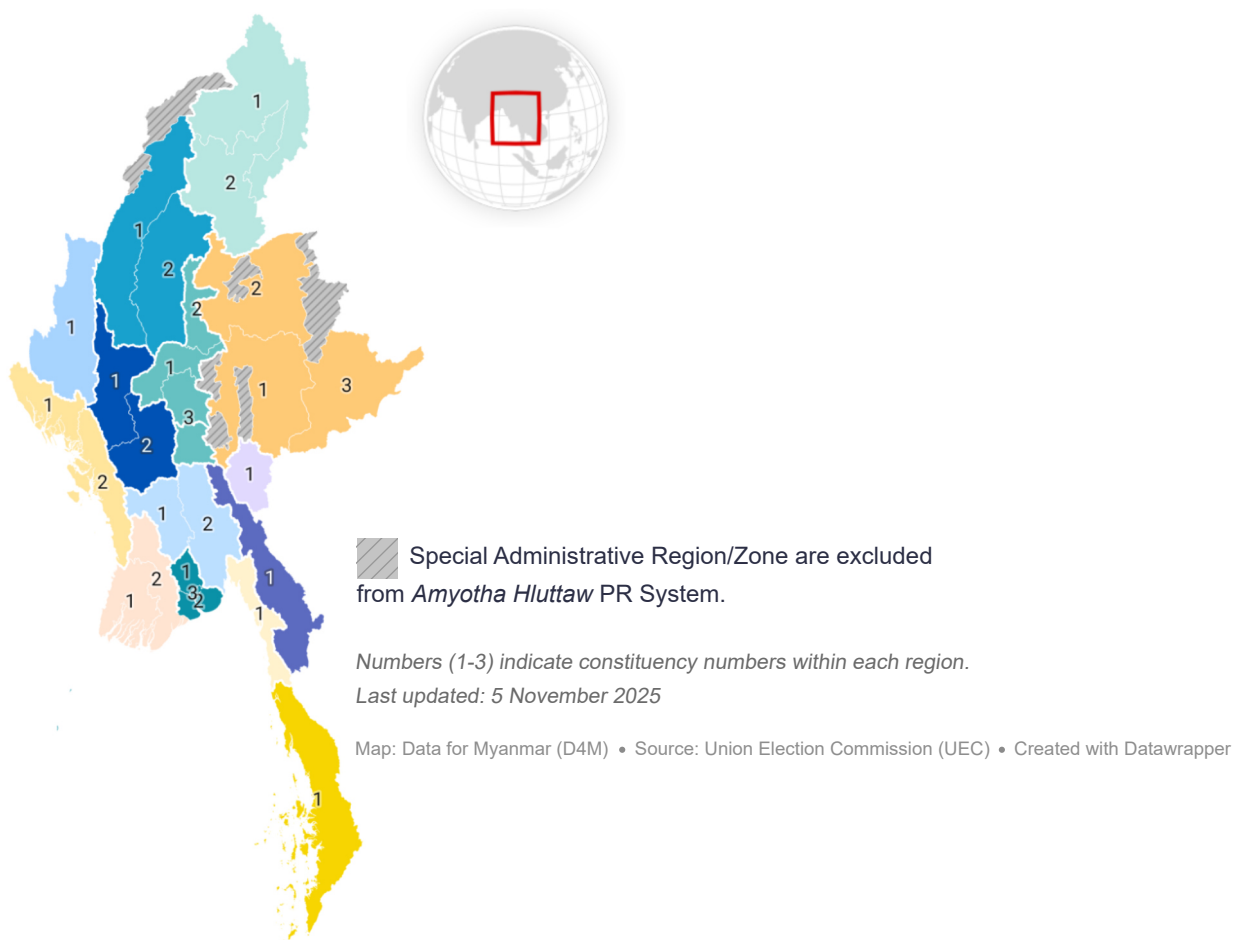
Data source: Junta-appointed UEC/Data for Myanmar, November 2025

- Most importantly, the constituencies for the PR elections were drawn up inconsistently, as each state or region was divided into between one and three constituencies for the *Amyotha Hluttaw*, and one to six constituencies for the state or region *hluttaw*, with no clear criteria for the number of divisions chosen for each. PR systems yield more proportional results when the number of seats assigned to each constituency (known as

the district magnitude) is higher, and vice versa. Breaking down most states and regions into smaller constituencies mathematically increased the seat share that larger parties (namely the USDP) could expect to win.

The map below, produced by Data for Myanmar, illustrates the discrepancies in the number of electoral districts for the *Amyotha Hluttaw* in each state or region. It is also important to note that even within a single state or region, each district can have a different number of seats. For instance, in Kachin state, constituency 1 was allocated two seats while constituency 2 had four. The same was true for Sagaing region.

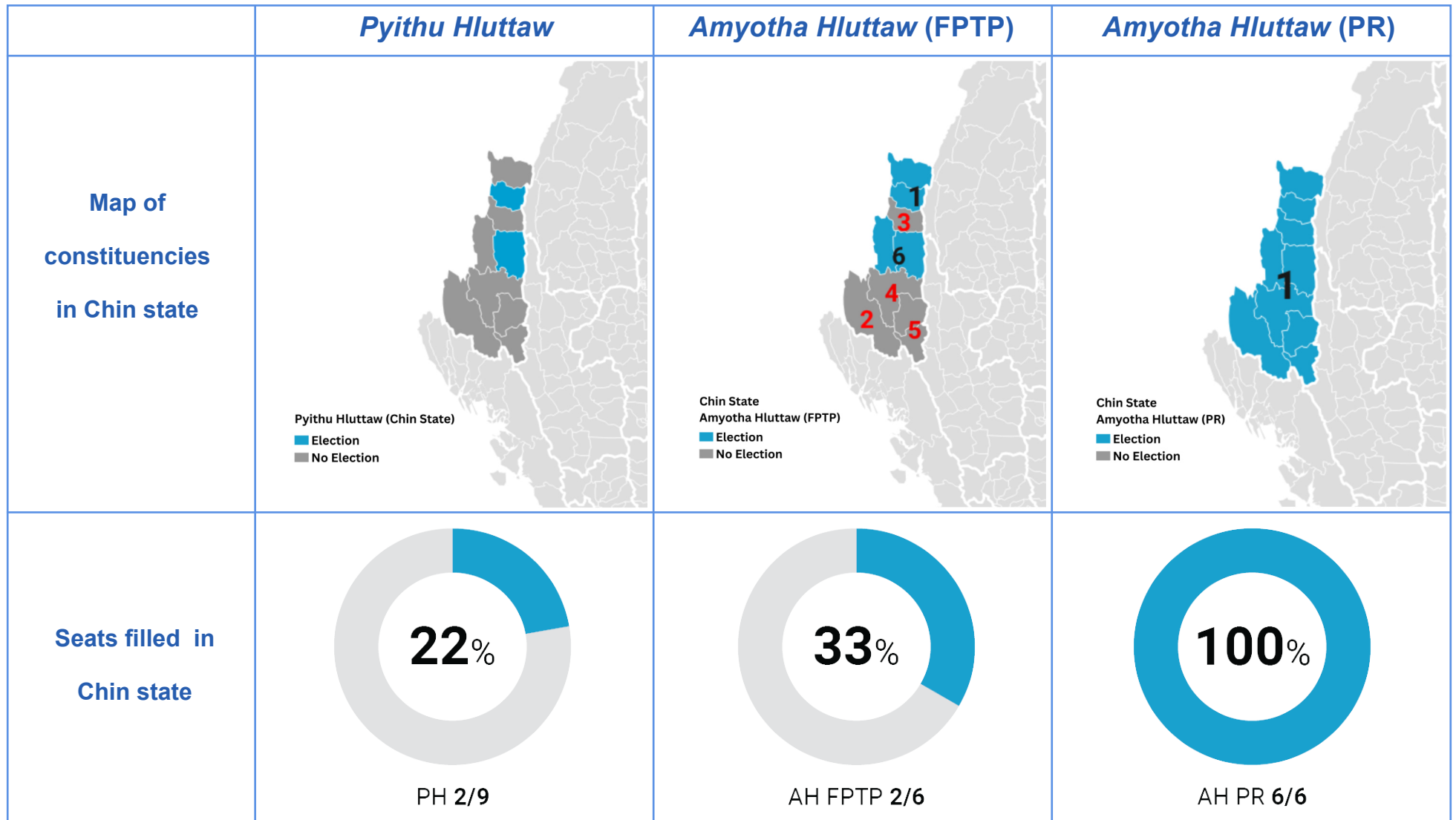
Junta-Staged Elections: Map of Amyotha Hluttaw PR Constituencies



4. This gerrymandering, combined with larger electoral districts due to the adoption of a hybrid electoral system, allowed the junta to claim a more extensive election coverage on paper despite cancellations in many areas, as parliamentarians could still be elected through partial elections.

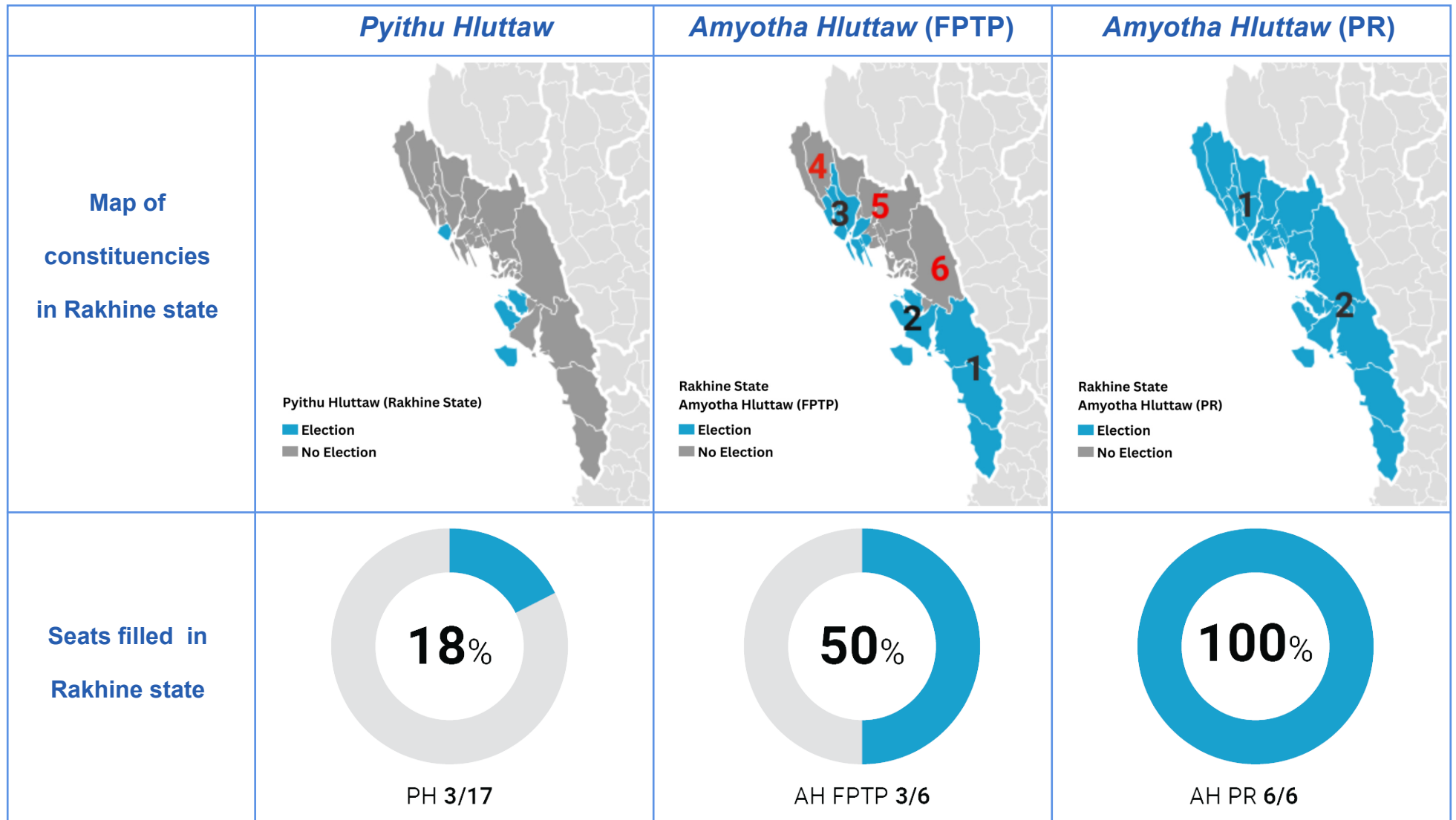
This phenomenon applied to FPTP *Amyotha Hluttaw* constituencies but even more so to PR ones, and similarly affected elections for state and region *hluttaws*. It was most apparent in Rakhine and Chin states, as illustrated by the maps and charts below, but it could also be observed in most states and regions.

Claimed Coverage in the Junta's Elections in Chin State



Data source: Junta-appointed UEC

Claimed Coverage in the Junta's Elections in Rakhine State



Data source: Junta-appointed UEC

5. Finally, introducing a degree of PR into the electoral system mathematically guaranteed that smaller political parties would win at least some seats, while the USDP would remain in a dominant position. This ensured that the junta-staged elections would not produce a Parliament composed exclusively of USDP members and military appointees. However, this token representation did not mean that a genuine range of political options was available to voters, as we will demonstrate.

The electoral system designed by the junta runs contrary to the tenets of genuine elections set out in international standards. As the UN Human Rights Committee provides: “The principle of one person, one vote, must apply, and within the framework of each State’s electoral system, the vote of one elector should be equal to the vote of another. The drawing of electoral boundaries and the method of allocating votes should not distort the distribution of voters or discriminate against any group and should not exclude or restrict unreasonably the right of citizens to choose their representatives freely.”⁶⁰

While some variation can be observed across countries, especially for elections to upper houses of Parliament, such arrangements are still generally expected to respect the principle of equal suffrage. However, the electoral system designed by the junta goes beyond typical institutional variation and may result in a more pronounced distortion of voter representation in ways that advantage military-aligned actors.

Absence of Genuine Political Choice

Regardless of the electoral system, voters were unable to exercise a genuine and meaningful choice in the junta’s staged elections, as they were provided with a limited range of junta-approved political parties and candidates. A cornerstone of the legal framework crafted by the junta to ensure that its elections would not be genuinely competitive was the *Political Parties Registration Law* enacted in January 2023. This “law” required all existing political parties to re-register under the junta-appointed UEC.

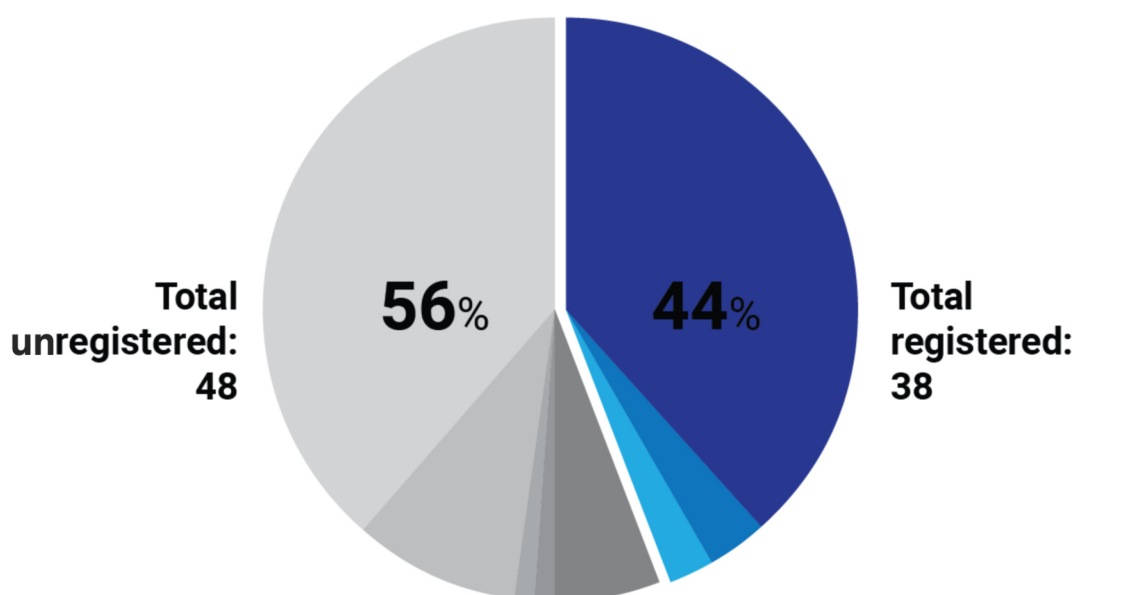
Forty groups, including the NLD, the SNLD, the Kayah State Democratic Party, and the Ta’ang National Party, all of which had won seats in the 2020 general elections, refused to do so and were dissolved by the UEC on 29 March 2023. Other ethnic parties that won seats in 2020, such as the Zomi Congress for Democracy and the Arakan National Party, did apply for registration in order to maintain legal status⁶¹ but were rejected by the UEC.

⁶⁰ UN Human Rights Committee, CCPR General Comment No. 25, paragraph 21, 12 July 1996, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/hrc/1996/en/28176> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁶¹ Khonumthung News, ZCD Registers With Union Election Committee, 31 March 2023, available at: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/zcd-registers-union-election-committee> (accessed 25 March 2026).

The main result of the application of the junta’s *Political Party Registration Law* was that the majority of the 86 parties that competed in 2020 did not participate in the junta’s staged elections. Indeed, 48 of these parties (56%) were dissolved by the UEC because they did not re-register, while only 38 (44%) still exist today in one form or another.⁶² Worse still, the parties that registered with the UEC only represent a fraction of the votes cast (26.8% across all *Pyithu Hluttaw* and *Amyotha Hluttaw* races) and seats won (9.8% across *Pyithu Hluttaw*, *Amyotha Hluttaw*, and state/region *hluttaws*) in the 2020 general elections, as illustrated below.

Status of Political Parties Competing in the 2020 General Elections as of December 2025

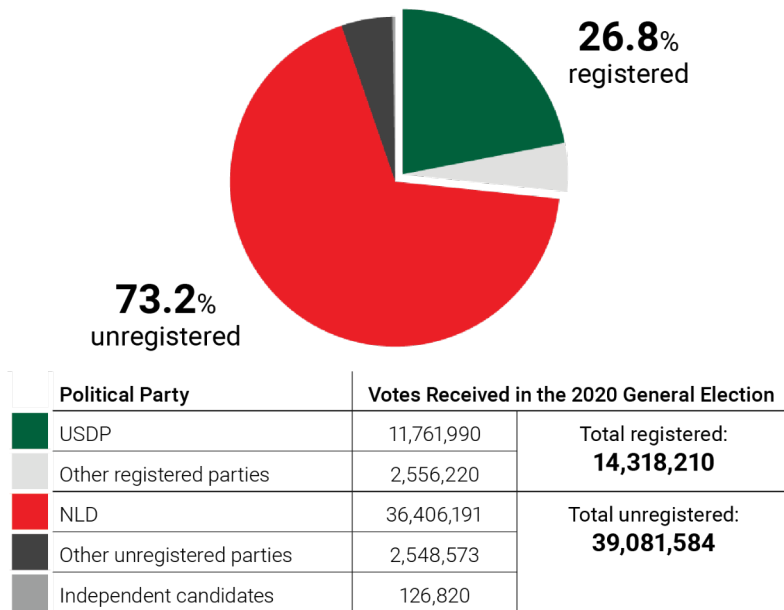


5	Registered then dissolved	33	Registered under the same name
1	Application pending	3	Registered under a new name
1	Application canceled	2	Merged with another party
8	Application rejected		
33	Did not apply		

Data source: Junta-appointed UEC

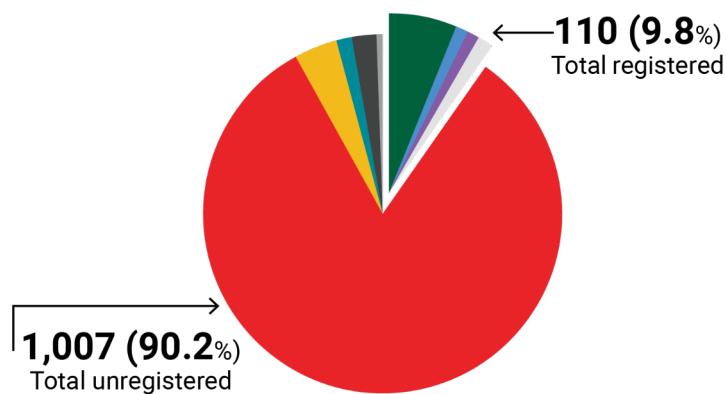
⁶² This includes parties that have changed names or have merged with another.

Breakdown of Votes Cast in the 2020 General Election (Across *Pyithu Hluttaw* and *Amyotha Hluttaw*)



Data source: UEC

Breakdown of Seats Won in the 2020 General Election (Across *Pyithu Hluttaw*, *Amyotha Hluttaw*, State/Region *Hluttaws*, and Ethnic Affairs Minister Positions)



Political Party	Seats Won in 2020
USDP	71
MUP	12
PNO	11
Other registered parties	16
Total registered	110

Political Party	Seats Won in 2020
NLD	920
SNLD	42
ANP	15
Other unregistered parties	26
Independent candidates	4
Total unregistered	1,007

Data source: UEC

The *Political Party Registration Law* also influenced the behaviour of parties recognised by the junta's UEC. The law distinguished between Union-level and state/region-level political parties, with the latter only being able to stand for elections in one state or region, and so at a significant disadvantage to reach out to voters and be competitive.

Registering at the Union level required parties to have at least 50,000 members, offices in at least one-third (110) of all townships, and a bank deposit of 100 million kyat (around US\$50,000). Only six parties were approved nationwide as a result, ensuring the dominant position of the USDP among them. Registration at the state or region level was much easier, with only 1,000 members, five offices, and a deposit of at least 10 million kyat (around US\$5,000) required.

The combined low barrier to entry at the local level and high threshold for nationwide registration contributed to inflating the number of groups participating locally in the staged elections, which the junta consistently labelled as “multi-party democratic general elections”.⁶³ All registered political parties were required to compete or risk being dissolved by the UEC.⁶⁴ At the state/region-level, this meant running in at least one township. At the Union-level, it meant running in at least a quarter of all constituencies.

The *Registration Law* also prohibits parties from contacting or supporting, directly or indirectly, any organisation or individual engaged in armed revolt, using any state property directly or indirectly (a provision that is deliberately vague), or engaging in voter fraud or any illegal practice,⁶⁵ among others. Such broad and unclear provisions provided the junta's UEC with ample opportunity to dissolve undesirable political parties and to exert collective punishment as it wished. The UEC's decision to revoke a party's registration is final and cannot be appealed, thereby keeping political parties compliant.

