

INTRODUCTION

This factsheet is prepared by the OHCHR Myanmar Team to complement the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on developments in the human rights situation in Myanmar, as mandated by Human Rights Council Resolution 56/1. The report, which covers the period from 1 June 2025 and 31 May 2026, documents violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict. Figures on verified deaths represent an underestimation of reality on the ground. This report contains recommendations to the military, duty-bearers, and Member States, including ASEAN members.

CONTEXT

This report analyses the worsening human rights crisis resulting from the 2021 military coup, with emphasis on protection of civilians. It documents widespread and systematic violations and abuses committed by the Arakan Army and the Myanmar military (the military) against the Rohingya, and human rights violations, abuses, and concerns related to the expansion of unregulated mining activities, particularly of rare earth elements, in Kachin and Shan States.

Figures between 1 February 2021 and 31 May 2026

	8,075	civilians killed by the military.
	31,101	have been arrested on political grounds by the military.
	14,278	languish in detention in severely inadequate conditions.
	3.6M	internally displaced.
	125,000	reported as conscripted.
	15.2M	are reported to be facing acute hunger.

VIOLENCE, CONFLICT, AND PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

Civilians remained vulnerable to relentless military attacks and related impacts from violence and repression. AAPP reported the military killed a minimum of 8,075 civilians, including 1,774 women and 1,074 children, since the coup and until 31 May 2026. At least 1,241 of those civilian deaths occurred during the reporting period, including 382 women and 255 children. Forced conscription was among the key drivers of the deterioration of the human rights crisis. Since activating the process in 2024, the military reported recruiting 25 batches of as many as 5,000 youth each. This granted the military a significant numerical advance on the battlefield factoring into territorial gains. As a result, fear permeated every aspect of life of youth and family members.

Airstrikes remained the main cause of civilian deaths, confirming the military's disregard for all calls of cessation of hostilities and increased protection of civilians. Of the total of 1,241 civilian deaths, 845, including 277 women and 206 children, were killed in attacks by fixed-wing aircraft, drones, helicopters, paramotors, and gyrocopters. Despite a global fuel crisis, the intensity of airstrikes remained extremely high, with open sources recording 2,592 attacks, 17 percent more than the preceding 12 months. These figures are certainly an underestimation as military-imposed restrictions hampered verification of thousands of civilian deaths. Open sources indicate that as many as 15,731 civilians may have been killed since the coup and 3,102 in the reporting period.

Fig.1 Civilian deaths by year (up until May 2026)

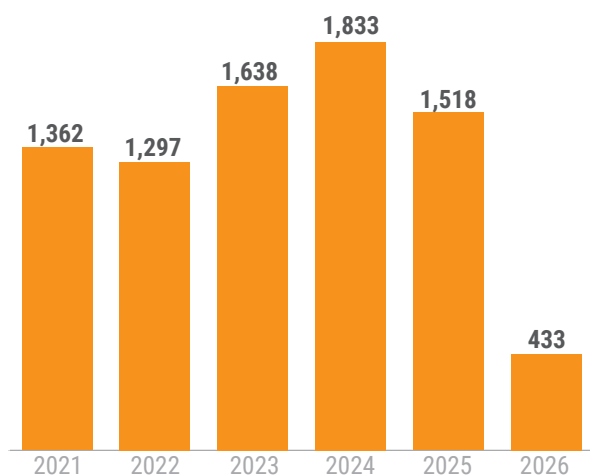
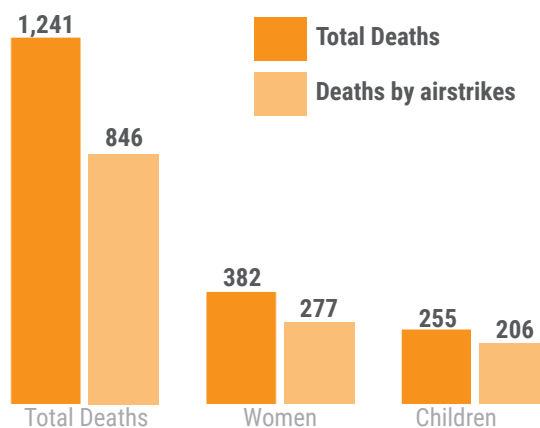
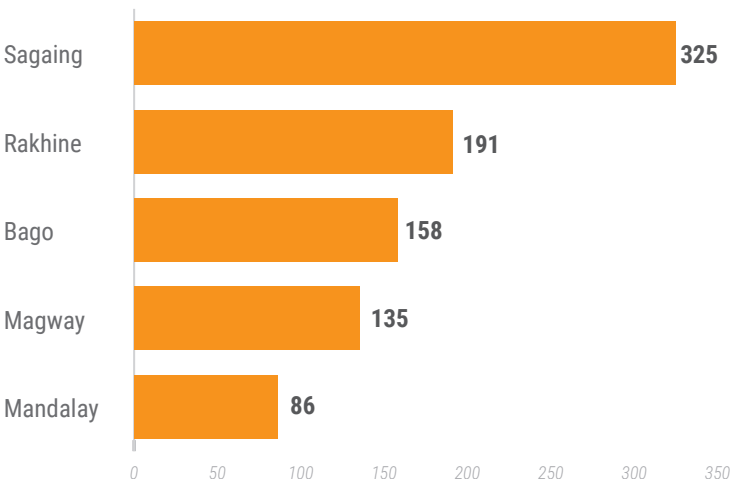


