

ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

# mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight

**The Curse of Natural Resources, the  
Resistance War, and the Lost Path to  
Environmental Revival in Myanmar**

**EXCLUSIVE**



# mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight



# DIGITAL MAGAZINE

Our relaunched magazine Mizzima Weekly provides readers with a more focused read on what matters in Myanmar and the wider region, with an emphasis on analysis, insight and providing key talking points.

# MYANMAR JUNTA'S ELECTION RUSE

The Myanmar military junta, which grabbed power in a coup in 2021, appears to be stepping up their rhetoric to hold elections in the not-too-distant future. They recently declared they would hold a general election in November 2025 and are stepping up efforts to complete a census.

Myanmar opposition groups, including the National Unity Government (NUG), see through this ruse. They recognize the junta aim is to provide a “democratic fig-leaf” for their rule and seek some level of international legitimacy. The junta continues to peddle the false narrative that Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy (NLD) committed fraud in the 2020 elections and that their coup was necessary to right this wrong.

But there is urgency in the junta’s call to re-enter the “democratic process” – flawed though it is.

Resistance groups and ethnic armies have been making significant gains over the last year, stretching the military resources of the junta. Facing a series of battlefield defeats and troop surrenders, junta leaders are searching for an exit strategy to a civil war that will drag on and that increasingly appears they have no hope of winning. Elections offer the junta that chance to create a sense of normalcy and political stability in the country – a call that neighbouring China appears to support.

Analysts note that the junta hopes to legitimize their control of Myanmar’s government by manipulating the electoral process to ensure that their preferred candidates win, allowing them to retain power under the guise of a democratic system. There is also recognition in Naypyidaw that foreign governments and international players, including the United Nations, are calling for peace and negotiations and might provide the

“thumbs up” to a democratic process – a sham though it will be.

The resistance appears to be digging in their heels. The vast majority reject the idea of negotiations with the junta and some form of return to the democratic trail with the military continuing to play king-maker. This stance would appear to clash with some of the calls by governments and NGOs to call for parties to the civil war to come to the negotiating table.

The resistance forces seek the surrender or collapse of the Myanmar military junta. Enough is enough. Decades of military rule and failed efforts by activists to bring true democracy to the country, reinforce the call to remove the military from the democratic equation. The 2010-2020 “democratic run” was a con by the military to allow them to retain power, under their military-written 2008 Constitution.

The resistance groups say they will step up their attacks on junta positions to increase their territory and block elections in areas under their control. They claim the junta is using the election as a distraction from the ongoing civil war and its human rights abuses. Many groups say they will focus on resisting the junta militarily while advocating for democratic reforms without a ballot.

Last week NUG Prime Minister Mahn Win Khaing Than told media that the junta has plans to hold a fake election as their last resort next year. “Some countries will support the elections, encouraging the junta to continue the plan by all possible means. With thorough consideration, we need to speed up our offensives and political measures,” he noted.

The resistance is digging in to seek some form of military victory as the junta’s calls for elections increase.

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Cover photo of miner by AFP







Natural resource mining is damaging the environment and people's health. Photo: AFP

*BO HAN AND MYANMAR'S INSIGHT EYES CORRESPONDENT*

# **THE CURSE OF NATURAL RESOURCES, THE RESISTANCE WAR, AND THE LOST PATH TO ENVIRONMENTAL REVIVAL IN MYANMAR**

**A**fter the military coup in Myanmar, all environmental conservation efforts came to a halt, leading to severe natural resource loss, deforestation, and environmental degradation, making recovery difficult. The exploitation of natural resources has also largely been directed towards China.

Dai Kaung, a 19-year-old Kachin man, has lived in a refugee camp in Waingmaw Township since the military coup. After spending over two years in the camp, he found work at a rare earth mining site in the Pangwa area in early January 2024. His job was to support his struggling family in the refugee camp.

Pangwa, located in northern Kachin State, is under the control of the Kachin militia led by Zakhung Ting Ying, who is loyal to the Myanmar military.

This region is one of Myanmar's largest producers of rare earth minerals, which are in high demand in neighbouring country China. Despite local opposition due to the environmental and livelihood impacts, rare

earth production increased significantly after the military coup.

Dai Kaung was aware that rare earth production could severely harm the local environment and livelihood, but he needed the daily wage of 100 yuan (RMB) to support his family.

Unfortunately, on May 29, the mining took his life when the mining site collapsed. Along with him, some Chinese workers also went missing. Of the approximately 20 missing workers, only five bodies were recovered, and 12 people were confirmed dead.

"They told us he died. It rained heavily that day. He was such a good child, always helping his parents," said Dai Naw, Dai Kaung's sister.

The family, including his parents, sister, and a younger brother, remained in the refugee camp and could not afford to hold a funeral for him.



FLASHBACK - Protest at a copper mining site in Monywa in 2013. Photo: AFP



## Natural resources and resistance post-coup

Since the coup, Myanmar's natural resource management has significantly deteriorated. The military's administration has weakened, and previously ongoing environmental protection and management efforts have collapsed. Many youths have taken up arms against the military's oppressive rule. Consequently, the number of armed groups across the country has reached nearly 900, according to political research organizations.

"We need money to fight the military. We rely on public donations and have to find other sources of income from the areas we control. The primary goal is to overthrow the military regime," said a member of the current resistance movement.

They added that the need for funding and weapons for the armed resistance has driven the involvement in resource extraction activities.

Due to this situation, what was once shady rare earth mining, opposed by local communities, has

now become openly conducted. Previously, only the militia, allies of the military, were involved in extensive rare earth production. Now, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA/KIO) is also heavily involved in these activities, leading to increased pressure and protests from local Kachin communities. However, as the belief strengthens that selling these natural resources to fund weapon purchases is crucial for toppling the military dictatorship, local Kachin environmental activists find themselves in a challenging position, unable to resist and left to watch helplessly.

China's General Administration of Customs (GACC) records from the past four years show that Myanmar has been one of the top 20 countries supplying rare earth minerals to China. According to ISP - Myanmar, a think-tank, Myanmar has sold rare earth minerals worth approximately 2.6 billion USD to China since 2017, with about 2 billion USD worth sold after the coup.

Rare earth extraction in Kachin State has increased significantly since the coup. Before the coup, there were 114 rare earth mining sites in Kachin State, but now there are over 340 sites.



Rare earth mining in Kachin State.  
Photo: Supplied



“We need weapons and money to fight the military dictatorship. On the one hand, the environmental damage is severe, and Myanmar will suffer the consequences. This is already happening in Kachin and other regions,” said an environmental expert who asked not be mentioned his name due to security reasons.

## Why is rare earth so important to China?

Rare earth mining is mainly conducted in Chipwi, Momauk, and Mansi townships in Kachin State. Satellite images show extensive environmental damage in these mining areas.

Rare earth minerals are vital for the production of smartphones, vehicles, and military goods, making them highly valuable to China. China is also the world’s largest exporter of rare earth minerals, using this capacity to build political and economic power. Over the past four years, 80 per cent of the rare earth minerals China imported came from Myanmar.

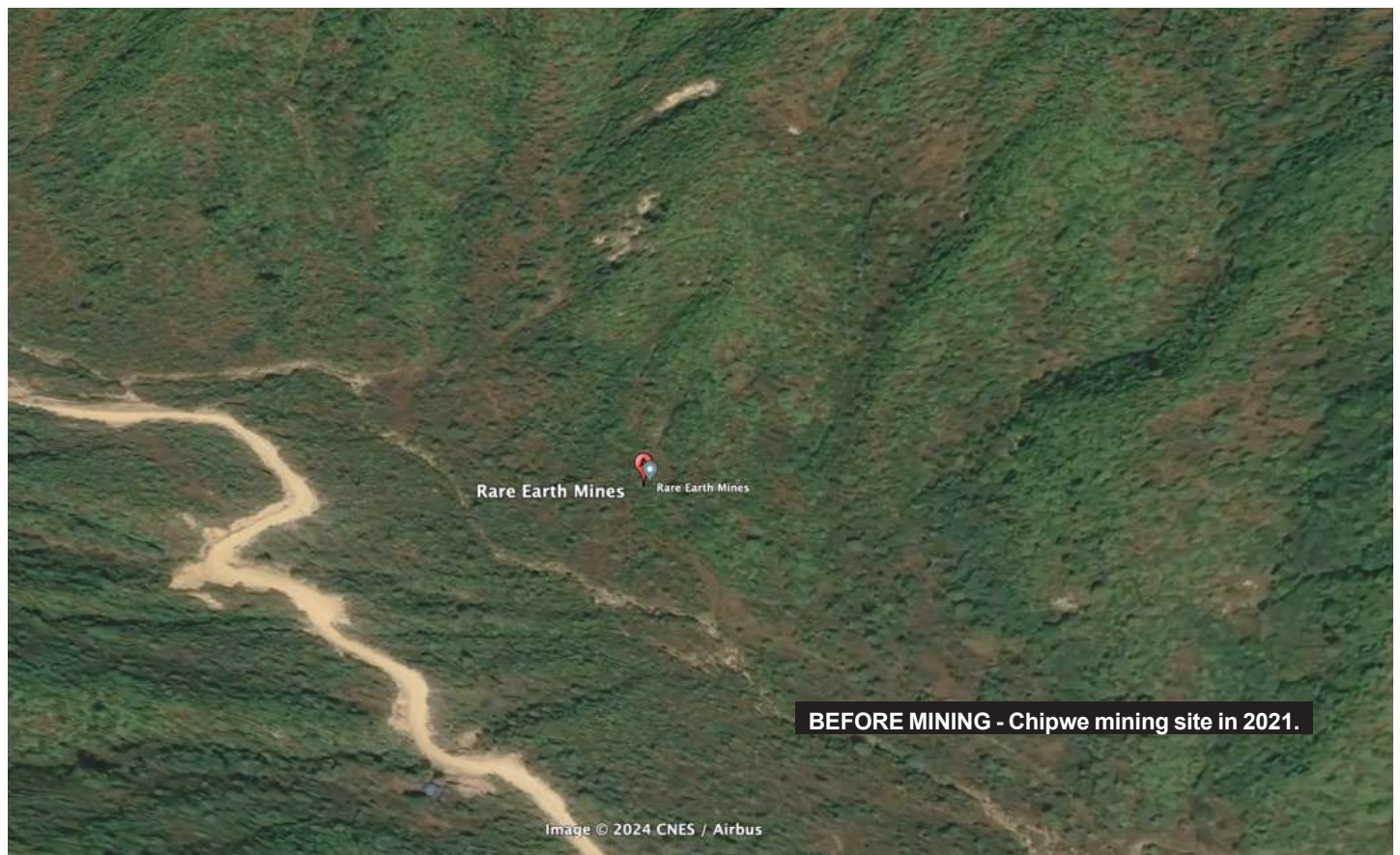
“They exploit rare earth from struggling countries like Myanmar, ruining local communities. Meanwhile, they use it to gain economic, political and diplomatic

advantages over the US and Western countries,” said an expert on China-Myanmar relations.

