



Annual update on the Human Rights Situation in Myanmar
Overview of developments in 2025

OHCHR Myanmar Team

Key Highlights

- **2025 was the deadliest year for children since the coup in 2021 with the impact of violence on girls particularly increasing;**
- **Civilian deaths due to airstrikes rose to the highest levels verified since 2021;**
- **Natural disasters and restriction of humanitarian access significantly aggravated the protection crisis;**
- **Almost a quarter of the population faced high levels of acute food insecurity with risk of further deterioration;**
- **Rohingya suffered systematic violations and abuses by the military and the Arakan Army;**
- **Military governance continued to be characterized by repression of political dissent, mass arbitrary arrests, conscription, widespread surveillance and limitation of civic space;**
- **Military-imposed elections lacking basic elements of freedom, fairness, and representativeness, exacerbated violence and societal polarization;**
- **Anti-military armed groups continued to commit violations targeting civilian officials working for the military and their institutions, such as the election commission, or others they accused of being informants;**
- **Proliferation of illicit activities, especially drug production and trafficking, scam centers, and unlawful natural resource extractions expanded in a climate of total impunity;**
- **Developments in international accountability processes continued for cases involving universal jurisdiction and preparations for hearings on the merits in The Gambia's case against Myanmar before the International Court of Justice.**

I. Introduction

Five years after the military coup triggered an ever-deteriorating crisis, the overall human rights situation continued to worsen. Myanmar communities reported violations across the spectrum of human rights with the military's relentless use of violence without taking measures to protect civilians, suppression of dissent, and denial of humanitarian access. This situation was persistently compounded by the military's gross mismanagement of the economy which has seen almost a quarter of the population forced into high levels of acute food insecurity.¹ Both the military and its armed opponents allowed transnational criminal networks to operate in areas under their control with the continued growth of illicit economies including human trafficking and scamming, as well as the narcotics and weapons trade. Rohingya remained exposed to continuous violations and abuses by the military and the Arakan Army (AA) further entrenching an already catastrophic human rights situation. Myanmar's human rights crisis resulted in regional and global consequences as, in absence of the rule of law, the spillover effects of displacement, transnational organized crime, trafficking in human beings, narcotics and arms impacted neighboring countries and the wider region.

Empowered by continuing supplies of armaments, the military systematically attacked, killed, arrested, disappeared, conscripted and displaced civilians to try to regain territories and installations lost in 2024. Following interventions by China, in April the military regained control of the Northwest Command and Lashio town from the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and in October signed a ceasefire agreement with the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) leading to the return of resource-rich Mogok and Momeik towns. In August, the United Wa State Army (UWSA) announced the cessation of all support to anti-military armed groups. Following these developments, the military announced, on 31 July, an end to its long-standing state of emergency and its intention to stage nationwide three-phase

¹ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000170171/download/>

elections starting in December² with the clear intention of obtaining international recognition as the legitimate government.³

Despite these announcements, the military did not de-escalate levels of violence to pave the way for polls. Rather it increased the scope and scale of its offensives on several fronts throughout the country to regain territory and increased its repression of political dissent, civic space and independent media. Imposing a new “election protection law”, the military also began to utilize new surveillance technologies to track and arrest individuals wanted for dissident activities or criticism of the elections process. Institutions linked to the elections, such as the military-controlled electoral commission, have lost all semblance of independence or functional transparency.⁴

Anti-military armed groups continued to direct the bulk of their operations against military objectives. Despite this, there continued to be persistent reports of attacks by armed groups targeting civilian officials or individuals believed to be sympathetic to the military. Targets included individuals working for the military-controlled election commission and township administrations. Anti-military elements also reportedly continued to use anti-personnel landmines and other inherently indiscriminate weapons such as command-detonated improvised explosive devices.

Furthering the plight of civilians, natural disasters significantly increased suffering contributing to deaths and destruction, amid a systematic denial of humanitarian access by the military in areas inside and outside their control. Most significantly, on 28 March, a 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck Mandalay and the central regions causing over 4,000 deaths and displacing more than one million. Between May and October, floods in Bago, Kayah, Kayin, Shan, Mandalay, Magway, Mon, Naypyidaw, and Sagaing, affected another million people, killed some 500, displaced 80,000, and worsened outbreaks of cholera and dengue. Persistent shortages of medicines due to military-imposed restrictions impacted treatment of chronic diseases.

A key source of fear, insecurity, and displacement has been the military’s continued enforcement of the 2010 law on military service that reached its 19th round at the end of the year.⁵ This process has forced many youth to flee abroad or hide to avoid recruitment. In 2025, the military reportedly began to conscript women causing additional protection concerns related to sexual and gender-based violence, as well as leading people to resort to other harmful practices, such as early marriages.⁶

II. Protection of Civilians

Military

Civilians across Myanmar remained exposed to daily violence and serious protection concerns with the military being responsible for the vast majority of incidents and casualties. According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP),⁷ since the coup in February 2021 a minimum of 7,646 civilians has been killed at the hands of the military, including 982 children and 1,616 women. Open sources reported over 3,220 civilian deaths during 2025, including 294 children and 800 women,⁸ while AAPP⁹ was able to verify 1,514 civilian deaths, including 287 children and 508 women, making 2025 the deadliest year for children since the coup. These figures are an underrepresentation of civilian deaths as over 4,400 other reported instances of civilian fatalities were still being verified at year’s end. Additionally, figures of

² On 31 July 2025, the military revoked its state of emergency declaration from February 2021 (which had been extended seven times). While ending its own emergency in 267 townships, the military indicated that it would maintain martial law in 63 townships.

