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Agenda items 2 and 4

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the  
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General****Human rights situations that require the Council's attention****Situation of human rights in Myanmar****Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights\****Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 58/20, in which the Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor and assess the overall situation of human rights in Myanmar, and to submit to the Council a comprehensive report thereon, also examining efforts made by pro-democracy actors and civil society, among others, to develop institutions and policies on human rights protection, inclusive governance and transitional justice, at the local and national levels, and outlining actions the international community can take to support these efforts.

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\* Agreement was reached to publish the present document after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.

## I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 58/20, the Human Rights Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to monitor and assess the overall situation of human rights in Myanmar, maintaining focus on accountability regarding alleged violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as the rule of law, to monitor the implementation of that resolution and previous resolutions with the same title, to make recommendations on additional steps necessary to address the current crisis and to submit to the Council, at its sixty-second session, a comprehensive report thereon, also examining efforts made by pro-democracy actors and civil society, among others, to develop institutions and policies on human rights protection, inclusive governance and transitional justice, at the local and national levels, and outlining actions the international community can take to support these efforts.
2. The present report documents violations and abuses by all parties to the conflict that have occurred between 1 August 2025 and 31 January 2026, covering the period from the military's announcement of elections through to the conclusion of the voting period. The report builds on findings and recommendations from previous reports published since the 2021 coup, and details emerging concerns with regard to the protection of the human rights of the civilian population, deriving from conflict-related violence, lack of respect for the rule of law, denial of humanitarian assistance and the impact of the military-controlled elections.
3. Amid these concerns, the report contains an analysis of how communities on the ground and governance structures have responded to the multidimensional challenges of the military-created human rights crisis, addressed protection concerns and sustained the provision of essential services.
4. The report contains tailored recommendations to the Myanmar military, the National Unity Government, anti-military armed groups, local governance structures and States, including members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to support the democratic aspirations of the Myanmar people and their human rights demands for protection and justice.

## II. Methodology

5. The findings in the present report are based on remote monitoring and verification activities conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). During the reporting period, growing limitations on financial resources affected the capacity of OHCHR to gather and verify information to its applicable evidentiary standard, meaning that the number of incidents and patterns of violations meeting that standard that could be reflected in the present report was limited.
6. As OHCHR continued to prioritize full respect for the "do no harm" principle over other considerations, geographical references and the attribution of actions to specific actors, particularly at the township level, are not included, in order to ensure protection and prevent risks of reprisal. The factual determination of incidents and patterns was conducted where there were reasonable grounds to believe that the relevant incidents had occurred. Figures on reported deaths represent an underestimation of realities on the ground, as military-imposed Internet shutdowns and other restrictions hampered the ability to document violations comprehensively.
7. Between August 2025 and January 2026, OHCHR conducted 80 interviews with victims, witnesses, other primary sources, lawyers, thematic experts, media professionals and representatives of civil society. To inform the findings with data and recommendations by local actors, OHCHR held 24 consultations and information-gathering meetings with civil society and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, from nearly all states and regions of Myanmar. Representatives of minority communities and groups participated in these discussions.
8. OHCHR submitted questionnaires to relevant duty bearers, including the military and the National Unity Government, and it sought contributions from representatives of local

governance structures, anti-military armed groups and several ethnic armed organizations. OHCHR also consulted United Nations entities and thematic experts and reviewed laws, policies and reports.

### III. Situation of human rights in Myanmar

#### A. Conflict-related developments

9. Serious human rights violations and abuses, amid generalized insecurity and instability, characterized the period preceding the military-controlled elections. OHCHR verified incidents that evinced trends and patterns of violations and abuses that significantly undermined the essential fundamental rights and freedoms necessary for credible elections. Credible sources reported to have verified a minimum of 702 civilian deaths across the country during the reporting period.<sup>1</sup> Of these, 224 were women and 153 children, which, combined, accounted for over 53 per cent of the total civilian fatalities. Air strikes remained the single largest cause of destruction and suffering. At least 505 civilians, including 175 women and 112 children or 57 per cent of the total, were killed in attacks carried out with jet fighters, drones, paramotors and gyrocopters. For comparison, analysis of open sources over the same period indicated that at least 1,015 civilians died in over 1,400 air strikes. Rohingya men, women, boys and girls have also remained exposed to forced recruitment by the Arakan Army, as well as to killings, arbitrary arrests and sexual violence.

10. Exemplifying the life-threatening risks and protection needs of the civilian population, on 6 October 2025 at around 8 p.m., 23 civilians, including two women and four children, were killed, and over 60 others wounded, after two large-calibre munitions were successively dropped by paramotors, striking civilians gathered in front of a school in Bon To village, Chaung-U township, Sagaing. At the time of the attack, participants were holding a candlelit event to celebrate the end of Buddhist Lent, and to call for the release of political prisoners, oppose military conscription and reject military elections. After rescuers arrived, another munition landed, without resulting in casualties but heightening fears. Artillery shelling directed towards a nearby clinic further disrupted efforts to transport the wounded. A public statement in military-affiliated media claimed that the attacks were part of a “counter-terrorism operation” in which armed groups used civilians as shields, without providing corroborating information.<sup>2</sup>

11. Data analysis corroborated spikes of civilian deaths in two periods: August and September 2025, and December 2025 and January 2026. Credible sources reported that in August and September 2025, they verified at least 265 civilians killed, of whom 161 in air strikes. In December 2025 and January 2026, 228 civilians were reportedly verified as killed, 183 in air strikes. These periods coincided with the announcement of the elections and advancements by the military on the battlefield as it attempted to secure its territorial reach.

