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1948

1948

Myanmar, then known as Burma, gains independence from the United Kingdom.

1948

Civil war erupts between the Myanmar military and the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), killing 17,600 over four decades. Many ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) emerge over the next 20 years.

1988

The 8888 Uprising sees the emergence of Aung San Suu Kyi as a prodemocracy leader. The government reacts by killing 3,000 protesters, and Suu Kyi is placed under house arrest.

1990

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) wins parliamentary elections, but the military rejects the results and arrests several NLD leaders.

2007

Former students and Buddhist monks lead a series of antigovernment protests called the Saffron Revolution. A military crackdown kills 200.

2010

The military-backed USDP party wins a predetermined victory in parliamentary elections.

2010

Aung San Suu Kyi released from house arrest.

2012

After a rape and murder by three Rohingyas, riots and revenge attacks kill at least 192. Almost 120,000 are displaced. Anti-Muslim riots and violence spread to other parts of the country the following year.

2012

Suu Kyi's NLD wins parliamentary by-elections.

2016

Harakah al-Yaqin, a Rohingya guerrilla group with international ties, attacks Border Guard Police in Rakhine State, killing nine officers.

2016

Government retaliation in Rakhine leads to widespread reports of human rights abuses. Seventy-four thousand people flee to Bangladesh and 20,000 are internally displaced.

2016

Most EAOs attend round one of the government's 21st Century Panglong political dialogue.

1962

General Ne Win seizes power in a coup, turning Myanmar into a one-party military dictatorship. Rangoon University students protesting the coup are shot and killed.

1982

Citizenship Law denies citizenship to Muslim Rohingyas, who have lived in Rakhine State for generations.

1989

The CPB splinters along ethnic lines and is defeated by the Myanmar military. Key EAOs emerge from the splintered party.

2003

Suu Kyi, released from house arrest, joins NLD tour in upper Myanmar. Attacks by progovernment militias kill 70, and Suu Kyi is arrested again.

2008

Undemocratic new constitution grants the military 25 percent of seats in parliament and control over key ministries. The constitution bars Suu Kyi from becoming president.

2011

New president Thein Sein launches reforms, releasing political prisoners, lifting restrictions on the media, and renewing peace efforts with EAOs.

2011

Fighting erupts in Kachin state as a 17-year-old ceasefire collapses.

2015

NLD wins historic landslide in general elections. NLD's Htin Kyaw will be Myanmar's president but, in practice, Suu Kyi will run the government.

2015

Eight EAOs sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, but many groups fail to sign, and fighting continues in Shan and Kachin States.

2017

A second round of political dialogue is held, but progress is slow, and ethnic violence continues.

2017

Insurgent attacks on police posts in Rakhine lead to renewed military operations. Hundreds of thousands flee over the border to Bangladesh.

2017

Myanmar

At a glance



National civil war
Absent



Communal/ideological conflict
High



National political conflict
Decreasing from high to low



Local political and electoral conflict
Low



Transnational terrorism
Low with potential to rise to medium



Local resource conflict
High



Separatism and autonomy
High



Urban crime and violence
Low

** Rankings are based on the last 15 years and are relative to other Asian countries.*

Overview

Conflict and violence in Myanmar are longstanding, rooted in the lack of legitimacy and capacity of successive military regimes to address contested visions of what constitutes the nation state among the country's ethnic groups and political factions. Several decades of authoritarian military rule, marked by brutal suppression of democracy movements and ethnic autonomy, have resulted in protracted armed conflicts between government security forces and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs). Since 2011, the civilian government has initiated several efforts to reach peace agreements with EAOs. In 2015, eight EAOs signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement with the central government. However, many of the largest armed groups have not signed, and progress in moving towards implementation has been slow. Armed clashes still continue in several areas, such as Kachin and Shan States. Intercommunal violence, in particular in Rakhine State with military involvement, has led to massive displacement. With the military maintaining a strong influence and significant roles in Myanmar's governance, it remains to be seen how the newly elected government under Aung San Suu Kyi's leadership will move the peace process forward and manage ongoing subnational conflicts.