³ Military-controlled elections were organized in three phases starting on 28 December. Other rounds of voting were scheduled on 11 and 25 January 2026.

⁴ <https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025-12/OHCHRMyanmar-Background-paper-on-military-elections-Nov25.pdf>

⁵ Although the military does not provide figures on conscription, each batch is supposedly composed of 5,000 recruits, making the total number of people enlisted by the military to an estimated 95,000 since February 2024.

⁶ According to the 2010 law, married women and women with children are exempted from military service.

⁷ <https://aappb.org/>

⁸ <https://coar-global.org/weekly-analytics-hub>

⁹ <https://aappb.org/>

civilians killed in areas affected by communications blackouts and in hard-to-reach areas, such as Rakhine, Sagaing and Kayin, remain mostly unverified.

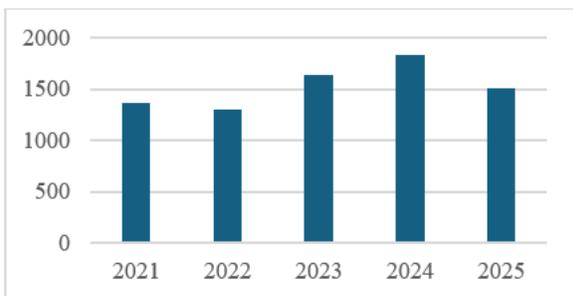


Table 1: Verified Civilian deaths by year



Table 2: Verified civilian deaths by sex

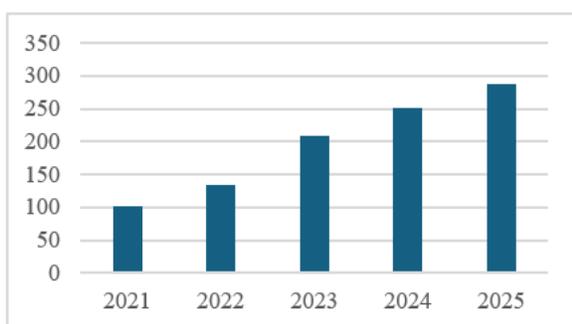


Table 3: Verified children killed by year

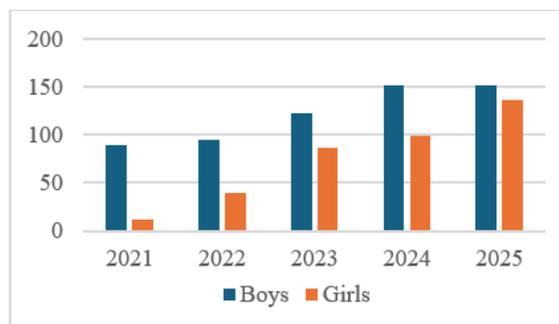


Table 4: Verified boys and girls killed

Airstrikes remained the leading cause of civilian casualties with 2025 figures showing a 52 per cent increase compared to 2024. While in 2024 a minimum of 641 civilians had been killed by airstrikes, in 2025 the number of deaths reached 982, including 368 women and 232 children. Among the latter, airstrikes killed 123 boys and 109 girls, surpassing the combined total number of children killed between 2021 and 2024. Of further concern is that 499 out of 975 deaths occurred after the military announced in mid-August its intention of holding elections, and that 93 were children, accounting for nearly half of all child fatalities for the year. In the deadliest incident for children, on 12 May, in Oe Htein Kwin village, Tabayin Township, Sagaing, a military aircraft dropped munitions on a high school during class hours without warning - killing 22 students and two female teachers and injuring more than 40 others. No armed clashes had been previously reported in the area prior to this attack.

As in previous years, the central regions were the most affected with over 1,700 airstrikes recorded, with Sagaing accounting for 563, followed by Mandalay with 436 and Magway with 385 attacks. However, the single largest variation was recorded in Ayeyarwady with 73 airstrikes and 18 verified civilian deaths, including eight women and three children. No previous airstrikes had been previously reported from Ayeyarwady. This intensification of military violence is likely attributable to the expansion of the AA beyond the Rakhine borders and to its extension of control over townships in Ayeyarwady. For example, on 23 October 2025, in Sa Pyin village, Yegyí Township, the military carried out repeated airstrikes killing at least 11 civilians, including four women and two children, and injuring scores.

Strikes by jet fighters and the use of high-explosive munitions were responsible for some of the largest incidents of 2025. On 8 January, in Kyauk Ni Maw village, Ramree Township, Rakhine, the military bombed the market in a Muslim village reportedly killing 41 civilians, including 12 women and seven children, and injuring more than 50 others. Over 500 houses were reportedly damaged or destroyed in the

attack. Military planes launched strikes on the general hospital in Mrauk-U town, Rakhine, on 10 December killing at least 33 civilians, including some 16 women, and injuring over 70 others, including doctors, nurses, bedridden patients, and their family members. This attack, which represents the deadliest recorded attack on a healthcare facility in Myanmar since 2021, also resulted in the destruction of the facility, its wards, and the surrounding buildings.¹⁰ While the military confirmed having carried out the airstrike, they also claimed that the attack was part of a counterterrorism operation which involved no civilian deaths.