12. Further exemplifying this situation, on Human Rights Day, on 10 December 2025, at around 9 p.m., the military destroyed a 300-bed hospital in Mrauk-U, Rakhine, killing 33 civilians, including 17 women and a three-month-old baby, and injuring dozens other civilians. Interviewees reported that aircraft had dropped two munitions, one of which struck a patient ward, while the other landed next to the hospital’s security booth, killing four volunteers and destroying the facilities. Victims were mostly patients and those visiting family members, including a pregnant woman, several ethnic-Rakhine civilians, and a Muslim man and child. This was the deadliest incident against a health facility since the coup,

<sup>1</sup> See <https://aappb.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> See Thet Htwe Naing – Freelance Journalist, “Military commission alleges that PDF uses public as human shield regarding the common village process”, 9 October 2025, available at <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1155880723309035&set=pcb.1155880963309011>.

out of a total of 1,873 reported incidents as at 31 January 2026.<sup>3</sup> The military claimed that four armed groups had been using the hospital as a base, although this claim cannot be independently verified.<sup>4</sup>

13. Civilians in the central regions<sup>5</sup> and in Rakhine suffered the greatest impact of the military violence. Credible sources reportedly verified 573 of 702 civilian deaths as occurring in these areas during the reporting period. Of these, 476 deaths were due to air strikes with 111, including 43 women and 10 children, in the run-up to the voting in December 2025. Sagaing remained the most dangerous region for civilians as the military pressed to gain ground, with 191 deaths, including of 60 women and 30 children, with air strikes responsible for over 70 per cent of the total. On the evening of 5 December 2025, during the election period, a military aeroplane bombed a tea shop in Tabayin township, as people had gathered to watch a football match. Credible sources reported to have verified at least 19 civilian deaths, including four women and one child, with reports of 20 others wounded.

14. Deploying low-cost, lightweight aerial vehicles, such as paramotors and gyrocopters, the military widened the scope of its aerial attacks striking civilians and critical infrastructure. According to analysis of open sources, in the reporting period, the military carried out over 300 aerial attacks using paramotors (209 attacks) and gyrocopters (102 attacks), killing a total of 134 civilians, including 22 women and 13 children. Numerous air attacks reportedly damaged or destroyed schools,<sup>6</sup> health facilities,<sup>7</sup> markets, monasteries and displacement sites, heightening protection risks and furthering insecurity among the civilian population.

15. Anti-military armed groups also carried out operations in opposition to the military-controlled elections. According to the military, anti-military armed groups disrupted the electoral process through the distribution of false propaganda, intimidation and threats to voters, party officials and electoral personnel, attacks on polling stations and security personnel, and the use of explosives and firearms, with a total of 54 acts of sabotage.<sup>8</sup>

16. Credible open sources indicated that anti-military armed groups carried out attacks that affected civilians, including a minimum of 95 election-related incidents, with Bago and Yangon respectively experiencing 39 and 18 attacks. Over 80 per cent of the violent incidents reportedly occurred during the prime election period, from November 2025 through January 2026, with an average of 26 per month. Anti-military armed groups claimed responsibility for the use of mortars and rocket-propelled weapons, drone-delivered explosives and improvised explosive devices, the bombing of and shooting at polling stations, the killing, arrest and abduction of electoral personnel, and ambushes on convoys transporting ballot boxes. One such instance included a reported drone attack during voting on 11 January 2026 against the General Administration Department office in Htantabin township, Bago, in which one public official was killed and another wounded, also resulting in the closure of the polling station. Another incident, on 25 January 2026, the third-round voting day, in Taungtha town, Mandalay, involved anti-military armed groups firing heavy weapons around the time of the opening of polling stations. No civilian casualties were reported.

17. This climate of widespread insecurity amid acts of violence by all parties further affected the election environment and continued to drive overall humanitarian and protection needs.<sup>9</sup> Violence repeatedly forced civilians to flee their homes to seek safety, both within Myanmar and abroad, exacerbating the regional impact of the military-created crisis. While the United Nations reported about 3.7 million people displaced since the coup,<sup>10</sup> the actual

<sup>3</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/attacks-health-care-myanmar-18-february-03-march-2026>.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.moi.gov.mm/moi:eng/news/19750>.

<sup>5</sup> Bago, Magway, Mandalay and Sagaing.

<sup>6</sup> Some 1,328 attacks against education facilities were reported since the coup, of which 199 occurred during the reporting period (see <https://data.humdata.org/dataset/63605720-f0da-454d-89a6-552f1acc3a53/resource/fc54f0ab-cde5-4ccc-8285-a407c830a847/download/2017-2026-mm-education-in-danger-incident-data.xlsx>).

<sup>7</sup> Some 1,873 attacks against health facilities were reported since the coup, of which 117 occurred during the reporting period (see *ibid.*).

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.moi.gov.mm/news/79489>.

<sup>9</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-update-no51-9-march-2026>.

<sup>10</sup> See <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/mmr>.

number is believed to be significantly higher, as many did not seek assistance through formal mechanisms. In addition, the earthquake in March 2025 and seasonal floods compounded an already dire situation, leaving over a million without shelter or access to basic services.<sup>11</sup> Consistent with conflict patterns, 35 per cent of the total displaced persons were from Sagaing, and nearly 50 per cent when combined with those from Rakhine.<sup>12</sup> Reports of over 300 incidents of arson, with responsibility attributed to the military, were received, although they could not be independently verified. As previously reported,<sup>13</sup> arson attacks drove humanitarian needs and heightened concerns for civilians deprived of food, shelter, personal and property documentation, and even professional tools for people to work and sustain their families. Some 9.2 million people face acute food insecurity, while over a third of the population requires humanitarian assistance.<sup>14</sup> Food insecurity was particularly pronounced in northern Rakhine, with projections estimating a deterioration to critical phase 4 in Maungdaw and catastrophe phase 5 in Buthidaung by May 2026.<sup>15</sup> Concerns remain profound for Rohingya, as military-imposed blockades of goods reaching Rakhine are severely aggravating their situation.

