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World Report 2025 - Myanmar

The Myanmar junta has ramped up its “scorched earth” tactics against civilians in response to the growing armed resistance and territorial losses. The military’s atrocities committed since the February 2021 coup amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, fueled by decades of impunity. Ethnic Rohingya are currently facing the gravest threats since the military’s 2017 atrocities. Refugees from the conflict are increasingly fleeing to neighboring countries and elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

Military Abuses

Since October 2023, fighting between junta forces and alliances of ethnic and resistance armed groups escalated throughout the country, following the opposition’s launch of [Operation 1027](#). The junta has increasingly carried out aerial and artillery attacks during military operations, including indiscriminate and deliberate strikes against civilians and civilian property and infrastructure. Fighting took place in all 14 states and regions. Civilians in conflict-affected areas have described living in constant fear of fighting, arrest, and torture by security forces.

The military has [launched airstrikes](#) on schools, hospitals, religious sites, and camps for displaced people. On January 7, a military [airstrike](#) on Kanan village in Sagaing Region killed 17 civilians who were attending church, including nine children. On February 5, the military [launched an airstrike](#) on a school in Daw Se Ei village in Karenni State, killing four students and injuring another 27 civilians. Overall, there have been growing numbers of [attacks on education](#) and [grave violations against children](#). On September 5, the military [bombed](#) an internally displaced persons’ camp in Pekon township on the Shan-Karenni State border, killing eight children and two women.

The junta has carried out widespread extrajudicial killings. On May 29, soldiers [rounded up](#) hundreds of villagers in Byain Phyu in central Rakhine State and separated the men and women. Residents were interrogated and [tortured](#); some were shot. The military reportedly killed between 48 and 76 villagers, including five women who were also raped. In August, two journalists [were killed](#) during a military raid in Mon State.

Since 2022, Myanmar has used domestically produced air-dropped cluster munitions, which are indiscriminate weapons in populated areas. In 2024, airstrikes involving cluster bombs were seemingly carried out in Rakhine State in January; Chin State in April; and in Mandalay Region in August.

Myanmar [topped the global list](#) of landmine casualties for the first time in 2023. In the first nine months of 2024, 889 civilian casualties from landmines and explosive remnants of war [were documented](#), including 245 children, though the actual numbers are presumed much higher. Myanmar is one of only four countries currently using antipersonnel mines.

From May 2021 to August 2024, the military [burned](#) more than 100,000 homes, predominantly in Sagaing Region.

The junta continues to receive foreign revenue and make payments for weapons and other military needs by [evading sanctions](#).

Conscription, Repression, and Surveillance

On February 10, facing depleted ranks in the military, the junta activated the 2010 People’s Military Service Law, enabling the conscription of men ages 18 to 35 and women ages 18 to 27 for up to

five years. Myanmar's military has a long history of employing abusive recruitment tactics. Rates of arrests and of people fleeing the country both increased in response. Military authorities have since used abductions and detention of family members to carry out [conscription](#), including of children. Conscripts have been used as human shields and porters on the front lines. In August, the junta [announced](#) it would recruit men ages 35 to 65 to join the newly developed "people's security and counterterrorism teams." The UN [verified](#) the military's recruitment and use of over 1,100 children in 2023.

In July, the junta extended its "state of emergency" for an additional six months to prepare for the [sham elections](#) scheduled for November 2025. In October, the junta launched a nationwide census with an extensive list of 68 questions that appear [designed to root out](#) opposition activists and eligible military recruits. In a similar surveillance effort, the junta in May [began requiring](#) all individuals to obtain biometric e-IDs in order to leave the country.

The junta [severely restricts](#) internet and phone services, with rolling shutdowns around the country—particularly in conflict areas—that gravely impact access to information, humanitarian efforts, and community protection. In May, the junta Ministry of Transport and Communications [began blocking](#) VPNs (virtual private networks), which allow users to access the internet securely and circumvent censorship, followed by a block on the encrypted message application Signal in July.

Arbitrary Detention, Torture, and Ill-Treatment

Junta authorities [have arrested](#) at least 27,500 people since the 2021 coup, including over 5,700 women and 570 children. More than 1,900 people have died while in junta custody, although the actual figures are likely higher. The use of torture, sexual violence, and other ill-treatment is [rampant in prisons](#), interrogation centers, military bases, and other detention sites, with reports of rape, beatings, prolonged stress positions, electrocution and burning, and deprivation of food, water, and sleep.

Junta forces have arbitrarily arrested activists, journalists, humanitarian workers, lawyers, and religious leaders. Charges under the amended counterterrorism law for association with anti-military groups have increased, including for support such as aid provision. On January 10, a closed military court [sentenced](#) award-winning documentary filmmaker Shin Daewe to life in prison on trumped-up terrorism charges. More than 1,800 people [have been detained](#) since February 2022 for online activity supporting the opposition or criticizing the military, including simply "liking" a post on social media. Security forces continue to arbitrarily detain family and friends of activists as a form of coercion and collective punishment, including children.

More than 125 detainees have been sentenced to death, with an additional 44 people sentenced to death in absentia.