Of further concern, beginning in December 2024 and continuing throughout 2025, the military increasingly deployed paramotors and gyrocopters¹¹ alongside fixed-wing aircrafts in lieu of helicopters, with a disastrous impact on civilians as they targeted homes, markets, monasteries, hospitals, schools, and displacement sites. In line with nationwide conflict trends, Sagaing and the central regions were the most affected, although attacks were also recorded in Ayeyarwady and Rakhine. Open-sources analysis indicates that in 2025 there were 309 paramotor incidents causing 163 civilian deaths, and 64 gyrocopter attacks resulting in 34 civilian deaths. These data reflect an extremely high incident-to-death ratio which became profoundly troubling for the overall protection of civilians. For example, on 6 October, in Bon To village, Chaung-U Township, Sagaing, two paramotors dropped in contiguous attacks mortar rounds on a crowd gathered during the religious festival of Thadingyut, killing at least 23 civilians, including two women and four children, and injuring more than 60 others.

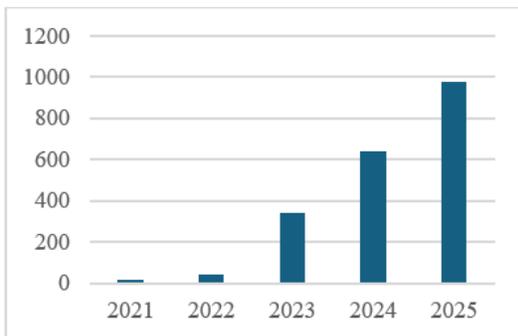


Table 5: Verified civilian deaths by airstrike

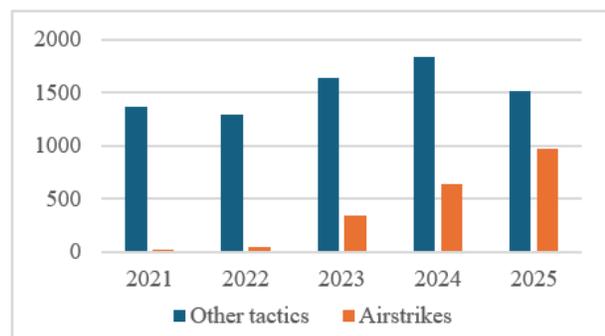


Table 6: Total deaths vs. deaths by airstrike

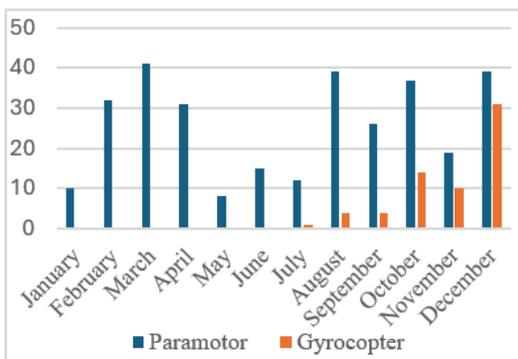


Table 7: Paramotor and Gyrocopter attacks

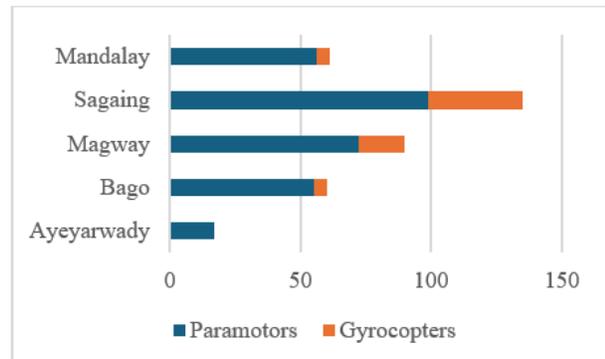


Table 8: Paramotor/Gyrocopter attacks in Central

Open-source analysis identified over 800 military attacks, including 585 airstrikes and over 200 artillery strikes, in the two months following the earthquake that struck Myanmar on 28 March. At least 683 attacks

¹⁰ https://www.facebook.com/reel/24367024176307444/?s=fb_shorts_profile&stack_idx=0

¹¹ Paramotors are motorised paraglider with the ability to carry and deliver munitions, while gyrocopters are short-range, crewed rotary-wing aircraft, with the ability to carry up to three passengers, rockets, and mortar rounds. Use of gyrocopters was first reported in July 2025.

occurred during periods covered by the temporary unilateral ceasefires declared by the military and armed groups and at least 236 targeted the townships most impacted by the natural disaster. In April alone, the military carried out 341 airstrikes nationwide, while the population faced a period of heightened humanitarian vulnerability due to the earthquake. AAPP verified that May was the deadliest month for civilians in 2025, with 166 deaths, including 59 women and 54 children. Of these, 133 occurred in the central regions affected by the earthquake and with Sagaing suffering the highest toll at 71 deaths. Consistent with previous practices documented during typhoons Mocha and Yagi in 2023 and 2024 respectively, the military denied humanitarian access and access of goods to areas struck by the earthquake but outside their control, only selectively allowing life-saving and other supplies to reach those in need.