Fig.2 Deaths by airstrikes



Sagaing and the central regions were confirmed as the most dangerous areas for civilians with credible sources reporting at least 388 verified deaths, followed by Magway with 135. However, conflict activities increased nationwide with civilians, including members of minority communities, across Myanmar remaining exposed to multiple life-threatening concerns. Health experts warned about surges in water-borne and skin diseases, malaria, and possible measles outbreaks for which preparedness is minimal, given the absence of medicines and attacks on medical facilities and personnel. Open sources recorded 221 incidents against healthcare during the reporting period, including 90 airstrikes.

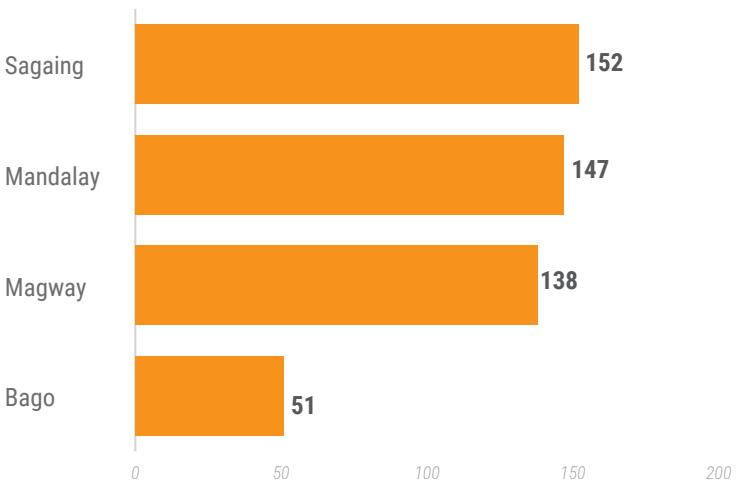
Fig.3 States and regions with highest number of deaths



These developments worsened the human rights situation, escalating insecurity, fuelling displacement, and expanding urgent protection and humanitarian needs of an already worn-out civilian population. Sexual and gender-based violence, mostly attributed to military perpetrators, remained a pressing concern, although nationwide evidence-based data are not available.

The use of arson as a tactic also escalated, with analysis of open sources indicating 597 arson attacks in the reporting period compared to 405 attacks in the previous period. Sagaing and Mandalay were most affected with 152 and 147 incidents, respectively.