Even close allies of the junta were not safe from punishment. In September 2025, the military-aligned National Democratic Force (NDF) was dissolved by the UEC for allegedly failing to recruit 50,000 members, despite the party claiming to have submitted the names of over 80,000 members.⁶⁶ In October, Thet Thet Khine, the chair of the People's Pioneer Party (PPP) and a candidate for the *Amyotha Hluttaw*, was disqualified by the UEC for having pending business loans,⁶⁷ a decision that many saw as politically motivated. Thet

⁶³ See Global New Light of Myanmar, Govt, public ensure 2025 multiparty democratic general election despite disruptions, 27 January 2026, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/govt-public-ensure-2025-multiparty-democratic-general-election-despite-disruptions/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁶⁴ Section 12(a) of the 2023 Political Parties Registration Law, as amended in September 2025

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Mizzima, NDF says party dissolution “a slap on the nose” amid broader political crackdown in Myanmar, 12 September 2025, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2025/09/12/26302> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁶⁷ DVB, People's Pioneer Party founder Thet Thet Khine disqualified by Union Election Commission, 26 October 2025, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/peoples-pioneer-party-founder-thet-thet-khine-disqualified-from-running-in-regime->

Thet Khine was a junta minister for years following the coup and was rumoured to be close to Min Aung Hlaing, but she expressed criticism of the junta ahead of the elections.⁶⁸ In January 2026, she was detained for meeting representatives of a foreign embassy in Yangon without authorisation. Thet Thet Khine stepped down from her party position in anticipation of legal action being taken against her by the UEC.

In light of this restrictive law, some political parties clearly stated that they took part in the junta's elections to maintain their registration,⁶⁹ while others adopted a more pragmatic approach and hoped to reform the system from within.⁷⁰ The majority of the 57 political parties that took part in the junta's elections were, however, affiliated with the military or its ethnic militia proxies.



Khin Yi (left), chairman of the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), stands next to Kyaw Swar Soe (right), chairman of the Myanmar Farmers' Development Party, during a ceremony to release the party's election manifesto on 19 November 2025 in Yangon. (USDP Facebook page)

[elections/](#) (accessed 25 March 2026).

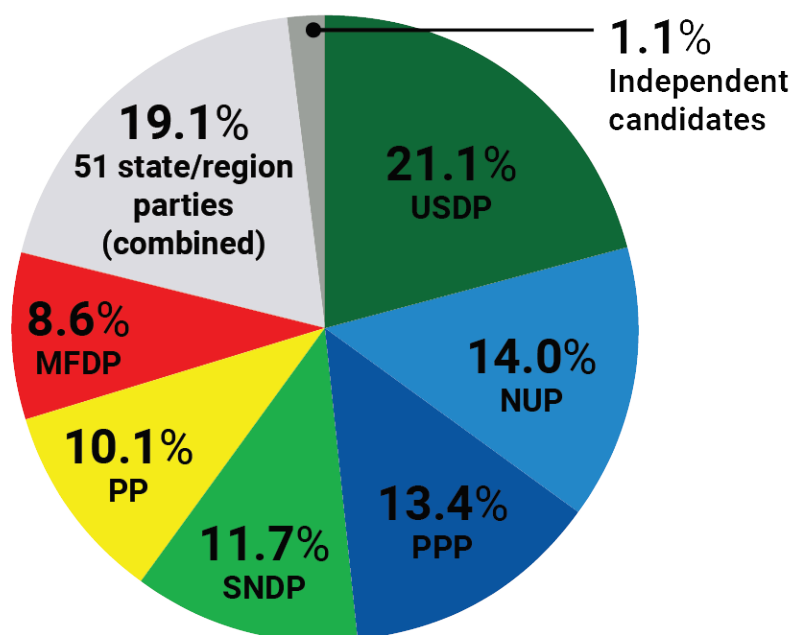
⁶⁸ The Irrawaddy, Junta Election Body Moves Against PPP Leader Over Alleged Embassy Meeting, 15 January 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/junta-election-body-moves-against-ppp-leader-over-alleged-embassy-meeting.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).









⁶⁹ Development Media Group, Overseen by junta-appointed UEC, debate continues over election system change for Myanmar, 14 January 2022, available at: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/overseen-junta-appointed-uec-debate-continues-over-election-system-change-myanmar> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁷⁰ For instance Friedrich Naumann Foundation, These elections will not be free and fair, 16 December 2025, available at: <https://www.freiheit.org/southeast-and-east-asia/these-elections-will-not-be-free-and-fair> (accessed 25 March 2026).

Finally, a staggering 21.1% of all 4,937 candidates were fielded by the USDP, which once again benefited from advantages baked into the legal framework. Thirty-one constituencies had no contest as there was only a single candidate. Twenty-eight of these unopposed candidates were from the USDP.⁷¹

Breakdown of Candidates by Political Party in the Junta's Staged Elections



	USDP	1,042	21.1%
	NUP	690	14.0%
	PPP	667	13.4%
	SNDP	576	11.7%
	PP	501	10.1%
	MFDP	423	8.6%
	51 state/region parties (combined)	945	19.1%
	Independent candidates	93	1.9%
	TOTAL	4,937	

Data source: Junta-appointed UEC

⁷¹ Mizzima, Over 30 junta-backed candidates set to win seats unopposed in upcoming Myanmar election, 29 October 2025, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2025/10/29/27713> (accessed 25 March 2026).

Voters were not provided with a genuine range of options in the junta's staged elections, only with a façade of political diversity, as all competing parties had either openly echoed or tacitly accepted the narratives fabricated by the military since the 2020 elections and subsequent coup. Meanwhile, political parties that fielded representatives who in 2020 were elected in accordance with the democratic will of the people were barred from the ballot.

The *Political Party Registration Law* enacted by the junta goes against international standards on freedom of association,⁷² enables collective punishment, and denies the right to appeal. It was applied by the junta's UEC to exclude most legitimate political parties and to ensure compliance from those handpicked to run, creating an illusion of choice in the junta's staged elections.

Other Legal Aspects

The junta amended other relevant laws in the months leading up to its illegitimate elections, further crafting a favourable environment for itself.

In June 2025, the *Union Election Commission Law* was revised to allow civil servants to chair election sub-commissions, which are in charge of tallying vote results at every administrative level.⁷³ These civil servants were usually junta appointees and often ex-military officers, which further compromised the independence of election management structures.

In July 2025, revised election "laws" for the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, *Amyotha Hluttaw*, and state/region *hluttaws* were published. In addition to the issues raised above, amendments included:

- Changes to candidate eligibility, such as the requirement to have completed secondary education and to be free of debts (which was used against Thet Thet Khine)
- Changes to the preparation of voter lists, with objections now adjudicated by township election sub-commissions instead of village/ward sub-commissions as previously, with the possibility of appeals removed
- New restrictions on election campaigning, with pre-approval from township election sub-commissions required for any rally or speech, and from the Union-level UEC

⁷² For instance Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/ccpr.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026), and Asian Electoral Stakeholder Forum II, Dili Indicators of Democratic Elections, *ibid.*, items II(b)(1) and II(b)(2).

⁷³ Maung Kavi, The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Junta Changes Election Law Ahead of Polls, 20 June 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-changes-election-law-ahead-of-polls.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

for speeches on media outlets. Parties said they were repeatedly warned by UEC chair U Than Soe not to make derogatory comments against the military⁷⁴

- A new process for the counting of advance votes, with out-of-country and out-of-constituency votes counted and announced prior to election day
- New provisions allowing for the use of electronic voting machines (EVMs), which will be discussed below, in lieu of or alongside traditional ballot papers.

Also in July 2025, the junta enacted the “*Law on the Protection of Multiparty Democratic General Elections from Obstruction, Disruption, and Destruction*”, more commonly referred to as the *Election Protection Law*. This draconian “law” criminalised any criticism or disruption of the election process and introduced harsh punishments (as will be addressed in Chapter 4) as part of a wider discussion of fundamental freedoms ahead of the elections.

The Junta’s Electronic Voting Machines

In February 2023,⁷⁵ the junta’s UEC unveiled plans to use EVMs to conduct the junta’s staged elections for the first time in the country’s history.

Dubbed the “Myanmar electronic voting machine”, the device was claimed to have been designed locally,⁷⁶ but was most likely supplied in whole or in part from India. India has indeed long been using EVMs of a near-identical design, for which one of the two manufacturers is Bharat Electronics Limited, a state defence firm with long-standing ties with Min Aung Hlaing.⁷⁷ It has also continued to supply the junta with weapons and technology since the coup.⁷⁸

The UEC stated that over 50,000 EVMs would be deployed for the junta’s elections, with cost reduction and the elimination of voter fraud as the stated purposes of their introduction - building upon the junta’s narrative of widespread fraud in the 2020 elections. However, the decision to use EVMs was made unilaterally by the UEC without prior discussion with

⁷⁴ BBC, *ဦးသန်းစိုး - တပ်ကိုကာကွယ်သူ ကော်မရှင်ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ*, 25 October 2025, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/burmese/articles/cd042r10dvgo> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁷⁵ Global New Light of Myanmar, *UEC explains Myanmar Electronic Voting Machine (MEVM) production to SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing*, 10 February 2023, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/uec-explains-myanmar-electronic-voting-machine-mevm-production-to-sac-chairman-prime-minister-senior-general-min-aung-hlaing/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁷⁶ Myanmar iTV, *Electoral Process : Briefing to the international election observers*, 28 December 2025, available at: <https://www.myanmaritv.com/news/electoral-process-briefing-international-election-observers> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁷⁷ Eleven, *Military Chief visits Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) in Ghaziabad*, 1 August 2019, available at: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/military-chief-visits-bharat-electronics-limited-bel-in-ghaziabad> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁷⁸ Justice for Myanmar, *India’s BEL continues support for Myanmar junta with exports of over \$5M in military end-use equipment in 6 months to April ‘23*, 21 June 2023, available at: <https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/stories/indias-bel-continues-support-for-junta-with-exports-of-over-5m-in-military-end-use-equipment-to-myanmar-junta-in-6-months-to-april-23> (accessed 25 March 2026).

political parties and other stakeholders, as international standards dictate should be the case when introducing new election technology.

In practice, the use of EVMs in Myanmar resulted in reduced transparency of the electoral process, as political parties and media were not allowed to review the source code used by the machines or to otherwise scrutinise the tabulation of results. Independent media or civil society organisations can no longer legally operate within the country, meaning that election observer networks active for the 2015 and 2020 elections no longer existed, and that any ground coverage of the junta's elections was piecemeal at best.

In this regard, while little is known about how exactly EVMs were used by the UEC, their introduction raised further concerns about the integrity of an election already stage-managed by the junta and its proxies. It is possible, although unproven, that EVMs were part of a strategy by the junta to fabricate favourable results, including voter turnout figures, for its overwhelmingly unpopular staged elections. Voters were also unable to cast blank ballots with the EVMs, further contributing to an environment of coerced voting.



Leaders of the military-backed USDP campaign in Yangon in early December 2025. (Kan Kaung/Myanmar Now)

3

Participation and Integrity Shortcomings of the Junta-Staged Elections

Even by the low standards set by the junta, the staged elections were an abysmal failure in terms of participation. Most of Myanmar’s territory was excluded, and most people who could avoid it did not take part in the exercise, despite the junta's persistent efforts to intimidate and coerce citizens into voting.

Significant integrity shortcomings were also reported, including questionable advance voting results and EVM failures on election day, which nonetheless did not prevent the junta from claiming its elections were “successful”.⁷⁹ These shortcomings further highlight the junta’s lack of legitimacy and the lengths to which it has gone to present itself as a democracy and normalise its standing within the international community.

Actual Coverage of the Junta’s Elections

The extent to which the military junta actually controls Myanmar has long been debated and is hard to establish authoritatively due to ever-changing conditions on the ground and fleeting control by the junta and other armed groups. As early as September 2022, SAC-M flagged that “the junta [was] losing what control it does have at an increasing rate”.⁸⁰

After the launch of Operation 1027 by the Three Brotherhood Alliance in October 2023, the military lost large swathes of the country, leading to a widely disseminated assessment by the BBC that the junta only had full control over 21% of Myanmar’s territory as of mid-November 2024,⁸¹ with much of the country contested. Since then, the military has made considerable gains and recaptured several towns, helped by a massive airstrike campaign and coercive pressure from China on resistance groups to withdraw from territory won from the military through bloody battles, such as Lashio. Still, the junta’s effective control and its ability to hold elections across the country remained questionable.

Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing first admitted that a nationwide election might not be possible in March 2024 in an interview with Russian state media outlet TASS.⁸² This marked a departure from his previously stated objective of holding elections in all of the country’s 330

⁷⁹ Stephen Quillen, Al Jazeera, Myanmar military reports 50 percent turnout in first election phase, 31 December 2026, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/12/31/myanmar-military-reports-50-percent-turnout-in-first-election-phase> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁸⁰ SAC-M, Briefing Paper: Effective Control in Myanmar, 5 September 2022, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SAC-M-Briefing-Paper-Effective-Control-in-Myanmar-ENGLISH-1.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁸¹ Rebecca Henschke, Ko Ko Aung, Jack Aung & Data Journalism Team, BBC, Soldier-spies in Myanmar help pro-democracy rebels make crucial gains, 20 December 2024, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c390ndrmy17o> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁸² Global New Light of Myanmar, Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives ITAR-TASS Media of Russian Federation, 25 March 2024, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/chairman-of-the-state-administration-council-prime-minister-senior-general-min-aung-hlaing-receives-itar-tass-media-of-russian-federation/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

townships, with the 325 townships included in the 2010 junta elections applied as a baseline.⁸³

The junta then announced in June 2025 that its elections would be held in several phases – which the legal framework allows and for which there is a historical precedent in the 1951-1952 elections – but in only 267 townships.⁸⁴ Simultaneously, the junta expanded military counter-offensives to regain lost territory ahead of the elections. It was however only able to recapture nine towns before the first phase of voting took place on 28 December.⁸⁵ ANFREL⁸⁶ and other stakeholders flagged that the holding of the staged elections in phases enabled the military to redirect its resources and firepower to selected areas on a rolling basis, further escalating the conflict and inflicting more casualties ahead of the elections.

Significantly, the junta admitted that even within the townships where elections had been declared, numerous areas under resistance control would not be able to vote. The scale of these cancellations was massive, with 161 wards and 2,770 village tracts excluded on 5 December 2025,⁸⁷ and another two townships, 10 wards, and one village tract ruled out on 20 January 2026,⁸⁸ just days before phase 3 of the staged elections. These were added to the wards and village tracts not included in the original election announcements, as the UEC only scheduled partial elections in numerous townships.

⁸³ Global New Light of Myanmar, National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar holds meeting 1/2023, 2 February 2023, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/national-defence-and-security-council-of-the-republic-of-the-union-of-myanmar-holds-meeting-1-2023-2/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁸⁴ DVB, Regime elections to be held in 267 townships; Sixteen arrested, including six-year-old, for killing retired general, 9 June 2025, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/regime-elections-to-be-held-in-267-townships-sixteen-arrested-including-six-year-old-for-killing-retired-general/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁸⁵ Su Mon, ACLED, Myanmar's military elections will not lead to peace or improvement in the political crisis, 4 February 2026, available at: <https://acleddata.com/report/myanmars-military-elections-will-not-lead-peace-or-improvement-political-crisis> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁸⁶ ANFREL, Myanmar Junta's Planned Elections: Falling Short of Democratic Legitimacy, 30 September 2025, p. 31, available at: https://anfrel.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ANFREL_2025-Myanmar-Report_final_29-Sept-2025.pdf (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁸⁷ Eleven, UEC: Elections cannot be held in 161 Wards and 2,770 Village-Tracts across parts 1 and 2, 6 December 2025, available at: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/uec-elections-cannot-be-held-in-161-wards-and-2770-village-tracts-across-parts-1-and-2> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁸⁸ UEC, Announcement on list of Region or State FPTP constituencies where elections will not be held and Announcement of areas where elections will not be held, 20 January 2026, available at: https://cdn.digitalagencybangkok.com/file/client-cdn/gnlm/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/21_Jan_26_gnlm.pdf (accessed 25 March 2026).

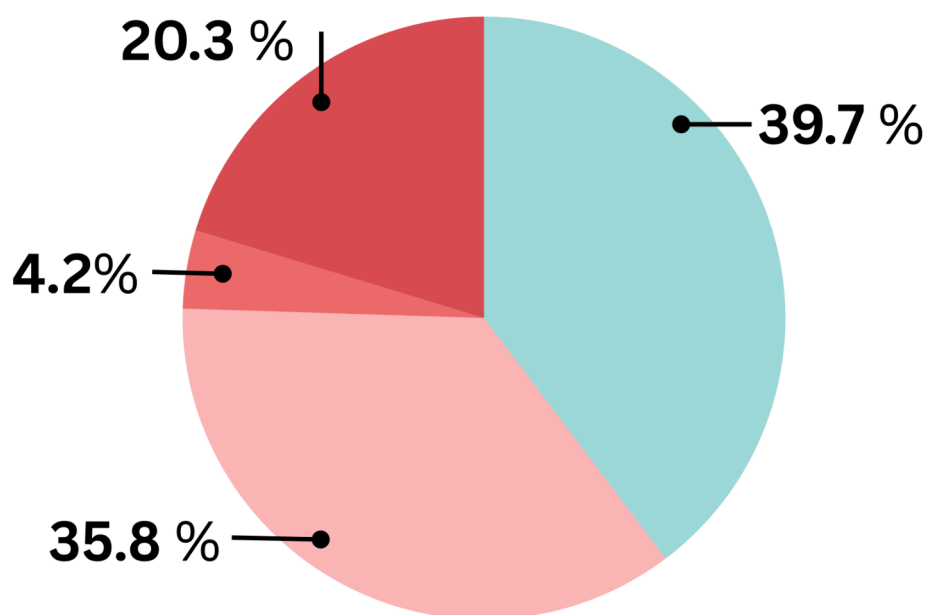
Election Cancellations per Phase

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Date of announcement	20 August 2025	28 October 2025	25 December 2025
Date of elections	28 December 2025	11 January 2026	25 January 2026
Number of townships included	102	100	61
Number of wards and village tracts within included townships	5,652	4,804	3,098
Number of wards and village tracts where voting took place	4,215 (74.6%)	3,312 (68.9%)	2,132 (68.8%)

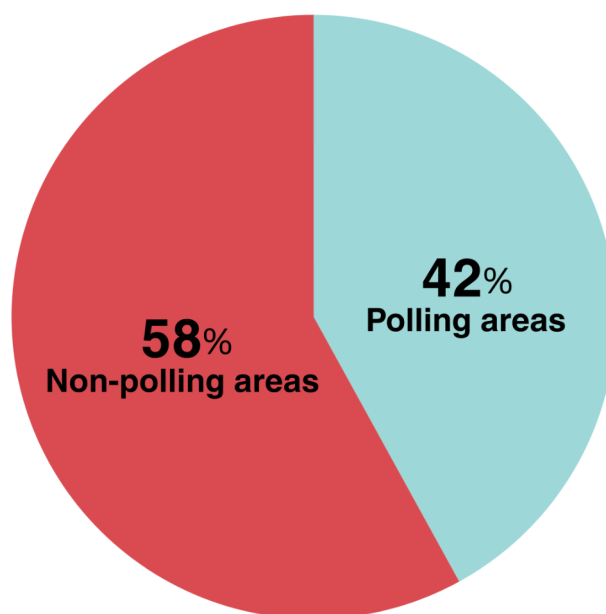
Data source: Junta-appointed UEC/Data for Myanmar

Ultimately, the junta was only able to organise its elections in 263 of Myanmar's 330 townships. Elections were held in full in only 131 townships, according to the independent media outlet Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB). Even more strikingly, DVB estimates the overall territorial coverage of the junta-staged elections at only 42% across the whole country.

Territorial Coverage of the Junta's Staged Elections



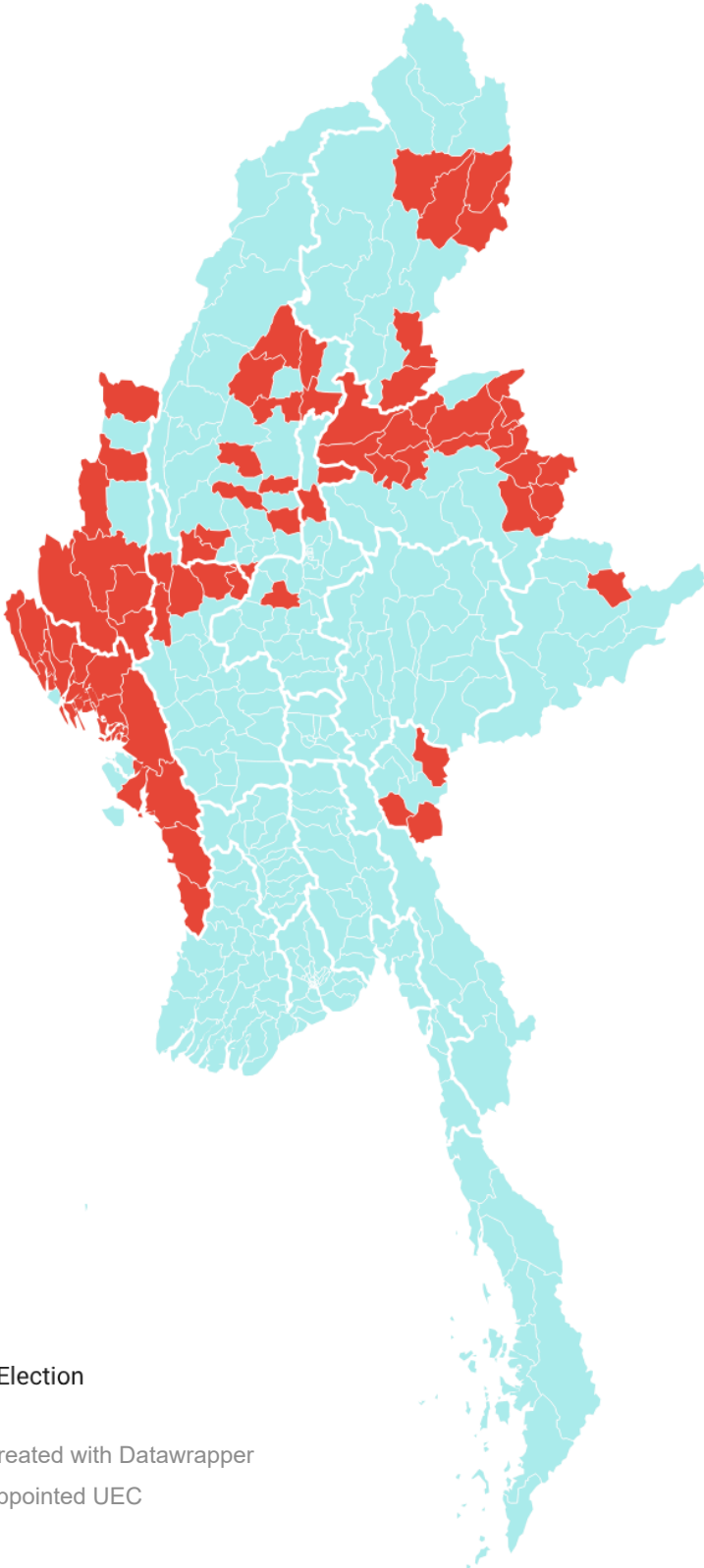
■	Townships where junta elections were not held at all	67
■	Townships where junta elections were held only in urban areas	14
■	Townships where junta elections were held partially	118
■	Townships where junta elections were held in full	131



Data source: Junta-appointed UEC/DVB⁸⁹

⁸⁹ These percentages are derived from QGIS-level mapping tools. Due to the inherent limitations of digital square-area mapping at this scale, these figures may vary slightly from actual ground-level data. DVB recommends treating these as high-level estimates rather than exact physical measurements.