Civilians across Myanmar remained exposed to other violations, including indiscriminate artillery strikes, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrest, arbitrary conscription and forced recruitment, and sexual and gender-based violence. Civilian infrastructures protected under international law, including hospitals, clinics, educational facilities, and religious and displacement sites, continued to be attacked. Open sources reported 231 attacks against religious sites and 111 against educational facilities,¹² while the World Health Organizations (WHO) verified at least 70 incidents against health facilities.¹³ There was a resurgence in arson attacks, after the military resumed ground operations following their significant reduction in 2024 due to the advancements by anti-military groups, with open sources recording some 527 incidents in 2025. Sagaing had the area with the highest number of arson incidents recorded, 156, while the central regions accounted for over 80 percent of the incidents nationwide.

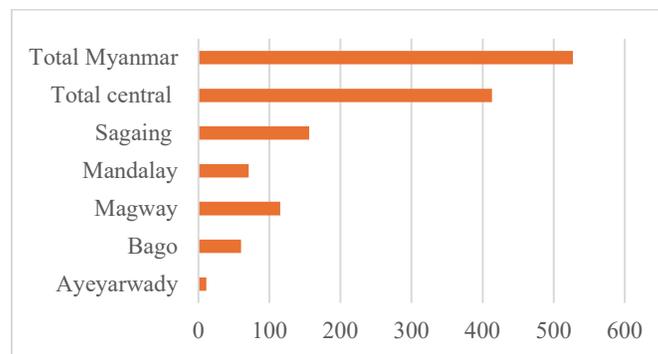


Table 9: Total arson attacks in the central regions

Anti-military Armed Groups

While not comparable in scale with violations committed by the military, Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) and other anti-military armed groups continued to commit serious violations that targeted or impacted civilians. Forced recruitment in Kachin, Shan, and Rakhine caused significant concerns as youth were subjected to recruitment drives and household quotas for recruits, coupled with punishments for families or communities that refused to comply.¹⁴ Occasional reports accused anti-military groups of launching attacks that destroyed civilian objects such as schools, providing inconsistent warnings to civilians prior to attacks, and using remote-detonated roadside bombs and anti-personnel landmines.

Of increasing concern was the ongoing reports of anti-military armed groups conducting targeted killings of civilians suspected of association with the military, particularly civil servants or individuals suspected of being informants. Victims were often killed in their homes, tea shops, or restaurants. In the last quarter of the year, several incidents occurred in which armed individuals reportedly targeted electoral personnel,

¹² <https://coar-global.org/weekly-analytics-hub>

¹³ <https://extranet.who.int/ssa/LeftMenu/PublicReportList.aspx?start=2025-01-01&end=2025-12-31&countryList=145&countryRegionList=0&typeList=0>

¹⁴ <https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025-09/A%20HRC%2060%2020%20AdvanceEditedVersion.pdf>

political party members, and representatives of the election commission. Anti-military groups have claimed responsibility in at least 169 incidents in which local administrators, their family members, and other civilians, including religious personnel, were attacked in eight states and regions. Bago, Magway, and Mandalay areas had the highest number of reported incidents. In one emblematic incident on 14 February 2025 in Kan Gyi village, Shwebo Township, Sagaing, members of an anti-military armed group killed a Catholic priest in the Our Lady of Lourdes church with a sword after accusing him of being a military informant. On 17 July 2025, a court affiliated with the Ministry of Justice of the National Unity Government, sentenced nine individuals to 20 years in prison in this case. In relation to the electoral process, some incidents affected civilians, such as the reported abduction of nine teachers from Kyaikto Township, Mon, in November by an anti-military armed group for attending a training on election. Ahead of the voting, a group calling itself the Yangon Army claimed responsibility for the bombing of administration offices in Hlegu and North Okkalapa that injured several election staff.

Other reported violations and abuses by armed groups included deaths of detained individuals, extensive use of landmines, violent suppression of peaceful protests against the extraction of natural resources, and seizures of land.¹⁵

III. Human Rights Situation of the Rohingya

Rohingya continued to live in the most precarious protection environment, subjected to systematic and widespread human rights abuses by both the military and the AA. Following the serious violations against Rohingya communities throughout northern Rakhine in 2024, mass displacement, lack of humanitarian assistance, acute food insecurity and a constant threat of violence continued with no actions to respect the provisional measures imposed by the International Court of Justice in 2020.¹⁶

After assuming the *de facto* authority in large parts of Rakhine, the AA has implemented discriminatory policies in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships and committed widespread abuses against the Rohingya similar to those systematically perpetrated by the military for decades. Particularly indicative is the persistent denial of Rohingya identity and the obstinate efforts to refer to them as “Bengali” or other derogative terms. Patterns of abuses documented throughout 2025 included arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearances, forced recruitment, forced labour, extortion, taxation, confiscation of Rohingya homes and lands, and restrictions on freedom of movement, communications and livelihood activities. These abuses may reflect an intention of the AA to motivate further displacement and cross border movements to Bangladesh. Interviewees consistently reported having limited or no access to medical care and humanitarian access is largely restricted. Absence of humanitarian agencies further exacerbated protection risks and humanitarian needs for the civilian population remaining in northern Rakhine. According to UN analysis, the nutrition situation in northern Rakhine is projected to rapidly deteriorate to Critical Phase 4 in Maungdaw township and to Catastrophe Phase 5 in Buthidaung between November 2025 and May 2026.¹⁷ In central Rakhine, reports of survival strategies and negative coping messages emerged, including women resorting to sex work to sustain their families, early marriages, and suicides and attempted suicides allegedly due to hunger.