## Conflict between rare earth mining, local communities, and authorities

During Aung San Suu Kyi’s government, experts and activists voiced concerns about Myanmar’s natural resources and environmental issues, including rare earth mining. However, environmental policies were hard to implement amid conflicts with the military and ethnic armed groups. The areas controlled by the militia have always been weak in terms of civilian government influence, largely due to their cooperation with the military. Now, the situation has worsened significantly. Previously, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA/KIO) listened to the voices of local Kachin communities and refrained from rare earth mining. However, in the current situation, they have begun allowing rare earth mining in their controlled areas.

“They make holes on the mountains, and put acid into it. It destroys the environment. Streams that used to flow are now polluted or dry up,” said Tin Baung, a local from Pangwa.





“The land is severely damaged. From an aerial view, Pangwa looks like a sore spot,” he said.

In these dire conditions, another young Kachin, 16-year-old Shun Tu, lost his life. A seventh-grade student, he worked at a rare earth mining site because of his strength.

However, he died within months after falling ill.

“People say he drank contaminated water from the mining site. Others have had similar experiences. Losing a son is indescribable,” his mother told Mizzima.

As rare earth mining sites increased, people in Chipwi Township, Phare locals said they could no longer let their chickens, pigs, buffaloes, and cows roam freely. Contaminated water from the mining areas killed the animals.

“We can’t farm or raise livestock anymore. It’s hard to survive here,” they said.

Regarding the environmental issues in Kachin State, Khawn Zang, one of the leaders of the Transparency and Accountability Network Kachin (TANK), an

environmental watchdog in Kachin said, “In the past, the chemicals they used caused many problems. Now, there are more environmental issues. They dig into people’s fields more often, leading to more protests. The situation has worsened.”

About 150,000 people live in the three main mining townships of Chipwi, Momauk, and Mansi, and their livelihoods are increasingly threatened by mining activities, according to environmental researchers.

## Deforestation and the Resistance War in Sagaing

“People can’t continue farming or other regular jobs because of the fires and military raids. So they cut and sell trees to brokers to make a living,” said Tun Tun, a former forest department officer from Monywa District who joined the CDM movement after the coup.

Sagaing’s famous timber areas like Yinmarpin, Monywa, Kathar, Kalay, Banmauk, Wuntho, and Chaung-U experienced illegal logging even before 2020, but forests remained. After the coup, deforestation skyrocketed. Valuable timber such as teak, ironwood, and tamalan attracted demand from China.





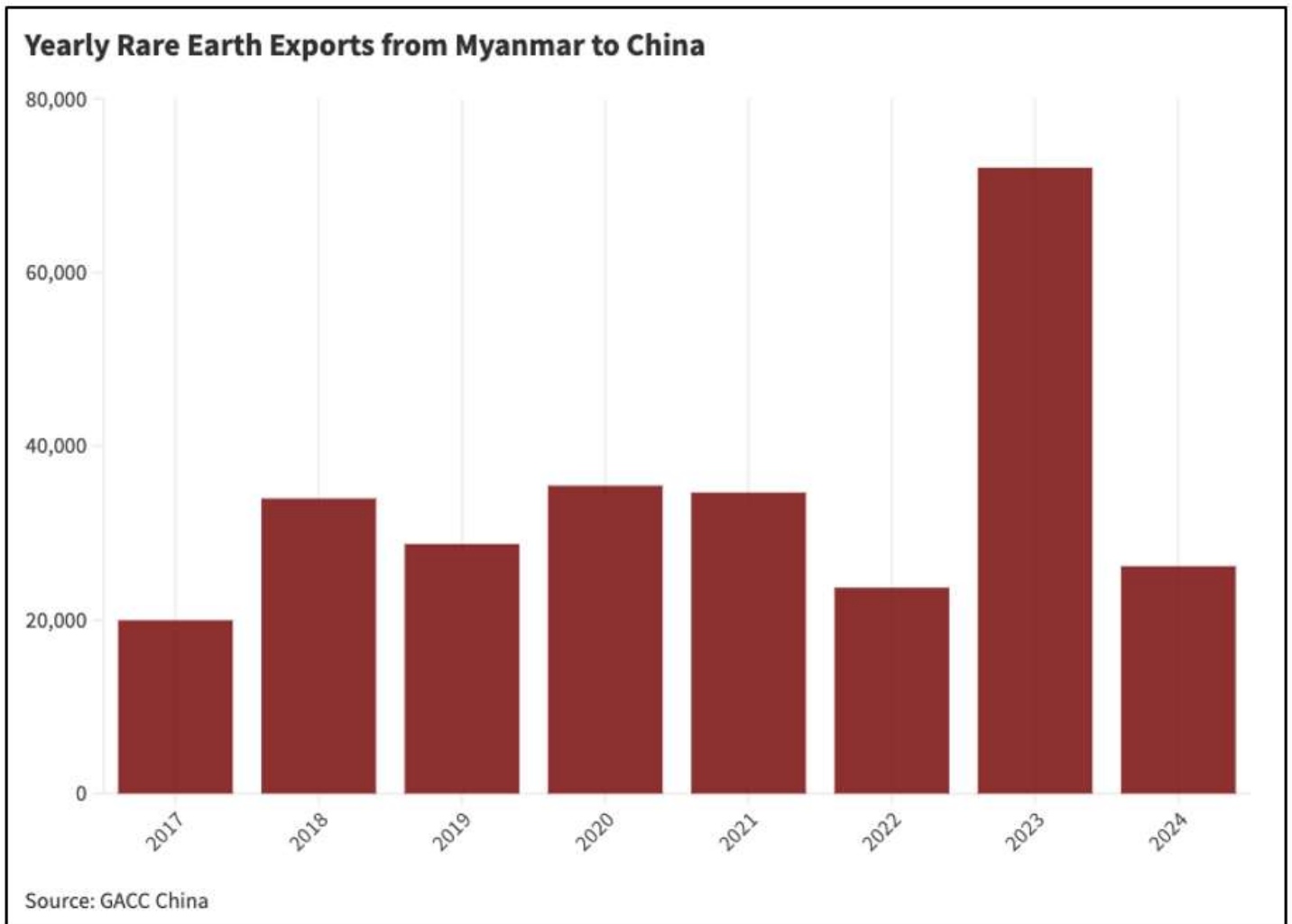
The National League for Democracy (NLD) government had policies to protect forests, but these were abandoned after the coup when forest officers joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). The military's involvement in forest management led to rampant illegal logging.

The resistance groups also relied on logging for funding their fight, Sagaing locals said. "They cut a lot of trees. All groups are involved. The checkpoints are manned by PDFs and the military. Each checkpoint costs between 500,000 to 1 million kyats. Brokers from Monywa and Mandalay handle it," a local resident told Mizzima.

According to the Global Forest Watch (GFW), Myanmar had more than 31.7 million forest alerts from February 1, 2021, to March 27, 2024. Environmental researchers pointed out that this indicates the extent of logging.

With over 220 of the 330 townships in Myanmar experiencing some form of armed conflict, deforestation in Sagaing is a serious issue. Sagaing's 45 townships include 19 severely affected by military violence. Villages have been burned, and airstrikes have been conducted by the military, resulting in over 90,000 homes burned nationwide, with 60,000 in Sagaing alone, according to Data for Myanmar.

Locals and experts say it is challenging to prioritize environmental protection amid the struggle for survival. "It's not easy to get weapons. We have a lot of struggles. Some timber merchants used to trade guns for timber. Not all of them, though. Timber is transported to China. It's sad to see the forests disappear. We will have to recover them later (after the overthrowing of Myanmar military junta)," a local close to Sagaing's public administration of PDF told Mizzima.



These logging activities are not only happening in Sagaing but also in the ASEAN Heritage Park of Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park. This park, spanning over 540 square miles, is a safe haven for wildlife. Now, even these forests are disappearing.

“After the coup, logging trucks started taking timber daily. It’s not a small amount,” a local eyewitness told Mizzima. Chinese merchants favor tamalan wood due to its beautiful grain, making it highly sought after by furniture manufacturers, locals said.

“A few months after the coup, the frequency of trucks coming to cut and transport wood has increased significantly,” a local eyewitness told Mizzima. The Alaungdaw Kathapa Forest is rich with teak and ironwood, and the Mahamyaing Reserve, not far from Alaungdaw Kathapa, has a high output of tamalan, a type of wood highly prized by Chinese merchants due to its beautiful grain, making it very popular among furniture makers, according to locals.

Illegal logging poses a significant threat to the environment in Sagaing. However, Sagaing has long faced environmental challenges. The Letpadaung Copper Mine, which previously generated over two million USD in revenue per day, is one such problem.

Since the coup, the mine has not been operating as visibly, but the military has erected fences and destroyed the homes of local residents near the project area. Copper from the mine continues to be transported with the help of Myanmar military forces, leading to frequent clashes between resistance forces and the military.

Similarly, the Taguang Nickel Plant in Tagaung Township, Sagaing, is another project of significant importance to China. This project is notorious for displacing local residents, violating human rights, and damaging the environment. At the end of July, the PDF under the NUG seized control of the plant.

However, due to pressure from the Chinese government, the resistance has assured that the project will be protected. This situation highlights that while Chinese projects may harm local communities and the environment, those involved in the conflict in Myanmar cannot easily resist China’s influence, both politically and economically.

## **Shan State’s projects in darkness**

The escalating conflict and the instability following the military coup have silenced many local community-based organizations that once worked to raise awareness about the negative impacts of various projects and led protests against them.

These organizations have had to flee their homes and now live under constant threat from armed groups, rendering them unable to speak out against ongoing projects, which are now proceeding unchecked.

In Shan State, after Operation 1027 launched in October last year, many strategically important Chinese projects in the region came under the control of Three Brotherhood Alliance (3BHA). These armed groups are reportedly close to Chinese influence, leading to situations where these projects could later be subject to negotiations with the armed groups. This scenario raises concerns about environmental impacts, especially if it results in conditions where the rights and voices of the local people are suppressed.