Territorial Coverage of the Junta-Staged Elections (by Township)

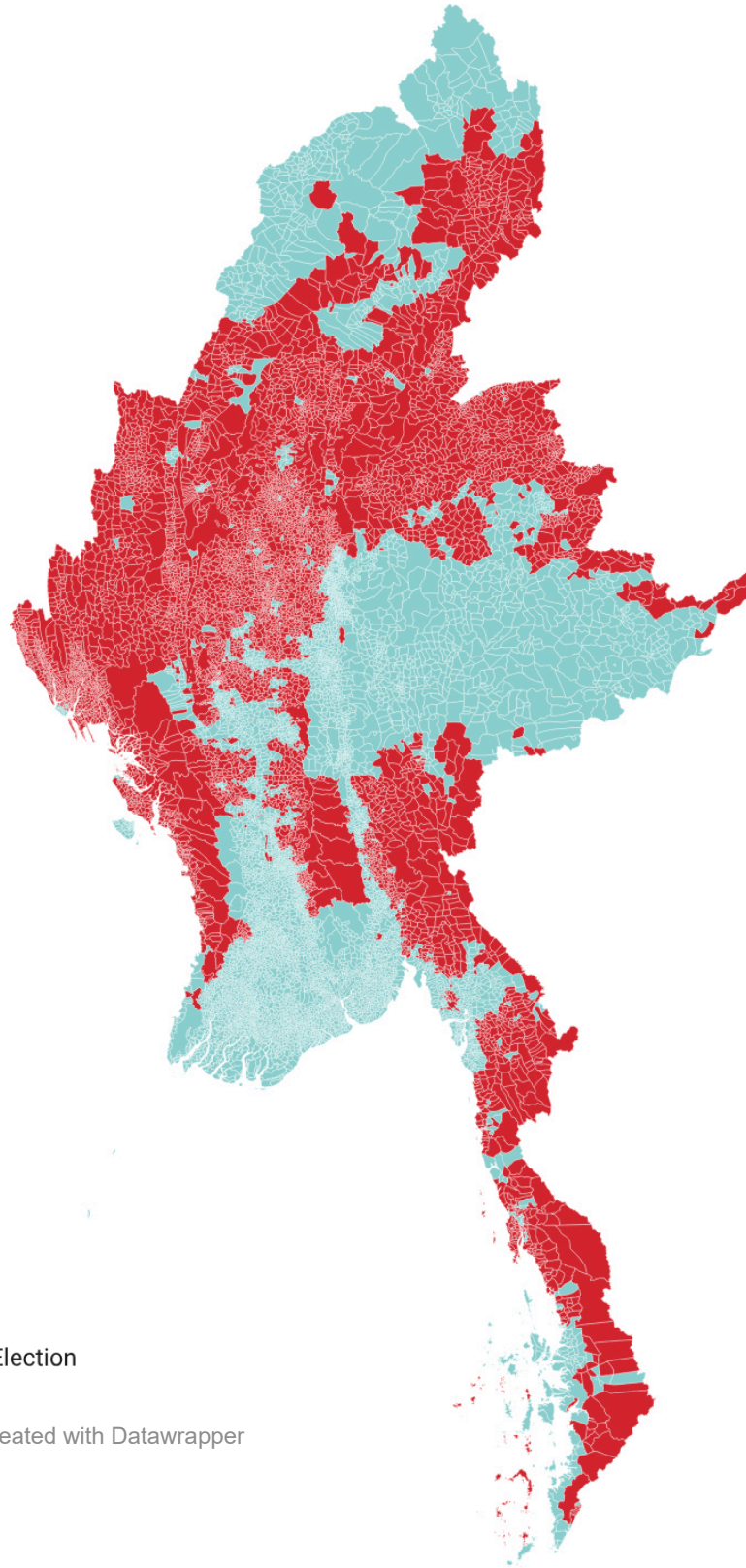


Status

■ Election ■ No Election

Map data: USAID • Created with Datawrapper
Data source: Junta-appointed UEC

Territorial Coverage of the Junta-Staged Elections (by Ward and Village Tract)



Status

■ Election ■ No Election

Map data: USAID • Created with Datawrapper

Map Credit: DVB

Voters Under Pressure

The widespread election cancellations led to a large reduction in the number of registered voters and voters able to vote. According to the junta's UEC, 24.22 million people were eligible to vote in the junta's staged elections, compared to 38.27 million registered voters in the 2020 general elections.

Ironically, the junta's UEC drew widespread criticism for the poor quality of the voter lists it prepared. These were compiled from population registries maintained by the General Administration Department and the Ministry of Immigration and Population, which have become increasingly inaccurate since the coup given how many people have fled the conflict, economic hardship, and forced conscription.

Even in the military stronghold of Naypyitaw, the local USDP chair claimed that the voter lists were riddled with errors after their first public display.⁹⁰ Pa-O National Organisation (PNO) spokesperson Khun Kyaw Win also criticised the voter lists, claiming that entire villages were missing, while others were incomplete, with voters registered in the wrong ward or village tract.⁹¹ Other political parties echoed these concerns,⁹² while some would-be voters found themselves missing from the voter registry on election days.⁹³

Over the three phases of its illegitimate staged elections, the junta reported an official voter turnout of 54.22%, with 13.14 million people allegedly casting ballots. This figure represents only 47.8% of the voters who participated in the 2020 general elections.

Official Voter Turnout Reported in the Junta's Staged Elections

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Registered voters	11.69 million	7.59 million	4.94 million
Voter turnout	6.09 million	4.24 million	2.79 million
Turnout rate	52.13%	55.95%	56.48%

Data source: Junta spokesperson Zaw Min Tun⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Mizzima, USDP chairman says Myanmar voter lists contain widespread errors, outdated data, 8 October 2025, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2025/10/08/27055> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁹¹ CJ Platform, စစ်အုပ်စုရွေးကောက်ပွဲမှာ မဲစာရင်းအချက်အလက်တွေ အမှားအယွင်းရှိနေတယ်လို့ PNO ဝေဖန်, 18 December 2025, available at: <https://cjplatform.com/181220254-2/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁹² CNI, Political Parties Concerned Over Errors in Voter Lists, 9 October 2025, available at: <https://cnimyanmar.com/index.php/english-edition/32000-political-parties-concerned-over-errors-in-voter-lists> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁹³ Ben Dunant, Himal Southasian, Fear and loathing greet Myanmar's unfree election, 9 January 2026, available at: <https://www.himalmag.com/politics/myanmar-election-military-junta-nld> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁹⁴ Eleven, Voter turnout reaches about 55 percent in Myanmar's 2025 General Election, says NDSC Spokesperson, 27 January 2025, available at: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/voter-turnout-reaches-about-55-percent-in-myanmars-2025-general-election-says-ndsc-spokesperson> (accessed 25 March 2026).

However, these figures do not align with observations on the ground, with polling stations largely empty throughout the day in stark contrast to the long queues of voters witnessed in the 2015 and 2020 general elections. The Irrawaddy also pointed out the near-total absence of young people at polling stations in Yangon,⁹⁵ despite the UEC's claims that 24% of all voters were aged between 18 and 30 years.⁹⁶

Rumours of retaliation and reprisals by junta officials against those who boycotted the polls, from fines to forced military conscription, circulated widely ahead of election day. “We have to vote. We live under them”, said one voter, referring to the military.⁹⁷ Many people who turned out to vote did so out of fear, and not genuine interest in the junta's staged elections. As one Mandalay woman put it: “I don't believe this election will really change things, but I came anyway to avoid trouble”.⁹⁸

In many areas, junta administrators did indeed pressure residents into voting, making house visits or phone calls and threatening residents with anything from travel bans to their children being drafted into the military or their businesses being forced to close⁹⁹ if they did not comply. One Yangon resident said the local administrator threatened his mother: “We can protect you from many things. But this one thing you must do”.¹⁰⁰ In Tanintharyi, a village administration office posted a public notice stating that voting was mandatory, and that non-compliance would be met with imprisonment or other penalties.¹⁰¹ This intimidation was most effective in rural areas, where authorities wield greater influence over people's lives. The application of indelible ink to voters' fingers, after they had voted may have also made it easier for junta administrators to identify who had and had not voted.

Civil servants, members of the military, and their family members were expected to show up

⁹⁵ The Irrawaddy, Empty Polls, Streets Filled With Soldiers as Yangon Votes Under the Gun, 30 December 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/empty-polls-streets-filled-with-soldiers-as-yangon-votes-under-the-gun.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁹⁶ Eleven, Youth aged 18–30 make up largest voting bloc in 2025 General Election: UEC, 27 February 2026, available at: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/youth-aged-18-30-make-up-largest-voting-bloc-in-2025-general-election-uec> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁹⁷ Ben Dunant, Himal Southasian, *ibid*.

⁹⁸ Sui-Lee Wee, New York Times, In Myanmar's Election, 'Voting Out of Fear, Not Hope', 28 December 2025, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/28/world/asia/myanmar-election.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

⁹⁹ SHAN News, Junta Threatens Travel Bans to Force Turnout Ahead of Phase 2 Election in Shan State, 9 January 2026, available at: <https://english.shannews.org/archives/29114> (accessed 25 March 2026), Ayeyarwaddy Times, အင်္ဂုပုမြို့နယ်ရှိ ကျေးရွာများတွင် မဲမပေးပါက စစ်မှုထမ်းခေါ်မည်ဟုခြိမ်းခြောက်ကာ မဲထည့်ခိုင်း, 25 January 2026, available at: <https://ayartimes.com/?p=64539> (accessed 25 March 2026) and Nay Min Ni, Myanmar Now, Junta officials and troops pressure Mandalay residents to vote in door-to-door intimidation campaign, 5 December 2025, available at: <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/junta-officials-and-troops-pressure-mandalay-residents-to-vote-in-door-to-door-intimidation-campaign/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁰⁰ Stan Collingwood and Kwey Yin Wei, The Times, Gunmen force the poor to vote in 'scripted' Myanmar election, 21 December 2025, available at: <https://www.thetimes.com/world/asia/article/myanmar-junta-election-kwdg2mnf7> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁰¹ DVB, ကျွန်းစု၊ ကံမော်ရွာတွင် မဲမထည့်သူကို အရေးယူမည်ဟု ခြိမ်းခြောက်စာကပ်ထား, 7 December 2025, available at: <https://burmese.dvb.no/post/736358> (accessed 25 March 2026).

at the polls, while factory workers in Yangon were pressured to vote by their employers.¹⁰² Migrant workers overseas also reported experiencing pressure from junta-aligned consular authorities. In Thailand and South Korea, some migrant workers were threatened by the local Myanmar embassy that their passports would not be renewed or that other essential paperwork would not be issued if they did not vote.¹⁰³

In some locations, authorities broadcast calls over loudspeaker to urge people to vote, promising free transportation for the elderly and persons with disabilities¹⁰⁴ which, in a context of coercion, amounts to undue influence rather than genuine voter assistance. In others, the junta issued instructions to provide food and drinks to voters to increase turnout.¹⁰⁵ In one ward in Yangon's Insein township, residents received money from local administrators ahead of election day. A ward official told The Irrawaddy that the money was provided by a political party for transportation fares¹⁰⁶ in a clear instance of state-sponsored vote-buying.

Students in several locations were required to vote to maintain their enrolment, as local administrative bodies refused to issue documentation they required (recommendation letters, certificates of good conduct, or criminal clearance certificates) unless they could provide proof of having voted in advance.¹⁰⁷ Officials also reportedly pressured internally displaced persons (IDPs), making them sign pledges that they would vote in exchange for cash handouts¹⁰⁸ or food rations,¹⁰⁹ or threatening them with the withdrawal of their financial aid, food, or shelter privileges if they did not.¹¹⁰ The Karenni Political Prisoners Association

¹⁰² Ben Dunant, *Himal Southasian*, *ibid.*

¹⁰³ HaRDstories and Delta News Agency, Myanmar migrants report voting pressure for passport renewals, 30 December 2025, available at: <https://hardstories.org/stories/rights-suppression/myanmar-migrants-report-voting-pressure> (accessed 25 March 2026) and The Irrawaddy, Overseas Myanmar Voters Spurn Election Despite Junta Intimidation, 2 December 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/overseas-myanmar-voters-spurn-election-despite-junta-intimidation.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁰⁴ The Irrawaddy, Inside the Final Phase of Myanmar Junta's Election: Scenes From a Low-Turnout Vote, 26 January 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/inside-the-final-phase-of-myanmar-juntas-election-scenes-from-a-low-turnout-vote.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁰⁵ Ayeyarwaddy Times, အင်္ဂုပုမြို့နယ်တွင် မဲပေးသူနည်းပါးပြီး အစားသောက်များဖြင့် ဧည့်ခံရန် စစ်ကော်မရှင်က ညွှန်ကြား, 25 January 2026, available at: <https://ayartimes.com/?p=64568> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁰⁶ The Irrawaddy, မဲဆန္ဒရှင်တွေကို ပိုက်ဆံကြိုပေးမှု ပေါ်ပေါက် (ရုပ်/သံ), 11 January 2026, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/852139047795422> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁰⁷ Shan Human Rights Foundation, University students forced to give advance votes in regime election in southern and eastern Shan State, 28 November 2025, available at: <https://shanhumanrights.org/university-students-forced-to-give-advance-votes-in-regime-election-in-southern-and-eastern-shan-state/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁰⁸ The Irrawaddy, Aid for Votes: Myanmar Junta Forcing IDPs to Participate in December Election, 2 October 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/aid-for-votes-myanmar-junta-forcing-idps-to-participate-in-december-election.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁰⁹ Ayeyarwaddy Times, လေးမျက်နှာမြို့တွင် စစ်ဘေးရှောင်လာသူများကို ဆန်၊ဆီပေးပြီး မဲထည့်ရန်ဖိအားပေး, 8 November 2025, available at: <https://ayartimes.com/?p=61389> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹¹⁰ The Irrawaddy, No Vote, No Shelter: Junta Forces Myanmar IDPs to Cast Early Ballots, 1 December 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/no-vote-no-shelter-junta-forces-myanmar-idps-to-cast-early-ballots.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

claimed that over 700 prisoners in Loikaw prison were forced to cast advance votes in late September.¹¹¹

Importantly, the legal framework for elections in Myanmar does not stipulate a minimum voter participation rate for elections to be valid. Perhaps not coincidentally, the junta reported a voter turnout just above the symbolic threshold of 50%. Min Aung Hlaing then used the reported turnout to boast of the “success” of the junta’s staged elections and make the spurious claim that 50 countries around the world experienced lower participation rates in 2025 alone.¹¹²

On 10 December 2025, International Human Rights Day, a nationwide “silent strike” was organised from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to protest against the junta’s elections. The strike was widely observed in cities across the country, as shops closed down and streets were deserted.¹¹³

Advance Voting Fraud and Other Reported Irregularities

As the junta’s staged elections took place, a large number of irregularities were reported, with most related to advance votes. Advance voting has historically been the weak procedural point in Myanmar’s elections, with fewer safeguards and less transparency than election day proceedings. Members of the armed forces in particular massively resort to advance voting, casting hundreds of thousands of ballots in a controlled environment.

In the 2010 general elections, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) junta used advance ballots as a trump card to overturn unfavourable election results, flooding targeted constituencies with votes for the USDP.¹¹⁴ There are indications that this was again the case in the 2025-2026 junta-staged elections.

Unsurprisingly, advance ballots were overwhelmingly cast in favour of the military-aligned USDP. Results compiled by Data for Myanmar¹¹⁵ show that 77% of advance votes across

¹¹¹ Mizzima, Myanmar junta authorities accused of forcing inmates in Loikaw Prison to cast advance votes, 28 November 2025, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2025/11/28/28598> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹¹² Myo Pyae, The Irrawaddy, Min Aung Hlaing Boasts of ‘Successful’ Poll as Critics Question 54% Turnout Claim, 11 February 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/min-aung-hlaing-boasts-of-successful-poll-as-critics-question-54-turnout-claim.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹¹³ Reuters, Myanmar anti-coup activists protest against junta with ‘silent strike’, 10 December 2025, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-anti-coup-activists-protest-against-junta-with-silent-strike-2021-12-10/> (accessed 25 March 2026), The Irrawaddy, Streets mostly deserted as Myanmar cities join silent strike against junta, 10 December 2025, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/18HAjld9sk/> (accessed 25 March 2026) and Mizzima, Nationwide ‘Silent Strike’ observed in Myanmar on International Human Rights Day, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2025/12/10/29005> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹¹⁴ Anonymous, Observation report: 2010 Myanmar general elections, Learning and sharing for the future, April 2011, available at: <https://www.centrepeaceconflictstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2010-Myanmar-Observer-report.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹¹⁵ Data for Myanmar, Comparison of Advance Voting Percentages Between USDP and Other Party Candidates_Phase1, available at: <https://wmjfig.short.gy/d4m-data-2025-election-phase1-usdp-advance-voting-compare> (accessed 25 March 2026).

the 101 *Pyithu Hluttaw* constituencies included in phase 1 went to the USDP; in nine of them, this proportion was greater than 90%. As one party leader told The Irrawaddy: “If the USDP gets 1,000 votes in advance voting, the other parties only get two or three votes”.¹¹⁶ In some military bases, soldiers were reportedly unable to vote on their own behalf but instead had to go through proxies.¹¹⁷

Advance ballots made up a significant fraction of the vote for USDP candidates across the country, about 15% on average, against around four percent for candidates from other parties and independent candidates, based on *Pyithu Hluttaw* election results. In 10 townships, advance votes even constituted the majority of USDP votes: Thandaunggyi and Kyainseikgyi in Karen state, Bawlahke, Hpruso, and Demoso in Karenni state, Hakha in Chin state, Bhamo in Kachin state, Phyu in Bago region, Taungtha in Magway region, and Thabeikkyin in Mandalay region. All of these townships are in active conflict zones that experienced widespread election cancellations, with soldiers making up most of the few thousand voters in each.

Shares of Advance Ballots for *Pyithu Hluttaw* Candidates

	Phase 1 (all 101 townships)	Phase 2 (94 townships only)	Phase 3 (54 townships only)
Advance votes received by USDP candidates	418,565	268,876	194,147
Total votes received by USDP candidates	2,725,563	1,835,483	1,192,050
Share of advance ballots for USDP candidates	15.36%	14.65%	16.29%
Advance votes received by other candidates	125,061	101,370	94,878
Total votes received by other candidates	3,372,968	2,349,645	1,541,286
Share of advance ballots for other candidates	3.71%	4.31%	6.16%

Data source: Junta-appointed UEC/Data for Myanmar

2026).

¹¹⁶ The Irrawaddy, အကြောက်တရား လွှမ်းမိုးတဲ့ ရွေးကောက်ပွဲ ကြိုတင်မဲနဲ့ ကြံ့ခိုင်ရေး အသာစီးရ, 29 December 2025, available at: <https://burma.irrawaddy.com/news/2025/12/29/409549.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹¹⁷ Ayeyarwaddy Times, ပုလောရို စစ်ကော်မရှင်တပ်သားများ ကိုယ်တိုင်မဲပေးခွင့်မရပဲ လူကိုယ်စားဖြင့်သာ ကြိုတင်မဲပေးရ, 24 January 2026, available at: <https://ayartimes.com/?p=64518> (accessed 25 March 2026).

Election results indicate that USDP candidates won thanks to advance ballots in 13 constituencies in phase 1 alone.¹¹⁸ In the state *hluttaw* constituency for Chaungzon township, Mon state, Chief Minister U Aung Kyi Thein defeated his Mon Unity Party (MUP) opponent only after around 500 ballots arrived after 10 p.m. on election night.¹¹⁹ In Shan state's Muse township, the Shan and Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) led the state *hluttaw* race in 17 out of 18 polling stations, before losing to the USDP due to advance ballots at the final polling station.¹²⁰

After phase 1, the People's Party, the SNDP, and the Myanmar Farmers' Development Party (MFDP) sent letters to junta leader Min Aung Hlaing to complain about a lack of transparency in the counting of advance votes.¹²¹ They claimed that the UEC only informed the USDP and not other parties of the time and location where advance votes would be cast, and that lists of advance voters were not made public. On 5 January 2026, the UEC met with political parties and insisted that the advance voting process was conducted transparently and accurately in accordance with the law.¹²²

During phases 2 and 3, fewer complaints were recorded, and the SNDP chair stated that party representatives had been invited by the UEC to attend the casting of advance votes.¹²³ However, some candidates still complained about advance votes being collected in their absence¹²⁴ or arriving without proper supporting documents.¹²⁵ The chair of the People's Party also complained about "unusually high" numbers of advance votes,¹²⁶ which continued to benefit USDP candidates.

The UEC told media outlet CNI that 5,403 overseas Myanmar citizens had filled out Form

¹¹⁸ The Irrawaddy, မဲရုံမှာ ရှုံးသော်လည်း ကြိုတင်မဲဖြင့် အနိုင်ယူသည့် ကြံ့ဖွံ့အမတ် တခါဇင်ကျော်ရှိ, 10 January 2026, available at: <https://burma.irrawaddy.com/news/2026/01/10/409774.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹¹⁹ HURFOM, Late Night Ballots Raise Doubts as Mon State Chief Minister Secures Narrow Win in Chaungzon, 29 December 2025, available at: <https://rehmonnya.org/late-night-ballots-raise-doubts-as-mon-state-chief-minister-secures-narrow-win-in-chaungzon/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹²⁰ SHAN News, SNDP Raises Concerns Over Advance Voting Transparency in Junta-Led Election, 11 January 2026, available at: <https://english.shannews.org/archives/29128> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹²¹ Myo Pyae, The Irrawaddy, Same Old Playbook? USDP Accused of Repeating 2010 Advance-Vote Cheating, 6 January 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/same-old-playbook-usdp-accused-of-repeating-2010-advance-vote-cheating.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹²² Eleven, UEC Chair says advance voting and election procedures were conducted transparently and in line with law, 6 January 2026, available at: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/uec-chair-says-advance-voting-and-election-procedures-were-conducted-transparently-and-in-line> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹²³ SHAN News, *ibid.*

¹²⁴ The Irrawaddy, ကော့မှူး ကြိုတင်မဲ ပွင့်လင်းမြင်သာမှုမရှိဟု ပြည်သူ့ပါတီပြော, 11 January 2026, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AeBm3HYU9/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹²⁵ DVB, Disputes over ballot counts and advanced votes during second phase of Myanmar elections, 13 January 2026, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/disputes-over-ballot-counts-and-advanced-votes-during-second-phase-of-myanmar-elections/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹²⁶ Mizzima, People's Party chairman reports irregularities in high volume of advance votes during final election stage, 25 January 2026, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2026/01/25/30618> (accessed 25 March 2026).