National level



National civil war

Civil war between the central government in Myanmar and the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) began immediately following independence in 1948 and lasted for 41 years. Intense fighting between the Myanmar military, known as the *Tatmadaw*, and the CPB's armed forces caused at least 17,600 fatalities between 1948 and 1988.¹ Prior to its defeat in 1989, the CPB was the country's largest multiethnic insurgent group. The party disintegrated after ethnic units mutinied against the CPB's mostly Burman leaders. Key ethnic armed groups emerged from the CPB, most notably the powerful United Wa State Army (UWSA), which can mobilize around 30,000 troops, and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance (Kokang). Both have strongholds along the Chinese border.



National political conflict

From independence in 1948, the military has played a central role in national politics. Following a split within the ruling Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, General Ne Win led a military coup in 1962 that turned Myanmar into a one-party military dictatorship. Military rule was marked by war and the suppression of ethnic minorities and opposing political groups.

Following the military coup in 1962, soldiers shot and killed a number of Rangoon University students who were protesting against the coup. Since then, the military has attacked and killed protestors on a number of occasions. During antigovernment riots in August 1988, known as the 8888 Uprising, which saw the rise of Aung San Suu Kyi as a leader of the democratic movement in Myanmar, around 3,000 protestors lost their lives.² After the riots, Suu Kyi was put under house arrest. The student demonstrators who survived the massacre in Rangoon picked up arms and formed the semi-insurgent All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF). Low-intensity fights between the ABSDF and the *Tatmadaw* continued from 1990 to 1994, resulting in at least 100 deaths.³ It is estimated that at least 4,000 civilians, including political opponents, demonstrators, and ethnic minorities, were killed by the government armed forces between 1991 and 2012 (figure 1).

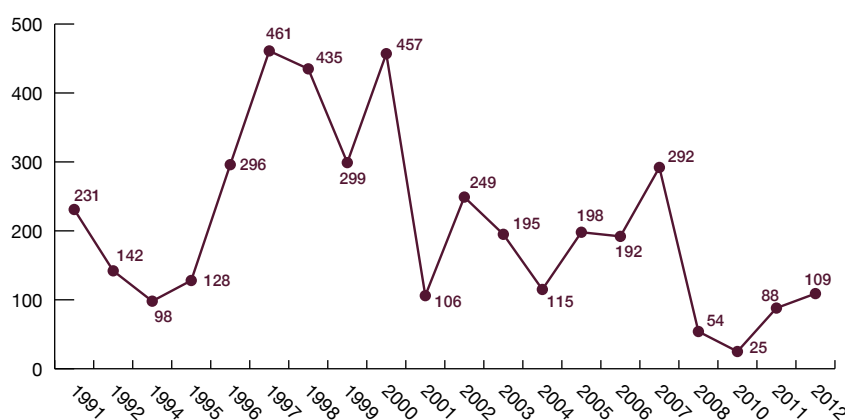


Figure 1. Number of civilian fatalities in one-sided violence (1991–2012)

Source: Eck and Hultman, "Violence Against Civilians," and Melander et al., "Organized Violence."⁴

Suppression of the democratic movement continued with the military's rejection of the National League for Democracy's (NLD's) victory in the 1990 election and the subsequent arrest of several NLD leaders. When Suu Kyi was released and joined an NLD tour in upper Myanmar in May 2003, the party's convoy was attacked by progovernment militias. As many as 70 people were killed in the violence.⁵ Suu Kyi was arrested again, along with several NLD members. Similar state violence against civilians occurred in 2007, when students from the 88 Generation, who were involved in the 8888 Uprising, and Buddhist monks led a series of antigovernment demonstrations across the country that became known as the Saffron Revolution. The military crackdown took the lives of up to 200 demonstrators.⁶

After the 2010 election, in which the military backed the predetermined victory of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), a civilian-led government was formed. In late 2010, Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest. When President Thein Sein took office in March 2011, he launched a series of political reforms, including the release of hundreds of political prisoners and the easing of restrictions on the media and civilian political activity. The NLD and Suu Kyi were allowed to resume political activities, which resulted in opposition wins in the 2012 by-elections.

The year 2011 marked a transition to a military-civilian hybrid government, with the NLD triumphing in general elections in November 2015. National politics took a broadly positive turn with regard to democratization and liberalization, but there were still fears that reforms might be reversed. In the past, the military had attempted to improve Myanmar's image by releasing political prisoners, allowing elections, and increasing liberties. However, whenever the military felt threatened by the NLD and civilian support for democracy, authoritarian rule strengthened. Since 2011, reforms have been much more substantive, but barriers remain. In addition to giving the military one-quarter of parliamentary seats, the undemocratic 2008 constitution gives the military control of three powerful ministries: defense, home affairs, and border affairs. The constitution also bars Aung San Suu Kyi from becoming president,⁷ and it is very difficult to make constitutional amendments.