Rohingya living in military-controlled areas in and around IDP camps in Sittwe were subjected to widespread violations, with arbitrary arrests, forced labour, and ill-treatment reported throughout the year as well as forced recruitment and extortion. Over 5,000 Rohingya had reportedly been conscripted in the first six months of 2025, with this practice continuing throughout the year. Further, the military’s continuing campaign of airstrikes on AA-controlled areas continued to claim civilian lives, including those of Rohingya. Additionally, armed clashes between the AA and Rohingya armed elements have contributed to widespread insecurity in northern Rakhine. However, due to the military’s internet shutdowns and

¹⁵ <https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025-09/A%20HRC%2060%2020%20AdvanceEditedVersion.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/178>

¹⁷ <https://www.wfp.org/publications/hunger-hotspots-fao-wfp-early-warnings-acute-food-insecurity>

surveillance as well as communication restrictions imposed by the AA, verification of civilian casualties and other violations remains extremely challenging, further entrenching impunity.

Appalling conditions imposed on the Rohingya by the military and the AA continued to cause people to flee over the land border to Bangladesh and via deadly maritime routes to third countries. By mid-2025, 150,000 Rohingya had fled Rakhine for Bangladesh in the preceding 18 months, and in 2025, 5,600 Rohingya had undertaken maritime journeys from Myanmar and Bangladesh, with over 600 dead or lost at sea.¹⁸ Additionally, the arrest of nearly 800 Rohingya passengers of two boats intercepted by the military in November and December respectively illustrate the nature of the continuing Rohingya tragedy; many passengers were fleeing northern Rakhine, only to be arrested and jailed by the military for trying to leave.

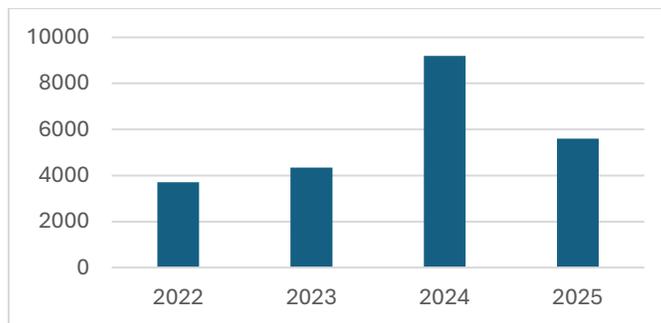


Table 10: Rohingya embarking per year

Against this backdrop, the General Assembly organized on 30 September a High-Level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities.¹⁹ Despite a wide participation, pledges were only around 100 million USD, far short of the amount needed to meet immense humanitarian and protection needs of the Rohingya community in Myanmar and Bangladesh.²⁰

IV. Rule of law

Arrests and Detentions

Violence and violations continued to be enabled by the complete absence of the rule of law or the instrumentalization of the law and civilian institutions by the military against the people.²¹ Courts have systematically demonstrated disregard for basic fair trial guarantees, including ignoring widespread reports of torture. According to the AAPP, a minimum of 30,267 individuals has been arrested since the coup on political grounds and 22,712 are still detained, including 4,278 women. Due to a reported decrease in formal arrests, AAPP verified 290 arrests in 2025, compared to the over 1,000 of 2024. Several men and women aged between 18 and 35 who came under arrest were reportedly recruited, instead of being arrested. Three more prisoners were sentenced to death in 2025 bringing the total 173, including 44 sentenced in absentia. Deaths in custody of the military remained a key concern with at least 2,237 individuals verified as dead since the coup. Despite three amnesties for over 10,000 prisoners announced by the military, the number of political prisoners released was minimal, with verified figures short of 500, with many having almost served their time. Many political prisoners slated for pardon or release were reportedly re-arrested and charged

¹⁸ <https://www.unhcr.org/emergencies/rohingya-emergency>

¹⁹ <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k13/k139c87odr>

²⁰ <https://rohingyakhobor.com/arno-expresses-gratitude-for-uk-and-us-renewed-support-and-highlights-crisis-in-rakhine-state-and-education-needs/>

²¹ In a significant development confirming the concerns raised with regard to the incorporation of pre-existing civilian institutions into military structures, in 2025 the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) expelled the Myanmar human rights commission from the Asia Pacific Forum, following the revocation of its accreditation in 2024, for lack of compliance with the Paris Principles and of independence, in particular.

with new offences. President Win Myint and State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi remained held in undisclosed locations with no information about their conditions and wellbeing.