“There is no rule of law to protect the people at this time. The public is not protected by the law, so businesses exploit them, and there are human rights violations, but the people can’t speak out,” said an environmental activist based in Shan State, reflecting on the current situation.

In recent years, Chinese mining companies have operated in Shan State, but local residents are often kept in the dark about essential information. “With



the country in ruins, those with weapons and power are doing whatever they can for their own benefit. For ordinary people, this means they can no longer cultivate their land or are increasingly exposed to environmental hazards. But right now, survival is the priority," said a young displaced person from Shan State.

According to research by ISP-Myanmar, the combined value of projects planned and currently being implemented in Shan State by Chinese companies is over \$23 billion, representing almost half of China's total investment in Myanmar.

The military junta is currently facing both military and economic crises. The junta, which once profited from various trade routes, has lost control of many border trading posts connecting Myanmar with China, India, Bangladesh, and Thailand.

Since Operation 1027, they have lost control of five major trading posts, which account for nearly 40% of the total trade volume. Although the junta regained control of the Myawaddy post on the Thailand-Myanmar border with the help of the Karen Border Guard Force, trade flows have not returned to pre-conflict levels.

The economic situation in Myanmar has deteriorated significantly. The value of the kyat has plummeted from around 1,330 kyats per dollar in February 2021, at the time of the coup, to over 6,000 kyats per dollar today.

The World Bank's June report highlighted that due to ongoing conflict, labour shortages, and currency instability, conducting business in Myanmar has become extremely challenging, with poverty levels reaching their highest point in six years.

Given the country's economic collapse, it raises the question of whether addressing environmental and resource destruction is still a priority or if more pressing issues have taken precedence.

However, the ongoing extraction and exploitation of resources make it increasingly difficult to mitigate environmental damage, as noted by an environmental expert. "There is practically nothing we can do now. Even if we try to revive the environment, it will take a long time. Right now, nothing is possible. The Chinese are buying up everything they can get their hands on," the expert said.

Currently, most of the rare earth minerals from Kachin State are being directed to China, just as the majority of timber from Sagaing and Bago is also destined for China.

"Not everyone in the resistance is ignorant of environmental issues. Some are well aware. But with the pressing need for weapons and funding, they have no choice but to take this path. This makes it difficult to mitigate the damage," the environmental expert explained.

The Chinese have also seized the opportunity to secure their influence in the resistance, with Chinese merchants capitalizing on the situation. The funds generated from selling timber to China are reportedly being used to purchase weapons. "Trucks are leaving Kachin every day, heading to China. Every group, regardless of who controls the area, is selling the timber to Chinese merchants. They handle transportation and clearing the routes," a source close to the Sagaing resistance explained.

The path to effectively managing and conserving Myanmar's natural environment and resources has always been fraught with challenges. However, the current situation represents an unprecedented difficulty. Amid political upheaval and the ongoing resistance, the continued exploitation of resources resembles a self-inflicted wound that exacerbates the country's plight.



Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.  
Photo: AFP

# TERRORIZED ROHINGYA FLEE NORTHERN RAKHINE



As the Arakan Army (AA) pushes to seize control of Maungdaw City, thousands of Rohingya residents are fleeing their homes, attempting to cross into Bangladesh. The situation has escalated due to the Myanmar military's increasing reliance on airstrikes, following significant losses on the ground and an inability to send in reinforcements.

In early August, a tragic incident occurred when approximately 200 Rohingya were killed by artillery or drone strikes as they attempted to cross the Naf River into Bangladesh. This event has heightened fear among the local population, prompting more Rohingya to seek refuge across the border. A Bangladeshi official associated with the Refugee Repatriation Commissioner's office reported that around 10,000 Rohingya have already arrived in Bangladesh, escaping dangers posed by both the junta and the AA.

On August 18, the AA issued a statement categorizing the remaining residents of Maungdaw. They had previously warned residents to evacuate to avoid being caught in the crossfire. The statement identified five groups of residents who had not yet left,

including junta subordinates, junta-trained militias, and armed groups such as ARSA, RSO, and ARA, as well as ordinary civilians being used as human shields by these groups.

The AA has focused its attacks on the No. 5 Border Guard Police Battalion, the junta's last remaining stronghold in Maungdaw. With the battalion on the brink of collapse, the junta has increasingly relied on airstrikes to fend off AA advances.

According to an AA statement on August 26, over 100 junta troops, including pro-junta Rohingya militias, were killed during the battle for Maungdaw City. The AA reported burying the bodies on August 24, 25, and 26, and also mentioned the capture of prisoners of war and weapons from the junta forces. The urban battles have seen junta-trained Rohingya and other Rohingya armed groups fighting alongside the military.

Despite these hardships, some Rohingya resettled by the AA in its controlled areas have expressed a sense of safety. A Rakhine-based media outlet reported that Rohingya in AA-controlled regions feel secure, having



Kachin Independence Army fighters. Photo: AFP

experienced violence, including killings, kidnappings, and robberies by junta troops and other armed groups. One Rohingya resident stated, "We feel secure in AA-controlled areas. There are no such cases here." The report also highlighted that the AA has evacuated around 20,000 Rohingya to safe zones from Maungdaw. An evacuated Rohingya expressed gratitude, saying, "The AA provided us with rice, edible oil, and tarpaulins during this difficult time. We are deeply impressed and grateful, especially since international organizations like ICRC and WFP have been unable to assist us."

## KACHIN STATE FIGHTING UPDATE

On August 19, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) successfully captured the Myanmar military's last significant stronghold in Momauk Township, Bhamo District in Kachin State. The regiment, identified as the No. 437 Light Infantry Battalion, was located just seven miles from Bhamo and had been the junta's final base in the Momauk area after the KIA's 0307 Operation in March. The KIA's efforts to seize this regiment had been ongoing since May, with a renewed offensive launched on July 21.

The junta responded to the KIA's offensive with heavy airstrikes, but after more than a month of intense

fighting, the KIA managed to overrun the regiment, capturing a large cache of weapons and taking prisoners of war (POWs). According to one POW, the junta suffered significant losses, with over 300 troops killed and approximately 400 wounded. The KIA also endured casualties in this operation.

The day after capturing the regiment, the KIA seized two additional junta outposts located about five miles southeast of Bhamo. These outposts served as forward positions for the No. 319 and No. 601 Light Infantry Battalions, which are tasked with the security of Bhamo and Mansi Townships.

In response, on August 23, the junta launched an operation to reclaim the lost regiment from Momauk, deploying seven battalions with around 500 troops from Bhamo. The offensive included artillery support from Bhamo headquarters. Despite facing fierce resistance from the KIA, junta forces managed to advance within one mile of the lost regiment by August 28, relying heavily on airstrikes to push through KIA defenses.

The recapture of these posts and the regiment is critical for the junta's control over Bhamo, a strategically important area in Kachin State. The ongoing clashes highlight the escalating conflict in the region, with both



Myanmar junta helicopter gunship flying over Loikaw Township. Photo: Supplied



sides determined to assert control over key military positions.

### BATTLE FOR KARENNI STATE'S LOIKAW

In July, the Myanmar military escalated its efforts to regain control of Loikaw City, Karenni State, launching a significant offensive after amassing troops throughout June. By the end of July, junta forces had successfully retaken several key positions within the city that had been seized by the Karenni National Defence Force (KNDF) during their 1111 Operation. Despite this, skirmishes continued on the outskirts of Loikaw, prompting the KNDF to advise locals to avoid using the Loikaw-Demoso road due to ongoing dangers.

Amid the conflict, the State Administration Council (SAC) authorities urged residents to return to Loikaw, assuring them that electricity and water supplies had been restored. However, those who returned encountered severe scrutiny from junta troops, with some residents facing intense checks even near their own homes.

Since the third week of August, junta forces have been advancing from Loikaw towards Demoso, a town that remains under KNDF control. Despite this, the junta's No. 102 and No. 427 Light Infantry Battalions continue to hold out in the area. The military's current

objective is to deliver food and ammunition to those two Battalions. During this advance, junta troops reportedly torched at least 20 houses in Dawpoesi, Four Mile Village, and Six Mile Village, with no clear reason provided for the destruction. A KNDF official commented on the incident, stating, "The reason they torched the villagers' houses is to clear the area for their targets."

The situation in Karenni State remains volatile, with both the junta and KNDF engaged in fierce battles as the military seeks to reassert control over key areas. The ongoing conflict has severely impacted local communities, with residents facing significant dangers as they navigate the contested region.

### TOP MIZZIMA BURMESE VIDEOS

Please find the top Mizzima Burmese videos of the week:

Living Witness of War Crimes (Editorial Talk)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G\\_l43YofrvY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_l43YofrvY)

Is inflation being manipulated by the War Council?  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2\\_T3B5L6iiw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_T3B5L6iiw)

Military Council isolated in diplomacy  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydUzn4lwJuQ>





Photo: AA Info

## ARAKAN ARMY CLAIMS OVER 100 JUNTA SOLDIERS KILLED IN MAUNGDAW BATTLE AS FIGHTING INTENSIFIES ACROSS RAKHINE STATE

The Arakan Army (AA) announced that over 100 junta soldiers were killed in the Maungdaw battle, with intense fighting continuing in Thandwe, Kyeintali, and Maungdaw townships.

According to the AA, the battle in Ward No. 2 of Maungdaw town lasted from 24 August to 26 August, resulting in the deaths of more than 100 junta troops. The AA stated these casualties included junta armed forces and military council-trained personnel. The deceased were reportedly buried properly.

During the three-day conflict, the AA captured some soldiers, as well as weapons, ammunition, gold, silver, and mobile phones. The junta forces reportedly fled with their weapons and are now being pursued by AA fighters who continue to attack the remaining junta camps.

Beyond Maungdaw town, clashes between the AA and military council forces have escalated in Thandwe, Maung Shwe Lay Navy Base, Gwa, and near Kyaukpasat village in Kyeintali town.

The military council has responded by sending reinforcements, including eight warships, to these conflict zones. The AA reported that fighting has intensified as these warships are firing artillery.

The AA has been attempting to capture junta camps in and around Maungdaw township for about three months. The latest round of fighting began on 4 August as part of an effort by the AA to take complete control of Maungdaw Township.

The military council has yet to release any official statements regarding the ongoing fighting in Rakhine State.

Amid the heavy fighting in Maungdaw township, the military council has reportedly used civilians as human shields. The AA also stated that locals fleeing the conflict are in urgent need of medical supplies due to an outbreak of diarrhoea.