The fear of returning to authoritarian rule has significantly decreased since the NLD's historic landslide in the 2015 election. The party secured an absolute majority in Parliament and achieved similar results in state and regional legislatures. The elections were peaceful and generally viewed by observers as "free and fair."⁸ However, more than a million people in Rakhine State who self-identify as Rohingya—considered illegal immigrants from Bangladesh despite having lived in Myanmar for decades—were disenfranchised. Thousands of people in ethnic areas such as Shan and Kachin States were also unable to vote due to ongoing conflict and protracted displacement, and elections were cancelled in 3.4 percent of village tracts and wards across the country.⁹

The NLD-led government faces various challenges in civilianizing the government, given power-sharing arrangements with the military that stem from the 2008 constitution. The military still controls significant parts of the bureaucracy and 25 percent of seats in the Union, state, and region parliaments. The NLD has taken a conciliatory approach towards the military and cooperated to ensure a peaceful power transfer. Previous agenda items for Suu Kyi, such as reforming the constitution to reduce military power or allow Suu Kyi to become president, have been downplayed. Instead, Suu Kyi's trusted friend, Htin Kyaw, became president in March 2016. In practice, Suu Kyi has run the government.



Transnational terrorism

Anti-Muslim violence, and the mistreatment of self-identified Rohingyas by the Myanmar government and Buddhist groups, have triggered statements from transnational Islamist and jihadist groups in the region, such as the Islamic State (IS),

Ethnic armed groups present in

1/3 of townships

al-Qaeda, and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.¹⁰ There has been little evidence that Myanmar is their operational priority. However, the local Muslim insurgent group in Rakhine State, Harakah al Yaqin (Faith Movement, HaY), which changed its name to the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), is reported to be linked with international jihadist groups. Considering ARSA's tactics of guerilla warfare and the use of crude explosives, the group appears to have cooperated to some degree with international groups, and to have received some assistance such as training and funding. Members of ARSA have confirmed that their leaders are well connected in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and, to a lesser extent, India.¹¹