Fig.4 Total arson attacks in the central regions



HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF ROHINGYA MUSLIMS

Across Rakhine, civilians from ethnic Rakhine, Rohingya and other minority communities faced constant life-threatening risks due to hostilities between the military and Arakan Army. AAPP reported that the military had killed at least 191 civilians, including 71 women and 48 children during the reporting period. Of these 177 died in airstrikes.

Among the deadliest incidents, the military bombed two boarding schools in Kyauktaw in September 2025, the Mrauk-U General Hospital in December 2025, and a market in a village in Ponnagyun in February 2026, cumulatively killing at least 66 civilians, including 28 women and 24 children. In ethnic Rakhine majority areas, military reliance on heavy artillery and drones caused civilian deaths and forced displacement.

Fig.5 Construction of a non-Rohingya settlement on Rohingya farmland (Source: Maxar, via Esri World Imagery. Captured: 11/02/2025)



Before

Rohingya men, women, and children, suffered systematic discrimination by all parties, with absolute impunity. In Northern Rakhine, the Arakan Army carried out arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, instances of enforced disappearance, forced labour and recruitment, unlawful confiscation of land and residential property, and the destruction of villages, religious and cultural sites, forcing renewed Rohingya displacement.

Local sources reported that in areas under their control, the Arakan Army also restricted movement, livelihoods, and access to healthcare, with patterns of forced recruitment, forced labour, unlawful taxation, and extortion, albeit on a lower scale than in northern Rakhine.

Fig.6 Construction of a non-Rohingya settlement on Rohingya farmland (Source: Maxar, via Esri World Imagery. Captured: 3/01/2026)



After

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF ROHINGYA MUSLIMS

Gravely, the Arakan Army has seemingly attempted to reshape land use and ownership in northern Rakhine. Despite reduced conflict activities, the Arakan Army did not allow displaced Rohingya to return to their places of origin and settled non-Rohingya communities on Rohingya land. Rohingya labourers were forced to build a camp for survivors of the 2024 massacre in Hoya Churi. Currently some 600 displaced Rohingya are held there, constantly guarded, and unable to leave.

Fig.7 A camp for survivors of the 2024 Hoya Churi massacre built using Rohingya forced labour (Source: Maxar, via Esri World Imagery. Captured: 11/02/2025)

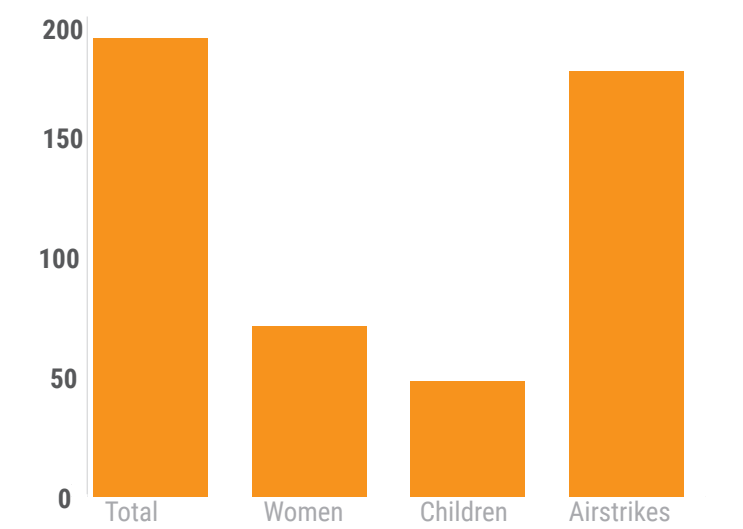


Before

Instances of Arakan Army units plundering Rohingya livestock and agricultural yield, arbitrary taxation, and systematic movement restrictions exclusively targeting Rohingya prevented access to healthcare and livelihoods. Women and children faced heightened life-threatening risks, aggravating intersecting vulnerabilities.

Arakan Army elements forcibly recruited members of all communities, including Rohingya men, women, and children, heightening protection concerns and driving further displacement. Recruiters from the Arakan Army reportedly demanded villagers meet quotas with families being instructed to provide “one boy or one girl” as a recruit.