18. The economic fallout from the crisis continues to worsen, compounded by an estimated \$11 billion in economic losses following the 2025 earthquake.<sup>16</sup> The resulting decline in economic activity and loss of livelihoods have had far-reaching implications for the enjoyment of economic and social rights, including the rights to work, housing rights, education and health. While lower volatility in staple food prices and targeted relief measures in 2025 helped moderate food costs, the pressures remained significant.<sup>17</sup> Despite inflation deceleration in 2025, inflation on non-food items increased to 26.3 per cent, from 25.6 per cent in 2024.<sup>18</sup> Displacement raised demand for housing and frequent power outages kept energy costs high, pushing inflation in housing and energy to about 30 per cent.<sup>19</sup> Conflict-affected areas, including Bago, Kachin, Magway, Shan and Sagaing, recorded the highest inflation rates, between 18 and 26 per cent, while being affected by access constraints, restrictions on commodity flows, checkpoint delays and funding shortfalls.<sup>20</sup>

## **B. Election-related violations and abuses**

### **1. Military-controlled elections**

19. Between 28 December 2025 and 25 January 2026, the military held three rounds of voting in an electoral process in which participation was restricted and suppressed. In many areas, civilians were pressured to take part and threatened if they did not do so or if they spoke out against the process. Despite this, interlocutors consistently reiterated their demands for a civilian Government, justice and rule of law,<sup>21</sup> and rejected the military-controlled elections as illegitimate. Such calls were particularly pronounced in areas outside of military control.

20. In addition, the military unilaterally amended applicable laws in order to disband and criminalize opposition political parties, including the National League for Democracy, and continued to hold political leaders incommunicado, including Aung San Suu Kyi. They also arrested and prosecuted people for expressing dissent, online and offline, and convicted some candidates partaking in the election process for using words such as “revolution” during political rallies. Evidence-based analysis indicated that, with the absence of effective legal protections and independent judicial mechanisms, military-controlled elections were likely

<sup>11</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-earthquake-situation-update-edition-1>.

<sup>12</sup> See <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/mmr>.

<sup>13</sup> See [A/HRC/54/59](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/54/59).

<sup>14</sup> See <https://fscluster.org/myanmar>.

<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.wfp.org/publications/hunger-hotspots-fao-wfp-early-warnings-acute-food-insecurity>.

<sup>16</sup> World Bank, *Myanmar Economic Monitor: Surviving, Not Thriving* (2025), p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> See [A/HRC/59/57](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/59/57).

to entrench authoritarian rule rather than facilitate a transition to civilian governance.<sup>22</sup> Some States sent observation missions to monitor the military-controlled process, although election monitoring appeared to have occurred mostly in parts of Yangon and Nay Pyi Daw.<sup>23</sup> Some international media were allowed into Myanmar around the voting period.

21. Large segments of the population were excluded from voting in numerous areas of the country, including conflict-affected and mixed-controlled areas, with displaced persons and minority communities disproportionately affected. Rohingya remained excluded from citizenship and voting rights. Although the military announced the organization of elections in 263 townships, voting occurred in two thirds of wards and village tracts within participating townships, with data indicating that out of 13,554 slotted wards and village tracts, 3,895, or nearly a third, were excluded, limiting participation. According to the military-appointed electoral commission, the turnout rate was 54 per cent, with 13 million out of more than 24 million eligible voters allegedly casting ballots.<sup>24</sup> These figures raise concerns that many voters were disenfranchised, particularly when contrasted with previous elections. In 2020, there were 37 million eligible voters, with a 70 per cent turnout rate,<sup>25</sup> and in 2015, there were 34 million eligible voters, with a 70 per cent turnout rate.<sup>26</sup> Voter lists were reportedly compiled largely on the basis of a 2024 military-run census that fully covered only 145 townships out of 330 and an estimated 19 million people out of a population of 51 million.<sup>27</sup>

22. As the only political entity with national reach, the military-affiliated Union Solidarity and Development Party won an overwhelming majority, securing 232 of the 263 seats in the lower house and 109 of the 157 seats in the upper chamber,<sup>28</sup> marking a dramatic increase compared to the 71 seats won in 2020.<sup>29</sup> With the 166 seats reserved for the military in the 2008 Constitution, they jointly hold 507 seats out of the total of 586 in parliament.

## 2. Rule of law, fundamental freedoms and coercion of voters

23. The military continued to arbitrarily exercise power and suspend fundamental human rights guarantees, especially in the electoral context. Credible sources reported to have verified that, since the coup, 30,508 individuals, including 6,177 women and 633 children, had been arrested on political grounds, and 22,799 remained in detention, including 4,261 women and 250 children. In the electoral context, information was received that political prisoners in several prisons were compelled to vote in the elections. According to military figures, at least 324 men and 80 women were prosecuted ahead of elections, including for minor online criticism, with disproportionate punishment such as a sentence of 49 years of imprisonment in one case for disseminating anti-election materials.<sup>30</sup>

24. Military intolerance for dissent was particularly evidenced by the detention of the chairperson of the People's Pioneer Party, who had publicly expressed criticism about the management of the electoral process, under accusations of having unauthorized contact with foreign diplomats. She was subsequently released and reportedly placed under restrictions resembling house arrest. This and other cases indicated the lack of space to express any form of dissent, further restricting civic space and fundamental freedoms, and limiting the work of media.<sup>31</sup> Access to information remained precarious, with widespread Internet shutdowns

<sup>22</sup> See <https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025-12/OHCHRMyanmar-Background-paper-on-military-elections-Nov25.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Participating States included Belarus, Cambodia, China, India, Kazakhstan, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, Thailand and Viet Nam.