Subnational level

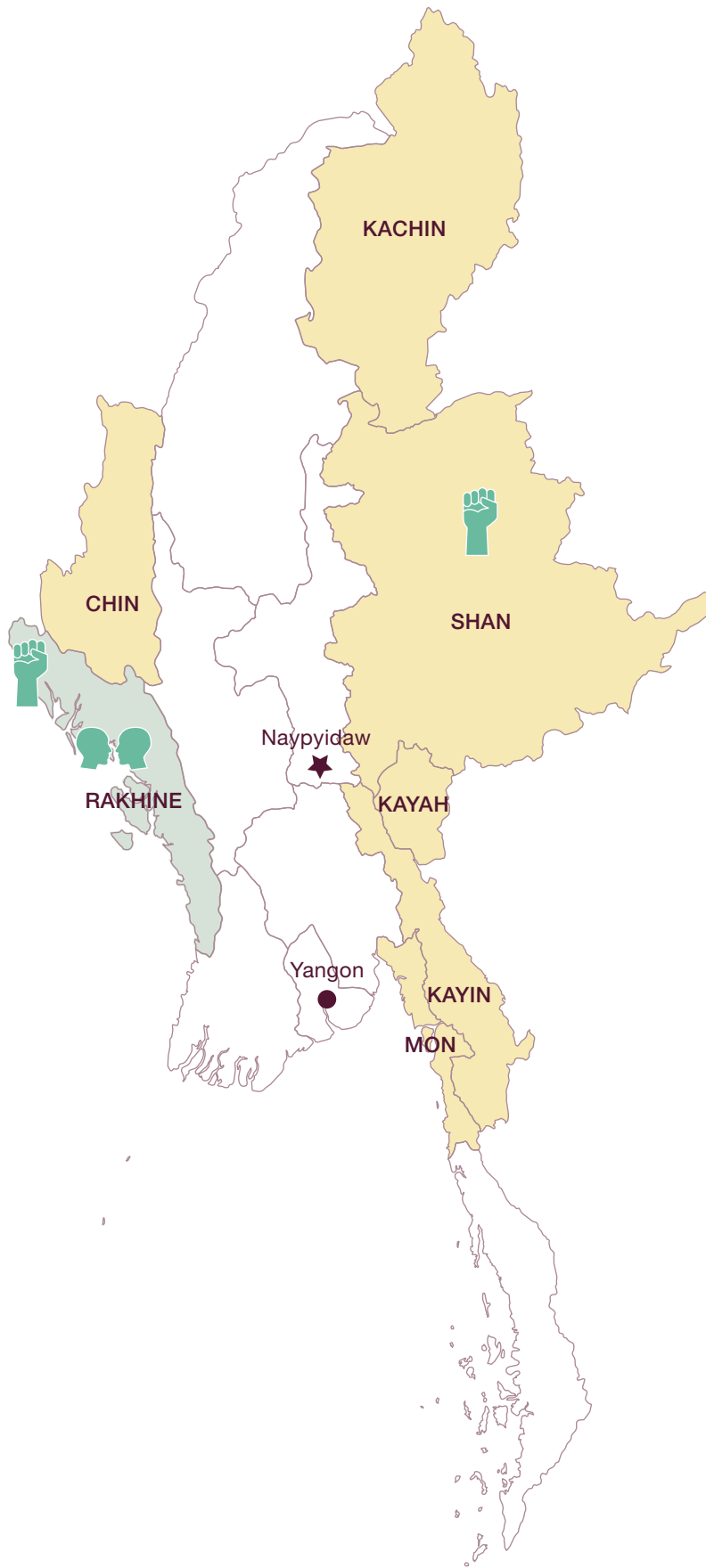


Separatism and autonomy

Myanmar is a country of great ethnic and cultural diversity. The country officially recognizes 135 ethnic groups, each of which has its own language and culture, and many of which have a history of autonomous self-governance both before and during the colonial period. They are primarily concentrated in the mountainous border areas of the country. Added together, ethnic minorities account for one-third of the country's population.

Several ethnic groups, such as the Karen, Mon, and Rakhine, took up arms to struggle for sovereignty immediately following independence. Other ethnic groups have fought against such insurgencies as part of the national army. However, by the 1950s and '60s, ethnic groups originally aligned with the government, such as the Shan, Chin, and Kachin, were also in open revolt. Their motivations varied, from seeking greater autonomy and fair representation to outright secession. After the military coup in 1962, the junta tried to control ethnic opposition by employing the "Four Cuts" strategy, designed to eliminate four main links—food, funds, intelligence, and recruits—between insurgents, their families, and local villagers. This effort forcibly displaced a large number of people.

It is estimated that there are now at least 21 EAOs along with many militia groups, including an estimated 396 in Shan State alone.¹² Approximately 118 of Myanmar's 330 townships, containing more than 12.4 million people, are affected by conflict and tensions between EAOs and the government. In 2016, over 100,000 people resided in long-term camps in Thailand, and a further 100,000 were internally displaced within Shan and Kachin States.¹³



Much of the heavy fighting between EAOs and government forces has taken place in the country's eastern and northern border areas, such as Karen (also known as Kayin), Kachin, and Shan States. Armed conflict in Karen State, one of the longest-running internal conflicts, caused at least 18,000 fatalities between 1949 and 2013.¹⁴ Kachin and Shan States have also long been battlegrounds in the central government's wars with EAOs. The intense, violent clashes in Kachin and Shan States resulted in 16,878 and 10,236 deaths, respectively, between 1949 and 2015, figures that probably underestimate the true death toll.¹⁵ In recent years, most of the fighting between government forces and EAOs has been low intensity, except during 2011 and 2012, when fighting erupted between the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) and the government after a 17-year-old ceasefire agreement collapsed (figure 2).

In the 1980s and '90s, the government pursued ceasefire deals with several armed groups, leading to many giving up their weapons and integrating into the Border Guard Force. The central government has made other special arrangements to subsume and co-opt the militants, but ceasefire interruptions and armed clashes still recur sporadically.