Fig.9 Civilian deaths in Rakhine and deaths by airstrike



Arakan Army actions exacerbated the already severe humanitarian crisis caused by the military's blockade of goods and restriction of access for humanitarian organizations, particularly impacting Rohingya. Chronic shortages in medical care resulted in high rates of acute watery diarrhoea, skin infections, various transmittable diseases, and malnutrition, with three women reportedly dying during childbirth in a village in Buthidaung between November and April 2026.

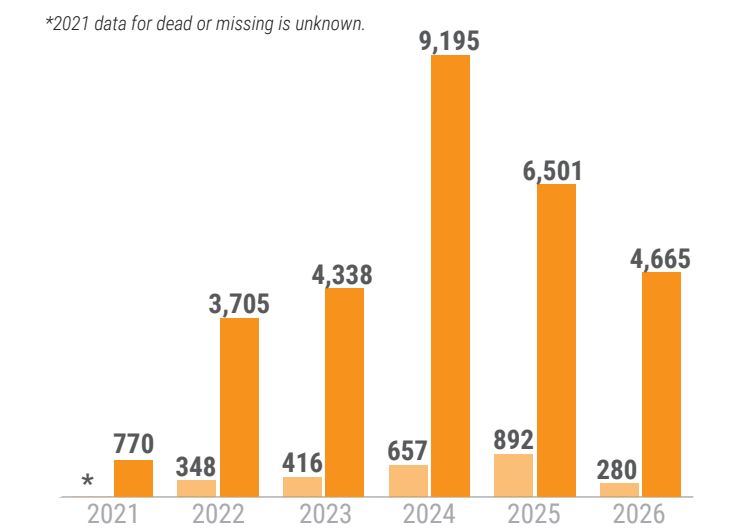
Fig.8 A camp for survivors of the 2024 Hoya Churi massacre built using Rohingya forced labour (Source: Maxar, via Esri World Imagery. Captured: 3/01/2026)



After

Such threats, incidents of violence, intercommunal tensions and forced recruitment have motivated Rohingya to continue to flee to seek protection. By the end of April 2026, 149,769 Rohingya were newly registered in Bangladesh. According to United Nations figures, 2025 was the deadliest year for Rohingya undertaking maritime journeys, with 892 dead or missing. This trend continued into 2026 with 4,665 attempting maritime journeys by May 2026, the highest reported since 2022, with 280 reported dead or missing. Given further deteriorations in the situation in Rakhine, conditions remain non-conducive for safe, sustainable, and dignified returns.

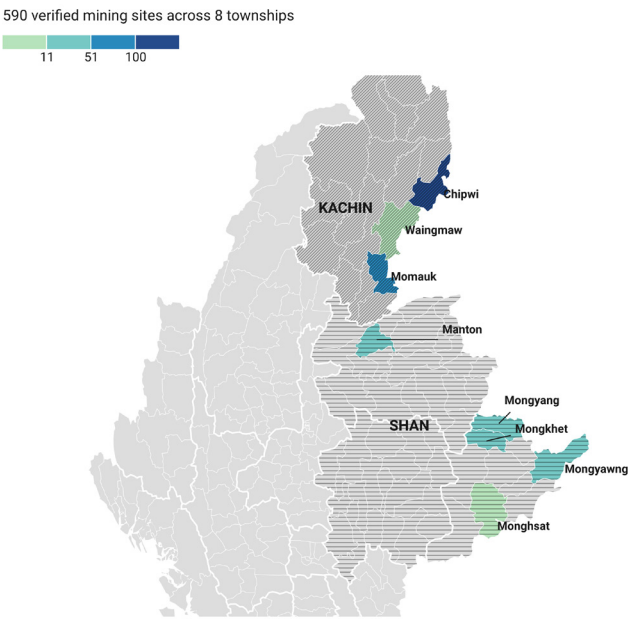
Fig.10 Rohingya maritime movements and reported dead/missing (Source: UNHCR)



HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS OF RARE EARTH MINING

The absence of the rule of law in Myanmar has resulted in the flourishing of illicit economies that have helped finance the conflict and worsen the human rights crisis. Illicit, unregulated mining, particularly of rare earth elements, has caused massive environmental damage, contributed to widespread human rights violations and abuses, and expanded the regional impacts of the crisis.