<sup>24</sup> See <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/civil-servants-urged-to-foster-love-for-nation/>.

<sup>25</sup> See <https://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/3319/>.

<sup>26</sup> See <https://cartercentee50c07c05.blob.core.windows.net/blobcartercentee50c07c05/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/myanmar-2015-final.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> See [https://anfrel.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ANFREL\\_2025-Myanmar-Report\\_final\\_29-Sept-2025.pdf](https://anfrel.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ANFREL_2025-Myanmar-Report_final_29-Sept-2025.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> See <https://www.moi.gov.mm/moi%3Aeng/news/20208>.

<sup>29</sup> See [https://networkmyanmar.org/ESW/Files/ANFREL\\_Democracy-Under-Attack-F.pdf](https://networkmyanmar.org/ESW/Files/ANFREL_Democracy-Under-Attack-F.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> See <https://cjplatform.com/over-400-charged-under-election-law-as-myanmar-junta-pushes-third-phase-of-sham-polls/>.

<sup>31</sup> See <https://www.icnl.org/our-work/myanmar?ki-cf-botcl=1>.

and limited connectivity hampering public access to independent information and leaving many unaware of any impending security risks. Expert monitors reported widespread communication disruptions in Kachin, Magway, Rakhine, Sagaing, Shan and Taninthayi.<sup>32</sup>

25. Over 250 peaceful protests occurred nationwide, approximately 100 of them ahead of voting. Most demonstrations were held in areas outside military control, with the highest number, at 132 protests, recorded in Yinmarbin township, Sagaing. Few of the reported protests took place in urban areas, such as Yangon and Mandalay, particularly around voting days.

26. Interviewees described severe restrictions on movement due to the significant presence of checkpoints on roads and bridges, where civilians were subjected to harassment and extortion. One interviewee reported having to pass four checkpoints within 75 metres to reach the polling station, with bribes extorted at each checkpoint. Civil society organizations raised alarms about heightened military surveillance, including the use of the “Person Scrutinization and Monitoring System”.<sup>33</sup>

27. Interviews and consultations conducted by OHCHR indicated that the elections were conducted in a general climate of fear and coercion, as well as overall apathy about choices and prospects for change. Some interviewees indicated that their decision to vote was linked to fear of reprisal if they failed to comply. Some stated that they voted out of desperation, hoping for an end to the crisis. Civil servants, including teachers, were reportedly requested to register to vote, and occasionally administrators went door to door instructing people to participate. Some interviewees felt that they had to vote to keep their businesses open or out of concern that they would lose access to passports or other documents without proof of voting. Others reported coercion intended to force participation, extortion, bribery and threats of harm to detained relatives. Threats of forced conscription into the military were reported alongside measures targeting displaced persons, including the withdrawal of access to food and seizure of property. Administrative measures were reported, including the denial of border passes and the refusal to renew passports and issue driving licences and university registration cards. Interviewees also reported on incentives, such as payment of electricity bills, food distribution at political rallies and cash delivery, offered in exchange for votes. Prisoners were subject to advance voting in late October 2025, reportedly under threat of additional criminal charges or with offers of inclusion in future pardons.

28. The atmosphere at polling stations on voting days was described as highly militarized. Interviewees described armed personnel both inside and around polling stations and strict controls over access to these areas. The presence of armed soldiers and the requirement to present marked voter lists to local authorities caused concerns about the secrecy of the ballot. Concerns regarding heightened insecurity and attacks on civilians casting their votes did not materialize, with voting days recording a decrease in hostilities, particularly military air strikes, at least in areas where voting was occurring.

## IV. Protection responses on the ground

### A. Civilian protection initiatives

29. Since the coup, OHCHR has documented trends and patterns of violence affecting civilians across Myanmar. The military’s aerial and ground operations, digital surveillance and other violations of fundamental rights and freedoms heightened protection risks, while restrictions on food, fuel and medical supplies compounded the humanitarian crisis. Military units have failed to take any or sufficient measures to protect civilians, including by warning local communities prior to ground operations, artillery and air strikes and other attacks, further exacerbating the impact of violence. Other armed actors have also failed to dedicate

<sup>32</sup> See <https://www.myanmarinternet.info/internet-shutdown>.

<sup>33</sup> See [https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2026-02/ohchr\\_myanmar\\_annual\\_update\\_2025.pdf](https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2026-02/ohchr_myanmar_annual_update_2025.pdf).

sufficient resources to fulfil their obligations to protect civilians, leading to a pernicious protection crisis that has left civilians vulnerable to attacks.

30. Civilians, civil society organizations and local governance structures have been forced to take responsibility to save lives, protect civilians and ensure a minimum level of access and availability of essential services, in the absence of State responses and despite continuous attacks by the military on the civilian population. These stakeholders, with women's organizations at the forefront, have saved countless civilian lives, displaying resilience, adaptability, resourcefulness, creativity and steadfast commitment to justice, rights and democracy, despite modest political and financial support from the international community compared to the gravity of the situation on the ground. Localized responses were critical in saving thousands of lives in the aftermath of the earthquake in March 2025, although the military persisted in bombing affected civilian areas and denying humanitarian assistance.