After 2011, President Thein Sein's government tried to negotiate peace deals with most major EAOs. In late 2013, 16 EAOs formed the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT),¹⁶ which represented its members in multilateral negotiations with the government team, known as the Union Peacemaking Working Committee (UPWC). After several meetings, the NCCT and the UPWC signed a final draft of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in March 2015. However, this draft was rejected in June 2015 by key EAO leaders, who demanded further amendments to the final document, reorganization of its negotiation team, and inclusion of three EAOs fighting against the government in Kokang, an area of northern Shan State. The government rejected the demand, insisting that all groups must enter a bilateral ceasefire with the government before joining the peace talks. More talks were held the following July and August, resulting in a slightly revised ceasefire agreement.

In October 2015, only eight EAOs signed the NCA, making it neither nationwide nor inclusive. Six EAOs were not allowed to sign the agreement because three of them, the Arakan Army (AA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), were still engaged in violent skirmishes with government forces, while

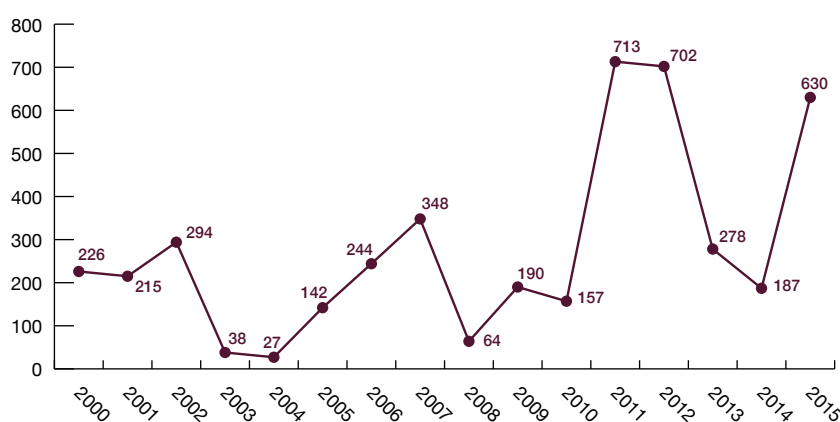


Figure 2. Number of fatalities in separatism conflicts (2000–2015)

Source: Melander et al., "Organized Violence"¹⁷

the other three, the Arakan National Council (ANC), the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU), and the Wa National Organization (WNO), lacked significant troop strength.¹⁸ The remaining groups postponed their decision to sign the agreement. This led to some tensions between signatory and nonsignatory EAOs.

The new administration led by Suu Kyi has inherited a peace process that was in stasis during the 2015 elections and the lengthy handover period, and she has indicated that achieving peace will be a top priority for her government. After the election, she stated, “The peace process is the first thing the new government will work on. We will try for the all-inclusive ceasefire agreement.... We can do nothing without peace in our country.”¹⁹ The Union Peace Conference–21st Century Panglong, named for the historic Panglong Conference of 1947, was first held in the early fall of 2016 with representatives from nearly all major EAOs except the AA, MNDAA, and TNLA, which had not entered a bilateral ceasefire with the government.²⁰ The government has expressed its intention to hold such peace conferences every six months, and the second conference was held in May 2017. In March 2017, Suu Kyi announced that five more EAOs, including the ANC, LDU, WNO, Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), and New Mon State Party (NMSP), would sign the NCA, but this announcement may have been premature.²¹

In the meantime, violence continues, particularly in Kachin State and northern parts of Shan State. In 2015 and 2016, there were 1,022 clashes between the government and EAOs in 63 townships.



Large-scale communal and ideological conflicts

Myanmar has a long history of communal mistrust between Buddhists and Muslims. Religious and ethnic tensions have grown in the past few years, with deadly consequences. In particular, intercommunal violence has intensified in Rakhine (Arakan) State between the Rohingya Muslims, who constitute one-third of the state population, and the Rakhine Buddhists. Although Rohingyas, who originated in part of Bengal (current Bangladesh), have been living in Rakhine State for generations, they are denied citizenship under the 1982 Citizenship Law, and are severely persecuted. Following the rape and murder of a Rakhine Buddhist woman by three Rohingya men in June 2012, riots and violent retaliation broke out across Rakhine State. According to the Rakhine Inquiry Commission, established by President Thein Sein, a series of violent clashes that took place in 2012 killed 192 people, injured 265 others, and destroyed over 8,500 houses.²² Nearly 70 percent of those killed were Rohingyas. Almost 120,000 people were internally displaced.²³ Since then, Rakhine State has experienced growing tensions and sporadic violence between the Buddhist and Muslim communities.