# MYANMAR JUNTA REPORTEDLY CONDUCTS FORCED CONSCRIPTION OF CIVILIANS IN PATHEIN TO MEET MILITARY QUOTAS

**M**yanmar military and police forces reportedly conducted forced conscription of civilians, including youths, in Pathein, Ayeyarwady Region, on the night of 26 August, according to a source from the regional military council office.

The military council instructed that to meet recruitment quotas conscription efforts should be carried out at night. Previous attempts failed due to individuals fleeing mandatory military service in Pathein, the source stated.

The first, second, and third batches of military service recruits reportedly did not meet the required numbers, prompting regional military officials to resort to these measures.

The source further explained that junta soldiers and police are authorized to detain individuals for various reasons at roadblocks to fulfill military service quotas. When asked whether the operation might be canceled due to news leaks, the source indicated that while the date could be postponed, the conscription efforts are mandatory and will proceed as planned.

“This information is accurate, and operations began on 26 August. Young people out at night risk being taken as ‘porters’ [a colloquial euphemism for military recruits], and it’s possible that individuals could even be conscripted from their homes. Since the regional government has ordered it, these actions will definitely be carried out,” the source confirmed.

In recent days, local youths have reported increased roadblocks and checks by junta soldiers and police in Pathein, leading to concerns about forced conscription.

One local youth said, “When I heard about the conscriptions, I wasn’t sure which neighborhoods were affected. If this is really happening, it’s best not to go out at night. I don’t have the money to flee to avoid military service, so I’ll have to avoid being caught as much as possible.”

There have been similar reports from the Ayeyarwady and Bago regions, where men have been arrested under various pretexts and forced into military service.

A resident from Hinthada recounted an incident where a young man transporting rice to the Bago Region was intercepted and given the choice between joining the military or paying 3 million Kyats, which he ultimately paid to avoid conscription.

On the night of 20 August, local residents reported that a man listed for military service was arrested from his home in Athote town, Ayeyarwady Region.

The military council enacted the Conscription Law on 10 February, mandating military service for all adult men and women. Recruitment of military trainees was scheduled to begin in April 2024, following the Thingyan water festival, with plans to enlist 60,000 personnel annually at a rate of 5,000 per training week.

Following the enactment of the conscription law, many young people reportedly fled the country through legal and illegal means to evade military service, while others have joined revolutionary forces.

According to resistance forces, thousands of men aged 18 to 35 from the Ayeyarwady Region have already been conscripted under the law, forced to undergo military training, and deployed to frontline positions.



PDF fighters. Photo: Supplied

## PDF OFFICIALS TO INVESTIGATE DEATHS OF VILLAGERS DETAINED BY BATTALION 3801 IN BAGO REGION

Officials from the People's Defense Forces (PDF) in the Bago Region have vowed to investigate the deaths of five villagers from Bor Bin village in Zeekone Township. These villagers had gone to the Bago Yoma (Pegu Mountain Range) to cut wood in an area controlled by PDF Battalion-3801 in Thayarwaddy District, Bago Region. They were reportedly detained by a unit led by the battalion's acting commander, Moe Kyo Gyi.

On 19 August, six villagers, including a man awaiting conscription into the junta's forces, entered the Bago Yoma with 24 buffaloes to cut wood. According to a family member of the victims, an argument broke out among the group, resulting in the death of the conscripted man. The remaining five villagers were reportedly heading back to their village when they encountered Moe Kyo Gyi. They informed their families of the encounter, saying they would return after speaking with him. However, their families lost contact with them after that conversation, sparking concerns.

"I inquired about this case with Moe Kyo Gyi. He replied that 'there is no one alive'," said Ko Lu Aye, the information officer for the Thayarwaddy People's Defense Force. Ko Lu Aye further stated that he is supporting the victims' families in seeking the truth about the incident.

Moe Kyo Gyi claimed the deceased villagers were members of the Pyu Saw Htee militia or supporters of the military council. He insisted that his Battalion 3801 is conducting its revolutionary activities in a disciplined manner, with all actions reported to higher authorities.

A family member, who wished to remain anonymous

for security reasons, expressed grief and pleaded for help, saying, "Right now, our family is in mourning. Please assist us. Pyu Saw Htee make up the majority or 75% of the population of Bor Bin village. But the other twenty-five percent are ordinary villagers. Our sons are also ordinary people."

The five villagers who died during their detention are Nyein Chan Ko Ko, Ye Lin Ko, San Aung, P Kay, and Tin Maung Aye.

Tin Oo, a member of the People's Defense Force (PDF)'s No. 2 Southern Regional Sub-Command, told Mizzima that he had contacted the former battalion commander of Battalion 3801 after hearing about the incident. He promised to investigate the matter thoroughly.

"Moe Kyo Gyi was recently appointed as acting battalion commander. He was a company commander before this. An inquiry needs to be conducted if a complaint is made. Investigations are presently being conducted into several situations. We handle these kinds of cases with a procedure. The authorities have released guidelines. If someone does injustice to the people, we have no cause to forgive them. All revolutionaries are equal. What is unfair is unfair," said Tin Oo.

Revolutionary forces in the western part of the Bago Region, alongside the families of the deceased, are calling for the truth to be revealed. The PDF community in Bago has committed to maintaining the organization's reputation as protectors of the people, assuring that the public should not fear them.





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# MYANMAR RESISTANCE FORCES STRIKE TAUNGOO AIR BASE, KILLING JUNTA COLONEL IN DRONE AND ROCKET ATTACK

Myanmar resistance forces launched a coordinated attack on the junta air force base in Taungoo Township, Bago, at around 3:30 pm on 26 August using Kamikaze drones and improvised rockets.

The attack resulted in the deaths of 8 junta troops, including a colonel, according to Tin Oo, a spokesperson for the No. 2 Southern Regional Sub-command of the People's Defense Force (PDF).

Among the casualties were a colonel, a captain, a sergeant, and five other ranks, with 21 additional troops injured during the assault on the Taungoo air base, Tin Oo reported. Mizzima is still working to independently verify the reported casualties.

"The targets were struck as intended, with some being directly hit by our 114 mm rockets," Tin Oo said. Three residents of Taungoo confirmed to Mizzima that they heard an explosion emanating from the air base.

The operation, codenamed "Rain of Fire," was a joint effort involving multiple resistance groups such

as the artillery unit of the regional sub-command, the Shar Htoo Waw technical force, the KLOUD Drone Team, Brigade-2 of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) special unit, No. 2 Taungoo District Battalion 3502, the PDF's Central Region Military Command, and the Nay Pyi Taw command.

This latest attack follows previous assaults on the Taungoo air base. In May, resistance forces launched ten improvised rockets at the base, killing at least 10 junta troops, including two officers, and destroying two fighter jets, according to the Mountain Knights Civilian Defense Force (MKCDF). Additionally, on 1 December 2023, a combined force of the KNLA and the PDF used drones to bomb the base, and on 14 May 2023, Brave Warriors for Myanmar (BMW) and allied forces fired five rockets at the base.

According to monitoring by revolutionary forces, the Taungoo air base is primarily used to conduct airstrikes in battle zones, including Karenni and Karen States, as well as the Bago Region.





# JUNTA JET FIGHTER BOMBS CLINIC IN KALAY TOWNSHIP, CAUSING FATALITY

**O**n 27 August, around 3:30 pm, a military council jet fighter targeted a temporary clinic set up in Sawbwa Yay Shin village, northern Kalay township, Sagaing Region.

The attack, involving a 500-pound bomb, resulted in the death of one People's Defense Force (PDF) member and injuries to three others.

The temporary clinic was established in a school and was hit by the bombing despite the absence of recent fighting in the area. The explosion caused significant damage to the school's walls and roof.

The Kalay Township People's Administration said, "A PDF member tending to a patient was killed, and three others were injured."

A local resident speculated that news of the clinic's location may have led to the military council's aerial attack and emphasized the need for vigilance among PDF members.

The jet fighter responsible for the bombing returned to Tada-U airbase in Mandalay Region, as reported by observers of military council air activities.

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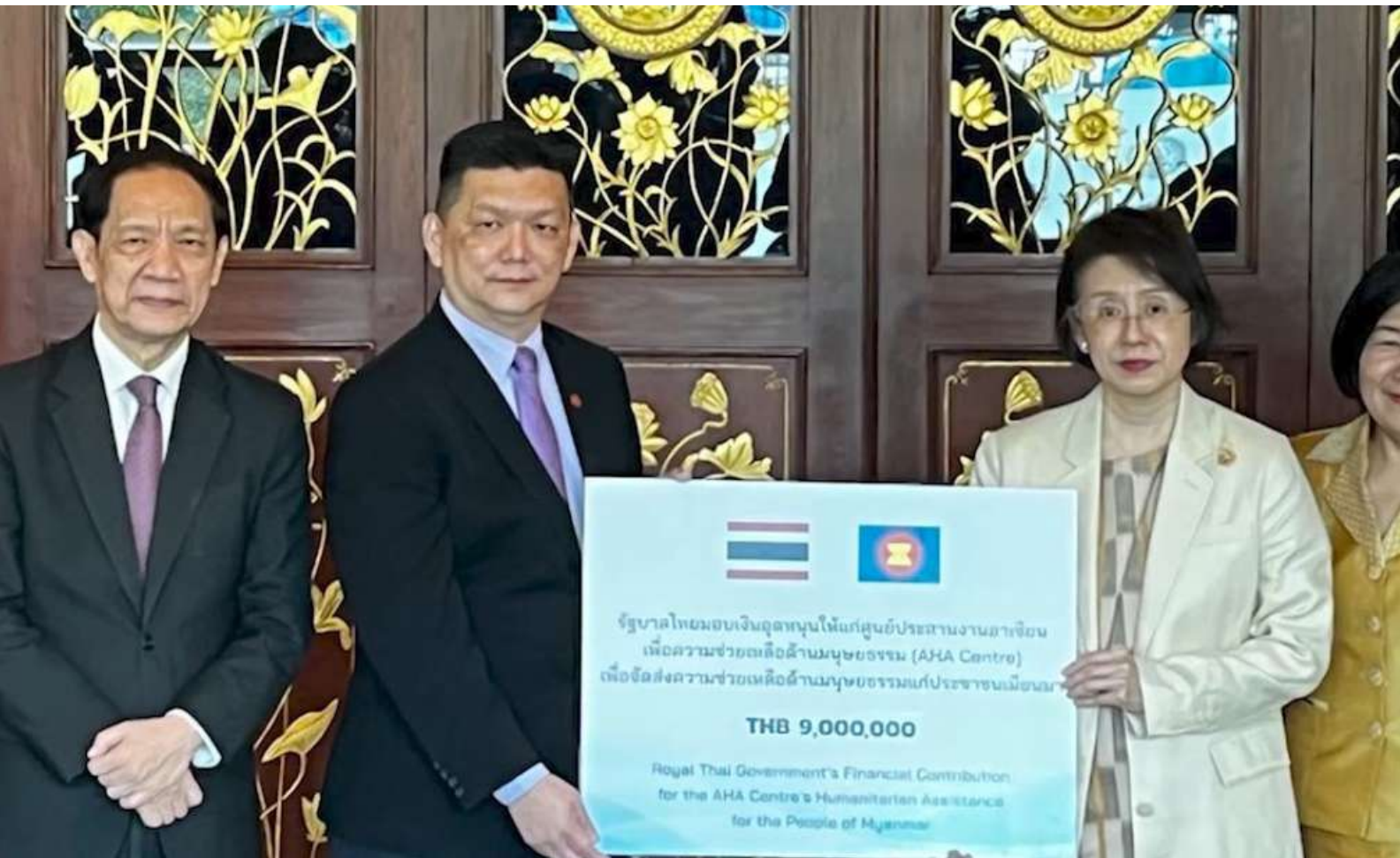
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## THAILAND CONTRIBUTES ADDITIONAL 9 MILLION BAHT TOWARD HUMANITARIAN AID TO MYANMAR