15 to register for advance voting,¹²⁷ compared to around 150,000 in the 2020 general elections, indicating very low interest in the junta's staged elections among the diaspora. However, the election sub-commission in Hlaingbwe township, Karen state, reported receiving 862 overseas votes,¹²⁸ a dubious number that further points to fraudulent use of advance voting processes.

EVM failures were also reported on election day, with some polling staff confirming frequent errors.¹²⁹ A People's Party (PP) candidate in Hinthada township, Ayeyarwaddy region, claimed that 20 EVMs malfunctioned at the same time, and that all were used for the regional *hluttaw* race.¹³⁰ Another PP candidate in Yangon stated that some EVMs either automatically voted for one party or did not allow voting for one because of broken buttons.¹³¹

According to research group Myanography, in one Shan state village under the control of the PNO, the vote lasted for three days and used paper ballots instead of EVMs.¹³²

UEC staff in each polling station were also supposed to double-check the results produced by the EVMs by manually counting the receipts printed by the machines for each voter, but according to Spring Sprouts executive director and election analyst Htin Kyaw Aye, this was rarely done: "In most instances, they simply accepted the figures generated by the machine as final".¹³³ Contrary to international standards, these paper trails were also not verifiable by voters, as they reportedly dropped into the EVM receptacle immediately after voters made their choice.

Finally, there was widespread belief that the EVMs could enable junta authorities to track individual voters, as expressed by Htin Kyaw Aye: "The military group is in a position to know who voted at which station, or even what they voted for".¹³⁴ The UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) also said the use of EVMs raised "legitimate

¹²⁷ CNI, ပြည်ပရောက် မြန်မာသန်းချီအနက် ၅၀၀၀ ကျော် ကြိုတင်မဲစာရင်းပေး, 12 December, available at: <https://cnimyanmar.com/index.php/political-2/politics-local/33253-2025-12-12-06-48-30> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹²⁸ DVB, လှိုင်းဘွဲ့မြို့တွင် ပြည်ပကြိုတင်မဲ ၈၀၀ ကျော်ရ၊ မဲမာမာမှုရှိနိုင်ဟုဆို, 27 December 2025, available at: <https://burmese.dvb.no/post/739198> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹²⁹ Bywar Oo, MPA, အတုအယောင်ရွေးကောက်ပွဲတွင် အသုံးပြုသည့် မဲပေးစက်အချို့ Error တက်, 28 December 2025, available at: <https://mpanews.info/headline/4298/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹³⁰ Delta News Agency, ရွေးကောက်ပွဲ မဲရလဒ်တွေကို လက်မှတ်မထိုးသေးတဲ့ ပြည်သူ့ပါတီ, 1 January 2026, available at: <https://deltanewsagency.com/58796/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹³¹ BBC, ဂမ်ဘီယာက မြန်မာကို စွပ်စွဲတဲ့ ရိုဟင်ဂျာတွေကို လူမျိုးတုံးသတ်ဖြတ်မှု ကြားနာပွဲ ICJ မှာ စတင်, 12 January 2026, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/burmese/live/cn0yqgerq5rt> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹³² In Insight Myanmar, Episode #498: An Undisciplined Democracy, 8 March 2026, available at: <https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2026/3/8/episode-497-an-undisciplined-democracy> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹³³ SHAN News, The Illusion of Transition: Myanmar's Military and Its Sham Election, 5 March 2026, available at: <https://english.shannews.org/archives/29401> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹³⁴ SHAN News, *ibid.*

concerns about ballot secrecy and potential reprisals against voters who do not choose USDP or other military-aligned parties”.¹³⁵

While there has been no evidence so far that EVMs did record individual votes in a traceable manner, or even possessed the technical capacity to do so, the fact that many believed this was a possibility testifies to the climate of mass surveillance under which the junta’s staged elections took place, and the psychological impact this inevitably had on voters.

Co-opted International “Observers” and Media

In an effort to drum up international support for its staged elections, the junta invited diplomats based in Myanmar and representatives from junta-friendly countries and regional election management bodies to visit polling stations on election day. While these were labelled “election observers” by the UEC and state-owned media, they in fact did not monitor election day developments according to an established methodology, nor were they independent in their movements, all of which are core fundamentals of genuine election observation.

International election observation is indeed an activity guided by an UN-endorsed Declaration of Principles and an accompanying Code of Conduct,¹³⁶ which mandate absolute impartiality, independence, and an overview of the entire process in order to produce a credible assessment of an election. Credible citizen election monitors are similarly guided by a Declaration of Global Principles.¹³⁷ Short-term visits by handpicked individuals or organisations at the behest of the host country can never result in genuine, principled election observation.

The UEC claimed that 162 so-called international “observers” were accredited for Phase 1 of its staged elections. These included delegations from:

- China, led by Special Envoy for Asian Affairs Deng Xijun
- Russia, led by Deputy Chairman of the State Duma Sholban Kara-ool and Member of the Central Election Commission Igor Borisov
- Belarus, led by Deputy Chairman of the Central Election Commission Alexei Bashan

¹³⁵ OHCHR Myanmar team, Background paper on Myanmar military’s plans to hold national elections, 28 November 2025, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/press/2025-11/20251128-elections-background-paper-re-edit-rm.docx> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹³⁶ Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers, 27 October 2005, available at <https://anfrei.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Declaration-of-Principles-for-International-Elections-Observation.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹³⁷ Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors, Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations, available at <https://gndem.org/declaration-of-global-principles/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

- Kazakhstan, led by Deputy Chairman of the Central Election Commission Yerman Mukhtar
- Cambodia, led by National Election Committee (NEC) member Yich Samethy
- Vietnam, led by Nguyen Duc Thinh, Head of the Department of External Relations of the Communist Party of Vietnam
- Nicaragua, led by Mario José Armengol Campos, the Vietnam-based ambassador of Nicaragua to Myanmar
- India, including retired major general Arun Kumar Sahni and political editorialist Atul Aneja.
- Japan, comprising members of the Myanmar-Japan Friendship Association and private-sector representatives.

The delegations from India and Japan were the only ones from countries that hold democratic elections. However, they were not official delegations. The Indian government said that the representatives from India visited Myanmar in a private capacity.¹³⁸ One is a known junta propagandist¹³⁹ who published an article rubber-stamping its staged elections even before they had concluded.¹⁴⁰ The Japanese delegation was led by Yusuke Watanabe, the son of a former Japanese cabinet minister who has campaigned to endorse the junta.¹⁴¹ Watanabe claimed in May 2021 to be “one of the few foreigners in constant contact” with Min Aung Hlaing.¹⁴²

These delegations were invited by the junta-appointed UEC, which paid for their travel expenses,¹⁴³ gave them tours, and held gala dinners in their honour.¹⁴⁴ On election day, the UEC paraded them in two groups around Naypyitaw, with one group visiting a total of six polling stations.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁸ Devirupa Mitra, The Wire, Myanmar State Media Lists Indian Observers, New Delhi Says No Official Status, 28 December 2025, available at <https://thewire.in/world/myanmar-state-media-lists-indian-observers-new-delhi-says-no-official-status> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹³⁹ Ministry of Information, MoI Union Minister receives strategic analyst from India, 7 November 2024, available at <https://www.moi.gov.mm/moi:eng/news/15975> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁴⁰ Atul Aneja, Geopolitika.eu, Why Myanmar can hope for a bright future after landmark elections, 30 December 2025, available at <https://www.geopolitika.ru/en/article/why-myanmar-can-hope-bright-future-after-landmark-elections> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁴¹ Bangkok Post, Japanese ex-minister lobbies for Myanmar junta, 18 December 2021, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/2234055/japanese-ex-minister-lobbies-for-myanmar-junta> (accessed 25 March 2026)

¹⁴² Yusuke Watanabe, The Diplomat, On Myanmar, Japan Must Lead by Example, 26 May 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/on-myanmar-japan-must-lead-by-example/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁴³ UEC, Information Sheet for International Election Observer (2025)

¹⁴⁴ Global New Light of Myanmar, Honorary dinner hosted for international observers of 2025 general election, 29 December 2025, available at <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/honorary-dinner-hosted-for-international-observers-of-2025-general-election/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁴⁵ Global New Light of Myanmar, International and embassy observers monitor 2025 multiparty general election in Nay Pyi Taw, 29 December 2025, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/international-and-embassy-observers-monitor-2025-multiparty-general-election-in-nay-pyi-taw/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

Before leaving the country, these so-called observers “shared feedback” on the junta’s staged elections, unsurprisingly delivering overwhelmingly positive remarks.¹⁴⁶



International “observers” stand behind a voter at a polling station in Naypyitaw on 28 December 2025. (Junta Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

No foreign delegation came to Myanmar for phase 2 of the junta-staged elections, but accredited diplomats based in Myanmar did visit polling stations.

During the third phase on 25 January 2026, delegates from Belarus, India, Nicaragua, and Vietnam, the election commissions of Cambodia, Indonesia, and Nepal, and the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) were present.¹⁴⁷ Before departing, they also unanimously bestowed praise on the UEC.¹⁴⁸ ICAPP is close to the

¹⁴⁶ Global New Light of Myanmar, International Observers Share Feedback on Myanmar’s 2025 General Election, 30 December 2025, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/international-observers-share-feedback-on-myanmars-2025-general-election/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁴⁷ Global New Light of Myanmar, UEC hosts dinner in honour of international election observers in Yangon, 26 January 2026, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/uec-hosts-dinner-in-honour-of-international-election-observers-in-yangon/#article-title> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁴⁸ Global New Light of Myanmar, International election observers deliver remarks on Phase III of general election, 27 January 2026, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/international-election-observers-deliver-remarks-on-phase-iii-of->

Cambodian People's Party and has repeatedly rubber-stamped elections in Cambodia despite a lack of competitiveness and curtailed freedoms in the country.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) declined to send observers or endorse the junta's elections,¹⁴⁹ although individual member states did send representatives.

The UEC also invited applications from civil society organisations (CSOs),¹⁵⁰ but no domestic election observer groups took part in the elections staged by the junta. CSOs indeed needed to be registered with the junta's Ministry of Home Affairs, which very few are, to apply.¹⁵¹ For reference, over 11,000 domestic observers from 52 organisations monitored the 2015 general elections,¹⁵² and at least a dozen groups deployed domestic observers for the 2020 general elections.¹⁵³

The junta's UEC accredited 215 foreign journalists from 61 international media organisations and 1,177 journalists from 52 domestic media organisations. Accepting the UEC's accreditation was a dilemma for journalists, who knew they would play into the junta's self-legitimation scheme. On the other hand, it was for many the first opportunity to enter Myanmar since the coup.

Most foreign correspondents were granted short-term seven-day visas and reported from the same polling stations in downtown Yangon. They were relatively free to report, although interviews with voters were marred by the presence of police and intelligence officers around polling stations. In Mandalay, journalists were more closely monitored.¹⁵⁴

The Independent Press Council Myanmar and Human Rights Myanmar also released a report describing at length how the junta blocked independent reporting. This included increasing blockages to the websites of independent media outlets ahead of the junta's

[general-election/](#) (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁴⁹ Reuters, ASEAN will not certify Myanmar election or send observers, Malaysia says, 20 January 2026, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/asean-will-not-certify-myanmar-election-or-send-observers-malaysia-says-2026-01-20/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁵⁰ MITV, UEC released announcement on election observers, 17 September 2025, available at: <https://www.myanmaritv.com/news/announcement-election-observers-uec-released-announcement-election-observers> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁵¹ Zaw Myat Khant, The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Junta Bars Independent Domestic Monitors From Sunday's Election, 26 December 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/myanmar-junta-bars-independent-domestic-monitors-from-sundays-election.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁵² The Carter Center, Observing Myanmar's 2015 General Elections: Final Report, available at: <https://cartercenter50c07c05.blob.core.windows.net/blobcartercenter50c07c05/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/myanmar-2015-final.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁵³ Joint Statement by Domestic Election Observer Organizations, 29 January 2021, available at: <https://www.pacemyanmar.org/mmobservers-statement/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁵⁴ Annie Zaman, Al Jazeera Institute, Reporting the Spectacle: Myanmar's Manufactured Elections, 7 February 2026, available at: <https://institute.aljazeera.net/en/ajr/article/3547> (accessed 25 March 2026).

elections relative to their degree of criticism of or compliance with the junta's narrative. The junta also placed blocks on encryption and circumvention tools, dismissing such blocks as technical failures, and levelled threats against telecommunication operators.¹⁵⁵



A policeman checks a journalist's accreditation in Yangon on 28 December 2025. (AFP)

¹⁵⁵ Human Rights Myanmar and Independent Press Council Myanmar (IPCMM), How the Military Blocked Independent Media During the 2025-6 Elections, 16 March 2026, available at: <https://wp.progressivevoicemyanmar.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/How-the-military-blocked-independent-media-during-the-2025-6-elections-1.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026).



The aftermath of junta airstrikes on Mrauk-U Hospital, photographed on the morning of December 11 2025. (One Nation News)

4

The Backdrop: Widespread Violence and Crackdowns on Fundamental Freedoms

Previous sections of this report have addressed the shortcomings of the junta's staged elections in terms of legal and administrative arrangements, integrity, participation, and the various ways they failed to meet international standards. Inherent in these engineered failures are a range of human rights violations affecting universal suffrage and political rights.

This section will examine the broader human rights context within which the junta's illegitimate elections were staged – a raging war and the junta's escalation of violence in the months leading up to its staged polls. It will also address the junta's forced conscription efforts and other measures to target perceived opponents and to undermine and deny fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association, ahead of the junta's illegitimate elections.

An Ongoing Human Rights Catastrophe

Since its February 2021 coup attempt, the military junta has repeatedly committed grave human rights violations, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. It has plunged Myanmar into a human rights, humanitarian, political, and economic crisis that has bled across borders and enabled transnational crime to thrive.

The UN's Human Rights Office (OHCHR) has comprehensively documented atrocities, violations, and abuses by the military and other pro-junta armed groups since the coup attempt. These include airstrikes and artillery barrages, extrajudicial killings, the razing and destruction of homes, places of worship, and entire villages, forced conscription, and "acts of extreme brutality, including beheadings, burnings, mutilations, executions, torture, and the use of human shields".¹⁵⁶ The junta continues to target minority communities, including the Rohingya, with footage from northern Rakhine in the second half of 2024 described as "reminiscent of the atrocities of 2017".¹⁵⁷ The UN's Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) also possesses evidence of the junta's use of systematic torture, including acts of extreme sexual violence during interrogations conducted in its detention facilities.¹⁵⁸

According to Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED), conflict-related fatalities in Myanmar since the junta's coup attempt stood at nearly 93,000 as of late January 2026.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ OHCHR, High Commissioner Türk to Rohingya Conference: The international community must honour its responsibilities and act, 30 September 2025, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/09/high-commissioner-turk-rohingya-conference-international-community> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁵⁷ OHCHR, *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ IIMM, Report of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (A/HRC/60/18), 14 July 2025, available at: <https://iimm.un.org/sites/default/files/2025/08/IIMM%20Annual%20Report%202025%20EN.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁵⁹ Facebook post by ACLED, 2 February 2026, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/ACLEDFINFO/posts/since-the-attempted-coup-in-myanmar-in-february-2021-acled-records-nearly-93000-/1324336779713299/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

The Institute for Strategy and Policy-Myanmar recorded 95 massacres of civilians as of 9 December 2025, defined as single events where 10 or more people were killed, with 91 committed by junta forces.¹⁶⁰

Decades of extreme military violence and the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators laid the ground for the junta's coup attempt and the current human rights crisis. In response, international accountability efforts have seen the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in November 2024 request an arrest warrant for Min Aung Hlaing for the alleged crimes against humanity of deportation and persecution of the Rohingya in 2016 and 2017.¹⁶¹ In February 2025, an Argentine court issued arrest warrants for 25 senior Myanmar officials, including Min Aung Hlaing, in connection with genocide and crimes against humanity against the Rohingya.¹⁶² Meanwhile, proceedings initiated by The Gambia at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2019 for genocide, and supported by 11 intervening states, have entered the deliberative stage after parties presented their arguments in January 2026.¹⁶³

More recently, Timor-Leste appointed a prosecutor to explore potential proceedings against the military junta, including Min Aung Hlaing, for war crimes and crimes against humanity.¹⁶⁴ This is reportedly the first time an ASEAN member has initiated such action against a fellow member, marking a turning point for the regional bloc.¹⁶⁵ In quick succession, on 6 April 2026, a Rohingya genocide survivor, Yasmin Ullah, and 10 leading Indonesian public figures, including SAC-M Member and former Indonesian Attorney-General Marzuki Darusman, filed a criminal complaint with the Prosecutor's Office in Indonesia, accusing Min Aung Hlaing of acts of genocide against the Rohingya.¹⁶⁶ Indonesia's new Criminal Code

2026).

¹⁶⁰ ISP-Myanmar, 95 Civilian Massacres Recorded Since the Coup, 11 December 2025, available at: <https://ispmyanmar.com/cst-02/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁶¹ ICC, 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 25 March 2026).

¹⁶² SAC-M, States Must Enforce Historic Arrest Warrants for Myanmar Officials Issued by Argentine Court, 20 February 2025, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2025/02/historic-arrest-warrants-myanmar-argentine-court/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁶³ Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, The Concluding Stage of The Gambia v Myanmar Genocide Case Before the International Court of Justice 10 February 2026, available at: <https://www.global2p.org/publications/the-concluding-stage-of-the-gambia-v-myanmar-genocide-case-before-the-international-court-of-justice/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁶⁴ SAC-M, Timor-Leste's Commitment to Accountability Marks an ASEAN Turning Point on Myanmar, 23 February 2026, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2026/02/timor-lestes-commitment-to-accountability-marks-an-asean-turning-point-on-myanmar/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁶⁵ Myanmar Accountability Project, Timor Leste Opens Unprecedented Legal Proceedings Against Myanmar Junta, 2 February 2026, available at: <https://the-world-is-watching.org/2026/02/02/timor-lete-opens-unprecedented-legal-proceedings-against-myanmar-junta/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁶⁶ Mizzima, Myanmar Dictator Faces Fresh Genocide Charges as he Claims the Presidency, 3 April 2026, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2026/04/03/32810> (accessed 7 April 2026) and Reuters, Myanmar's new president Min Aung

(KUHP) provides for universal jurisdiction over the most serious international crimes, including genocide and crimes against humanity.

Regardless, no member of the Myanmar military has been held accountable for the atrocities perpetrated against the Rohingya in 2016 and 2017, or for any of the violations committed countrywide since the junta's 2021 coup attempt.

At the same time, the junta continues to weaponise humanitarian need. The scale of Myanmar's humanitarian crisis is a direct and intentional outcome of the junta's counterinsurgency 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 junta has also repeatedly exploited natural disasters for military advantage, including Cyclone Mocha in 2023,¹⁶⁷ Typhoon Yagi in 2024,¹⁶⁸ and the devastating March 2025 earthquakes, which overnight pushed an additional two million people into humanitarian need. In the aftermath of these earthquakes, the junta continued its air and ground attacks in affected areas despite having announced a ceasefire, and prevented humanitarian aid from reaching those most in need.¹⁶⁹

Myanmar is now among the most severe humanitarian crises in the world, and faces one of the most constrained humanitarian access situations worldwide.¹⁷⁰ In January 2026, the UN estimated that 3.6 million people were displaced across the country and that 16.2 million people required life-saving assistance and protection services, including five million children.¹⁷¹

UN Secretary-General António Guterres in October 2025 described the human rights situation in Myanmar as follows: "Thousands are dead, millions displaced, humanitarian needs are soaring, and the Rohingya and other communities are trapped in cycles of

Hlaing faces genocide complaint in Indonesia, 6 April 2026, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmars-new-president-min-aung-hlaing-faces-genocide-complaint-indonesia-2026-04-06/> (accessed 7 April 2026).

¹⁶⁷ 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 25 March 2026).

¹⁶⁸ 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 25 March 2026).

¹⁶⁹ SAC-M, UN Security Council Must Enforce Myanmar Junta Ceasefire and Mandate Urgent Humanitarian Response to Earthquake, 4 April 2025, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2025/04/security-council-junta-ceasefire-urgent-humanitarian-earthquake/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁷⁰ ACAPS, Country analysis: Myanmar, available at: <https://www.acaps.org/en/countries/myanmar#> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁷¹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Myanmar Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, available at: <https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1505#page-title> (accessed 25 March 2026).

persecution and flight.” He added that “any elections risk further exclusion and instability”.¹⁷²

Similarly, UN Special Envoy Julie Bishop reported a “deeply disturbing pattern of indiscriminate attacks on civilians”, and said that the junta’s elections risked “deepening violence and instability”.¹⁷³ UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk added his voice in December 2025, warning that “these elections are clearly taking place in an environment of violence and repression. There are no conditions for the exercise of the rights of freedom of expression, association, or peaceful assembly that allow for the free and meaningful participation of the people”.¹⁷⁴

ASEAN leaders rejected the junta-staged elections, asserting that “the cessation of violence and inclusive political dialogue must precede elections” in Myanmar and pressing “the importance of free, fair, peaceful, transparent, inclusive, and credible general elections”.¹⁷⁵

Escalating Violence Ahead of the Junta’s Staged Elections

This was the context in which the junta staged its illegitimate elections, with the full awareness of the international community. In the lead-up to the junta-staged elections, violence was not only rampant but reached new heights as the junta tried to recapture parts of the country.

In recent years, the junta’s military strategy has increasingly relied on the use of airstrikes, prompting international campaigns to cut its access to jet fuel. Despite the adoption by Western governments of sanctions on the junta’s suppliers, imports of jet fuel to Myanmar increased by 65% between 2024 and 2025,¹⁷⁶ thanks to shipments from Iran and Russia and the reported use of “shadow fleets”.¹⁷⁷

At the same time, the junta has expanded its drone capabilities and used drones alongside

¹⁷² UN, Secretary-General Calls Association of Southeast Asian Nations ‘Pillar of Multipolarity’, United Nations a ‘Proud Partner’, at Fifteenth Summit, 27 October 2025, available at: <https://press.un.org/en/2025/sqsm22882.doc.htm> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁷³ UN News, Myanmar at a crossroads: A choice between impunity and justice, available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/10/1166221> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁷⁴ OHCHR, Myanmar: Türk warns against violence and intimidation ahead of military-controlled vote, 23 December 2025, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/12/myanmar-turk-warns-against-violence-and-intimidation-ahead-military> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁷⁵ ASEAN, ASEAN Leaders’ Review and Decision on the Implementation of the Five-Point Consensus, (paragraph 26), 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 25 March 2026).