Fig.11 Rare earth mining sites by township (Source: Stimson, USAID as at May 2026)



Since the coup, Myanmar has become the main global producer of opium and synthetic drugs, with Shan accounting for 88 percent of national production. A multi-billion-dollar online scam industry established operations in Shan, Kayin, and other areas, aggravating human trafficking, transnational crimes, torture, sexual abuse, and forced labour. As a highly destructive technique, in-situ leaching methodologies required clearing vast forest areas to establish networks of thousands of hillside boreholes, resulting in rapid soil decay.

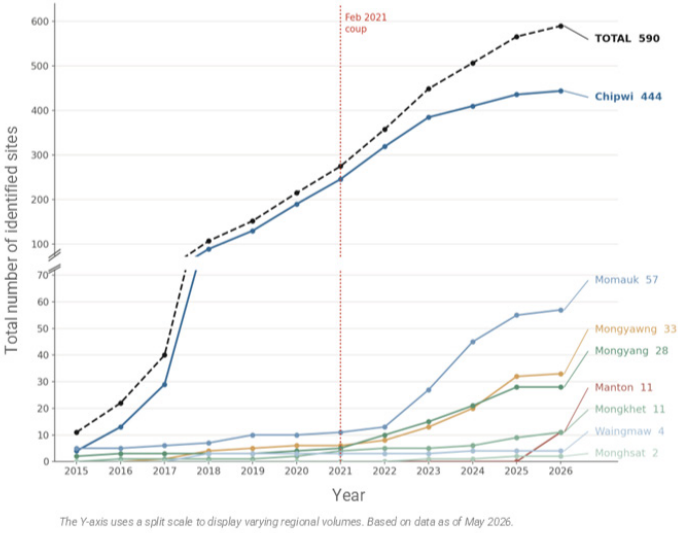
Fig.13 A Rare Earth Mining Area in Mongyawng Township, Shan (2021 vs. 2025) (Source: Maxar, via Esri World Imagery. Captured: 13/02/2021)



Before

Geospatial analysis by thematic experts has identified a surge in rare earth mining sites, with figures growing from 215 pre-coup to over 590 by 31 May 2026. Satellite images confirmed that Kachin remained the primary mining area, with 302 new sites since 2021, a 149 percent increase since pre-coup. In Shan, sites increased from 12 pre-coup to 85 post-coup, representing a 600 percent expansion.

Fig.12 Cumulative rare earth mining sites by township (Source: Maxar, via Esri World Imagery. Captured: 3/01/2026)



This environmental degradation severely exacerbated climate vulnerability, with rainfall triggering widespread flooding as extensive deforestation and damage to mountainsides limited the land's water retention capacity. Since extraction sites lacked wastewater treatment infrastructure or containment safeguards, toxic mining runoff flowed directly into local streams, resulting in severe chemical and transboundary pollution.

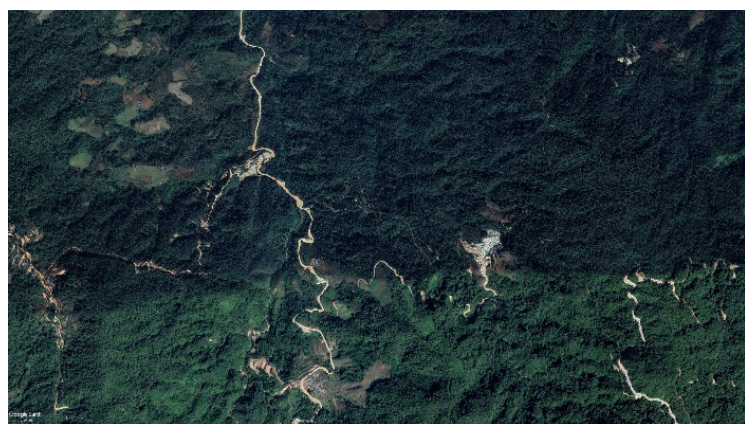
Fig.14 A Rare Earth Mining Area in Mongyawng Township, Shan (2021 vs. 2025) (Source: Maxar, via Esri World Imagery. Captured: 22/12/2025)