The security situation in Rakhine State grew increasingly volatile after attacks on the Border Guard Police in October 2016, which killed nine police officers. ARSA, formed by members of the persecuted Rohingya minority, has been blamed for the deadly attacks. The government's response, cracking down on Rohingya insurgents, has led to widespread reports of serious human rights abuses and a temporary suspension of humanitarian services in northern Rakhine State. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has documented allegations cases of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, forced disappearance, brutal beatings, rape, and other human rights violations against Rohingya populations, including women and children, by government security forces in the northern part of the state.²⁴ The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that approximately 74,000 people fled to Bangladesh, and 20,000 were internally displaced in Rakhine State, in October 2016.²⁵ While humanitarian services resumed in some areas, an estimated 30,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) had no access to humanitarian aid because of security operations by the government.²⁶ In August 2017, violence broke out after ARSA fighters attacked police posts in Rakhine, leading to a military response. With violence ongoing, UN officials stated that more

2012

2016

2017

**Rakhine violence
displaced hundreds
of thousands**

than 270,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh and more than a thousand may have been killed in the first two weeks after the violence erupted, with these numbers increasing since then.²⁷

Since the 2012 riots in Rakhine State, anti-Muslim violence has spread to other parts of the country. In March 2013, violence flared up between Buddhists and Muslims in Meiktila, Mandalay Region, following a dispute between a Muslim gold-shop owner and Buddhist customers. The brutal killing of a Buddhist monk escalated the situation, resulting in widespread destruction of Muslim neighborhoods and leaving at least 44 people dead, including 22 students and several teachers massacred at an Islamic school.²⁸ Anti-Muslim riots continued for another six months in other parts of Myanmar, where Buddhist monks and rioters torched several mosques, Muslim boarding schools, and houses and killed Muslims with machetes, chains, bricks, and stones. A state of emergency and curfews were announced in six states/regions, including Ayeyarwady, Bago, Mandalay, Rakhine, Shan, and Yangon. Anti-Muslim sentiments and violence grew with the rise of the 969 Movement, led by prominent Buddhist monks including Wirathu and Wimala.²⁹ The movement preaches intolerance and advocates boycotting Muslim businesses. Wirathu denied that the 969 Movement was contributing to anti-Muslim violence, but accepted that it might be contributing to greater hatred of Muslims. Isolated cases of attacks on Muslims have continued, including the destruction of a mosque in Bago Region in June 2016 and the burning of a Muslim prayer hall by a mob of 500 people in northern Myanmar in July 2016.³⁰

Despite international pressure for the Myanmar government to improve the condition of Muslims in the country, the government led by Suu Kyi has failed to address the underlying causes and develop an overarching political and development strategy. With ongoing discrimination against the Muslim community by the state and society, and continuing sporadic communal violence, this conflict is likely to become more destabilizing and protracted.

Local level



Local political conflict and electoral violence

Due to the attention given to the recent political changes at the national level, local politics and governance are often overlooked. In 2012, the government of President Thein Sein passed the Ward and Village Tract Administration Law, which required ward and village tract administrators (WA/VTAs) to be elected by community representatives instead of being appointed by the high-level officials of the Government Administration Department (GAD).³¹ Following the enactment of the new law, the first WA/VTAs elections were held in

late 2012 and early 2013. Some voting irregularities and local conflicts were reported in villages with ongoing disputes among opposing groups.³² No specific incidents of electoral violence were reported, due to the absence of any formal election observation.

The second WA/VTa elections, in January 2016, were also largely ignored by the media, donors, and international and local organizations, as everyone focused on how the newly elected NLD government would be formed. In general, citizens viewed the national elections as more important and relevant to them than the local elections, which were considered something to be dealt with by community representatives and elders. As party affiliations became more important in the second WA/VTa elections, a political dispute between the NLD and the USDP was reported in an urban ward of Mon State.³³ The local NLD branch argued that the USDP's winning candidate did not meet the education criteria to stand for election. Local elections have become increasingly fractious since the 2015 national elections.