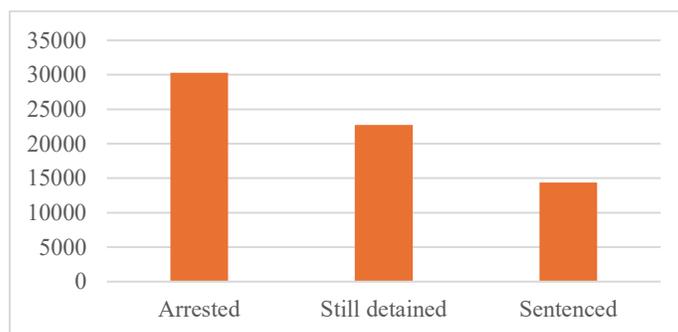


Table 11: Verified figures of political prisoners arrested, still detained, and sentenced since the coup

Politically motivated arrests have continued apace throughout the reporting period, particularly during the pre-election cycle under the guise of the military’s “election protection law”. According to media sources, a total of 341 individuals were arrested and prosecuted in this context with 293 charged under this law and 48 on charges related to social media interference aimed at disrupting the electoral process. Examples of arrests and prosecutions, with prison sentences reaching up to 49 years, clearly illustrate how the military used the law and the courts to persecute opponents who peacefully exercised their rights. Instances included a man in Shan who received a seven-year sentence for posting criticisms on Facebook; a man in Mon who was sentenced to 17 years after tearing down a list of parliamentary candidates posted at the village administrator’s office; four children, aged 14 to 17, from Kayah who were arrested for “organizing protests, writing letters, and posting messages on social media and in public spaces to oppose the election”; and three artists charged “for making false and misleading criticism on social media regarding other artists” and for having “[...] failed to contribute their artistic expertise towards the success of the upcoming election.”²²

Prison conditions remained dire, putting prisoners’ lives at great risk and exposing them to potential long-term health impacts. Issues of malnutrition and worsening of the overall health situations were reportedly caused by food rationing and lack of adequate medical supplies. Restrictions imposed on family visits also exacerbated the needs of civilian population in prisons as they were prevented from accessing food and other personal items. Due to the earthquake in March, sections of the Obo prison collapsed, killing 58 prisoners, including a pregnant woman who allegedly died after being denied medical treatment for injuries suffered in the quake. Instances of reprisals against Human Rights Defenders documenting deaths of political prisoners at the Obo Prison were reported, including allegations of arrest and torture.

Conscription and forced recruitment

The military’s arbitrary conscription campaign remained a key protection concern as youth, both male and female, continued to live in fear of being forced to serve in the military. By the end of 2025, the military had announced the training of the 19th batch of recruits with an estimated 95,000 youths having been conscripted since 2024. According to open sources analysis, over 270 abductions, arbitrary arrests, and possible enforced disappearances associated with conscription were alleged and reported throughout the year. Incidents reportedly occurred in urban and rural areas, both by day and by night, at checkpoints, while alone or with company, and as a consequence of arrests. Seemingly in an attempt at concealing evidence of possible abductions for the purpose of recruitment, in August military-controlled newspapers started refusing to accept advertisements for missing youth.

²² <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/3-artistes-face-legal-action-for-disrupting-multiparty-general-election/>

Parents lived in fear of letting their sons and daughters leave their homes and were subjected to payment of bribes and ransom for their release. Village administrators, along with the police and military-affiliated militias, continued to play a key role in the local recruitment process, in order to meet military-imposed quotas at village or township level, as they identified recruits and detained them at administration offices. Reports of defection of new recruits have also been common, with dozens of freshly drafted, barely trained soldiers joining the resistance rather than serving in the military at the frontline. Marking a further deterioration in the protection situation, several instances of compilation of lists and conscription of women have also been reported from Yangon, Southern Shan, and Mon.

Reports of forced recruitment by anti-military armed groups, and Ethnic Armed Organizations in particular, were also received. Of specific concern were the AA recruitment activities, as well as those by Rohingya armed groups, of Rohingya community members (see above).

Fundamental Freedoms

As in previous years, the ability of people to exercise fundamental freedoms remained heavily controlled and suppressed. Further deteriorations were noted with the introduction of new technologies for surveillance purposes. For example, civil society reported an increase in the use of Person Scrutinization and Monitoring System (PSMS) – a unique surveillance technology that combines smart ID card tracking, CCTV networks, and artificial intelligence (AI) – which allowed the military to identify and track, more efficiently, individuals suspected of opposing them. Between March and April, the Mandalay Region police stated that some 1,650 people had been arrested with the support of PSMS.²³ Local residents reported an increased use of PSMS ahead of elections and, in October, authorities in Mon State tightened security at gates, road checkpoints, bridges, and vehicle inspection points by using PSMS scanners.²⁴

Through unilateral amendments to existing laws, including the Cybersecurity Law, the military further eroded freedom of expression and access to information. On 1 January, the military criminalized the use and operation of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) without formal approval and made the vaguely formulated “dissemination of inappropriate information online” a criminal offense. On these grounds, military checkpoints on the streets became more persistent and selective in targeting civilians with phones being regularly scanned. For example, one individual was arrested after military officials searched his phone, accusing the individual of having had a saved contact who the military had accused of being part of a Peoples Defence Forces (PDF) group. Such arrests for having contacts with anti-military groups has been a common occurrence since the coup. In another case, two children were sentenced to multiple years in prison for having “liked” and shared online content by PDF groups; and four people were arrested for posting birthday messages for Aung San Suu Kyi on their social media and charged with unlawful political incitement.