¹⁷⁶ Justice for Myanmar, Justice For Myanmar calls for new and coordinated sanctions on junta’s aviation fuel supply chain, 23 February 2026, available at: <https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/press-releases/justice-for-myanmar-calls-for-new-and-coordinated-sanctions-on-juntas-aviation-fuel-supply-chain> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁷⁷ Amnesty International, Myanmar: Jet fuel used in deadly air strikes flowing in on ‘ghost ships’ with suspected links to Iran, 25 January 2026, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/01/myanmar-jet-fuel-used-in-deadly-air-strikes-flowing-in-on-ghost-ships-with-suspected-links-to-iran/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

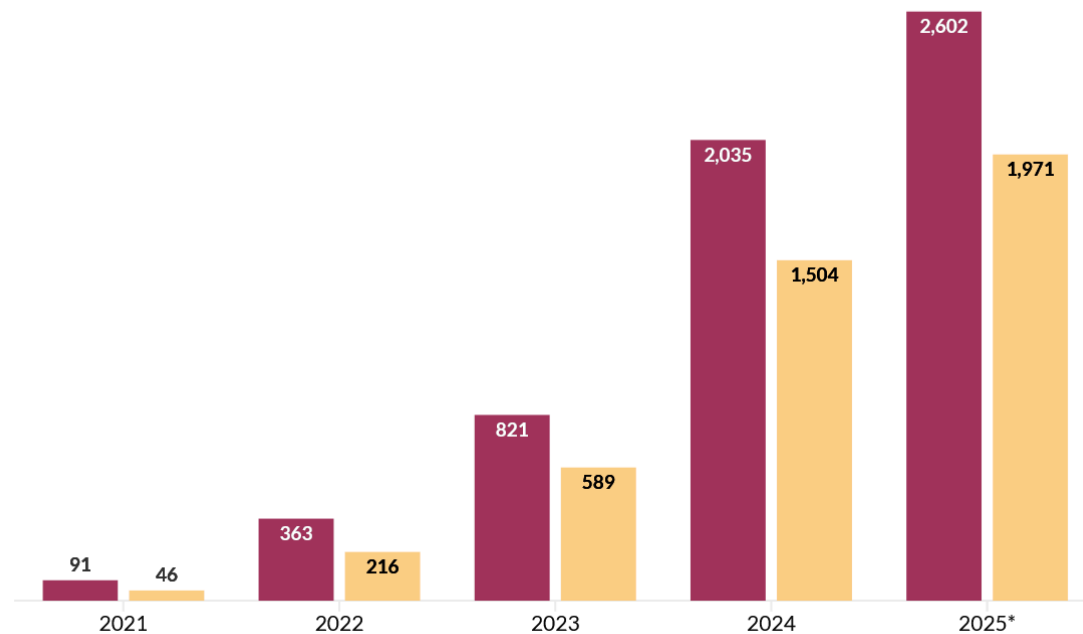
jets, helicopters, and paramotors in its air campaign.¹⁷⁸ The result was a record number of attacks and casualties in the months leading up to the junta's illegitimate elections. Between 1 January and 28 November 2025, ACLED recorded over 13,700 conflict-related deaths countrywide and a 30% increase in the junta's air and drone strikes compared to 2024.¹⁷⁹

Military Air and Drone Strikes in Myanmar

1 January 2021 - 28 November 2025



■ Number of events ■ Reported fatalities



*ACLED data up to 28 Nov. 2025

Image credit: ACLED

According to OHCHR, between December 2025 and January 2026, the period covering all three phases of the junta's staged elections, aerial attacks killed 170 civilians in 408 incidents across Myanmar.¹⁸⁰ These include the following mass casualty events:

- On 5 December, a junta airstrike on a teashop in Tabayin township, Sagaing region, killed 18 civilians and wounded 20 others as they were watching a football match on TV.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Su Mon, ACLED, The war from the sky: How drone warfare is shaping the conflict in Myanmar, 1 July 2025, available at: <https://acleddata.com/report/war-sky-how-drone-warfare-shaping-conflict-myanmar> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁷⁹ Su Mon, ACLED, Ahead of elections, Myanmar's military capitalizes on foreign support to divide the resistance, 11 December 2025, available at: <https://acleddata.com/report/ahead-elections-myanmars-military-capitalizes-foreign-support-divide-resistance> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁸⁰ OHCHR/UNTV CH, OHCHR/Myanmar election violence, 30 January 2026, available at: <https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d353/d3531011> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁸¹ Grant Peck, AP, Myanmar military air strike on a tea shop kills 18 watching a football match on TV, 8 December 2025, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/myanmar-army-resistance-bombing-football-match-d0017d296f587cfb4d299421de38943c> (accessed 25 March 2026).

- On 6 December, two airstrikes in Mongmit township, Shan state, killed 11 civilians, including a pregnant woman and two children, and injured nine others amid clashes between the junta and resistance forces.¹⁸²
- On 10 December – International Human Rights Day –, a junta jet bombed a public hospital in Mrauk-U township of Rakhine state, killing at least 33 people, including women and children, and wounding at least a further 70 people, many critically. According to OHCHR, it was “the deadliest attack on a healthcare facility since the coup. The victims included doctors, nurses, patients, and family members”.¹⁸³
- On 27 December, the day before phase 1 of the junta’s elections, at least nine people were killed, and more than 10 others were wounded when a junta fighter jet and helicopter gunship attacked a row of restaurants in Khin-U township, Sagaing region.¹⁸⁴
- On 20 January, junta airstrikes on a prison housing prisoners of war in Rakhine state killed 21 captured junta soldiers and family members and wounded 30 others.¹⁸⁵
- On 22 January, a junta airstrike on funeral attendees in Bhamo township, Kachin state, killed at least 21 civilians and possibly as many as 50.¹⁸⁶

According to data collected by one research group (see tables below), in December 2025 and January 2026, non-aerial conflict incidents were highest in townships with upcoming elections, while airstrikes were mostly directed at townships with no elections or where elections had already been held. This suggests a military strategy to have boots on the ground to “stabilise” townships included in the junta-staged elections, possibly for both security and intimidation purposes.

Other reports corroborate an escalation in military operations in the run-up to the junta’s

¹⁸² Shan Human Rights Foundation, 12 civilians killed, 9 injured in junta air and artillery attacks in Mongmit township, northern Shan State, 16 December 2025, available at: <https://shanhumanrights.org/?p=4654> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁸³ SAC-M, The Junta Is Ramping Up Its Attacks on Civilians Ahead of Its Sham Elections, 12 December 2025, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2025/12/the-junta-is-ramping-up-its-attacks-on-civilians-ahead-of-its-sham-elections/> (accessed 25 March 2026) and OHCHR, Remarks for the Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner’s oral update on Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar, HRC61, 27 February 2026, available at: https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/HRCDocuments/95/OTH/95_18842637_31afd564-25b1-478c-883b-9bf506320554.docx (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁸⁴ SAC-M, Slam the Sham: SAC-M Calls on the International Community to Outright Reject the Myanmar Junta’s Fake Elections Now, 29 December 2025, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2025/12/slam-the-sham-sac-m-calls-on-the-international-community-to-outright-reject-the-myanmar-juntas-fake-elections-now/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁸⁵ The Irrawaddy, Junta Airstrike on AA Prison Kills Captured Regime Troops, Relatives in Rakhine, 22 January 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/junta-airstrike-on-aa-prison-kills-captured-regime-troops-relatives-in-rakhine.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁸⁶ OHCHR, Myanmar: Türk says military-controlled ballot exacerbates violence and social division, 30 January 2026, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/01/myanmar-turk-says-military-controlled-ballot-exacerbates-violence-and-social> (accessed 25 March 2026).

staged elections. In Chin state, airstrikes reached a record level in December 2025, and hundreds of troops were deployed to establish control of key routes.¹⁸⁷ In Southeastern Myanmar, according to the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), “the junta [intensified] its 'clearance operations' through more frequent airstrikes and artillery shelling, even in areas far from active conflict”.¹⁸⁸ The same pattern was reported in Karenni state¹⁸⁹ and in other locations across the country.

¹⁸⁷ Chin Human Rights Organization, Military Escalation in Chin State Ahead of December 28 Elections, 21 December 2025, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/ChinHumanRightsOrganization/posts/pfbid02Pk1SsaFkMJuDvK1XoQS8rYCDX1FA35qXkTCSLMeJVQxoSJ78Ley48fGw7kxe6rl> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁸⁸ HURFOM, Voting under the barrel of a gun: A country at war, not at the polls, 13 November 2025, p. 9, available at: https://rehmonnya.org/reports/Voting_Under_the_Barrel_of_a_Gun.pdf (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁸⁹ Karenni Human Rights Group, Hanging Onto Hope: An Overview of the Human Rights Situation in Karenni State in 2025, 7 March 2026, p. 8, available at: https://wp.progressivevoicemyanmar.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/final_Hanging-Onto-Hope.pdf (accessed 25 March 2026).

December 2025 Conflict Incidents by Election Phase

	Total townships	Townships affected by conflict	Number of aerial attacks	% of total aerial attacks	Number of non-aerial conflict incidents	% of non-aerial conflict incidents	Total conflict incidents	% of total conflict incidents
Phase 1	102	34 (28%)	34	16%	141	32%	175	26%
Phase 2	100	34 (28%)	35	16%	116	26%	151	23%
Phase 3	63	22 (18%)	35	16%	89	20%	124	19%
No elections	65	31 (26%)	115	53%	99	22%	214	32%
Total	330	121	219		445		664	

Data: research group (anonymised)

January 2026 Conflict Incidents by Election Phase

	Total townships	Townships affected by conflict	Number of aerial attacks	% of total aerial attacks	Number of non-aerial conflict incidents	% of non-aerial conflict incidents	Total conflict incidents	% of total conflict incidents
Phase 1	102	33 (32%)	48	27%	141	26%	189	26%
Phase 2	100	42 (42%)	31	17%	179	33%	210	29%
Phase 3	61	25 (41%)	23	13%	149	27%	172	24%
No elections	67	29 (43%)	76	43%	77	14%	153	21%
Total	330	129	178		546		724	

Data: research group (anonymised)

There were also reported instances of violence by resistance groups against election stakeholders, although fewer than some analysts had expected. Around a dozen incidents were reported on 27 and 28 December, during phase 1 of the junta's illegitimate elections, including the bombing of a USDP office in Myawaddy, Karen state, which resulted in the death of one civilian.¹⁹⁰ More civilians were injured in rocket attacks in Mandalay, according to the junta,¹⁹¹ although a resistance group blamed the military.¹⁹² In Loikaw, Karenni state, an armed group reportedly attacked polling stations with explosives.¹⁹³

During phase 2 of the junta-staged elections, junta administrators were targeted by resistance forces in at least 10 townships. On 6 January, PDFs in Magway region attacked a convoy of police and election officials, killing at least three people.¹⁹⁴ On election day, 11 January, a drone strike on the General Administration Department (GAD) office in Htantabin township, Bago region, killed two staff members and injured two others as well as a civilian as they were preparing to count votes.¹⁹⁵ In Magway region's Kamma township, a resistance ambush on junta-appointed administrators inspecting polling stations resulted in one death and several injuries.¹⁹⁶

Phase 3 was similarly marked by instances of violence. In Hpakant, Kachin state, shelling near polling stations injured at least five civilians on election day.¹⁹⁷ Explosions also rocked polling stations in Myingyan township, Mandalay region.¹⁹⁸

Overall, attacks and casualties by the military junta before and during the staged elections far outweighed those by resistance forces. Civilians paid a heavy price as the junta held its illegitimate elections on a rolling basis and redirected manpower and firepower to conduct

¹⁹⁰ The Irrawaddy, One killed, 10 injured in Myawaddy blasts, 28 December 2025, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/theirrawaddy/posts/pfbid0234mkJ5WZvdXhErEtJLzyXBc6WjSjpDCPnNWW6Qj7CifRGLNjFisvNiziPhMVjQiTI> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁹¹ Eleven, Two civilians injured in rocket attacks on Mandalay during election day, receive medical and financial aid, 29 December 2025, available at: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/two-civilians-injured-in-rocket-attacks-on-mandalay-during-election-day-receive-medical-and> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁹² DVB, Unknown armed group attacks polling stations in Karenni State capital Loikaw, 28 December 2025, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/unknown-armed-group-attacks-polling-stations-in-karenni-state-capital-loikaw/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁹³ DVB, *ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ DVB, မကွေးတိုင်း ရွေးကော်မတီဝင်လိုက်ပါလာသည့် ယာဉ်တန်း တိုက်ခိုက်ခံရပြီး ရဲမှူးအပါ ၃ ဦးသေဆုံး, 7 January 2026, available at: <https://www.dvb.no/post/740592> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁹⁵ Mizzima, Resistance attacks disrupt Myanmar junta's phase two elections, multiple casualties reported, 15 January 2026, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2026/01/15/30294> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁹⁶ The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Junta Election Inspector Killed in Magwe Ambush, 12 March 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-election-inspector-killed-in-magwe-ambush.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁹⁷ Mizzima, Five civilians injured as artillery fire hits near Hpakant polling station on final election day, 25 January 2026, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2026/01/25/30611> (accessed 25 March 2026).

¹⁹⁸ Mizzima, Low turnout in Myingyan amid reports of door-to-door voter intimidation and nearby explosions, 25 January 2026, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2026/01/25/30615> (accessed 25 March 2026).

clearance operations in targeted areas ahead of each election phase.

As ANFREL asserted before the junta's elections, while there are historical precedents for elections taking place in wartime, the situation in Myanmar was far from conventional, as the military junta pushed for its staged elections while at the same time waging war on its own population, creating mass suffering, displacement, and fear. It follows that no genuine election could take place amid a backdrop of such widespread and egregious violence.¹⁹⁹

Impact of the Junta's Forced Military Conscription

In February 2024, the junta activated the 2010 *People's Military Service Law*, enforcing mandatory military conscription for all men aged 18 to 35 and all women aged 18 to 27 when called upon. The move was largely seen as an illustration of the junta's desperation in the face of military losses against resistance forces,²⁰⁰ but it had immediate and wide-ranging consequences.

According to independent estimates, around 100,000 men have been forcibly recruited by the junta so far.²⁰¹ Countless more have fled to resistance-held areas or neighbouring countries to avoid conscription.

The junta has implemented conscription ruthlessly and in violation of its own laws. Young men are routinely abducted from their homes without advance notice, and pedestrians are rounded up in broad daylight in cities across Myanmar.²⁰² Displaced and poor youths are more vulnerable to conscription, as they cannot afford the bribes demanded by junta administrators to look the other way. Rohingya have also been targeted despite being denied citizenship rights.²⁰³

Some of the forced conscripts are underage, increasing the use of child soldiers in Myanmar.²⁰⁴ In late 2025, reports of women's names being collected in preparation for the

¹⁹⁹ ANFREL, Myanmar Junta's Planned Elections: Falling Short of Democratic Legitimacy, September 2025, p. 26, *ibid*.

²⁰⁰ UN News, Myanmar: Mandatory conscription shows junta's 'desperation', rights expert says, 21 February 2024, available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/02/1146802> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁰¹ DVB, Nearly 100,000 males 'conscripted' into military since 2024 law enforced, 12 February 2026, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/nearly-100000-males-conscripted-into-military-since-2024-law-enforced/> (accessed 25 March 2026) and Progressive Voice, Junta's Forced Conscription of Youth Demands Urgent International Protection, 6 March 2026, available at: <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2026/03/06/juntas-forced-conscription-of-youth-demands-urgent-international-protection> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁰² Chin World, At least 10 young men abducted for conscription in Kale Town in one day, 15 December 2025, available at: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/least-10-young-men-abducted-conscription-kale-town-one-day> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁰³ Human Rights Watch, Myanmar: Military Forcibly Recruiting Rohingya, 9 April 2024, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/10/myanmar-military-forcibly-recruiting-rohingya> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁰⁴ Human Rights Watch, Myanmar: Stop Recruitment, Use of Child Soldiers, 20 June 2025, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/06/20/myanmar-stop-recruitment-use-of-child-soldiers> (accessed 25 March 2026).

military draft led to underage girls getting married to escape conscription.²⁰⁵

Once recruited, conscripts face physical abuse by officers²⁰⁶ and widespread drug use,²⁰⁷ and are forced to take part in the junta's atrocities against civilians. Many have defected to resistance armed groups. Others have been summarily executed for attempting to escape.²⁰⁸

In the lead-up to its staged elections, the junta intensified its repression while expanding systems of militarised surveillance and control. From September 2025, the junta increased security checks at city entrances, exits, and intersections across Mon state. Additional checkpoints were established along major roads, with junta forces specifically focused on inspecting male travellers. At checkpoints, accusations of support for resistance were a common pretext used to detain travellers, particularly young men, without due process. After being detained, individuals would often be forced into military service.²⁰⁹

Many checkpoints were equipped with the junta's Person Scrutinisation and Monitoring System (PSMS) and other advanced surveillance technology. The PSMS system, supported by China and Russia, uses a combination of facial recognition, artificial intelligence, and digital identification to identify civilians.²¹⁰

In areas where polling was scheduled, civil society organisations reported a surge in junta troops and pro-junta proxy militias. Even outside polling areas, local authorities were reportedly instructed to arrest anyone deemed "suspicious".²¹¹ These measures contributed to further restrictions on movement and the intensification of the junta's forced conscription campaign.

²⁰⁵ Khin Hnin Phyu Soe, Frontier, Early to wed: Myanmar girls marry to avoid military service, 24 October 2025, available at: <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/early-to-wed-myanmar-girls-marry-to-avoid-military-service/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁰⁶ Ah Htoi, The Irrawaddy, Conscript Tells of Brutal Abuses by Myanmar Military Officers, 8 August 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/conscript-tells-of-brutal-abuses-by-myanmar-military-officers.html> (accessed 25 March 2026) and Nay Min Ni, Myanmar Now, Mandalay teen beaten to death after forced conscription, family says, 18 February 2026, available at: <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/mandalay-teen-beaten-to-death-after-forced-conscription-family-says/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁰⁷ The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Junta Drags Soldiers to Keep Them Sharp, POWs Say, 11 December 2024, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-drugs-soldiers-to-keep-them-sharp-pows-say.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁰⁸ Sa Tun Aung, Myanmar Now, Myanmar junta kills three fleeing conscripts in Ayeyarwady, 11 April 2025, available at: <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-junta-kills-three-fleeing-conscripts-in-ayeyarwady/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁰⁹ Interview with CSO worker.

²¹⁰ Progressive Voice, Digital Tyranny, 20 July 2025, available at: <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2025/07/20/65773> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²¹¹ HURFOM, The Military Junta Escalates Violence Against Civilians in Southeastern Burma Amid Flagrant Attempts for Recognition Ahead of its Sham Election Plans, 5 November 2025, available at: <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2025/11/03/monthly-overview-the-military-junta-escalates-violence-against-civilians-in-southeastern-burma-amid-flagrant-attempts-for-recognition-ahead-of-its-sham-election-plans> (accessed 25 March 2026).

The junta conducted coordinated night raids targeting the homes of conscription-age men throughout the election period. In one reported incident, on the nights of 8 and 9 January — days before phase 2 of the elections — junta troops arbitrarily arrested nearly 80 young men in their homes in Dawei city.²¹² Junta forces reportedly cited “household registration checks” as a pretext for the raids. CSOs have documented other recent cases across Mon and Karen states and Tanintharyi region in which family members were forced to pay ransoms to prevent detained relatives from being sent to junta military service.²¹³

Military conscription was a key factor in the junta’s ability to regain territory in 2024 and 2025,²¹⁴ and it has further fragmented Myanmar’s society and enabled atrocities to take place. Conscription has also had knock-on effects on the economy, as thousands of youths have fled their homes, and their families have lost income. It also impacted the junta’s staged elections - voter lists were compiled from the population registries used for the conscription lottery, which led to a high number of erroneous entries. As addressed in chapter 3, people reported being forced into voting under the threat of forced conscription.

Fundamental Freedoms Dismantled

For decades, the Myanmar military has employed political detention as a default means of removing and punishing its opponents, real or perceived. After the coup attempt, the number of people detained again surged as the junta cracked down on protesters and dissidents.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) defines a political prisoner as “anyone arrested, detained, or imprisoned because of their perceived or known active role, perceived, or known supporting role, or in association with activities promoting freedom, justice, equality, human rights, including ethnic rights, in association with the pro-democracy movement”. According to the AAPP, 22,235 persons remained in junta political imprisonment as of 6 April 2026.²¹⁵ This includes elected parliamentarians and senior government officials such as President Win Myint and State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi.

IIMM Head Nicholas Koumjian confirmed that the junta accelerated this age-old strategy

²¹² HURFOM, The Human Rights Foundation of Monland Condemns Ongoing War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity Five Years After the Attempted Coup, 1 February 2026, available at: <https://rehmonnya.org/statements/the-human-rights-foundation-of-monland-condemns-ongoing-war-crimes-and-crimes-against-humanity-five-years-after-the-attempted-coup/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²¹³ HURFOM, Escalating Forced Recruitment, Collective Punishment, and Displacement Across Southeastern Burma, 16 February 2026, available at: [escalating-forced-recruitment-collective-punishment-and-displacement-across-southeastern-burma](https://rehmonnya.org/statements/escalating-forced-recruitment-collective-punishment-and-displacement-across-southeastern-burma/) (accessed 25 March 2026).

²¹⁴ Andrew Nachemson and Pyae Sone Aung, Foreign Policy, How Conscription Reshaped Myanmar’s Conflict, 17 November 2025, available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/11/17/myanmar-conscription-reshape-conflict-junta-china-thailand/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²¹⁵ AAPP, Daily Briefing in Relation to the Military Coup, 6 April 2026, available at: <https://aappb.org/%e2%81%a8daily-briefing-in-relation-to-the-military-coup-12/> (accessed 7 April 2026).

during its staged elections, reporting that “military authorities have imprisoned individuals who criticised or opposed the military’s current attempt to gain legitimacy through managed elections”. He added that “those who expressed their opposition have now joined the many thousands of people arbitrarily detained for their perceived resistance to the regime. Many detainees have been subjected to brutal torture”.²¹⁶ According to the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, the junta arrested at least 1,932 people, including peaceful protesters, politicians, human rights defenders, activists, and journalists, between 18 August and 12 December 2025, in the run-up to the staged elections.²¹⁷

As ANFREL previously reported, the junta has weaponised an extensive arsenal of repressive “laws” to crack down on dissent and to curtail fundamental freedoms.²¹⁸

This includes the October 2022 *Organisation Registration Law*, which uses broad language to restrict the activities of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and mandates invasive monitoring by authorities, severely restricting freedom of association. NGOs are required to register under a strict legal framework or face disproportionate penalties for non-compliance, including significant fines, jail time, and confiscation of assets. As a result, most civil society organisations are defunct or operate in hiding or in exile. Trade unions have effectively been banned, making Myanmar one of the 10 worst countries worldwide for workers, according to the International Trade Union Confederation.²¹⁹

Similarly, the junta’s *Counter-Terrorism Law* (amended in 2021 and 2023) and the January 2025 *Cybersecurity Law* have granted broad powers to junta agencies to monitor, target, and seize the assets of civil society groups, independent media, and political dissidents. On 2 March 2026, the junta pardoned 7,337 individuals sent to prison for minor violations of the *Counter-Terrorism Law*,²²⁰ highlighting the mass scale of the law’s punitive application.