31. Protection mechanisms, strategies and initiatives greatly varied, depending on location, proximity to international borders for access to goods and materials, actors implementing the measures, type of local governance system and level of external support. Analysis of interviews and contributions received by OHCHR demonstrated some common threads among local actors seeking to protect the civilian population. Despite concerns in describing existing protection measures for fear of being targeted by the military, interlocutors described 10 main categories of responses developed to address civilian protection needs.

## **1. Early warning systems**

32. Early warning has become a key survival mechanism for civilians across the country. Building on experiences from decades of conflict and maximizing the use of available equipment and new technologies, these alerts provided advance notice of risks of air strikes, troop advancements and impending violence, enabling many civilians to evacuate and seek safety. In some areas, communities established 24-hour monitoring centres to identify aircraft departures, troop movements and other risk factors to inform civilians using walkie-talkies, satellite phones and online messaging platforms, whenever available. In most areas, loudspeaker systems, short-wave radio, bells or gunshots served to convey warnings. Pamphlets, banners and other forms of dissemination of security messages and instructions were also reported. Some local governance structures took responsibility for civilian protection and institutionalized early warning mechanisms into township-level governance structures and security committees, including by developing policies and regulations on emergency response, public gatherings and the use of lights and electricity during the night.

33. Although communities have developed ingenious solutions to overcome military-imposed restrictions on Internet and communications, the impact of air strikes and raids on civilians has been disastrous, with many – including older persons, sick persons, persons with disabilities and persons with difficulties in fleeing – dying owing to insufficient warning time ahead of attacks. The military's increasing use of high-altitude drones and night-time strikes also limited the overall effectiveness of these community-based early warning systems, leading to higher levels of death and destruction. Furthermore, interlocutors attributed the deterioration of the protection situation to the withdrawal of international financial support, as numerous protection mechanisms had to rely on volunteer labour and provide security with minimal means.

## **2. Protective infrastructure**

34. Air strikes conducted by jets, helicopters, drones, paramotors and gyrocopters forced communities across the country to build protective infrastructure, including household bunkers and improvised shelters. Local organizations and governance structures played a key role in raising awareness and supporting communities in the construction of household-level bunkers and emergency evacuation procedures, contributing to the saving of numerous lives. Bunker construction, however, is typically self-financed and limited to locally available materials, meaning that many shelters are structurally weak and unable to withstand the impact of heavier weaponry. Military blockades of goods, including construction materials, directly curtailed the ability of communities to better protect civilians. Interlocutors expressed concerns that in mixed-controlled areas, where the availability of goods was

comparatively better, the military would target communities equipped with bunkers, taking such protective measures as proof of the presence of anti-military elements.

35. Military attacks damaged or destroyed religious buildings, hospitals, schools and displacement camps, among other civilian objects, depriving civilians of further options for safety and effectively eliminating their civilian protection functions. Local communities have prioritized reinforcing schools and health facilities to improve their protective capacity, although financial constraints prevented many necessary structural improvements. Similarly, households with limited financial means remained exposed to violence, owing to a lack of resources or other options. Interlocutors repeatedly highlighted the need for additional life-saving support to avoid leaving civilians responsible for their own survival through household-level protection measures.

### 3. Evacuation and avoidance

36. Evacuation and avoidance – including withdrawing from public spaces and family homes or leaving the country – remained the main civilian protection strategies deployed to respond to protection risks resulting from military violence. As a result, several million people have experienced displacement since 2021,<sup>34</sup> with types and duration of displacement varying greatly. When displacement was perceived as temporary, civilians tried to hide in nearby areas to attend to older relatives, cattle or their fields, but when displacement was long term, civilians experienced extensive life-threatening protection concerns. In the aftermath of air strikes, many civilians avoided seeking medical treatment in military-controlled areas out of fear, resulting in numerous preventable deaths. In some areas, armed actors, local governance structures and civil society coordinated action to identify safe areas to where civilians could flee, although civilians remained primarily responsible for their own evacuation. Initiatives to reunite families, especially lost children, in the jungle or other displacement settings were reported. In towns and villages, public services, including schools and hospitals, are routinely moved to nondescript buildings or underground to prevent risks of attacks. Avoidance and evacuation strategies were also adopted systematically by youth to escape conscription and forced recruitment.

### 4. Emergency healthcare services

37. In areas outside military control or under the control of long-established ethnic armed organizations, communities and governance structures have invested resources and efforts into ensuring access to health services, including trauma-focused mental health services, for civilians in newly controlled areas. With the essential contribution of health workers from the Civil Disobedience Movement, several local administrations had the opportunity to provide essential services in a structured manner. Volunteer ambulance services for wounded civilians were reported as examples, along with mobile clinics and medical teams travelling to hard-to-reach villages to provide emergency response. Although often at great personal risk, youth and women's networks and religious and community-based organizations remained the front-line providers of health services and contributed to the availability of life-saving care.

38. Limitations in coverage and capacities continued to grow along with needs. Violence has resulted in a massive increase in the number of persons with injuries and disabilities for whom adequate health or rehabilitation services do not exist. Expert analysis indicated that, since the coup, health gains made over decades have been reversed, with rural and displaced communities among the most affected.<sup>35</sup> Military-imposed restrictions on humanitarian access have produced massive shortages of medical supplies, including vaccines, and contributed to escalating concerns, including of malnutrition, skin diseases, cholera, malaria and pneumonia. Communities consistently reported urgent needs for psychosocial support. Credible reports of military-imposed restrictions on operations and functions of community-based health organizations in areas under their control were also received, causing profound concerns for maternal and child health and survival programmes.

<sup>34</sup> See <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/mmr>.