After

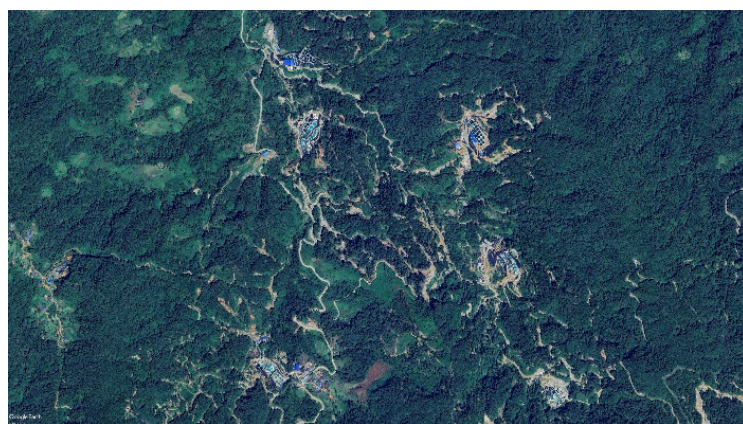
HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS OF RARE EARTH MINING

Fig.15 A Rare Earth Mining Area in Momauk Township, Kachin (2020 vs. 2025) (Source: Airbus, via Google. Captured: 19/01/2020)



Before

Fig.16 A Rare Earth Mining Area in Momauk Township, Kachin (2020 vs. 2025) (Source: Airbus, via Google. Captured: 11/10/2025)



After

Impacts on women and girls:

- Environmental contamination impacted maternal and reproductive health, with local documentation efforts confirming sharp surges in miscarriages, severe bleeding during pregnancy, childbirth, or after delivery, and pregnancy complications attributed to heavy metal and chemical exposure.
- Sexual exploitation and predatory labour practices were systemically embedded within the hiring structure of mining operations. Women seeking standard employment as cooks or cleaners were routinely subjected to “Ayaw”, or “mixed position” arrangements, a localized term denoting institutionalized sexual coercion.
- Women were reportedly confined to informal service roles and hired as “water watchers”, tasked with monitoring the flow of hazardous leaching agents through hillside boreholes, often in isolated conditions during twelve-hour day and night shifts across remote terrains, without any legal protection.
- Women working in mining or associated with workers were subjected to reputational damage and marginalization. Migrant workers formed temporary relationships and abandoned women and children without any financial support when relocating.

Impacts on workers:

- This sector operated on a rigid, discriminatory tier system that segregated the workforce by nationality and gender. Foreign nationals mostly occupied managerial, financial, and technical engineering roles, receiving significantly higher incomes and protections. Myanmar men carried out high-risk physical labour, including digging leaching tunnels, driving acid pipes into hillsides, and operating processing furnaces. Women were systematically channelled into lower-tier positions.
- Access to remote extraction sites was heavily gatekept by informal brokers charging recruitment fees, trapping numerous individuals into cycles of debt bondage. Wage exploitation was also widespread across mining zones, with workers routinely facing arbitrary wage reductions and having payments withheld five months to a year.
- Workers developed symptoms like acute respiratory distress, severe headaches, chemical burns, and gastrointestinal illnesses. Prolonged exposure caused the accumulation of toxic agents, leading to chronic pulmonary, kidney, and liver diseases.
- Traffickers reportedly transferred workers from scam centres to mining sites to be detained and subjected to conditions likely constituting forced labour.