In the six months following the junta’s coup attempt, peaceful protests across Myanmar were met by the junta with unrestrained brutality, as at least 651 protestors were killed and at least another 1,590 were arrested.²²¹ Freedom of assembly remains severely hindered to

²¹⁶ IIMM, Five years on, serious international crimes against civilians in Myanmar continue unabated, 30 January 2026, available at: <https://iimm.un.org/en/five-years-serious-international-crimes-against-civilians-myanmar-continue-unabated> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²¹⁷ FIDH, Myanmar: Arbitrary detention and torture of student leader Htet Myat Aung, 12 January 2026, available at: <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/myanmar-arbitrary-detention-and-torture-of-student-leader-htet-myat> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²¹⁸ ANFREL, Myanmar Junta’s Planned Elections: Falling Short of Democratic Legitimacy, September 2025, pp. 21-22, *ibid*.

²¹⁹ ITUC, Myanmar, available at: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/myanmar> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²²⁰ Mizzima, Myanmar junta pardons over 10,000 inmates, dismisses counter-terrorism cases, but keeps Aung San Suu Kyi detained, 2 March 2026, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2026/03/02/31747> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²²¹ Athan, Situation of peaceful assembly in Myanmar for six months after the coup, 9 August 2021, available at: <https://athanmyanmar.org/situation-of-peaceful-assembly-in-myanmar-for-six-months-after-the-coup/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

this day due to the junta's use of arbitrary arrest, detention, and abduction, as well as its aerial attacks and bombardment as described above.

Freedom of expression has also been systematically dismantled by the junta, with 1,993 people arrested for online speech as of October 2025.²²² The Myanmar Internet Project has recorded 442 internet shutdown events across the country since the coup attempt.²²³ Internet content is monitored around the clock²²⁴ and digital surveillance is ever-increasing as the junta aggressively pursues a commercial version of China's "Great Firewall", including deep packet inspection (DPI) technology, which would allow real-time surveillance and geolocation of any Internet user.²²⁵

To this effect, the junta announced in March 2026 the implementation of a mandatory International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) registration system. Under the directive, all civilians are required to submit their phone's unique device identification number together with their name, National Registration Card number, address, and phone number to a junta database by 31 March.

On 17 March, the junta enacted the *Myanmar Passport Law*, introducing penalties up to five years' imprisonment for those who illegally use, transfer, sell, or forge a Myanmar passport.²²⁶ This "law" establishes an electronic passport system using biometric data, based on digital identification cards introduced in 2024, raising further concerns over increased surveillance and control of movement. It also enables the junta to revoke existing passports and deny passports to any applicants "considered to be undertaking subversive activities that undermine national security and the national interest".²²⁷

Myanmar ranks 169th out of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index and is, "relative to its population, by far the country that imprisons its

²²² Mizzima, Nearly 2,000 people arrested for criticizing Myanmar's junta on social media, 6 November 2025, available at: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/nearly-2000-people-arrested-criticizing-myanmars-junta-social-media> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²²³ Myanmar Internet Project, Internet Shutdown, available at: <https://www.myanmarinternet.info/internet-shutdown> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²²⁴ Article 19, Myanmar: Crackdown on Freedom of Expression with 24-hour Monitoring, 1 April 2024, available at: <https://www.article19.org/resources/myanmar-crackdown-on-freedom-of-expression-with-24-hour-monitoring-2/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²²⁵ Justice for Myanmar, Report reveals how China's Geedge Networks and Myanmar telecoms companies are enabling the illegal junta's digital terror campaign, 9 September 2025, available at: <https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/press-releases/report-reveals-how-chinas-geedge-networks-and-myanmar-telecoms-companies-are-enabling-the-illegal-juntas-digital-terror-campaign> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²²⁶ Eleven, အမျိုးသားကာကွယ်ရေးနှင့်လုံခြုံရေးကောင်စီက မြန်မာနိုင်ငံကူးလက်မှတ်ဆိုင်ရာ ဥပဒေထုတ်ပြန်, 17 March 2026, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1RAHtW495D/?mibextid=wwXlfr> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²²⁷ Phoe Tar, The Irrawaddy, Myanmar's New Passport Law Sparks Fears of Abuse, Surveillance, 19 March 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmars-new-passport-law-sparks-fears-of-abuse-surveillance.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

journalists the most”.²²⁸ At least 223 journalists and media workers have been arrested since the coup attempt, and 56 remained in jail as of September 2025.²²⁹

As ANFREL has repeatedly stated, “credible elections cannot exist if fundamental political rights are not upheld”.²³⁰ For individuals to effectively exercise their suffrage rights, their fundamental freedoms – the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, freedom of movement and information, and freedom from coercion – must be fully protected.²³¹

The junta-triggered humanitarian crisis in Myanmar also directly impacted the right to vote, as people lack access to basic necessities or live under threat of violence or displacement, combined with the military’s well-documented blocking of aid as a means of collective punishment. The rights to food, water, shelter, medicine, and freedom from fear are integral to the exercise of fundamental freedoms and, by extension, meaningful political participation.

The Election Protection Law as a Tool of Repression

The “*Law on the Protection of Multiparty Democratic General Elections from Obstruction, Disruption, and Destruction*”, more commonly referred to as the *Election Protection Law*, was enacted in July 2025 and includes extremely harsh provisions against anyone who criticised or interfered with the junta’s staged elections.

This “law” introduced a minimum punishment of three years in prison, ranging up to the death penalty for acts of sabotage resulting in the death of a person. The destruction of election materials, EVMs, or polling stations is sanctioned by a five- to ten-year prison sentence, or life imprisonment if committed as a group. Even by the junta’s standards, the *Election Protection Law* is particularly egregious. It was completely unnecessary, as it covers acts already penalised under other “laws” in the junta’s vast legal arsenal.

In September 2025, in the first documented case under the law, a man was sentenced to seven years in prison with hard labour for posting a CCTV video of an armed robbery in Lashio, Shan state, along with the following comment addressed at the junta: “If you want the votes from the people, think of serving the people”.²³²

²²⁸ RSF, Myanmar, available at: <https://rsf.org/en/country/myanmar> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²²⁹ Athan, Update on Journalism and Media Safety in Myanmar : Jul – Sep 2025, 14 November 2025, available at: <https://athanmyanmar.org/update-on-journalism-and-media-safety-in-myanmar-jul-sep-2025/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²³⁰ ANFREL, Myanmar Junta’s Planned Elections: Falling Short of Democratic Legitimacy, September 2025, p. 22, *ibid*.

²³¹ UN Human Rights Committee, “CCPR General Comment No. 25”, *ibid*.

²³² Myo Pyae, The Irrawaddy, First Victim Jailed Under Myanmar’s New Election Protection Law, 10 September 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/first-victim-jailed-under-myanmars-new-election-protection-law.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

Under the *Election Protection Law*, calling for a boycott of the junta's staged elections was illegal. Two movie directors, Zambu Htun Thet Lwin and Aung Chan Lu, were arrested on 29 October for leaving "heart" emoji reactions on Facebook posts criticising an election propaganda film by the UEC. Director Maik Tee and actors Kyaw Win Htut and Ohn Daing were sentenced to seven years in prison for criticising the film.²³³ The junta stated they had "failed to contribute their artistic expertise toward the success of the upcoming election".²³⁴

The law was also used to charge people in cases that were only remotely linked to the junta-staged elections. In Bago region, a man was charged in Oktwin township under the *Election Protection Law* instead of assault after a motorcycle accident led to an altercation with a local UEC official. Another man was charged in Shwegyin township for confronting a USDP organiser who forced locals to attend a campaign rally.²³⁵

On 19 November, three young people were sentenced to jail terms of 42 to 49 years each, with hard labour, for putting up anti-election stickers in Yangon.²³⁶ These were the longest sentences delivered by the junta under the *Election Protection Law*.

Student activist Htet Myat Aung was arrested, allegedly tortured, and held incommunicado for conducting a street protest against the junta's staged elections on 10 December, International Human Rights Day.²³⁷ His whereabouts remain unknown.

Data compiled by DVB from junta statements indicates that 404 people were charged under the *Election Protection Law* as of 31 January.²³⁸ However, only 84 have been arrested. Most targets, including members of PDFs and the operators of the "Assistance Association for Myanmar-based Independent Journalists (AAMIJ) News" Facebook page, were charged in absentia.

As ANFREL has stated, "rather than ensuring peaceful, competitive elections, the *Election Protection Law* [was] deployed to silence dissent, deter protests, and block independent scrutiny – turning any form of election monitoring into a criminal risk".²³⁹

²³³ Connect Burma, ဒါရိုက်တာ မိုက်တီး နဲ့ သရုပ်ဆောင်နှစ်ဦးကို စစ်တပ်က ထောင်ဒဏ် ၇ နှစ်စီချ၊ 30 November 2025, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/ConnectBurma/posts/pfbid02nu5YPa2DgACe8uTQ1jWENZ8TFhpWmXhdwTZqdtA5Y4f5sdph55Yxa6ovMXivXY13l> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²³⁴ Phoe Tar, The Irrawaddy, Movie Director, Actors Arrested for Scoffing at Election Propaganda Film, 30 October 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/movie-director-actors-arrested-for-scoffing-at-election-propaganda-film.html> (accessed 23 March 2026).

²³⁵ The Irrawaddy, Junta using election law to snuff out dissent in Bago, 20 November 2025, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/17vTmTanLx/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²³⁶ Frontier, "Election under fear": Junta persecutes critics of its poll, 11 December 2025, available at: <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/an-election-held-under-fear-junta-persecutes-critics-of-its-poll/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²³⁷ FIDH, *ibid*.

²³⁸ DVB, Human Rights Violations: Regime's Election-Related Arrests & Charges, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/hrv-election-cases/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²³⁹ ANFREL, Myanmar: A Junta-Staged Election in the Midst of a War | Data Dive Issue No. 25, 19 December 2025,

Number of People Charged and Arrested by the Junta Under the Election Protection Law



(L) Taunggyi resident Nay Thway, convicted to 7 years of hard labor for a social media post (*Photo by Regime Police*) | (R) Director Mike Tee a.k.a. Than Tun Zaw was sentenced to 7 years for criticizing the junta's propaganda election video on social media (*Photo by Connect Burma*)

Source: DVB

available at: <https://anfrel.org/myanmar-a-junta-staged-election-in-the-midst-of-a-war-data-dive-issue-no-25/> (accessed 25 March 2026).



Myanmar junta chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing handing over a flag to newly appointed Commander-in-Chief General Ye Win Oo during a ceremony in Naypyitaw, Myanmar, 30 March 2026. (Myanmar Military True News Information Team)

5

Predictable Outcomes of the Junta's Illegitimate Elections

The junta's staged elections marked the culmination of a strategy that Min Aung Hlaing set in motion with his February 2021 coup attempt. Unsurprisingly, they delivered an overwhelming majority for the USDP, with only a few seats going to other political parties. Between the members of parliament from the USDP and those appointed by the military, the junta has done all it can to secure an illegitimate iron grip on the levers of legislative and executive power, while staging a façade of normalcy for the international community.

The junta generals have changed from military uniforms into civilian clothes in an attempt to rebrand themselves. This rebrand is of course an entirely superficial one, as the junta continues to escalate its attacks on civilian populations and its repressive measures.

Telegraphed Results of the Junta-Staged Elections

As each phase of the junta-staged elections was held, the UEC announced results for the seats that had been filled. Unsurprisingly, the USDP, which benefited from having the backing of the armed forces and the junta, the most resources, the most candidates, and an electoral system tailored to ensure its dominance, won an overwhelming majority of seats each time.

Eventually, the USDP “won” over 87% of *Pyithu Hluttaw*, 68% of *Amyotha Hluttaw*, and 66% of all state/region *hluttaw* seats in the junta-staged elections. For comparison, these figures were 21%, 22%, and six percent respectively in the 2020 general elections. The remaining seats have been filled by 30 political parties, mostly from ethnic minorities, and a lone independent candidate. Of course, these “parliamentarians” all hold illegitimate mandates and are not genuine representatives of the people's will.

However, election results published by the junta-installed UEC show that the USDP only secured about 44% of the vote across all constituencies for *Pyithu Hluttaw* and *Amyotha Hluttaw*. This equates to only around 11% of the total population, based on data from the junta's flawed 2024 census.²⁴⁰

Despite widespread intimidation, manipulation of advance ballots, and an embedded structural advantage for the USDP, most voters who took part in the junta's staged elections rebuked the military's proxy party, instead turning to other options amidst a limited field of junta-vetted candidates. The USDP only achieved a majority in the junta's illegitimate “parliament” thanks to an electoral system engineered in its favour, and to the fragmentation of other political parties, itself a result of the junta's *Political Party Registration Law* discussed in chapter 2.

²⁴⁰ Ben Dunant, Fulcrum, Myanmar's “Election” Reveals Hairline Cracks in Military Rule, 6 March 2026, available at: <https://fulcrum.sg/myanmars-election-reveals-hairline-cracks-in-military-rule/> (accessed 25 March 2026)

While the junta’s UEC is technically correct to claim that “ethnic parties and small parties have received more representation in parliament”,²⁴¹ this token representation does not constitute genuine inclusiveness and cannot result in any genuine influence on government or legislation when most political parties and a high proportion of voters were excluded from the junta’s staged elections, and when every branch of “government” is staffed by the military.

The infographics below illustrate the USDP’s dominance in all houses of parliament following the junta’s staged elections, as well as the vote share it actually received. Detailed results and maps are annexed to this report.

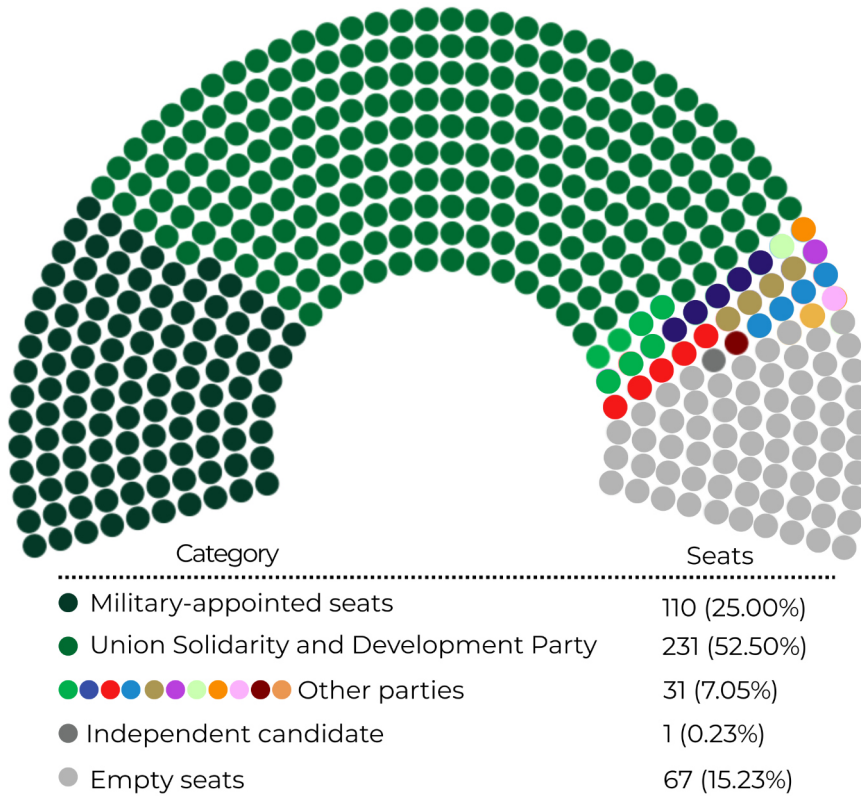


The first meeting of the *Pyithu Hluttaw* on 16 March 2026. (USDP Facebook page)

²⁴¹ Eleven, Union Election Commission meets with political parties, 14 February 2026, available at: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/union-election-commission-meets-with-political-parties> (accessed 25 March 2026).

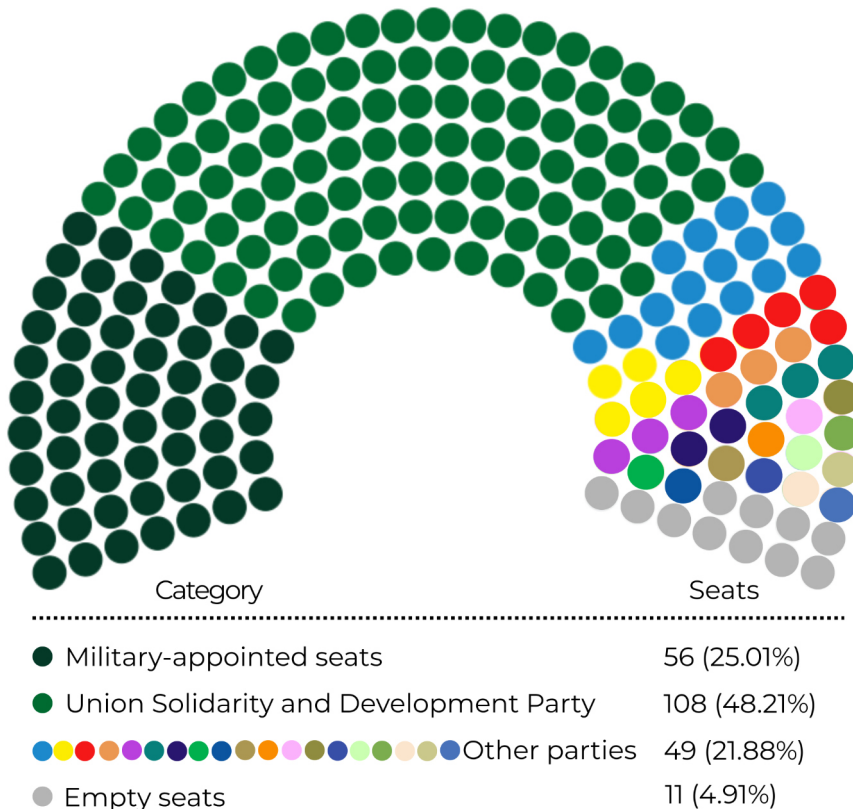
Composition of *Pyithu Hluttaw* After the Junta-Staged Elections

Total: 440 seats



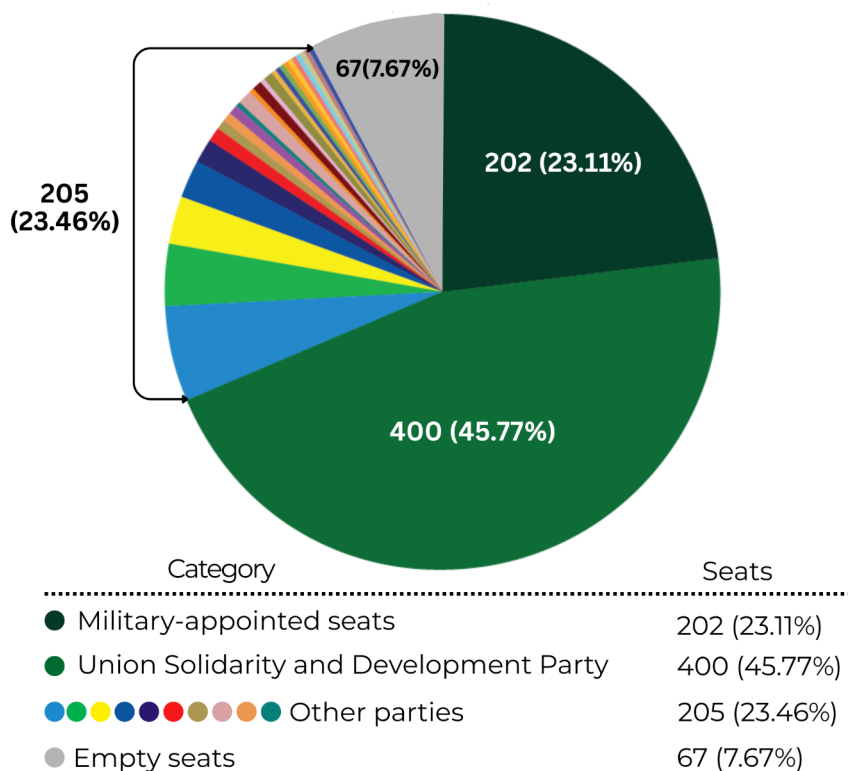
Composition of *Amyotha Hluttaw* After the Junta-Staged Elections

Total: 224 seats

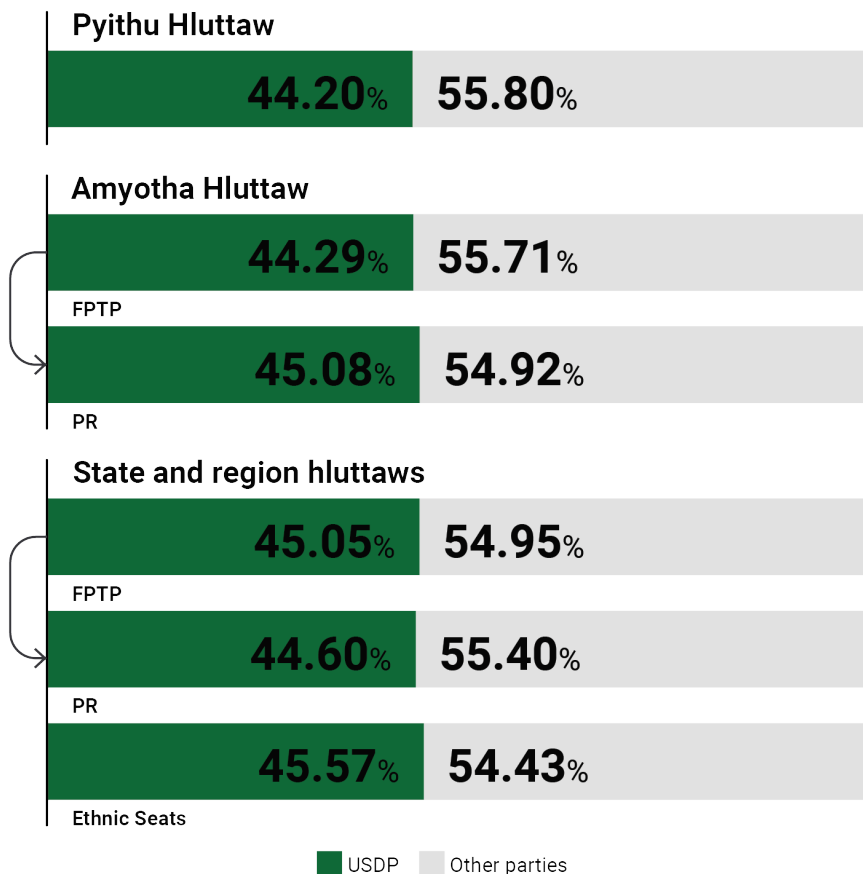


Composition of State/Region *Hluttaws* After the Junta-Staged Elections

Total: 874 seats across 14 state/region *hluttaws*



Vote Share of USDP in the Junta-Staged Elections



Election Results Table

No.	Political Party	Pyithu Hluttaw	Amyotha Hluttaw			Region/State Hluttaws				Overall Total
			FPTP	PR	Total	FPTP	PR	Ethnic seats	Total	
	Union Solidarity and Development Party	231	63	45	108	222	157	21	400	739
	National Unity Party	4		16	16	7	41		48	68
	Shan and Nationalities Democratic Party (White Tiger Party)	7		1	1	6	25		31	39
	People's Party			5	5	1	24		25	30
	People's Pioneer Party			1	1		19		19	20
	Pa-O National Organisation	5	1	1	2	5	6		11	18
	Mon Unity Party	5	3	2	5	4	3		7	17
	Naga National Party	4	1		1	4	3		7	12
	Arakan Front Party		1	2	3	1	4		5	8
	Karen National Democratic Party	1	1	2	3	1	2		3	7
	Zomi National Party		1	2	3	1	3		4	7
	Myanmar Farmers' Development Party				0		6		6	6
	Rakhine Nationalities Party	1		1	1		4		4	6

	Shan-ni Solidarity Party	1			0	1	2	1	4	5
	Danu National Democracy Party	1	1		1	1	2		3	5
	Tai Leng Nationalities Development Party			1	1		2	1	3	4
	Inn National League Party	1			0	1	1	1	3	4
	Kayah State People's Party			1	1		2		2	3
	Kachin State People's Party	1		1	1		1		1	3
	Pa-O National Unity Party			1	1		1	1	2	3
	Federal Democratic Party				0		3		3	3
	Kayin People's Party				0		2	1	3	3
	Lisu National Development Party				0		1	1	2	2
	New Democratic Party (Kachin)				0		2		2	2
	Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party			1	1		1		1	2
	National Interest Development Party			1	1		1		1	2
	88 Generation Student Youths (Union of Myanmar) Party				0		2		2	2
	New Chinland Congress				0		1		1	1
	Pa-O National Development Party				0			1	1	1

	Akha National Development Party				0			1	1	1
	Wa National Party		1		1				0	1
	Independent candidate	1			0				0	1
	Total "elected" seats	263	73	84	157	255	321	29	605	1025
	Military-appointed seats	110			56				202	368
	Empty seats	67			11				67	145

The Junta's Rebrand

On 7 and 8 February 2026, the UEC published lists of 166 military representatives handpicked by Min Aung Hlaing for the *Pyithu Hluttaw* and *Amyotha Hluttaw* as provided in the 2008 Constitution, which guarantees the military 25% of seats.²⁴² Because of election cancellations, these military appointees actually account for 28% of the national parliament.