On 26 August 2024, Thailand’s Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Eksiri Pintaruchi, presented a financial contribution of 9 million Baht (US\$ 280,000) to Mr. Lee Yam Ming, Executive Director of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre).

The ceremony was attended and witnessed by Mr. Alounkeo Kittikhoun, Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar, as well as ambassadors and representatives from the Bangkok missions of ASEAN member states’ missions in Bangkok.

Thailand’s financial contribution built on previous efforts to assist affected populations in Myanmar. It is

intended to increase the amount of crucial humanitarian aid the AHA Centre can deliver to populations in hard-to-reach areas of Myanmar.

The contribution reaffirms Thailand’s strong support for the current chairmanship of the Lao PDR in advancing the implementation of ASEAN’s Five-Point Consensus.

The Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar, Mr. Alounkeo Kittikhoun, and Executive Director of the AHA Centre, Mr. Lee Yam Ming, expressed their appreciation for Thailand’s constructive role and contribution, as well as steadfast commitment to expanding humanitarian assistance to reach more people in need in Myanmar.



Citizen photo

## TERROR IN ROHINGYA REFUGEE CAMP AS BOYS KIDNAPPED TO FIGHT IN MYANMAR

**T**he boy in the photo looks serious, pious and so very young. Muhammad often stares at this snapshot of his kid brother, Farhad. It's one of the few pictures he has of the 13-year-old, who has been missing for months.

In May, Farhad was abducted while coming home from his school, located inside Bangladesh's sprawling Balukhali refugee camp. (Both brothers' names along with those of other camp residents have been changed to protect their safety.) Farhad and his four brothers had lived in the camp since August 2017 after fleeing a bloody military crackdown in neighboring Myanmar.

"I'm not just like his brother," Muhammad, 26, told Radio Free Asia in June. "I'm like his father; he's like my son."

In the weeks after Farhad's disappearance, a desperate Muhammad pieced together some of his brother's movements through a handful of phone calls with him. But there have been far more questions than answers.

While Muhammad didn't know who exactly kidnapped Farhad, the camp in Cox's Bazar is overrun by gangs. Several of these have been abducting Rohingya refugees and smuggling them back across the border to fight in the war raging inside Myanmar.

Along with other forms of violence, abductions have long plagued the camps. Men and women are trafficked for labor or sex work, leaders are abducted as punishment for their advocacy, and sometimes refugees are kidnapped simply in order to extort funds from their family.

But starting earlier this year, a different form of kidnapping became common. Facing mounting battlefield losses, Myanmar's military government announced in February that it would begin enforcing a long-dormant conscription law. In Rakhine state, where the junta is fighting a number of resistance groups, its efforts to add soldiers have not stopped at the border. Just to the north, the Cox's Bazar camps, with their large, trapped refugee population and entrenched criminal enterprises, appear to have become feeder



lots for the military — and also for its opposing forces.

In their phone calls, Farhad told Muhammad that he had been smuggled into Rakhine state and taken south to Buthidaung. Later, he was handed over to the Myanmar military, which placed him in a training camp with about 40 other Rohingya men and boys. For the first two weeks, Farhad was given arms training, but eventually, he was pulled out of formal training and ordered to assist with cooking and running errands for soldiers, he told his brother on the phone.

“The abduction and forced conscription in Myanmar and in the camps — it’s one of those things that’s so horrific that even though everything is already so terrible for them ... here things are getting worse again,” said Jessica Olney, an independent analyst who has covered the Rohingya refugee crisis for years and in May published a paper for the United States Institute of Peace on conditions inside the camp.

Kidnappings like Farhad’s have changed the contours of life in the refugee camps, instilling a new form of terror among a deeply traumatized population. Shops are staying closed, as are doors. Roads that were once crowded with children playing and young men milling around have gone quiet. The appearance of an outsider brings only looks of distrust. Many families have taken to hiding their sons, brothers and nephews.

Since Farhad’s abduction, his classmates have lived in fear of becoming the next victim, according to Muhammad. “Most of the students are afraid,” he said. “But it’s kind of a new normal now.”

### **‘Now our own people torture us’**

An ethnic Muslim minority, Rohingya have long faced violence and persecution in their native Myanmar, where they are not legally recognized as citizens. For decades, many who fled wound up inside the dozens of camps in Cox’s Bazar – a city on the coast of Bangladesh named for an 18th century British colonial who managed refugee resettlements.

The bloodshed reached a crescendo in August 2017, when a Myanmar military campaign of rape, arson and murder sent more than 740,000 Rohingya fleeing into Bangladesh. The U.S., U.N. and others have classified those attacks a genocide.

Today, more than 1 million Rohingya live inside these tightly packed camps of tarps and bamboo where Muhammad and his family have tried to eke out an existence.

But the Bangladeshi government still views the Rohingya refugees as temporary residents and conditions inside the camps are bleak.

Landslides and fires regularly kill while a lack of sanitation and clean water means scabies, cholera and other diseases are disturbingly common. Schooling and healthcare are hard to come by, there’s not enough food, and almost no one is legally allowed to hold a job.

Added to these challenges is a worsening security situation — sending more people fleeing from the camps. Abductions and arson have become commonplace, as have drugs, human trafficking and extortion. Last year, at least 90 people were killed in the Cox’s Bazar camps amid fights over criminal territory.

Still, a steady stream of Rohingya have nowhere to go but Cox’s Bazar. Back in Myanmar, the war in Rakhine state may be edging toward another genocide, according to observers. Amnesty International this month warned the latest attacks, in which fleeing civilians were bombed, “bear a terrifying resemblance to the atrocities of August 2017.”

The situation has made Rohingya doubly vulnerable to criminals: those fleeing Myanmar must pay off smugglers to get them to Cox’s Bazar. At the same time, those trying to leave the refugee camps — via a risky sea voyage to Malaysia or Indonesia — must also pay hundreds or even thousands of dollars to the traffickers.

Often, the traffickers are tied to gangs controlling the camps. The largest of these groups originated inside Myanmar as militant Rohingya movements but have expanded operations into crimes outside the country’s borders.

The kidnapping of men and even boys to serve as fighters, assistants and cannon fodder for both the junta and its opposing forces — or to sell back to their desperate family — appears to have become yet another source of their revenue, Rohingya refugees told RFA.

Moustafa, another refugee living in the camps, used to visit his relative's tea shop often. The gossip he and his friends shared there represented a rare taste of normalcy for those whose lives had been repeatedly upended.

Now, such moments are impossible, he told RFA in June. One week earlier, Moustafa was sitting in his usual seat when a group of armed men grabbed two youths just outside the shop. The kidnappers were thought by Moustafa to be working for the Arakan Army, or AA — the armed wing of the predominantly Buddhist Rakhine, or Arakanese, self-determination movement. (The AA has denied forced conscription, calling such claims “unfounded” in an interview published by The New Humanitarian.)

Days after witnessing the abduction, Moustafa was still shaken.

“Sometimes the camp administration sends police, but most of the time they do not,” he said. “Living in the camp is very hard now. We were tortured and displaced by different groups [in Myanmar], and now our own people torture us.”

While numerous armed groups operate inside the camps, chief among them are the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, or ARSA, and Rohingya Solidarity Organization, or RSO. Analysts and refugees alike say the militia groups, along with the lesser-known Arakan Rohingya Army, bear the brunt of the responsibility for the conscription abductions.

ARSA first came to widespread notice in August 2017, when it attacked 30 police outposts and army bases in Rakhine, killing at least 12 officers, and triggering the brutal military crackdown that followed.

The militant group gained notoriety in the months and years that followed, including for a particularly violent attack on a Hindu village that saw scores, if not hundreds, killed.

By 2019, the militants had turned their attention to criminal activity inside the camps, with a report by rights group Fortify Rights noting that ARSA had begun abducting, detaining and torturing its critics.

RSO, which has been in existence for four decades, has carried out a similar campaign inside Cox's Bazar. In the case of kidnappings for conscription, the group appears to have gone after minors. “We noticed that RSO was doing forced coercion and putting pressure tactics on really different parts of the population,” said John Quinley III, a director of Fortify Rights. “There were some cases of forceful conscription of children.”

Under international law, it is illegal for children under the age of 15 to be recruited or sent to fight, though an optional children's rights protocol ratified by most countries, including Myanmar, raises the age to 18. Conscription of civilians of any age by non-state actors, such as ARSA and RSO, is also illegal.

In July, Fortify Rights released an investigation detailing how armed Rohingya groups were kidnapping refugees from the camps and turning them over to the junta. Refugees who had been abducted and later escaped told Fortify Rights of being nabbed at a market or cafe, brought across the border and handed over to soldiers. One said he had been released only after his family handed over \$850.

### **‘There is no safe place for us’**

The threat of abduction has prompted desperate families to try to move their sons to safety. Given the security situation across Cox's Bazar, that's a near impossibility.

In mid-May, Damira sent her 22-year-old son to stay with relatives in a neighboring refugee camp. The family had recently arrived from Myanmar, fleeing violence in Maungdaw that saw their house burned and relatives killed. But their new home inside Cox's Bazar has offered little sense of security.