The country's already weak rule of law has collapsed since the coup. Martial law has been declared in at least 64 townships. Lawyers defending anti-coup protesters and critics [have faced](#) threats, arrest, and prosecution. Military authorities have imposed systematic obstacles and restrictions on lawyers and abolished all semblance of an independent judiciary. The junta has established special closed courts inside prisons to fast-track politically sensitive cases, while closed military tribunals operating in townships under martial law are entirely opaque.

Persecution of Rohingya

About 630,000 Rohingya remain in Rakhine State, subject to systematic abuses that amount to the [crimes against humanity of apartheid, persecution, and deprivation of liberty](#), including about 150,000 held in [open-air detention camps](#).

Rohingya have been caught between the junta and ethnic Arakan Army forces since hostilities resumed in November 2023, ending a year-long unofficial ceasefire. As the Arakan Army has rapidly expanded its control of Rakhine State, the military has responded with [indiscriminate attacks](#) on civilians using helicopter gunships, artillery, and ground assaults. After junta forces and allied Rohingya armed groups attacked Rakhine areas in mid-April, the Arakan Army responded with a month of attacks on Rohingya villages. On May 17, Arakan Army forces shelled, looted, and burned Rohingya neighborhoods during their [capture of Buthidaung town](#).

On August 5, approximately 180 people were [reportedly killed](#) following drone strikes and shelling on civilians fleeing fighting in Maungdaw town.

Since February, the junta has recruited in violation of domestic law thousands of Rohingya men and boys from Rakhine State and the refugee camps in Bangladesh, with support from Rohingya armed groups, [inflaming tensions](#) between the Rohingya Muslim and Rakhine Buddhist communities.

The junta has imposed [new movement restrictions and aid blockages](#) in Rakhine State.

The conflict has internally displaced more than 380,000 people in Rakhine State and southern Chin State since November 2023. Tens of thousands have fled across the border into Bangladesh, while thousands more have been pushed back by Bangladesh border guards.

Since January 2023, more than 11,000 Rohingya [have attempted](#) dangerous boat journeys from Myanmar and Bangladesh, over 800 of whom have died or gone missing.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Women and girls are increasingly at risk of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence, committed by military and non-state perpetrators with impunity, particularly amid the expanding conflict.

As a means of punishing the civilian population, military forces [have subjected](#) civilians to rape and gang rape, sexualized torture and mutilation, sexual assault at checkpoints or during raids, and forced nudity. The notorious “ogre column” military unit in Sagaing Region [has abducted](#), beheaded, maimed, and raped women.

Sexual and gender-based violence is a [frequent tool](#) of torture used against detainees, including rape with objects, burning of genitals, sexual humiliation, and invasive body searches.

Domestic violence [has increased sharply](#), while survivors have little to no access to services, protection, or redress.

Aid Blockages and Displacement

The junta has ramped up its deadly blockages of humanitarian aid as a method of collective punishment against the civilian population. These blockages sustain the military’s longstanding “four cuts” strategy, designed to maintain control of an area by isolating and terrorizing civilians. From January to June, humanitarian organizations [reported](#) 682 incidents impeding the delivery of aid.

More than 3.2 million people have been internally displaced since the coup, including over 1.8 million since the escalation of fighting in October 2023. The majority live in makeshift shelters and open fields with limited access to food, health care, and water.

In September, hundreds were killed and an estimated 1 million [affected by flooding](#) from monsoon rains and Typhoon Yagi. The emergency response was obstructed by the junta’s restrictions on aid,

including roadblocks, telecommunications suspensions, denial of travel authorizations, blocked mobile payments, and increased scrutiny at checkpoints, particularly in resistance strongholds. Junta officials reportedly blocked the transport of food and other aid materials in [Bago Region](#) and [Karenni and Shan States](#).

Prior to the flooding, the number of people needing humanitarian assistance had already grown to [18.6 million](#), including 6 million children, amid countrywide economic and infrastructure collapse.

Lack of access to medical care has exacerbated growing [malnutrition](#), [waterborne illness](#), and [preventable deaths](#). Since early 2024, an estimated 1.6 million people [have been cut off](#) from hospital access in Rakhine State, where Médecins Sans Frontières [was forced](#) to suspend its medical activities. In response to a cholera outbreak in Yangon Region beginning in June, the junta withheld health information from [the public](#) and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#).

Justice and Accountability

In November, the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor requested an arrest warrant for the commander-in-chief, Sr. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, for the alleged crimes against humanity of deportation and persecution of the Rohingya committed between August and December 2017. The court's investigation is limited to crimes committed at least in part in Bangladesh, an ICC member country.

In July, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) [accepted the interventions](#) of seven governments in Gambia's case against Myanmar under the Genocide Convention. Gambia filed its reply to Myanmar's counter-memorial in May. The military's escalating abuses in Rakhine State underscore its blatant disregard for the binding [provisional measures ordered](#) by the ICJ.

In June, an Argentine prosecutor [requested arrest warrants](#) for 25 individuals from Myanmar. The case was brought under the principle of universal jurisdiction.