<sup>35</sup> See <https://hiswg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Ethnic-Demographic-Health-Survey.pdf>.

## 5. Emergency humanitarian assistance

39. Community-based organizations have been key to sustaining civilians' resilience and protection by providing cash, shelter, food, water, medicine, hygiene supplies, health consultations and information, and other support to assist the most vulnerable.<sup>36</sup> Owing to the trust that they enjoy and their knowledge of actors and local dynamics, responders have developed effective systems and procedures to assist their communities over the five years of conflict.

40. Local efforts to produce and distribute food locally were often thwarted by military air strikes and arson attacks, or by landmines and prohibitive transport costs. This inevitably increased dependency on donor funding. Some local administrations provided coordination and logistical support to humanitarian actors, establishing rice banks in strategic locations to support newly displaced persons and rice-sharing practices to meet minimum needs. Deliveries of foodstuffs were often coordinated through local transport committees to enhance their security, based on ongoing conflict activities, and to organize flexible aid pick-up points to avoid checkpoints and air strikes. Responders also manually carried sacks when trucks were blocked. Some interlocutors explained that cash support was often preferred when items needed could be purchased locally, to mitigate security-related and transportation risks, including confiscation of goods at checkpoints, which were mostly operated by the military.

## 6. Gender-responsive protection mechanisms

41. Interlocutors stressed that the establishment of gender-responsive protection mechanisms provided critical safeguards for women and children, particularly as overcrowding and inadequate infrastructure in displacement increased their exposure to violence. Women's and youth organizations participated in the development of some local mechanisms, enhancing their ability to deliver in a gender-responsive manner. Local administration and communities extended assistance to displaced families and facilitated access to education for children. Women's organizations demonstrated sophisticated and adaptive approaches to sustaining protection initiatives and humanitarian access by designing community-based access strategies, with women community leaders negotiating access. Women's organizations also identified gender-specific threats and fed information into early warning systems to effectuate efficient responses. To prevent and address gender-based violence, women's groups established safe spaces and adopted protection-by-presence strategies, placing women volunteers in public spaces, distribution points and shelters to reduce risks of violence and exploitation. In many areas outside military control, local administrations and local organizations introduced quotas or priority roles for women in committees responsible for coordination and decision-making with regard to civilian protection and humanitarian assistance, and ensured women's representation in the leadership of displacement camps.

## 7. Education and awareness-raising programmes

42. Civil society organizations spearheaded efforts to ensure access to education and life-saving information through awareness-raising programmes on civilian protection, mitigation measures and responses. Training for children and adults to raise awareness with regard to air strikes and landmines was delivered in schools and community meetings, and information was disseminated through radio, social media and printed materials. Contamination by explosive ordnance, including anti-personnel mines, presented a major concern, as systematic mapping remained limited and clearance non-existent. Continued violence and shifts in territorial control increased contamination by anti-personnel mines as several actors reportedly continued to use them, while resources for surveying and clearance dwindled. Without risk education and explosive ordnance clearance, the impact on civilians will only expand.

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<sup>36</sup> See [https://wp.progressivevoicemyanmar.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Edited\\_Our-Shared-Responsibility\\_report\\_Final-1.pdf](https://wp.progressivevoicemyanmar.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Edited_Our-Shared-Responsibility_report_Final-1.pdf).

## 8. Monitoring, documentation and reporting

43. Community-based documentation has been a central pillar of early warning, protection and risk analysis, and advocacy. With the support of civil society and OHCHR technical assistance, data-collection and -verification efforts expanded across the country, with youth networks taking a leading role. This enabled recurring protection concerns to be identified, air strikes or raids to be anticipated and humanitarian actors to be alerted to impending risks. Several duty bearers made efforts to formalize documentation and reporting. Some established and deployed data-collection teams across several areas of the country to assess trends, risks and mitigating measures, while others created dedicated committees to liaise with village-level networks, including women's and youth networks. Evidence-based documentation contributed to countering military narratives aimed at retaining power, and to informing the international community of shifting trends in the human rights crisis. However, reductions in funding significantly affected the operational capacity of local organizations documenting violations, thereby limiting this fundamental role.

## 9. Justice and accountability mechanisms

44. Non-State justice and accountability mechanisms emerged alongside civilian-led protection measures in areas outside military control, also building on examples from the Karenni and Chin people, highlighted in previous reports.<sup>37</sup> Such mechanisms helped in some cases to stabilize areas where they operated, providing a certain sense of rule of law and mitigating some effects of localized conflicts or disputes. In Sagaing, Magway and Taninthayi, the National Unity Government established the "Three Pas" structure,<sup>38</sup> to ensure local security, policing, coordination and dispute settlement. In Kachin and parts of Shan, customary village courts and administrative bodies established by armed groups have had to address disputes relating to land, domestic violence and serious crimes. These bodies, however, lack the capacity to adjudicate serious crimes with full safeguards of due process and fair trial guarantees. In Kayin, under the Karen National Union, local judicial institutions reportedly included women in senior judicial roles within functioning justice mechanisms. Efforts by the Ta'ang administration to establish a law academy and strengthen legal education are ongoing. In other areas under recently-established local administrations, justice processes reportedly often relied on community mediation and decisions by the administrative structures of each township.

45. Despite overlapping authorities, limited institutional capacity, instances of corruption and continuous conflict-related constraints across these contexts, interlocutors reported satisfactory outcomes on small-scale civil law disputes. They expressed concerns about slow investigations, limited transparency in serious criminal cases, abuse of authority and risks of reprisals for complainants. In the absence of a functioning justice system, local mechanisms remain the sole actors to be providing a practical measure of administration of justice contributing to social cohesion and should be appropriately supported, politically and financially, pending an end to the crisis and restoration of legitimate State institutions of justice.