“Compared to Bangladesh, the fear inside Myanmar was less,” Damira told RFA in June. “We never imagined we would have to hide our son here.”

There are almost no protected spaces within the massive, little-policed camps. Bangladesh's strict controls on freedom of movement for refugees make it almost impossible to leave, Quinley said. And while the U.N. refugee agency can move anyone facing threats from one camp to another, “RSO has a huge presence



around all the camps,” he said.

It is impossible to know how many children — or adults — have been abducted from the camps to fight inside Myanmar. Citing a confidential U.N. report, AFP reported that about 1,500 Rohingya had been forcibly conscripted from the camps as of May. One local aid worker told RFA he believed 3,000 had been kidnapped, but several humanitarians and analysts acknowledged there was no way to know for sure how many refugees have been sent to fight.

Ali, who crossed into Bangladesh from Myanmar seven years ago, told RFA that whatever normalcy he and his family had managed to carve out in the years since disappeared the moment forced recruitment began.

“For the last few months we have been living in extreme fear,” he said. In May, he sent his 16-year-old son to live with relatives elsewhere in the camps. Almost every day since he has heard of a boy being kidnapped for suspected forced recruitment. He is anguished by the idea that he cannot protect his child.

“The day before yesterday, my son told me that the area is also not safe. Every night a group of people have been patrolling. Whenever they spotted a young man, they targeted them to drag them to Myanmar,” he said.

“Until death there is no safe place for us.”

So far, Bangladeshi authorities appear unable or unwilling to address the security situation. Both Fortify Rights and Human Rights Watch last year released reports revealing widespread corruption, abuse and extortion by the Armed Police Battalion, or ABPn, which since 2020 has been responsible for camp security. Several senior officials at ABPn declined to comment when reached by RFA, though previously the ABPn defended their record, telling BenarNews last year they had done much to protect those living inside the camps.

### **An endless trap**

Quinley of Fortify Rights said that RSO appeared to change tactics in May, following protests by women inside the camp and significant pushback from the larger

community. RSO has denied both the use of children and a reported shift to going after teachers and leaders, insisting it's carried out no forced recruitment. In audio messages published by Shafiur Rahman, a journalist who runs Rohingya Refugee News, RSO leader Ko Ko Linn referred to such reports as propaganda and boasted of having thousands of trained volunteers.

“There's no need for the general public to be afraid or leave the camps,” he said, according to a translation by Rahman.

But such claims do little to calm the nerves of those living inside the camps.

Months after his brother's abduction, Muhammad is no closer to knowing whether it was RSO, ARSA or another group that took Farhad. All he knows is his brother went to school, tried to come home and disappeared.

“I don't know if he is alive or not because the last time I was able to talk to him, my brother told me that they are out of food,” Muhammad told RFA in June. While he spoke, rain pounded at the thin walls of their sparse home, seeping through one edge of the roof. His 4-year-old lay sleeping in the corner.

According to Muhammad, about six weeks after being forced across the border, Farhad managed to escape with three other boys. He called his brother from the jungle, telling him they found a trafficker who could smuggle him back into Bangladesh if given enough money. Muhammad thought the boy's voice sounded weak, and Farhad admitted he was sick. As Muhammad considered how to scrape together the funds to pay for Farhad's release, his brother became unreachable — he could no longer get through on the phone.

From time to time, when he is feeling scared or stressed or angry, Muhammad dials a now useless number. At the other end, a prerecorded message tells him the phone has been switched off. But this is the last number at which he heard from Farhad, so what else can he do but try it, over and over again.

*Courtesy of Radio Free Asia*



Photo: AFP

## UN EXPERT CALLS FOR GLOBAL ACTION TO STOP NEW ATROCITIES AGAINST ROHINGYA IN MYANMAR ON GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY

A statement issued by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar on 26 August. Remembering the seven-year anniversary of genocidal attacks on the Rohingya minority, the statement called on the international community to take action to prevent new atrocities against the Rohingya.

Seven years after genocidal attacks, the international community must take action to prevent new atrocities against the Rohingya. Special Rapporteur issues statement on 26th August.

On the seventh anniversary of attacks by the military junta, that forced more than 700,000 Rohingya to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, has called for an emergency convening of UN Member

States to halt a new round of atrocities underway in Rakhine State. He issued the following statement:

“The best way for the world to commemorate the seventh anniversary of the onset of genocidal attacks against the Rohingya in Myanmar is by acting to halt the new round of atrocities under way in Rakhine State.

Despite warning signs in 2017, untold numbers of Rohingya men, women and children were massacred in Rakhine State and more than 700,000 were forced to literally run for their lives over the Bangladesh border.

Now, seven years later, history is repeating itself. In Rakhine State, Rohingya civilians are being systematically attacked, displaced and killed. Just like seven years ago, glaring warning signs are being ignored by the international community, as the lives



of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya hang in the balance.

Myanmar's military junta has carried out a deliberate campaign to inflame tensions between Rohingya and Rakhine communities in Rakhine State, fueling resentment and prejudice to toxically high levels.

The junta has forcibly conscripted young Rohingya men into the very army that was responsible for the 2017 genocidal attacks. It forced Rohingya to participate in staged "protests" against the Arakan Army, pictures of which circulated online and heightened tensions with the Rakhine population. Some Rohingya militant groups have cynically aligned with the junta and participated in attacks on Rakhine villages.

Rohingya villages are reportedly being burned to the ground by Arakan Army forces that continue their military campaign to expel junta forces from Rakhine State. Both Arakan Army and junta forces have been imperiling innocent Rohingya by setting up bases inside Rohingya villages, exposing them to the hell-fire of artillery and drone attacks from both sides.

The death toll continues to mount in northern Rakhine State, with tens of thousands of Rohingya displaced, cut off from humanitarian aid and forced to fend for themselves to find food, water and shelter. Growing numbers, including young children, are starving or perishing from diseases and lack of access to medical care.

Now, just as in 2017, thousands of Rohingya, with nowhere else to turn, are seeking safety and shelter in Bangladesh. Despite being shot at, shelled and attacked with drones, the number of desperate families attempting to cross the border continues to grow. Scores have perished as overcrowded boats sink to the bottom of the Naf River that separates Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The way to end this cycle of horror and violence – a cycle that is repeating itself even as governments take note of the seventh anniversary of the Rohingya genocide – is to put an end to the conditions that enabled that genocide. These include lethal doses of international ignorance and indifference and the impunity that it fostered.

World leaders have issued statements every year on the anniversary of the beginning of the 2017 genocidal attacks, condemning the violence and expressing sympathy for its victims. These statements, no matter how well intentioned, are grossly inadequate.

Given the horror that is unfolding, once again, for the Rohingya in Myanmar, I implore world leaders to replace words of commemoration with action.

It is time for an emergency convening of UN Member States to address this crisis.

The UN Security Council should immediately convene and act to address this unfolding disaster before more innocent lives are lost. If the Security Council will not act, then I call for an emergency convening of UN Member States and non-state actors that are ready to act on behalf of those who are under siege. Such a convening can begin to address the crisis by:

- Shining the spotlight of world attention on a crisis that remains in the shadows – attention that can cultivate and sustain the political will for action;

- Launching an emergency action plan that includes the strong, practical measures necessary to address the cause of the crisis and its consequences while building strong, sustained support for the implementation of the plan from Member States;

- Mobilising robust emergency humanitarian aid and the access necessary to reach those in need; and

- Supporting mechanisms to hold those responsible for grave human rights violations, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, to account.

Finally, I urge the Government of Bangladesh to once again demonstrate its support needed to meet this profound responsibility.

The worst way to mark the anniversary of the 2017 Rohingya genocide is with empty words and hollow declarations. The Rohingya need and deserve much more. There is no time to lose."



Rohingya refugee in a camp in Bangladesh. Photo: AFP

## US AMBASSADOR TO THE UN CALLS FOR JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ON SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF ROHINGYA GENOCIDE IN MYANMAR

**A**mbassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield issues a statement on the Seventh Anniversary of Genocide Against Rohingya. The statements is as follows.

This week, we recognize a grim anniversary: seven years since the start of a campaign of genocide, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing against Rohingya in northern Rakhine State. The United States stands with victims and survivors of this horrific violence, and we reaffirm our commitment to pursue justice and accountability for the atrocities committed by the Burma military.

We thank the Government and people of Bangladesh for giving shelter and refuge to nearly one million displaced Rohingya, as well as other countries in the region hosting Rohingya refugees.

Even as these atrocities have faded from the headlines, the international community must not forget

the mass killings, torching of entire villages, and the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands, at the hands of the Burma military. The military regime's ongoing horrific atrocities have not stopped. It is time for the Security Council to act beyond Resolution 2669 and finally put the situation in Burma at the top of the Council's agenda.

For our part, over the past seven years, the United States has contributed nearly \$2.4 billion in humanitarian assistance. In addition, we have conducted extensive documentation of the atrocities and abuses committed against Rohingya and all civilians.

Today and every day, we call on Burma's military, as well as all armed actors, to protect civilian populations and allow for unhindered humanitarian access. And we stand in solidarity with the people of Burma as they call for a return to peace, democratic governance, and the rule of law.





Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing meets his troops. Photo: AFP

# MIN AUNG HLAING CALLS FOR REGION-SPECIFIC SECURITY MEASURES AMID ONGOING ARMED RESISTANCE

**M**yanmar junta leader Min Aung Hlaing underscored the necessity for region-specific security systems during a regional development meeting in Mandalay on 25 August.

According to the military-controlled Mirror daily newspaper, the Senior General advocated for security strategies tailored specifically to the needs of individual wards, villages, and roads. He emphasized that the ongoing security challenges, aggravated by various threats, have caused significant regional damage.

Implementing security systems at these local levels, he argued, would greatly enhance community safety and called for regular assessments of these measures.

In his remarks, Min Aung Hlaing also criticized the failure to address security issues stemming from alleged electoral fraud through political channels, stating that such problems have instead been resolved through armed conflict.

Looking ahead, the military council is planning to

conduct a population and household census in October, with plans to prepare for and hold elections based on the census results.

The Senior General called for a security framework that involves active community participation, believing that greater public involvement will strengthen stability, uphold law and order, and support the implementation of a multi-party democratic system.

In response to the armed resistance following the military coup, the council is facing territorial losses and a weakening military force. To address these challenges, the council has invoked the military conscription law, mandating citizen enlistment, and is reactivating veterans for active duty.