Local conflict over resources and community rights

Rights to and control over local natural resources have always been at the center of conflict between the central government and ethnic minorities. The 1894 Land Acquisition Act gave the central government the right to take land away from people, and the 2008 constitution upholds state ownership of all land in Myanmar. Several other laws adopted subsequently give the central government the right to accommodate foreign investment and arbitrarily confiscate land for any projects deemed of national importance. Since political reforms and economic liberalization began in 2011, Myanmar has attracted unprecedented foreign investment across the country. Megaprojects range from oil and gas production and pipelines, hydroelectric dams, and mining, to seaports and special economic zones. Many of these projects not only have generated tensions between local communities and the central government, but have led to renewed clashes between government armed forces and local EAOs in the east of the country.

By mid-2013, more than 5.2 million acres of large-sale agriculture concessions had been awarded across the country.³⁴ The majority of land was allocated in Tanintharyi Region (1.9 million acres) and Kachin State (1.4 million acres). Even though the government has tried to show that it is responsive to people's grievances by setting up a committee to investigate land confiscation complaints, only 5 percent of 8,478 cases filed had been settled as of February 2014.³⁵

Projects involving large-scale land confiscation can also lead to violent conflict and forced displacement. In 2013, clashes flared up between government armed forces and local EAOs, including the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, the Shan State Progressive Party, the Restoration Council of Shan State, the KIA, and the TNLA, over dam projects, gas and oil pipelines, and mining. Large-scale land confiscation has also displaced thousands of villagers.³⁶

Protests against land grabs, and displaced villagers who attempt to return to their land, are often met with arrest and excessive use of force. For example, from 2012 to 2014, in a series of protests against the Monywa copper mine, more than 100 protesters were injured by government security forces and several were arrested.³⁷



Urban crime and violence

Even though Myanmar remains predominantly rural, about 30 percent of the population lives in urban areas, primarily Yangon, Mandalay, and Nay Pyi Taw. Yangon Region is particularly urbanized, with 70 percent of its population living in urban areas.³⁸ Frontier Myanmar reported that there were 117 murder and 130 rape cases in Yangon in the first eight months of 2016.³⁹ Official statistics on civilian crimes unrelated to political and

After murder, **rape** is the most commonly reported **serious crime**

communal conflict is scarce in Myanmar; therefore, it is hard to determine the magnitude of urban crime and violence in cities. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Myanmar had a national intentional homicide rate of only 2.4 per 100,000 people in 2015, low by regional and global standards.⁴⁰ However, many crimes go unreported or are resolved through negotiations.⁴¹



Domestic and gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a persistent problem in Myanmar, where entrenched and normalized gender discrimination perpetuates a culture of impunity and a climate of permissiveness around violating women's human rights. Women and girls experience various forms of violence, such as physical, sexual, verbal, or psychological abuse, in their private and public lives. While statistical data on the scale and nature of GBV remains limited, a number of studies have shown that GBV is prevalent in the country.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is deemed acceptable practice. A 2005 randomized household survey conducted in Mandalay Region reported that 27 percent of women surveyed had experienced one or more incidents of physical violence, and 69 percent had experienced psychological violence, from their intimate partners over the course of 12 months.⁴² Over 90 percent of women in the survey did not seek formal action following their experience of violence. Another survey, carried out by the Palaung Women's Organization (PWO) in 2011, suggested a higher rate of IPV for women and girls among ethnic minorities, and higher still in conflict-affected areas. Ninety percent of the survey respondents, including both men and women, experienced or witnessed physical violence within families, and 62 percent of them reported that the violence in their home was a daily occurrence.⁴³ Three-quarters of the respondents believed that domestic violence should be solved within the home. Over half of women respondents in a survey by the Gender Equality Network (GEN) reported experiencing intimate partner sexual violence and marital rape, which was closely related to men's sexual entitlement—the belief that a husband can demand sex whenever he wants.⁴⁴

Rape of women and girls is also prevalent in the country. Nationwide rape statistics for 2012 were the highest in five years, making rape the second-most commonly reported serious crime after murder. According to the Myanmar police, in 2012 there were 654 rape cases involving women or children. The figures for the years from 2007 to 2011 were, respectively, 471, 430, 384, 377, and 605. It is not clear if police records include rapes by military perpetrators.⁴⁵

GBV at the hands of state and armed-group actors is reported to be a chronic problem, particularly in conflict-affected areas. Since the early 1990s, violence against women, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, has been used systematically by government security forces as a military strategy against ethnic minorities and populations associated with insurgencies.⁴⁶ Some studies suggest that sexual violence is condoned as a weapon of war by the security forces to terrorize and subjugate rebels, opposition groups, and local civilian populations.