Journalists and media workers continued to be targeted by the military for carrying out their work. According to data from the International Center for Not-For-Profit Law (ICNL), the military have arrested 226 journalists, including 37 women, since the coup with 38 individuals still in custody. Another 93 have been convicted for various offences with often disproportionate sentences ranging from 10 to 27 years.²⁵ With the independent media environment severely restricted and deprived of financial resources, the military continued to pressure remaining active journalists by threatening bans and license revocations. EAOs also reportedly committed abuses and acts of intimidation against journalists. On 22 September, the AA detained a female journalist in Maungdaw Township, Rakhine, allegedly while reporting on the lack of educational equipment at a school in an ethnic Mro village.²⁶ She was subsequently released a month later,

²³ <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/junta-uses-psms-system-track-and-arrest-opponents>

²⁴ <https://monnews.org/2025/10/24/mon-state-sees-tighter-enforcement-of-psms-surveillance-system/>

²⁵ <https://www.icnl.org/post/report/assessing-detentions-of-journalists-in-myanmar>

²⁶ <https://bnanews.net/arakha-region/7332/>

although she remained fearful that she could be rearrested. Her detention also generated fear among other media workers trying to document needs of the civilian population.

Within this context of conflict, violence, repression, and surveillance, on 7 June the electoral commission announced that elections would be held, designating 267 out of 330 townships for voting, later followed by an official announcement on 18 August. Phase one of the voting took place on 28 December in 71 out of the 102 slotted townships,²⁷ with two additional phases planned to cover additional townships on 11 and 25 January 2026.

In late July, the military unilaterally adopted the law protecting military secrets and the so-called election protection law, both carrying life imprisonment or the death penalty as maximum penalties. These laws were used selectively, particularly the election protection law, to crush active and passive dissent. By the end of 2025, media sources reported that some 341 individuals had been prosecuted under these provisions - 293 were charged under the election protection law, while 48 faced other charges related to social media interference to disrupt the military-controlled electoral process. Military officials also accused leaders of the Karen National Union (KNU), the AA, and the Chinland Council of denying support to the elections in territories under their control and indicating they would pursue criminal charges against them in absentia.

Widely rejected by a large proportion of the Myanmar public, the election process did not receive wide international support given the context and the lack of any plan for a political transition. Several of the major political parties, including the National League for Democracy and the Arakan National Party, were barred from participation for alleged non-compliance with military election laws or processes and many members remain detained. Additionally, the ongoing armed conflict, extensive online and offline surveillance, limitations on freedom of movement, freedom of expression including access to information, all compromised the basic conditions for credible and free election. Even those who decided to take part in the military-controlled process were not safe from retribution and prosecutions as demonstrated by the sentencing to one year imprisonment of a candidate that used the term “revolution”, deemed illegal under military rule, at a political rally.²⁸

Anti-military armed groups targeted some civilians linked to the electoral process over the elections period. They also detained, abducted, and intimidated civilians on a few occasions, and bombed administrative offices.

V. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Humanitarian and food crises

Myanmar’s economy remained in a situation of crisis as structural barriers, and the disruption of trade, production, and supply chains continue to impede economic recovery. High prices continued to strain households, and experts reported that inflation is expected to remain above 20 percent in the coming year.²⁹ Over 12 million people are reported suffering from acute food insecurity, while a minimum of 22 million are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.³⁰ Needs and sufferings were also exacerbated by the earthquake in March. UN figures indicated that some 17 million people, or nearly a third of the population, were food insecure prior to the earthquake. Additionally, a reported 540,000 children and mothers had minimal food access by the end of 2025, a 26 per cent increase from the previous year. Conflict-related large-scale displacement increased humanitarian needs across the country and particularly in hard-to-reach areas. Civil society organizations raised serious alarms about the situation of displaced persons in Kayah and southern Shan, due to serious shelter and food shortages. Acute food insecurity remained particularly dire in Rakhine State where the number of households unable to meet basic food needs reached an alarming

²⁷ Confirming the lack of fundamental elements for credibility of an election, the voting did not take place in 31 townships as there were no candidates other than the military-affiliated USDP candidate. Therefore, 31 individuals were elected without voting taking place.

²⁸ <https://eng.mizzima.com/2026/01/10/30086>

²⁹ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099120625204042781/pdf/P507203-7c4662b6-c1d8-4c3c-9b0c-d4835f2763cb.pdf>

³⁰ <https://myanmar.un.org/en/308519-myanmar-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2026>

57 per cent in August compared to 33 per cent in December 2024.³¹ Financial cuts by the United States and other traditional donors further aggravated the economic and humanitarian situations leaving millions of civilians without support for basic needs.

In the aftermath of the March earthquake that killed over 4,000 persons, around 16 per cent of households across Myanmar, and almost 60 per cent of those living near the epicenter in Mandalay, Sagaing and Naypyitaw, continued to suffer from widespread poverty, loss of income, and unemployment.³² Heightened protection risks of violence, trafficking, and psychological distress especially for women and children represented major concerns. Tens of thousands of children reportedly still exhibit signs of shock and trauma as access to support in mental and health services is severely limited,³³ including lack of trained personnel. This created constraints on the provision of safe spaces for the most vulnerable. Even months after the earthquake, reconstruction efforts and financing have remained limited due to significant funding cuts for humanitarian aid and restrictions imposed by the military including checkpoints, seizure of key supply routes, and distortionary price control measures. By the end of 2025, only 26 per cent of the required funds for the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response plan were disbursed, making Myanmar one of the most underfunded crises globally³⁴.