On 16 March 2026, the *Pyithu Hluttaw* convened for the first time since the military's coup attempt in February 2021. The "parliamentarians" stemming from the junta's staged elections then elected Khin Yi, a former general and the USDP leader, as *Pyithu Hluttaw* speaker. Maung Maung Ohn, the junta's Minister of Information, was elected deputy speaker.

The *Amyotha Hluttaw* convened for the first time on 18 March 2026 and elected another former general, Aung Lin Dwe, as "speaker". Aung Lin Dwe was a key junta official, serving as the Secretary of the State Administration Council (SAC) after the coup attempt and then as a member of its successor, the State Security and Peace Commission (SSPC), from 31 July 2025. As Judge Advocate General, he reportedly helped suppress evidence of the genocidal acts against the Rohingya in Rakhine state in 2017.²⁴³ A close confidant of Min Aung Hlaing,²⁴⁴ he will also serve as speaker of the *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw*, the joint assembly of the lower and upper houses, for the first half of its five-year term. Jeng Phang Naw Taung, another former member of the SAC and SSPC, was elected "*Amyotha Hluttaw* deputy speaker".

Dozens of other generals and junta officials also sit in the "parliament" produced by the junta's staged elections. Among them are several individuals personally accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, or other atrocities. These include Lieutenant General Thet Pon, "elected" to the *Pyithu Hluttaw* in Sagaing township, Sagaing, who led the violent crackdown against protesters in Yangon after the coup attempt and reportedly supervised the arrest, torture, and execution of resistance members.²⁴⁵

²⁴² Maung Kavi, The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Junta Names 166 Military Appointees to New Parliament, 9 February 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/myanmar-junta-names-166-military-appointees-to-new-parliament.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁴³ Myanmar Now, 'Trail of bodies': defector says military's top judge came to Rakhine to destroy evidence of Rohingya atrocities, 15 April 2022, available at: <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/trail-of-bodies-defector-says-militarys-top-judge-came-to-rakhine-to-destroy-evidence-of-rohingya-atrocities/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁴⁴ Maung Kavi, The Irrawaddy, Ex-General Behind Myanmar Junta's Decrees Now Set to Crown a President, 20 March 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/ex-general-behind-myanmar-juntas-decrees-now-set-to-crown-a-president.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁴⁵ The Irrawaddy, Ex-General Behind Yangon Crackdown Eyes Reward in Myanmar Junta Election, 13 October 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/ex-general-behind-yangon-crackdown-eyes-reward-in-myanmar-junta-election.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

State and region *hluttaws*, which convened across the country for the first time on 20 March 2026, are similarly constituted. The names of 202 military appointees to those assemblies were published on 11 February 2026.

Min Aung Hlaing was “elected” “president” by the *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw* on 3 April 2026, achieving a personal ambition that he had pursued at any cost. Before his appointment, members of the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, *Amyotha Hluttaw*, and military representatives each nominated one vice-president. Min Aung Hlaing, the *Pyithu Hluttaw* nominee, was then elected over Nan Ni Ni Aye (nominated by the *Amyotha Hluttaw*) and Nyo Saw (nominated by military representatives). Min Aung Hlaing was then sworn in as “president” on 10 April 2026.

Ahead of his “election” as “president”, Min Aung Hlaing handed over the reins of the military to his protégé General Ye Win Oo. Min Aung Hlaing was constitutionally required to step down as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces before becoming President. In early March, Ye Win Oo, previously in charge of military intelligence, was appointed Army chief.²⁴⁶

It is important to note that the parliamentarians elected in the 2020 general elections continue to maintain their claim on their seats and the continuance of their democratic mandate. On 16 March 2026, 205 representatives convened as the “*Pyidaungsu Hluttaw*” and adopted a statement that “reaffirmed the continued legitimacy of the results of the 2020 multi-party democratic general election”, confirmed that parliamentarians elected in 2020 “continue to hold the democratic representation entrusted to them by the people as a whole”, and declared that the “sham election organised by the terrorist military junta, as well as the parliament and administrative body formed through that election, do not in any way represent the will of the people and possess absolutely no legitimacy”.²⁴⁷

SAC-M has described the junta’s efforts to present itself as an elected civilian government as an “absurd rebrand”.²⁴⁸ As SAC-M member Yanghee Lee said: “Min Aung Hlaing has killed tens of thousands of civilians, set the country ablaze and destabilised the region, all in a selfish bid to anoint himself president. A confected title and a costume change won’t fool

²⁴⁶ Maung Kavi, The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Junta Boss’ ‘Eyes and Ears’ Ye Win Oo Promoted to Army Chief, 5 March 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-boss-eyes-and-ears-ye-win-oo-promoted-to-army-chief.html> (accessed 25 March 2026). Deputy Senior General Soe Win, the junta’s number 2, was passed over without explanation for this appointment, perhaps indicating a significant rift within the top military leadership.

²⁴⁷ *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw*, Statement (1/2026): Reaffirming the Continued Legitimacy of the Results of the 2020 Multi-party Democratic General Election and Condemning the Convening of an Unlawful Parliament Arising from the Terrorist Military Junta’s Sham Election, 16 March 2026, available at: <https://crphmyanmar.org/publications/statement-of-pyidaungsu-hluttaw-9th-session/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁴⁸ SAC-M, From Fatigues to Longyis: The Myanmar Junta’s Absurd Rebrand Begins, 16 March 2026, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2026/03/from-fatigues-to-longyis-the-myanmar-juntas-absurd-rebrand-begins/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

the Myanmar people or the international community or erase his crimes. He will ultimately be brought to heel and to justice”.

Possible Next Steps for the Junta

On 3 February 2026, the junta enacted a law creating a “Union Consultative Council” which would oversee all branches of government, both military and civilian.²⁴⁹ This new body, which has yet to be formed, will have broad powers and is seen as a way for Min Aung Hlaing to retain full control over the military despite transitioning to a “civilian” position. The junta evidently continues to undermine the separation of powers provided by the 2008 Constitution, which it claims to uphold, although every action it has taken since its coup attempt has been unconstitutional.

Min Aung Hlaing has also projected reform of the Constitution, claiming that the junta and aligned political parties have agreed on 43 points to be amended.²⁵⁰ Any such reform would only serve the junta’s interests.

There are well-founded concerns that the junta’s acts of violence and repression will continue to intensify. Military sources have reportedly claimed that the junta’s forced conscription drive will be expanded in April 2026.²⁵¹ By then, the first batch of conscripts drafted in 2024 will have completed the two years of service required by the junta. The junta will need new recruits to replace them and the significant battlefield casualties it has sustained.

The staged elections did not, therefore, in any way signal a softening or a change of course for the junta. Instead, they were the culmination of a years-long plan forged through systematic violence and repression, which has been met with unprecedented popular resistance within Myanmar. Reports suggest that the junta now intends to double down on its oppression of the people of Myanmar, while normalising its relationship with the international community in the guise of a nominally civilian government.

The junta is also expected to ramp up its digital repression by continuing its rollout of the Person Scrutiny and Monitoring System (PSMS) and deep packet inspection (DPI) technology discussed in chapter 4. This technology is used in conjunction with a centralised

²⁴⁹ Global New Light of Myanmar, Union Consultative Council Law, 3 February 2026, available at: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/union-consultative-council-law/> (accessed 25 March 2026) and Reuters, Myanmar junta plans ‘super-body’ to tighten grip on military, new government, 4 February 2026, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-junta-plans-super-body-tighten-grip-military-new-government-2026-02-04/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁵⁰ Maung Kavi, The Irrawaddy, Myanmar Junta Signals Constitutional Amendments but Analysts Skeptical, 12 March 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/myanmar-junta-signals-constitutional-amendments-but-analysts-skeptical.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁵¹ SHAN News, Forced Conscription Set to Expand After Military-Staged Election, Local Sources Say, 8 January 2026, available at: <https://english.shannews.org/archives/29111> (accessed 25 March 2026).

identity system that facilitates surveillance, arrests, and forced conscription.²⁵² The junta is working with India to integrate Indian-developed infrastructure into Myanmar’s existing digital identity system.²⁵³

Finally, the junta is likely to intensify efforts to “market” its new civilian branding to the international community, starting with receptive regional countries. Thailand was the first country to acknowledge the junta’s “parliament”, sending an advisor from the Thai Foreign Ministry to Naypyitaw on 19 March to congratulate *Pyithu Hluttaw* speaker Khin Yi.



Advisor to the Thai Foreign Minister Kallayana Vipattipumiprates embraces *Pyithu Hluttaw* Speaker Khin Yi in Naypyitaw on 19 March 2026. (Khin Yi Facebook page)

²⁵² Wai Phyo Mint and Darika Bamrungchok, Tech Policy Press, Five Years After Coup, Myanmar’s Digital Authoritarianism Enters New Phase, 13 March 2026, available at: <https://www.techpolicy.press/five-years-after-coup-myanmars-digital-authoritarianism-enters-new-phase/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁵³ Ayang Macdonald, Biometric Update, Myanmar adopts MOSIP, begins digital ID pilot, 14 November 2025, available at: <https://www.biometricupdate.com/202511/myanmar-adopts-mosip-begins-digital-id-pilot> (accessed 25 March 2026).



Protestors against the military coup hold a flag bearing the three-fingered salute in Mandalay, Myanmar, on 8 February 2021.
(Sai Han One / Shutterstock.com)

6

Myanmar's Way Forward

The Myanmar people have chosen and are actively forging a new path, as their widespread rejection of the junta's illegitimate elections shows. The legitimate National Unity Government (NUG),²⁵⁴ ethnic resistance organisations (EROs),²⁵⁵ civil society organisations (CSOs),²⁵⁶ and other stakeholders have steadfastly voiced their opposition to the junta-staged polls and called on the international community to reject them.

The Spring Revolution movement, while still in its foundational stages, represents the only legitimate and viable path toward a stable and inclusive federal democratic Union. Across the movement, there is meaningful consensus around a shared vision for a Union under a new constitution that enshrines civilian governance, equality, self-determination, justice, human rights, and the rule of law.

This vision is already being constructed from the ground up by a broad ecosystem of revolutionary stakeholders working collaboratively through overlapping platforms and processes. The movement's 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 self-determination.

In December 2025, SAC-M issued a report entitled *Myanmar's Way Forward*.²⁵⁷ It collected primary data through a written questionnaire²⁵⁸ distributed to national-level political bodies, EROs, state/federal units, ethnic-based councils, consultative bodies, civil society organisations, umbrella organisations, and coalitions comprising dozens of constituent groups. SAC-M received 25 responses to its questionnaire. In February 2026, SAC-M met with a range of pro-democracy and resistance organisations on the Myanmar-Thailand

²⁵⁴ See for instance National Unity Government (NUG) and National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC), Statement Regarding the Illegitimate Sham Elections of the Military Junta Commission, 29 January 2026, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=879435221506619&set=pcb.879435338173274> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁵⁵ See for instance Mizzima, KNU rejects Myanmar junta's planned election as illegitimate and destabilizing, 28 August 2025, available at: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2025/08/28/25856> (accessed 25 March 2026), DVB, Chin resistance says regime election not solution to crisis; Naypyidaw wants safe and secure polls in December, 15 August 2025, available at: <https://english.dvb.no/chin-resistance-says-regime-election-not-solution-to-crisis-naypyidaw-wants-safe-and-secure-polls-in-december/> (accessed 25 March 2026) and Myo Pyae, The Irrawaddy, AA Rejects Junta's Planned Election in Rakhine, 11 August 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/aa-rejects-juntas-planned-election-in-rakhine.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁵⁶ See for instance Open Letter: The UNHRC Must Reject the Junta's Sham Election Results to Consolidate Illegitimate Rule and Advance Accountability, 18 February 2026, available at: <https://athanmyanmar.org/open-letter-the-unhrc-must-reject-the-juntas-sham-election-results-to-consolidate-illegitimate-rule-and-advance-accountability/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁵⁷ Refer to SAC-M, Myanmar's New Way Forward, 5 December 2025, available at: https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/SAC-M-Briefing-Paper_Myanmars-Way-Forward_English.pdf (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁵⁸ 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?

border. The information gathered through the questionnaire and subsequent meetings informs this chapter.

The Alternative: A Ground-Up Movement

Ground-up political processes have emerged as the principal means through which the people's Spring Revolution movement has sought 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 state/federal units 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, these units and ethnic-based councils will be linked horizontally with each other and vertically with Union-level bodies to gradually form a new, inclusive national political order grounded in consent and popular participation.²⁵⁹

At the national level, there are multiple processes and bodies for convening and coordinating a diversity of revolutionary stakeholders, including state/federal units and ethnic-based councils, EROs, political parties, civil society, elected members of parliament, and groups formed in the wake of the attempted coup.

Processes taking place at the national level include dialogue towards the Common Political Agreement (CPA) and the Articles of Federal Transitional Arrangement (AFTA), which build on the Federal Democratic Charter and will function as a federal transitional constitution.²⁶⁰ Key bodies include the Joint Coordination Body (JCB) and the Multi-Ethnic Council (MEC).

On 30 March 2026, the Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union (SCEF) was launched by the NUG, the CRPH and four of Myanmar's most established EROs – the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the Karen National Union (KNU), the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and the Chin National Front (CNF). SCEF has six political objectives. These include ending the military's involvement in politics, the election of a civilian government through genuine democratic processes, the abrogation of the 2008 constitution and its replacement with a new constitution through consensus that

²⁵⁹ 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 25 March 2026).

²⁶⁰ 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 25 March 2026).

embodies federalism and democratic values, the establishment of a new federal democratic Union in accordance with the new constitution, and instituting a system of transitional justice to deliver justice to survivors and to secure accountability.²⁶¹

There are also state- and region-level efforts. In early March 2026, the Mon Revolutionary Forum marked the first time that different Mon revolutionary actors had come together in a formal process since the coup. Several agreements were reached during the historic forum, including that revolutionary actors would begin drafting a Mon State Revolutionary Charter and establish mechanisms for strengthened military coordination.

Joint armed resistance against the military, including through a “Spring Revolution Alliance”²⁶² formed in late 2025, 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 Spring Revolution Alliance represents an intriguing development in the revolutionary landscape. As an inclusive military platform, its 19 member organisations reflect a uniquely diverse array of ethnic, religious, and ideological interests. It is hoped that, in time, the benefits of the initiative might extend beyond strengthened military coordination to include information sharing and a platform for dialogue between resistance forces as well as new avenues for international engagement. Members are mindful of failed attempts to unite resistance groups in Myanmar through formal alliances in the past, and are eager to ensure the Alliance succeeds where past efforts have not.

Governance Mechanisms

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.²⁶³

Revolutionary local government administrations deliver core state functions such as healthcare, education, security, justice, and humanitarian relief, often alongside tax

²⁶¹ See X post by the NUG’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30 March 2026, https://x.com/MFA_NUG/status/2038656700937384429 (accessed 7 April 2026) and Ah Htoi, The Irrawaddy, Myanmar’s NUG and Four Ethnic Armies Form Unified Resistance Command, 1 April 2026, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/myanmars-nug-and-four-ethnic-armies-form-unified-resistance-command.html> (accessed 7 April 2026).

²⁶² The Irrawaddy, Interview: What Is the New Spring Revolution Alliance?, 19 December 2025, available at: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/in-person/interview/interview-what-is-the-new-spring-revolution-alliance.html> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁶³ SAC-M, Briefing Paper: Effective Control in Myanmar, 5 September 2022, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2022/09/briefing-effective-control-myanmar/> (accessed 23 March 2026) and Briefing Paper: Effective Control in Myanmar 2024 Update, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2024/05/briefing-paper-effective-control-in-myanmar-2024-update/> (accessed 23 March 2026).

collection, infrastructure repair, social services, and crisis response. Some have formed semi-elected bodies or other participatory governance mechanisms and/or issue identification and travel documents to residents. CSOs 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.²⁶⁴

Conditions for Success

Respondents to SAC-M's questionnaire 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.

A second essential condition is unity and coordination among revolutionary forces and actors, 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 accountability for past abuses and institutional reform as critical for rebuilding trust and ensuring non-recurrence of violence. Justice was 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.

²⁶⁴ 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 at: <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/resources?type=statement> (accessed 23 March 2026).

Federal Democratic Vision

Responses across all questions and from each category of revolutionary actor demonstrated 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 rejected 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.

(a) Pillars of a Federal Democracy

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.

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 consistently pointed to the impacts of longstanding and systemic marginalisation and discrimination, and the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities. The denial and erasure of the rights and identities of ethnic minorities, driven primarily by the Myanmar military and central governments, are root causes of conflict and entrenched inequality. 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 stressed 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.

Some respondents also 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.

Post Junta-Staged Elections Dynamics

Respondents were unanimously opposed to the junta's planned elections. A number said they saw no possibility that the process could provide a pathway to genuine peace or federal democracy. Instead, it would intensify and prolong the conflict and entrench authoritarian rule.

Following the staged elections, these views have evolved further. Recent SAC-M consultations with groups highlighted a number of emerging dynamics.

(a) Sustained Resistance

First, the elections have not altered the trajectory of the revolution. Groups emphasised that the revolution would continue until its core objectives are achieved, namely removing the military from politics and establishing a genuine federal democratic Union. In the view of these groups, challenges and setbacks are expected, but the people-led revolution is firmly underway. The junta is not capable of reversing its progress or determining its direction.

(b) Escalating Violence

Second, there is an awareness that the junta will likely continue to intensify its attacks on civilians in resistance areas, to expand its repression of civic space, and to target perceived opponents. Groups expect the junta to feel emboldened by its staged elections, with one group cautioning that the junta's rebranding as a "government" could provide it with cover for its atrocity operations against revolutionary actors under the banner of counterterrorism measures.

(c) “Peace” Processes

Third is the risk of a junta-led “peace process” as a familiar divide-and-conquer strategy. Groups emphasised that genuine peace cannot be achieved on the junta’s terms, and pointed to the failures of the flawed Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) process of 2015. Several groups said they would reject any “peace process” or dialogue premised on the military’s 2008 Constitution or the NCA. As one group noted: “A lot of money and time was wasted on that process, billions of dollars, for what? The junta just took control again.”

Some groups acknowledged that “external pressure”, including in coercive forms, would be applied by countries such as China that have an interest in seeing relations with the junta normalised. Others expected pressure from ASEAN, Western governments, and organisations promoting a mediated solution.

Consulted groups continued to insist that any future political dialogue with the junta was contingent on the fulfilment of certain preconditions, including but not limited to an end to the junta’s violence, the release of all political prisoners, and a commitment to the military’s withdrawal from political and economic life in Myanmar. It would also need to be genuinely inclusive, involving broad representation and participation across the revolutionary movement.

(d) International Engagement

Fourth, a growing number of groups appreciate the importance of direct engagement with the international community, and not simply the default domain of federal-level actors such as the NUG. While clear-eyed about the international community’s inaction on Myanmar, they see the cultivation of new bilateral and multilateral relationships as both a source of support and legitimacy, and as a means of denying the junta recognition.

Recommendations for International Action

The greatest risk to Myanmar is currently posed from outside, not within. For more than five years, the Myanmar people have sustained a pro-democracy revolution against the most brutal military in the region. The grave risk now is that, through expediency, apathy, or both, countries will normalise their relationships with the junta and grant it the legitimacy it so desperately needs. Added to this, a group of rogue states operating outside international law – Russia, Belarus, Iran, North Korea – will continue to enable the junta’s atrocity operations through the sale and transfer of weapons, munitions, dual-use items, and jet fuel, and through their international political support.

As OHCHR states, “the Myanmar people’s aspirations for civilian-led, democratic, representative, just and transparent governance need to be heeded. The recent elections have not responded to that call. New pathways must be found to restore genuine democratic and civilian rule”.²⁶⁵

The international community must act decisively and deliberately by providing political and material support to pro-democracy revolutionary actors, and by denying the junta legitimacy and access to the resources and materiel that continue to enable its repression and atrocities.

Respondents and groups consulted following the junta’s illegitimate election called on the international community to provide the following forms of support.

(a) Support Legitimate Pro-Democracy Actors and Movements

To UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, Tom Andrews: “Myanmar is at a crossroads, with the junta hoping that its election will lead to legitimacy... But, the international community is also at a crossroads: will it bring to scale measures that have proven to be effective and support the people of Myanmar who continue to demonstrate remarkable courage and tenacity? Or will it retreat and abandon the people of Myanmar precisely when they need that support the most?”.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ OHCHR, Remarks for the Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner’s oral update on Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar, HRC61, 27 February 2026, available at: https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/HRCDocuments/95/OTH/95_18842637_31afd564-25b1-478c-883b-9bf506320554.docx (accessed 23 March 2026).