On 16 August, the military council established the Public Security and Anti-Terrorism Central Supervisory Committee, which is responsible for forming and equipping village-level security groups with appropriate weapons, equipment, and combat training.



Photo: Facebook

# JUNTA CHIEF AIMS TO BUILD A SECURITY SYSTEM THROUGH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN WARDS AND VILLAGES ACROSS MYANMAR

The junta chief, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, said, "it is necessary to initiate a security system with public participation for the public security. If people participate in the public security system, it will help improve peace and stability as well as rule of law."

He made the statement at the meeting with Mandalay Region government and Region-level department heads held in Mandalay on 25 August.

"If people from relevant residential areas initiate security systems for the people's security and public security, it will be beneficial for the security measures of the regions and to hold free and fair general elections," he added.

The news being circulated among the people says that male persons will be given short-term military training courses, and they will be assigned public security duties at their locality.

The Military Council formed a 13-member Public Security and Anti-terror Organization led by Union Minister of Border Affairs Lt. Gen. Tun Tun Naung on 16 August.

All male citizens in the age group of 35-65 must serve in this organization at their location. The Military Council reportedly issued an order for giving military training to these people.

A source close to the Central Region Military Command said the junta chief's personal visits to Central Region and Southern Region Military Commands were to put pressure on regional military commanders to form these ward/village-level public security organizations.

The Military Council reportedly directed its forces to use these public security organizations which mainly consist of over-35 male people when the urban war emerges like the battle in Lashio in northeast Shan State.

These ward and village-level public security organizations will be formed within two months across the country and they will be given weapon training courses at the earliest time possible.

It is learned that the central body of the Public Security Organization will form state/region-level, township and ward-village-level subordinate organizations. They will be issued small arms, ammunition, uniforms, and equipment. Logistical support will also be provided for them. And they will be given basic military training and tactical operations training.





Sembcorp power plant.

# POWER STATION RESUMES OPERATION IN MILITARILY TENSE MYINGYAN, MYANMAR

**S**embcorp Industries (Sembcorp) announced in its statement issued on 23 August that it has resumed operation of the Sembcorp Myingyan Independent Power Plant in Mandalay Region, Myanmar, following its temporary suspension announced on 12 August 2024.

The decision was made after conflicts around the vicinity of the plant subsided such that the situation is now assessed to be safe for Sembcorp’s personnel to return to the plant.

The date to resume operations is aligned with the Electric Power Generation Enterprise, the press statement says.

The Sembcorp Myingyan Independent Power Plant (IPP) is a 225-megawatt combined-cycle, gas-fired power plant located in Myingyan District, Mandalay Region.

Costing about US\$300 million, the plant is one of the largest gas-fired independent power plants in Myanmar and plays a key role in meeting the country’s growing demand for electricity. It started operation at the end of 2018.

The Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation (YESC) issued a press statement on 13 August which says that the V-Power natural gas power plant in Myingyan, which supplies electricity to the national grid, experienced an emergency shutdown of its machinery on 12 August. Similarly, the Sembcorp natural gas power plant in Myingyan also suffered an emergency shutdown on 12 August, resulting in a combined power supply reduction from both power plants of about 4,920 megawatt-hours.

The recent suspension of operations comes after People’s Defence Forces (PDF) launched attacks in the Taungtha, Natogyi, and Myingyan townships on Saturday, including an attack on a junta base located only about six kilometres (four miles) from the power plant.

A special operation recently launched by the Myingyan District Special Operations (MDSO) unit attacked the Myingyan steel factory which forced the steel factory to shut down its operations until Tuesday. The situation was still tense in the area, the local PDF forces said.



Photo: Supplied

## MYANMAR JUNTA AND CHINESE AMBASSADOR DISCUSS BILATERAL TRADE AND IMPLEMENTING ONGOING PROJECTS

The Chinese ambassador to Myanmar, Ms. Ma Jia, met Military Council's Foreign Minister Than Swe for a reported discussion of bilateral trade in agriculture and livestock products under the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) and implementation of ongoing Chinese projects in Myanmar.

They cordially discussed matters pertaining to further consolidation of the existing Pauk-Phaw relationship and implementation of mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

China's consistent support towards peace and sustainable socioeconomic development for Myanmar was also discussed, the state-run Myanmar daily paper reported.

Both sides also exchanged views on closer collaboration in the regional and international arena, especially ASEAN and the United Nations, the daily paper reported.

In this meeting, they reportedly discussed giving protection to Chinese projects in Myanmar, implementing the agreement reached during the Chinese Foreign Minister's visit to Myanmar and stability and development in Myanmar.

A statement issued by the Chinese embassy in Myanmar says the State Administration Council (SAC) Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met the ambassador on 21 August and assured Ms. Ma Jia that he would provide utmost protection to the Chinese projects in Myanmar.

The Chinese embassy statement also says that Chinese Foreign Minister Mr. Wang Yi and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing agreed to give practical protection to Chinese projects, Chinese nationals working at these projects and to work for stability and tranquillity along the Sino-Myanmar border.

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Min Naung received Ambassador Ms. Ma Jia of the People's Republic of China to Myanmar at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon. Both sides cordially discussed matters in connection with cooperation in the development of the agricultural sector between the two countries, the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund Project, collaboration with the General Administration of Customs (GACC), and trade activities in farm products, Myanmar state-run daily paper reported.





Aung San Oo, left, and Myo Myint Oo, right.  
Photo: Facebook

# MYANMAR JUNTA JAILS JOURNALIST FOR LIFE IN ONGOING CRACKDOWN

**A** military court in Myanmar has jailed a journalist for life and sentenced another to 20 years in prison after convicting them under a counterterrorism law, their editor said on Thursday.

Myo Myint Oo and Aung San Oo, who work for the independent online news service Dawei Watch, were sentenced after being denied the right to legal defence and not being allowed to speak in court, editor Ko Kyaw told AFP.

Since overthrowing Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government in February 2021, Myanmar's military junta has waged a sweeping and bloody campaign against dissent, including targeting independent journalists.

The two journalists were arrested at their homes in the coastal town of Myeik, about 560 kilometres (350 miles) south of Yangon on December 11.

Myo Mynit Oo, 40, was handed a life sentence on May 15, while Aung San Oo, 49, was handed a 20-year jail term on February 16.

They were "violently interrogated" for four days in a detention centre before being transferred to the Myeik Prison, a statement from Dawei Watch said.

Ko Kyaw said he learned about the sentences earlier this year but delayed announcing them for the security of the journalists' families, without providing further details.

The court has not given a detailed explanation of the case, Ko Kyaw said.

Myanmar is now one of the world's biggest jailers of journalists with 62 detained, second only to China, according to the Paris-based campaign group Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

Myanmar now ranks 171 out of 180 in RSF's 2024 World Press Freedom Index.

Last September a Myanmar journalist was jailed for 20 years after being indicted on several charges, including breaching a natural disaster law and a telecommunications law while covering the aftermath of a deadly cyclone.

Several foreign journalists have been detained, including US citizen Danny Fenster, who was jailed for 11 years in 2021, before being pardoned and released days later.

AFP



Members of the Youth Sounding Board for EU

## EU INAUGURATES FIRST YOUTH SOUNDING BOARD FOR EU IN ASEAN

A special initiative has been launched to encourage young people's engagement in European Union and ASEAN cooperation.

Today, Sujiro Seam, Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to ASEAN officially inaugurated 11 youth representatives from ASEAN Member States and Timor Leste as the first ever cohort of the Youth Sounding Board for EU in ASEAN (YSBEA).

The establishment of YSBEA is an initiative aimed to boost young people's engagement in EU-ASEAN cooperation to act as a youth advisory group to the EU Delegation.

Sujiro Seam, Ambassador of the EU to ASEAN, said, "The selection of YSBEA members is an acknowledgement of their outstanding leadership qualities and impressive achievements. YSBEA will provide a consultative space and platform for young

people to strengthen the European Union's strategic partnership with ASEAN. YSBEA participation will make the actions of the European Union more relevant and effective for young people."

"Young people are change-makers and essential partners in ensuring the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change. Youth have an important role to play in deciding the future of this region: to build a better future that is greener, more inclusive, and digital. YSBEA members' participation reflects their testament and commitment to make a difference," added Ambassador Seam.

YSBEA members had the opportunity to pay a courtesy call to Nararya S. Soeprapto, Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) of ASEAN for Community and Corporate Affairs of ASEAN.





Members of the Youth Sounding Board for EU



Sujiro Seam, Ambassador of the EU to ASEAN with Nararya S. Soeprapto, Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) of ASEAN for Community and Corporate Affairs of ASEAN.





IDF forces in action in Gaza.  
Photo: AFP

# UN AID OFFICIAL QUESTIONS WORLD'S 'HUMANITY' AS GAZA WAR RAGES

**A** top UN aid official on Thursday last week questioned “what has become of our basic humanity,” as the war in Gaza rages and humanitarian operations struggle to respond.

Joyce Msuya, acting head of the UN’s humanitarian office (OCHA), said that “we cannot plan more than 24 hours in advance because we struggle to know what supplies we will have, when we will have them or where we will be able to deliver.”

“Civilians are hungry. They are thirsty. They are sick. They are homeless. They have been pushed beyond... what any human being should bear,” she told the Security Council.

Msuya’s comments came after the UN had to halt the movement of aid and aid workers within Gaza on Monday due to a new Israeli evacuation order for the Deir al-Balah area, which had become a hub for its workers.

“More than 88 percent of Gaza’s territory has come under an (Israeli) order to evacuate at some point,” Msuya said, adding that civilians, “in a state of limbo,” were being forced into an area equivalent to just 11 percent of the Gaza Strip.

“The evacuation orders appear to defy the requirements of international humanitarian law,” she added.

Israel’s war against Palestinian militant group Hamas has come under increasing scrutiny as the civilian death toll rises, but international powers including the United States have failed so far to help negotiate a ceasefire.

The current fighting was sparked by Hamas’s October 7 attack on southern Israel, which resulted in the deaths of 1,199 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures.

Israel’s retaliatory military campaign has killed at least 40,602 people in Gaza, according to the territory’s health ministry. The UN rights office says most of the dead are women and children.

“What we have witnessed over the past 11 months... calls into question the world’s commitment to the international legal order that was designed to prevent these tragedies,” Msuya said.

“It forces us to ask: what has become of our basic sense of humanity?”

Calling on the Security Council and wider international community to use its leverage to end the war, Msuya urged the release of hostages and “a sustained ceasefire in Gaza.”