46. At the international level, progress on accountability was noted. In January 2026, the International Court of Justice held and completed oral hearings on the merits in the inter-State case brought by the Gambia against Myanmar for alleged violations of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and the Court is now deliberating its judgment.<sup>39</sup>

47. At the International Criminal Court, the public record continues to indicate a pending application by the Prosecutor for a warrant of arrest against Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, [A/HRC/59/57](#).

<sup>38</sup> The Three Pas structure consists of the following: *Pa Ka Pha*, or people's defence teams, responsible for local defence; *Pa Ah Pha*, or people's authorities, responsible for local administration; and *Pa La Pha*, or people's security teams, responsible for local security.

<sup>39</sup> See <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/178>.

for crimes against humanity committed against Rohingya in 2017.<sup>40</sup> Further robust efforts are necessary to hold other perpetrators accountable and to break ongoing impunity.

## 10. Collaborative efforts

48. Cooperation among civil society organizations, local governance structures, community leaders and anti-military armed groups has become crucial for delivering civilian protection measures and local governance in conflict areas. While civil society and community-based organizations largely carried out the groundwork, local governance structures contributed with logistics, coordination and security indispensable to civilian protection and first response after attacks.

49. To systematize processes, in May 2025 the Karenni State Consultative Council adopted a humanitarian policy envisioning a rights-based, anticipatory humanitarian system. It mandates targeted aid to vulnerable groups, community-led planning, gender-responsive and inclusive approaches, and the collaboration of governance structures with civil society, ethnic service providers and international organizations.<sup>41</sup> It supports community-based involvement in early warning at all levels of governance to create a system that is both accessible and designed to support effective early response. It introduces a requirement for the activation of emergency response within 48 hours, and it relies on preorganized emergency response committees at multiple levels of administration. While proper qualitative assessments remain challenging, this form of rights-based protection policy reflects good practice for other governance actors to develop similar approaches.

50. Interlocutors reported examples of cooperation among anti-military armed groups, local governance structures, civil society and community leaders in raising and addressing protection concerns, including in relation to abuses by armed elements. In Kachin, civil society organizations provided technical advice through local governance mechanisms on protection priorities and the concerns of specific communities. However, long-standing calls for greater diversity and greater ethnic and gender representation in governance structures remained unheeded. In Kayin, reports were received of direct engagement of civil society with armed actors on specific protection concerns, such as extortion and informal taxation affecting communities. Through dialogue and training, civil society raised awareness among armed actors of international humanitarian law and civilian protection standards, positively contributing to the prevention of abuses. In Shan, teams dedicated to fostering community engagement and addressing grievances were reportedly established within women's departments to work with villagers. In Chin, interlocutors described pragmatic coordination mechanisms to facilitate civilian protection, including a system enabling cross-territorial movements during medical emergencies to facilitate referral of injured civilians to safe clinics.

## B. Challenges and ways forward

51. These protection mechanisms and initiatives, with inclusive and structured participation of diverse actors, demonstrated that some armed actors have taken their international obligations seriously and worked collaboratively to enhance civilian protection. Across the country, however, these mechanisms remain uneven and vulnerable owing to highly constrained operating environments and limited resources. Concerns related to surveillance, movement restrictions and risks of reprisals hindered coordination and rapid response, while disruptions in information flows further weakened early warning capacity. This resulted in the adoption of short-term mitigation strategies rather than comprehensive protection.

52. The military was noted as the key actor responsible for exacerbating protection concerns and for limiting protection and humanitarian responses, with prolonged military-imposed disruptions to Internet and phone access significantly weakening protection

<sup>40</sup> See <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-application-arrest-warrant-situation-bangladesh>.

<sup>41</sup> See <https://ieckarenni.org/karenni-state-interim-humanitarian-policy/>.

monitoring and early warning systems. Civilians had to travel for hours to gain access to the Internet, while phone inspections at checkpoints often resulted in arrests, extortion and conscription. Combined with the growing use of drones, paramotors and gyrocopters and a lack of clear audible warnings, these actions reduced the effectiveness of community alert mechanisms and ultimately increased the number of civilian deaths.

53. Fragmented authority and governance gaps in areas under the control of ethnic armed organizations or anti-military groups were found to affect protection outcomes for communities. These included increasing administrative requirements from non-military governance structures and, in some cases, requests to share financial information or project budgets. In some areas, communities reported limited delivery of services and declining trust in administrative structures, while justice mechanisms were described as inconsistent, eroding access to justice for victims and survivors. Reports on taxation practices varied across areas and were often described as lacking transparency and offering weak monitoring mechanisms and opportunities to address grievances. In order to strengthen civilian protection, secure information channels and ensure fairness in governance structures and accountability mechanisms, consistent support will be required in terms of knowledge, technical advice and resources.

54. Predictable funding is essential to strengthen civilian protection initiatives. Reductions and suspensions in international assistance threatened the sustainability of locally driven protection mechanisms, with women-led organizations particularly affected. This led to office closures, layoffs and programme cuts among ethnic media and women's organizations. Humanitarian and community programmes, including assistance to displaced persons, education initiatives and psychosocial support, were curtailed or halted, thereby increasing community vulnerability. Early warning networks that previously monitored military aircraft movements and issued alerts have weakened, following funding reductions that forced the closure of monitoring centres and limited access to advanced equipment. Although self-financed measures remain in place, reduced coverage has increased civilian exposure to harm. Emergency healthcare provision deteriorated, with organizations reporting difficulties maintaining medicine supply chains and health facilities. Safe houses for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence have closed or operate at a reduced capacity, while boarding facilities, education and women-focused programmes have been scaled down or sustained only through the reallocation of limited emergency resources. Education programmes for displaced children and psychosocial support initiatives have also been curtailed.