Impacts on local communities:

- Toxic wastewater from leaching pools discharged directly into downstream agricultural land made the soil barren, and where crops survived, yield and quality were severely affected, significantly reducing farmers’ incomes. Water contamination severely affected aquatic life, depriving communities of subsistence fishing, and impacting livestock-based livelihoods as cattle and water buffalo became ill or died from drinking from the rivers.
- Massive transport trucks crossing the border scattered heavy chemical dust across villages, coating homes in toxic residue and making the air unbreathable. Runoff heavily contaminated water sources, exposing downstream populations to the same heavy metal poisoning, respiratory distress, and severe organ failures observed in frontline workers.
- Local sources reported more frequent and severe floods and landslides, forcing temporary displacement. Unregulated industrial practices posed lethal threats to surrounding civilian populations.

CONCLUSIONS

More than five years since the coup, the human rights situation of civilians and minority communities has sharply deteriorated, as intensified airstrikes and arson attacks, destroyed infrastructure, displacement, denial of assistance, food scarcity, discrimination, sexual violence, forced conscription, disappearances, and extortion permeate civilian life. Rohingya residents are left with minimal options for survival as they have persistently experienced killings, disappearances, sexual violence, forced displacement, forced recruitment, forced labour, and seizure of home and land. The regional impacts of the crisis are evident in the flourishing of illicit economies, which have strengthened the expansion of transnational criminal networks, and serious transboundary environmental contamination with major human rights impacts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The High Commissioner calls on the Myanmar military to:

- a) Cease immediately all violations of international humanitarian law, and violations of international human rights law in compliance with Security Council resolution 2669 (2022);
- b) Allow and facilitate unhindered humanitarian assistance to civilians in need and lift restrictions;
- c) End all forms of conscription, including of children and Rohingya;
- d) Release all prisoners arbitrarily detained;
- e) Protect Rohingya by refraining from killing, maiming, arbitrarily arresting, torturing, forcibly recruiting and displacing them;
- f) Halt unregulated extraction of resources, ensure environmental protection, and respect for human rights.

To the Arakan Army, the High Commissioner recommends that they:

- a) Cease all violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law against the Rohingya;
- b) Ensure the full respect of land and property rights of Rohingya;
- c) Release all those arbitrarily detained and forcibly recruited, including Rohingya women, girls, and boys.

To the National Unity Government, Ethnic Armed Organisations, and anti-military armed groups:

- a) Cease all violations of international humanitarian law, and violations and abuses of international human rights law;
- b) Respect and ensure civilian protection, address abuses, including of sexual nature, timely and transparently;
- c) Cease all practices of forced recruitment, including of children and Rohingya immediately effectuate their release;
- d) Immediately end all instances of unregulated exploitation of natural resources and ensure environmental protection;
- e) Exercise appropriate oversight over extraction;
- f) Ensure mandatory, meaningful representation of women and local communities in all governance processes, alongside implementing zero-tolerance mechanisms for sexual and gender-based violence and labour exploitation.

To business enterprises:

- a) Companies involved in the extraction, purchase, processing, transport, financing or trade of rare earth minerals should conduct human rights due diligence proportional to the level of risk, suspend or terminate activities where adverse impacts cannot be prevented or mitigated, and provide for or cooperate in remediation or contributed where harm was caused.

The High Commissioner reiterates his calls for a full referral of the Myanmar situation to the International Criminal Court by the UN Security Council and recommends that Member States, including ASEAN:

- a) Cease and prevent the transfer to Myanmar of arms, ammunition, jet fuel and dual use items;
- b) Refrain from lending political legitimacy to the military's purported exercise of civilian authority;
- c) Politically and financially support the demands of the Myanmar people for democracy, justice, and all their human rights, by systematically engaging with all duty-bearers and democratic actors;
- d) Engage in political dialogue with the military insisting on verified and meaningful progress in adhering to international law;
- e) Support to those who fled Myanmar due to insecurity and develop measures to counter military's actions aimed at denying access to personal documentation and legal protection, including by not returning civilians and avoiding risks of refoulement;
- f) Support comprehensive data collection on environmental, health and social and cultural impacts of rare earth mining, while providing flexible funding to civil society actors and environmental human rights defenders.