²⁶⁶ OHCHR, Human Rights Council best positioned to stand up for rights in these perilous times, says outgoing UN

International support for Myanmar's pro-democracy and revolutionary movement must include a suite of interconnected actions.

First, states must strengthen their formal engagement with legitimate Myanmar representatives and emerging federal democratic institutions, including the Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union, ethnic organisations and councils, emerging state and federal units and alliances, civil society, and minority communities, including those who have been forced to leave Myanmar.

Second, there must be a reversal in funding cuts and a scaling-up of technical, capacity-building, and financial support to revolutionary actors, including Myanmar civil society. This should include support for short- and long-term institutional reform, including early thinking on inclusive frameworks, voter rights, and democratic participation so that the people of Myanmar can once again express their will through credible electoral processes, even in exile or transitional contexts. Scaled-up assistance is essential to sustain nascent efforts towards a genuine and inclusive federal democratic Union, to support ground-up local governance and service delivery, and to support activities that are essential to democracy: education, human rights monitoring and reporting, and an independent media. Local and regional civil society, election observation organisations, and media are critical in safekeeping information integrity and countering the junta's normalisation narratives, and should be supported in their efforts to do so.

Third, states must expand their coordination with legitimate Myanmar representatives, neighbouring countries, ASEAN, and UN agencies to support the 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. This must also see increased financial support to bolster recovery and reconstruction efforts and to address the broader humanitarian crisis. States must demand that full and unimpeded access be granted to humanitarian agencies and actors, including to the tens of thousands of political prisoners in junta detention centres.

Fourth, efforts must also concentrate on strengthening opportunities for the negotiation of a new federal democratic constitution for Myanmar in accordance with the will, aspirations, interests, and visions of the Myanmar people in ways that are inclusive of all communities, including the Rohingya and other minorities. The Philippines, as current ASEAN Chair, must build on the Stakeholder Engagement platforms developed by Indonesia and Malaysia during their respective terms to support legitimate Myanmar representatives in their negotiation of a new federal democratic constitution,

Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, 13 March 2026, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/03/human-rights-council-best-positioned-stand-rights-these-perilous-times-says> (accessed 25 March 2026).

without setting pre-conditions or prescribing pre-determined outcomes. The international community can play a constructive role in supporting dialogue and trust-building.

In doing so, the international community must avoid placing pressure on stakeholders, including through coercive measures, to enter junta-led political dialogue, “peace processes” or other efforts to normalise engagement with the junta that otherwise do not reflect the clearly stated will, aspirations, interests, and visions of the Myanmar people. This would seriously undermine genuine efforts towards peace and a lasting resolution to the conflict.

(b) Isolating the Junta and Withholding Legitimacy

The junta remains the largest obstacle to a return to an inclusive civilian democratic government. Its attempt to entrench its rule through elections that cannot resolve the country’s crisis, because the junta itself is the source of that crisis.

The military has used systematic violence over many decades to maintain political, economic, religious, and ethnic hegemony in Myanmar, and remains the most significant obstacle to genuine peace and democracy in Myanmar.

It follows that states must outright reject the outcome of the junta’s illegitimate elections and refrain from engaging in any act that may confer legitimacy on the junta or any successor body or “government” established by the military. This must include the withholding of technical and electoral cooperation from the junta’s new “parliament” and with junta-appointed bodies, including the UEC and the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, to avoid conferring legitimacy on the junta. To this end, independent media, journalists, and academics should maintain rigorous editorial standards in their coverage of the junta, its “government”, and its proxies and appointees to avoid inadvertently amplifying junta narratives or propaganda.

Furthermore, states must work in concert to ensure that the junta or any successor body to it does not receive accreditation in or is otherwise invited to attend UN forums or to engage with UN bodies. Myanmar’s NUG-aligned Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun, must be formally reconfirmed in his role by the UN General Assembly. This would also reopen the accreditation of legitimate Myanmar representatives in other UN organs and forums, including the International Court of Justice and the Human Rights Council.

ASEAN must maintain its ban on representatives of the military junta or any successor body or “government” from participating in ASEAN meetings, and confirm a series of incremental punitive steps that ASEAN will take beyond its Five-Point Consensus if the junta continues to refuse to abide by its decisions, fails to end its

attacks on civilians and to release political prisoners, or continues to withhold and manipulate access to humanitarian assistance. ASEAN should also strengthen the role of its Special Envoy on Myanmar, including by appointing a longer-term full-time Special Envoy and strengthening the Office of the Special Envoy's staffing and resources.

(c) Punitive Action Against the Junta

The international community must intensify coordinated measures against the junta, including diplomatic efforts to:

- **Secure an immediate end to all attacks, particularly airstrikes, and a total countrywide ceasefire supported and enforced by ASEAN and the UN and monitored by international observers**
- **Secure the immediate release of all political prisoners, including President Win Myint and State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi**
- **Stop 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 as well as surveillance technology**
- **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. This should prioritise the sanctioning of the Myanma 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 Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) and Myanmar's state-owned banks.**

States must also coordinate action through UN forums, principally the Security Council. The United Kingdom, as penholder on Myanmar in the Security Council, must resume efforts on a new resolution in follow-up to the Council's first and only resolution on Myanmar - resolution 2669 adopted in December 2022. **In a maximalist approach, a new resolution should:**

- **Express unequivocal support for the genuine democratic will, interests and aspirations of the Myanmar people**
- **Reject the junta's illegitimately staged elections and refuse to recognise their**

outcome and the junta or any successor body or “government” established by the military

- 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 on the Myanmar military, with a mechanism to monitor and enforce it
- Demand the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners
- Demand unhindered humanitarian access for UN agencies and other international organisations, and call for scaled-up financial support to Myanmar to address the humanitarian crisis
- 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
- Refer the situation in Myanmar to the ICC
- 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.

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 above. The General Assembly should also explore the creation of a special international criminal tribunal for Myanmar if the Security Council fails to refer the situation to the ICC.

(d) Principled Engagement

The risk of normalisation of the junta or its recognition by some states could complicate engagement by UN entities in Myanmar. This includes manipulation by the junta in the form of restrictions, travel bans, and the denial of visas to UN personnel.

The relatively recent appointment of a well-respected UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar, albeit ad interim, is a welcome development. Still, the Rosenthal Report and its documentation of the significant past failures by the UN Country Team in Myanmar, including during the military’s purges of the Rohingya in 2017 and 2018, continue to cast a long shadow.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ Gert Rosenthal, A brief and independent inquiry into the involvement of the United Nations in Myanmar from 2010-

UN entities, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), and other international humanitarian and development agencies must avoid actions that could grant or be perceived as granting legitimacy to the military junta or any successor body or “government”.

At the same time, they must expand their coordination with legitimate Myanmar representatives and actors, including emerging federal democratic institutions, civil society, and minority communities, to:

- Strengthen governance and aid programming in ways that increase presence in and humanitarian provision to non-military junta-controlled areas
- 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 that the junta does not continue to weaponise aid.

(e) Accountability and Reparations

Decades of military impunity, corruption, and the absence of checks and balances have allowed repeated cycles of violence without consequence.

Accountability efforts must see the ICC issue an arrest warrant for Min Aung Hlaing (assuming it has not already done so on a “Secret” basis) and the ICC Prosecutor request arrest warrants for other junta members.

States must also follow the lead of Argentina in using their own national courts to prosecute Min Aung Hlaing and other junta members under the exercise of universal jurisdiction.

The Philippines, now ASEAN Chair, showed its commitment to international law when it facilitated the arrest and transfer of former President Rodrigo Duterte to the ICC for the alleged crimes against humanity of murder, torture, and rape.²⁶⁸ It follows that **the Philippines must lead ASEAN in these same principled steps on Myanmar, including by expressing public support for the appointment by Timor-Leste of a prosecutor to explore potential proceedings against the military junta, including Min Aung Hlaing, for war crimes and crimes against humanity.**²⁶⁹

2018, available at: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3809543/files/Myanmar_Report_Rosenthal_-_May_2019.pdf (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁶⁸ ICC, Duterte Case, available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/philippines/duterte> (accessed 25 March 2026).

²⁶⁹ SAC-M, Timor-Leste’s Commitment to Accountability Marks as ASEAN Turning Point on Myanmar, 23 February 2026, available at: <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2026/02/timor-lestes-commitment-to-accountability-marks-an-asean-turning-point-on-myanmar/> (accessed 25 March 2026).

When the ICC – as widely expected – confirms that it has issued an arrest warrant for Min Aung Hlaing, the Philippines should announce that it will cooperate with the Court in securing his arrest and transfer to The Hague. Timor-Leste will join them. Malaysia and Singapore must add their support. So too should Indonesia, as the current President of the UN Human Rights Council and with the international community closely watching the progress of the criminal complaint filed against Min Aung Hlaing with the Prosecutor’s Office of Indonesia under the principle of universal jurisdiction.

The coming months will also see the International Court of Justice deliver its judgment in The Gambia’s case against the Myanmar military under the Genocide Convention. States must be ready to act on and implement the Court’s orders in the event of a judgment against the military.

Finally, the international community must provide support to local Myanmar actors in building their justice structures and in developing a range of transitional justice initiatives, including truth-telling and acknowledgment of past injustices, to help strengthen the rule of law and to cultivate trust in institutions and between communities.

Annex 1: Resources on the Illegitimate Junta-Staged Elections

ANFREL

- [Myanmar Junta's Planned Elections: Falling Short of Democratic Legitimacy](#)

Data for Myanmar

- Phase 1 Election Overview: [English](#) - [Burmese](#)
- Phase 2 Election Overview: [English](#) - [Burmese](#)
- Phase 3 Election Overview: [English](#) - [Burmese](#)

DVB

- [Human Rights Violations: Regime's Election-Related Arrests & Charges](#)
- [Myanmar Regime's 2025 Election Results](#)

Progressive Voice

- [The Junta's Sham Election: Attempt to Manufacture Legitimacy Through Violence and Fraud](#)

FIDH and ALTSEAN-Burma

- From Sham to Scam: Overview of Burma/Myanmar's Fraudulent Election: [English](#) - [Burmese](#)

Strategic Initiative Forum (SIF) and the Anti-Sham Election Campaign Committee (ASECC)

- Biggest Scam Yet: The 2025 Sham Election in Myanmar: [English](#) - [Burmese](#)

Myanography

- [Voting in Terror: How Myanmar's 2025 Election Is Manufactured Through Fear and Coercion](#)

Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)

- [Voting Under the Barrel of a Gun: A Country at War, Not at the Polls](#)

Human Rights Myanmar and the Independent Press Council of Myanmar (IPCM)

- How the Military Blocked Independent Media During the 2025-6 Elections: [English](#) - [Burmese](#)

Burma Affairs and Conflict Study (BACS)

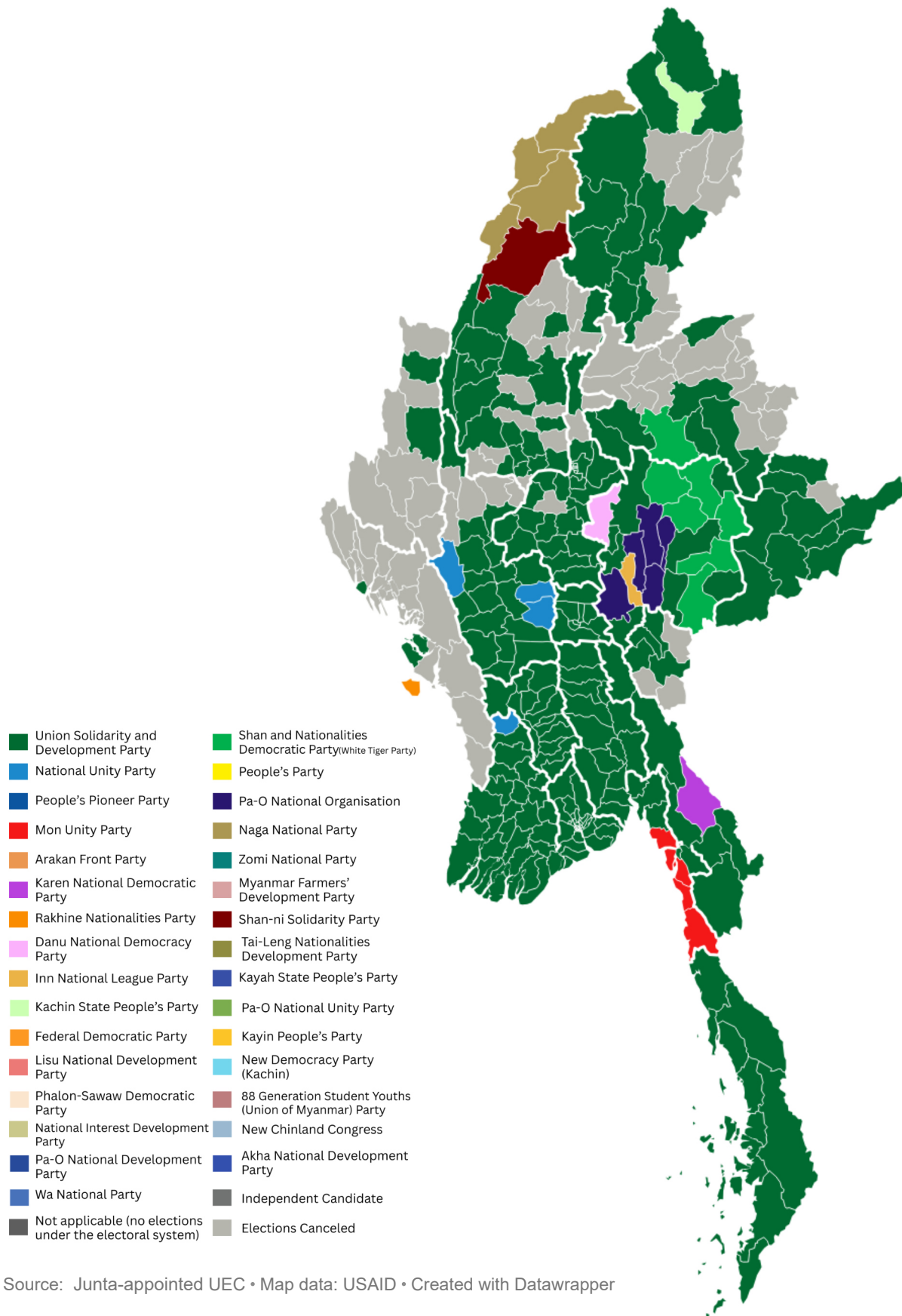
- RESPECT Myanmar: Research on Electoral Security, Participation, Engagement, and Civic Trust of Myanmar Migrants: [English](#) – [Burmese](#)

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

- [Background Paper on Myanmar Military's Plans to Hold National Elections](#)
- [Human Rights Situation in Myanmar during the Election Process: Update](#)

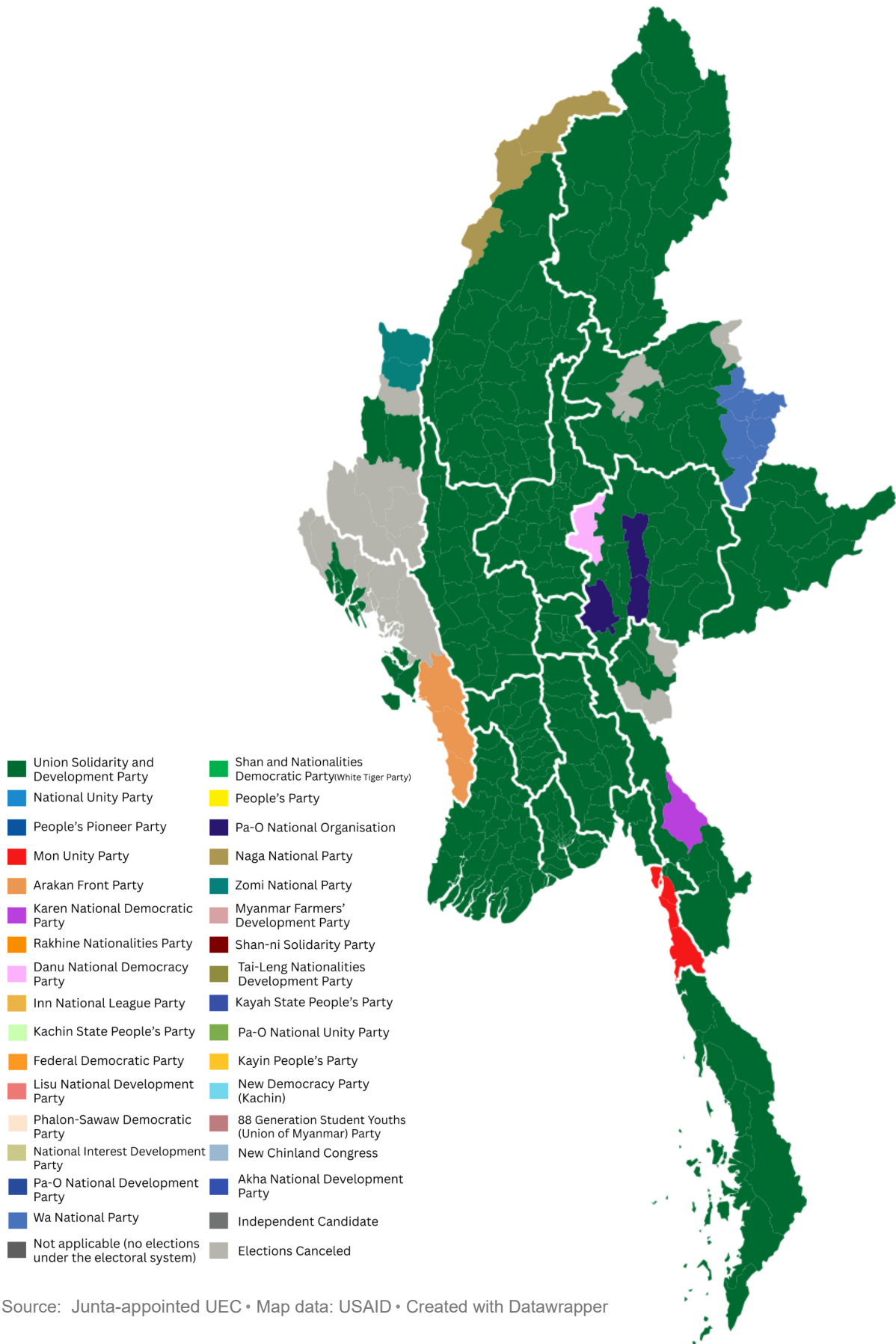
Annex 2: Junta-Staged Elections Result Maps

Junta-Staged Elections Result: *Pyithu Hluttaw*



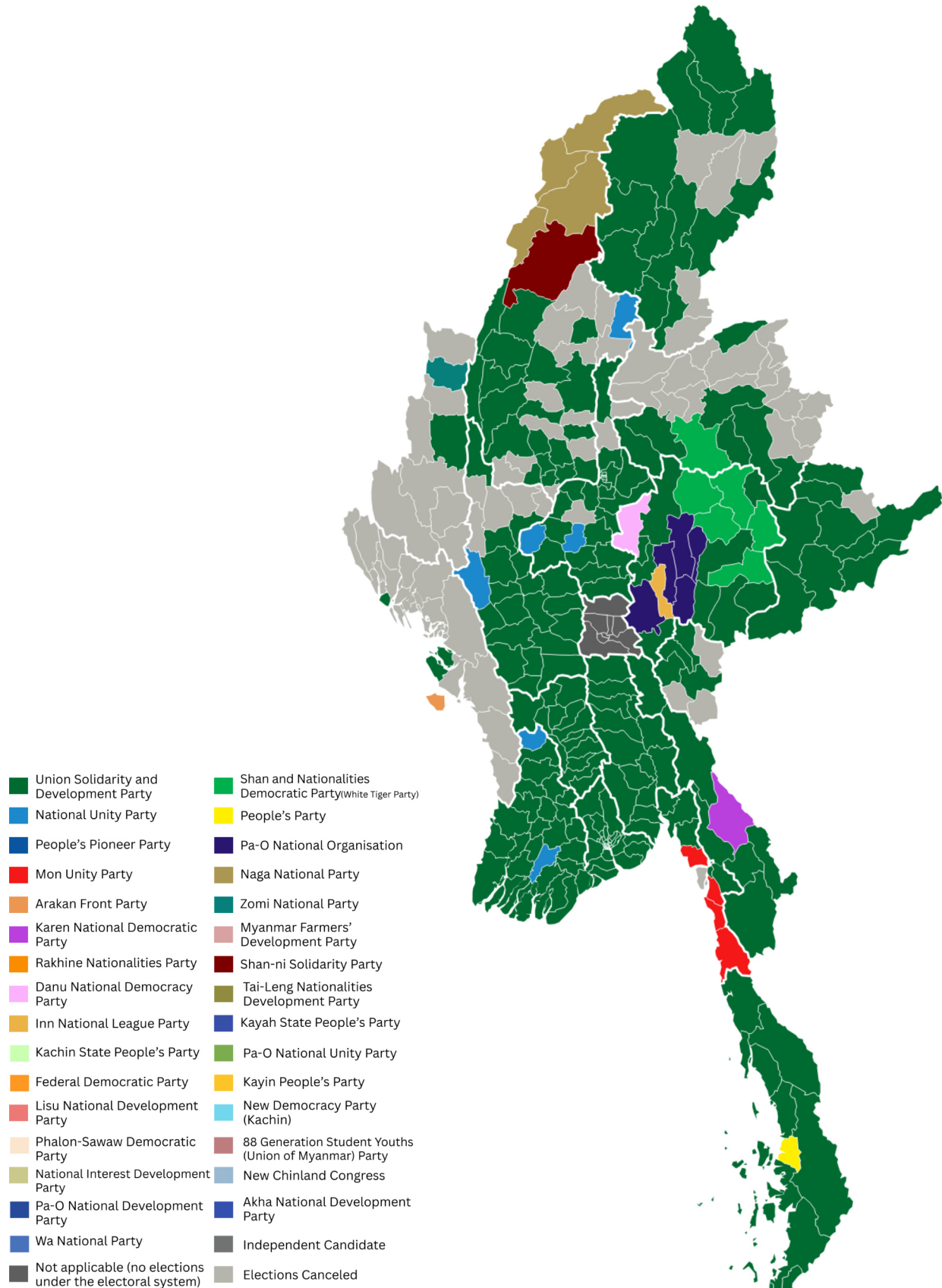
Source: Junta-appointed UEC • Map data: USAID • Created with Datawrapper

Junta-Staged Elections Result: *Amyotha Hluttaw* (First-Past-the-Post)



Source: Junta-appointed UEC • Map data: USAID • Created with Datawrapper

Junta-Staged Elections Result: State and Region *Hluttaws* (First-Past-the-Post)



Source: Junta-appointed UEC • Map data: USAID • Created with Datawrapper

Junta-Staged Elections Result: State and Region *Hluttaws* (Proportional Representation)

Each bar represents the number of seats "won" by a political party in a constituency