55. In addition, project-based, short-term and small-scale funding modalities have at times weakened civilian-led protection mechanisms and affected trust in information-sharing and coordinated responses on which civilians rely. Prioritization of funds for short-term humanitarian assistance following the earthquake affected support for civic participation and democratic governance, further limiting the possibilities for civil society actors to focus effectively on civilian protection.

## V. Conclusions and recommendations

56. After more than five years of widespread and systematic military violations, the human rights crisis in Myanmar has continued to inflict death, destruction, suffering, fear and despair on the civilian population. The military escalated attacks through air power in particular, causing loss of civilian life, injury and extensive destruction of civilian objects. Anti-military armed groups also continued to carry out attacks, including through the use of mortars, drones and improvised explosive devices and on electoral personnel during the electoral period, but the scale and intensity remain incomparable with military violence.

57. An immediate cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access to all civilians in need of food, clean water, medicines and services remains urgent. The international community should cease and prevent the transfer to Myanmar of arms, their parts and components, ammunition and munitions, as well jet fuel and dual-use items, where there is a risk that they could facilitate violations of international human rights and violations and abuses of international humanitarian law.

58. Equally essential is to maintain support for the demands of the Myanmar people for a democratic civilian Government and a country based on justice and respect for human rights and the rule of law. Attempts at obtaining political legitimacy through an electoral process that lacked basic elements of credibility should not be endorsed. The military-controlled elections failed to respect the fundamental human rights of the country's citizens and served to exacerbate violence and societal polarization.<sup>42</sup> Rather than enabling inclusive civilian governance or a safer environment, the elections have reinforced a protection crisis in which civilians remain exposed to harm and lack access to necessary protection mechanisms and to essential humanitarian assistance.

59. To assist and sustain the civilian population, community-based groups, civil society organizations and local governance systems have shouldered the responsibility of creating and managing protection mechanisms across Myanmar. Traditional State functions such as early warning, emergency healthcare and the coordination of humanitarian assistance are instead currently often provided through locally driven systems that capitalized on their local knowledge, adaptability and creativity to overcome the serious limitations upon them. These mechanisms, though fragile and constrained, demonstrated that degrees of protection are possible even under extreme conditions, when grounded in legitimacy, trust and collective organization. Political and financial support remain essential elements to support the conditions for their development, effectiveness and sustainability, building on the democratic foundations emerging at the community level.

60. **In the light of the above findings, the High Commissioner calls upon the Myanmar military:**

(a) **To cease immediately all violations of international humanitarian law and all violations and abuses of international human rights law, including attacks directed against civilians and civilian objects, including schools, hospitals, religious sites and camps for displaced persons, in compliance with Security Council resolution 2669 (2022);**

(b) **To allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief to civilians in need, which is impartial in character and conducted without any adverse distinction, and to lift restrictions on the delivery of food, medicine, essential supplies and telecommunications;**

(c) **To cease all practices of arbitrary conscription, including of children and Rohingya, that are incompatible with international human rights law, and immediately effectuate the release of those affected;**

(d) **To release all arbitrarily detained prisoners without further delay, and to ensure effective remedies for all cases of deprivation of liberty, including on grounds of alleged evasion or refusal of conscription.**

61. **The High Commissioner recommends that the National Unity Government, ethnic armed organizations and anti-military armed groups:**

(a) **Cease immediately all violations of international humanitarian law and all violations and abuses of international human rights law;**

(b) **Take specific steps to respect and ensure the protection of civilians, including by making efforts to ensure the accountability of perpetrators of violations and abuses and adopting gender- and age-sensitive measures in consultation with affected communities, in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law and international human rights standards;**

(c) **Cease all practices of forced recruitment, particularly with regard to children and Rohingya, and immediately effectuate the release of those affected.**

<sup>42</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/01/myanmar-turk-says-military-controlled-ballot-exacerbates-violence-and-social>.

62. The High Commissioner recommends that States, including members of ASEAN:
- (a) Refer, through the Security Council, the situation of human rights in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court;
  - (b) Cease and prevent the transfer to Myanmar of arms, their parts and components, ammunition and munitions, as well jet fuel and dual-use items, where there is a risk that they could facilitate violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law;
  - (c) Politically and financially support the demands by the people of Myanmar for democracy, justice and respect for human rights and the rule of law, including by systematically engaging with the National Unity Government and other relevant democratic actors, including representatives of local governance structures;
  - (d) Refrain from lending legitimacy to the military's purported exercise of civilian authority, particularly by refraining from resuming programme delivery or the provision of technical cooperation activities with institutions under its control;
  - (e) Promote confidence-building measures and political dialogue based on verified and meaningful progress in adhering to international law, including with regard to the de-escalation of violence, the protection of civilians, humanitarian access and the release of political prisoners;
  - (f) Support ASEAN regional efforts to achieve the cessation of hostilities, ensure unhindered humanitarian access and free all political prisoners;
  - (g) Ensure the protection of civilians, including Rohingya, fleeing violence abroad by granting international protection consistent with international law, providing solutions for long-term legal status and providing access to basic services, including education, health and employment opportunities, amid growing concerns related to forced recruitment and conflict-related violence if they are returned;
  - (h) Consult with civil society organizations on the technical, financial, humanitarian and protection needs of the civilian population and ensure predictable, direct and timely provision of funds to civil society to implement effective life-saving programmes.
-