Illicit Economic and Extractive Activities

Proliferation of illicit economies has been fostered by the ongoing conflict and the systemic lack of accountability for perpetrators. Myanmar remained the world's largest producer of opium with a one percent increase compared to 2024 in production and a continued expansion of synthetic drug production.³⁵ Additionally, in 2025 scam compounds, located along the northeast and southeast regions of Myanmar, became a key source of illicit funds and of human rights violations and abuses, including international human trafficking, abductions, forced labor, sexual violence, and torture. While a wide range of actors appear to be involved in these activities, constituting in some instances transnational crimes, military-affiliated militias and groups such as the Border Guard Force (BGF) and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), appeared to be among the main players ensuring financial benefits and income for the military.

In February, following Thailand's cuts of internet services, electricity, and fuel to the compounds, the BGF and DKBA claimed to have led a crackdown and rescued about 7,000 individuals held in these facilities. In October, the military led another major crackdown in the notorious KK Park, together with the BGF, using airstrikes and drone strikes. While scam centers were historically concentrated in Northern Shan, crackdowns have forced a geographical shift southward, with operations moving into remote forested areas of Southern Shan. Economic instability has made these centers in both northeast and southeast regions attractive to local populations with the promise of relatively high salaries ensnaring unemployed youth and drawing the population into criminal networks. Analysts highlighted that the military sought to showcase its enforcement actions against these scam centers as a means of gaining international political support. Such operations appeared to have little effect on the scam industry with most of the centers targeted simply relocating and continuing operation.³⁶

Unregulated and expanding mining activity by various armed groups, particularly in Shan and Kachin, raised serious concerns of environmental harm and related violations. Taking advantage of the absence of the rule of law and any form of oversight, informal extractions perpetuated mass deforestation, resulting in

³¹ <https://www.wfp.org/news/wfp-urges-life-saving-support-myanmars-rakhine-state-hunger-surges#:~:text=12%20August%202025-,WFP%20urges%20life%2Dsaving%20support%20for%20Myanmar's%20Rakhine%20State%20as,hunger%20and%20mothers%20skipping%20meals.>

³² <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/5098a854-0586-45a9-a187-c47c04a4ad8b>

³³ https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024-10/a_hrc_57_56_auv-1.pdf

³⁴ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/myanmar/conflict-fuels-suffering-myanmar-un-publishes-humanitarian-report-forecasting-most-urgent-needs-2026>

³⁵ https://www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/Publications/2025/Myanmar_Opium_survey_2025_web.pdf

³⁶ <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-scam-job-vacancies-surge-despite-junta-crackdown.html>

water pollution, including downstream in Thailand, and contributed to the impoverishment and deterioration of living conditions of local communities. In Kachin, where rare earth extraction increased massively since the coup, satellite data revealed over 370 mining sites and 2,795 leaching pits, constituting a 194 percent increase since 2021, with a disastrous environmental impact.³⁷

Extractive activities have direct links to the ongoing conflict since mining revenues directly fund the armed groups, contributing to civilian protection concerns. Armed groups like the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), UWSA, BGFs, and other military-affiliated local militias, taxed rare-earth ores to support their operations and maintain control over territories. Rare-earth mining has also exposed women and girls to exploitation and risks of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in mining camps, where male migrant laborers, soldiers and militias act with impunity.

VI. Accountability and International Developments

Lack of accountability for violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law remained a key driver for the recurrence of crimes and the suffering of the civilian population.

Encouragingly, under the principle of universal jurisdiction, on 13 February, a federal court in Argentina issued an arrest warrant against Min Aung Hlaing, 22 military officials, and two civilian political representatives, including Aung San Suu Kyi, for their role in alleged genocide and crimes against humanity committed against the Rohingya in Rakhine between 2012 and 2018. On 3 September, the plaintiff formally petitioned the Court to expand the case to crimes committed after the coup by the Arakan Army.³⁸

Proceedings before the International Court of Justice continued with parties submitting their reports in accordance with the schedule of the provisional measure, although no hearings took place in 2025. Another four Member States intervened in the proceedings and in July, the International Court of Justice allowed their interventions, bringing the total number of States to 11.³⁹ In December, the International Court of Justice announced that public hearings on the merit of the case were scheduled for mid-January 2026 with a possible decision during the year, between 6 and 12 months after arguments conclude.

In June, the 113th International Labour Conference invoked Article 33 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Constitution to address the labour rights situation in Myanmar and adopted a resolution⁴⁰ calling on the military to fully and effectively implement the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, including to "immediately cease all forms of violence, torture, and inhumane treatment against trade union leaders" and to "release and withdraw all criminal charges against trade unionists detained in relation to the exercise of their civil liberties and legitimate trade union activities".⁴¹ Despite these demands, the military rejected the findings and recommendations and it continued to target labor activists, including by arbitrarily arresting at least nine in July.

³⁷ <https://www.stimson.org/2025/rare-earths-and-realpolitik-future-of-mediation-myanmar/>

³⁸ <https://brouk.org.uk/argentine-court-urged-to-include-arakan-army-atrocities-in-rohingya-genocide-case/>

³⁹ States that submitted requests for intervention are Belgium, Canada, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Maldives, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

⁴⁰ <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-06/ILC113-Resolution-I-%5BRELMEETINGS-250604-007%5D-EN.pdf>

⁴¹ <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/ilo-myanmar-commission-inquiry-finds-far-reaching-violations-freedom>

ANNEX I: Overview of key human rights developments in 2025