For example, a 2002 study carried out by the Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) and the Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) found that the majority of rape cases in Shan State were committed by officers, ranked corporal to major, in front of other troops.⁴⁷ There are also cases of rape by EAOs. In most cases, sexual violence was accompanied by acts of torture, beating, mutilation, and suffocation, with 25 percent resulting in death. The dead bodies were deliberately displayed for local communities to see. Sixty-one percent of the cases involved gang rape. In some cases, women were detained and raped repeatedly for periods of up to four months. The Women's League of Burma (WLB) and its partners documented over 100 cases from 2010 to 2013, primarily in Kachin and northern Shan States, including 47 gang rapes by government security forces involving victims as young as eight years old. These reports indicate that there is continuing systematic use of sexual violence by government security forces, potentially due to the government's refusal to investigate, which results in widespread impunity for perpetrators.⁴⁸

Notes

- 1 Bethany Lacina and Nils Petter Gleditsch, "Monitoring trends in global combat: A new dataset of battle deaths," *European Journal of Population* 21, no. 2 (2005): 145–166. While the best estimate was not available, the lowest estimate numbers were used to calculate the number of battle deaths. Most analysts believe that the number of deaths associated with armed conflict is significantly higher. The battle deaths dataset is available on the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) website, accessed April 9, 2017, <https://www.prio.org/Data/Armed-Conflict/Battle-Deaths/The-Battle-Deaths-Dataset-version-30/>.
- 2 "Freedom in the World (2012): Burma," Freedom House website, accessed April 9, 2017, http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/burma-0#.U_CMGfmSxPU.
- 3 Lacina and Gleditsch, "Trends in Global Combat." Data on violence, especially fatalities, is particularly unreliable, and most of the numbers reported will be significant underestimates.
- 4 Kristine Eck and Lisa Hultman, "Violence Against Civilians in War," *Journal of Peace Research* 44, no. 2 (2007): 233–246; and Erik Melander, Thérèse Pettersson, and Lotta Themnér, "Organized Violence, 1989–2015," *Journal of Peace Research* 53, no. 5 (2016): 727–742. The one-sided violence dataset is available on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) website, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/>.
- 5 Simon Montlake, "Burma's 'Black Friday,'" *BBC News*, June 16, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2993196.stm>.
- 6 "2007 Uprising in Burma: Saffron Revolution in Burma," Burma Campaign UK website, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://burmacampaign.org.uk/about-burma/2007-uprising-in-burma/>.
- 7 The constitution does not allow anyone with a foreign spouse or child to hold the office of president.
- 8 People's Alliance for Credible Elections (PACE), *Final Report: Myanmar Elections, 2015* (Yangon: PACE, 2016), <http://pacemyanmar.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/PACE-Final-Report-Myanmar-Elections-2015-English.pdf>.
- 9 David Baulk and Matthew Smith, "Ethnic minorities in Myanmar denied vote as Aung San Suu Kyi claims power," *Guardian*, November 26, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/nov/26/myanmar-millions-of-ethnic-minorities-denied-vote-as-aung-san-suu-kyi-claims-power-rohingya>.
- 10 International Crisis Group (ICG), *Myanmar: A New Muslim Insurgency in Rakhine State* (Brussels: ICG, 2016), <https://d2o71andvipowj.cloudfront.net/283-myanmar-a-new-muslim-insurgency-in-rakhine-state.pdf>.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 The Asia Foundation, *The Contested Areas of Myanmar* (Yangon: The Asia Foundation, 2017).
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 See Lacina and Gleditsch, "Trends in Global Combat," and Melander et al., "Organized Violence." The number of deaths is calculated using the PRIO Battle Deaths Dataset's low estimates (best estimates not available) for a period between 1949 and 1988, and the UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset's best estimates for a period between 1989 and 1993.
- 15 Melander et al., "Organized Violence."
- 16 The NCCT member organizations include: Arakan Liberation Party, Arakan National Council, Arakan Army, Chin National Front, Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, Kachin Independence Organization, Karenni National Progressive Party, Karen National Union, KNU/KNLA Peace Council, Lahu Democratic Union, Myanmar National Democracy Alliance Army, New Mon State Party, Pa-O National Liberation Organization, Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army–North, Ta'ang National Liberation Army, and Wa National Organization.
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