AFP





Supporters of Khaleda Zia on the streets of Dhaka. Photo: AFP

## WITH HASINA GONE IN BANGLADESH, A RIVAL FAMILY TASTES POWER

**T**wo women dominated Bangladeshi politics for decades. One was chased into exile. The other is newly free from custody and too sick to rule, but her heir looks set to take power.

Autocratic ex-premier Sheikh Hasina, 76, fled the country by helicopter for neighbouring India this month as huge crowds demanding an end to her rule marched towards her palace.

Hours after the student-led uprising sparked the sudden collapse of her government, her lifelong rival and two-time prime minister Khaleda Zia, 79, was released from house arrest for the first time in years.

Members of Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) endured crackdowns and mass arrests under Hasina, who pointed to her opposition's cosy relations with Islamists as justification.

A caretaker government has run the country since Hasina's ouster -- but it has to hold new elections eventually, and now that the BNP has emerged from the underground, its members are confident of their prospects.

"People who supported us from behind for a very long time, they are now coming to the front," Mollik Wasi Tami, a leader of the party's student wing, told AFP.

Interim leader and Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, 84, has said he has no plans to continue in politics after his current role is finished.

The students who led Hasina's overthrow have no fondness for Zia either, and it remains unclear whether they would support a future BNP government or seek to form their own party.

But whatever they decide, analysts say that when polls are held, the BNP is the force with the cross-country network, the political experience and the drive to win.

"In the next election, whenever it takes place, the BNP has more appeal," Bangladeshi politics expert and Illinois State University professor Ali Riaz told AFP.

Zia herself is too ill to assume the prime ministership a third time.

She has suffered from numerous chronic health complaints since she was jailed in 2018 after a graft conviction widely seen as politically motivated, whatever the charge's true merits.

Zia has only appeared in public once since her release, in a pre-recorded video statement to a BNP rally in Dhaka from a hospital bed, during which she appeared sick and frail.

"We need love and peace to rebuild our country," she told thousands of party faithful at the rally, held two days after Hasina left Bangladesh.

Her supporters are planning to take her abroad for urgent medical care, clearing the way for her eldest son and heir apparent Tarique Rahman to take the reins.

### "He will come back"

Tarique has led the BNP since his mother's conviction while in exile in London, where he fled to avoid his own set of graft charges -- which his party is now working to quash.

"When the legal problems are solved, he will come back," Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, the BNP's secretary-general, told AFP.

Tarique's visage already appears alongside that of his mother on the party's banners and campaign materials, including at the rally held two days after Hasina's toppling.

The fact that rally happened at all was a remarkable departure from Hasina's rule.

The BNP's senior leaders and thousands of activists were jailed late last year ahead of January elections that -- absent any genuine political opposition -- returned Hasina to power.

### Dynasties forged in blood

The decades-old contest between Zia and Hasina is a dynastic battle that predates the political career of both women.

Hasina's father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Zia's husband Ziaur Rahman both led the country in the early years after its 1971 liberation war against Pakistan. Both were assassinated.

Both women joined forces in protests that ousted a military dictator in 1990 and then contested elections against each other the following year.

They have alternated in power ever since, with their parties serving as vehicles for their fierce rivalry.

Zia's first administration in 1991 was hailed for liberalising Bangladesh's economy, sparking decades of growth.

But her second term from 2001 saw several graft scandals -- some implicating Tarique -- and Islamist attacks, including one that almost killed Hasina.

### 'Politics based on religion'

Zia was also accused of steering Muslim-majority Bangladesh, and her nominally big tent BNP, away from their secular roots by allying with the Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami.

The partnership gave Hasina cover to persecute both parties by claiming she was fighting extremism -- an excuse bolstered by several terror attacks during her time in office.

Retired Dhaka University professor Abul Kashem Fazlul Haq told AFP that any collaboration between both forces risked antagonising the avowedly secular students who toppled Hasina.

"They are aware that they will be hurt if they do politics based on religion," he said.

But Alamgir, the BNP's secretary-general, said the party was open to renewing the alliance if it boosted their chances of forming the next government.

"BNP will definitely look for victory," he said. "If Jamaat helps, then definitely."

AFP



PODCAST #261

## From the Ground Up

Saw Kapi on how he transformed from a student activist to an educational innovator and public governance trainer

Voices: Current Events

## FROM THE GROUND UP

"Our standard of treating the population that we govern has to be right!" exclaims Saw Kapi, speaking to Insight Myanmar on their podcast service. "We cannot just treat them differently because we have guns and control the area. If we think that political authority comes from the barrel of the gun, then we are heading towards dictatorship. But if we believe that our authority to govern comes from the consent of the governed, we are heading in the right direction."

A veteran of the 8888 Uprising, Saw Kapi gives his insights on the slow process of democratization in Myanmar, and his own journey from revolutionary student to educator, to a builder of civil society.

Saw Kapi's second year at a government technical college in Taungoo was significantly impacted by the 1988 student uprising. On September 18, the military launched a coup to retake power; Saw Kapi fled along with his ABSDF (All Burma Students' Democratic Front) colleagues to join the resistance in Karen state. Reflecting on the student movement's dynamics in working towards the common cause of democracy, Saw Kapi notes, "We accepted each other. One commonality was our political consciousness, the reason we wanted to establish democracy." He continues, "It wasn't only Bamar students at the time, but there were students from different ethnic backgrounds who participated in the student movement. But they didn't really make their identity known, meaning the protests at the time did not take [on] an ethnic dimension."

He believes this was also a result of the country's isolationist stance during those socialist decades. "The country had been very closed to the outside world for a long, long time, almost 26 years," he says.

"Therefore, people at the time did not mention their ethnicity." Saw Kapi uses himself as an example of how

identities were negotiated. "My identity as a student was a lot more important and a lot more politically significant than my identity as a Karen. I do have dual or even triple identities. However, in terms of political movement, political consciousness, and participating in these democratic struggles, my identity as a student was at the forefront at the time."

Although Saw Kapi had fled to his cultural homeland adjusting to life there was challenging. He had grown up in a more urban environment, so this experience felt to him something of a cross between "coming home" while simultaneously being stuck in an alien environment. "I started learning about the ethnic struggles when I joined the student movement in the jungle. We didn't get to read a lot of these histories when we were in the city, so we did not know. But I started learning." Yet at the same time, he faced challenging living conditions, and widespread misconceptions, as the local population initially mistrusted Saw Kapi and his companions. But with his background, he played a crucial bridging role, eventually establishing trust and understanding between the students and the local population.

In 1994, Saw Kapi migrated to the United States as a refugee. "I simply started everything from the very beginning again!" he exclaims. "I had been a college student in 1988, but of course, I didn't bring any evidence. We had to reestablish our own identity when we migrated." He began his new life by attending adult school to improve his English and basic skills, eventually obtaining a GED. He then enrolled in a community college before transferring to San Francisco State University, where he studied international relations. This journey required significant effort and resilience. "One has to be very diligent and have focus and say, 'Okay, I'm going to try to finish my education!' Because by the time I started my college [in the USA], I was about five years older than most of my classmates. But we understood the value, the importance of education, especially in the revolutionary setting."

Beyond education alone, however, Saw Kapi also realized the vast cultural adjustments necessary in relocating to an entirely different country: "I felt like my body was in the United States, but my mental state, or a lot of my thinking was still in the jungle and with resistance, with most of my comrades in the jungle at the time."

### CATCH THE PODCAST

Read more and catch the Insight Myanmar Podcast here:

<https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2024/8/13/episode-261-from-the-ground-up>



## **MYANMAR JUNTA CHIEF STRESSES CENSUS IMPORTANCE AHEAD OF CONTROVERSIAL ELECTIONS**

**J**unta chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of Myanmar’s military council, officially known as State Administration Council, recently addressed junta officials, stressing the importance of the upcoming population and household census, according to the junta-controlled newspaper The Global New Light of Myanmar.

In a meeting with Chief Ministers and departmental heads from various states and regions in Yangon, the junta chief outlined how the census data would play a crucial role in shaping the country’s future, particularly in relation to the junta’s planned elections.

Data from the census-taking process will be used in serving the interest of the country, said Min Aung Hlaing, highlighting the census’s significance in preparing for its future plan.

In the meeting, the junta chief drew connections between economic development, political stability, and the upcoming elections. He said that all citizens are responsible for the development of the country’s economy as economy and politics rely on each other.

While specific details about the elections were not provided, the emphasis on gathering accurate population data through the census implies its potential use in electoral planning, including constituency delimitation and voter registration processes.

The junta’s chief focus on the census comes at a time when Myanmar military faces international pressure to return to democratic governance. This meeting suggests that the military junta is taking steps towards elections, albeit on its own terms and timeline.

The junta’s plans for elections, however, have been

met with significant skepticism both domestically and internationally. Critics argued that the proposed vote lacks credibility and is unlikely to reflect the true will of Myanmar’s people. Many Western nations have already signaled their reluctance to recognize the eventual outcome.

The election’s legitimacy has been further undermined by the junta’s actions, including the forced dissolution of dozens of political parties that failed to meet stringent new registration requirements.

Most notably, this includes the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi, which won a landslide victory in the 2020 election before being ousted by the military. The absence of the NLD and other major opposition parties from the ballot has led many observers to characterize the upcoming election as little more than a formality designed to lend a veneer of legitimacy to continued military rule.

## **MYANMAR JUNTA’S FORCED LABOR CLAIMS CLASH WITH REPORTS OF ONGOING CONSCRIPTION**

**I**n a recent statement, Myanmar’s military junta claimed progress in addressing forced labor complaints through cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and relevant ministries, according to junta-controlled media.

The junta-controlled media reported that since 2020, forced labor complaints have been handled via a National Complaint Mechanism (NCM), which purportedly includes representatives from the National Human Rights Commission, employer and employee organizations, and various ministries.

The junta asserted that victims of forced labor can now safely contact and file complaints with multiple bodies, including the Office of the State Administration Council, regional governments, and the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission.

However, these claims of progress stand in stark contrast to ongoing reports of human rights abuses by the military regime.

There have been widespread accounts of the Myanmar army engaging in forced conscription, particularly targeting young people. Human rights organizations and local sources report that the military has been conducting raids and arbitrary arrests, forcing civilians into military service against their will.



## FACEBOOK USERS CRITICIZE CHINESE PRESSURE ON ETHNIC ARMED GROUP TNLA

Facebook users in Myanmar are expressing strong opinions about reports of Chinese pressure on Myanmar's ethnic armed group Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) to cease military operations near the China-Myanmar border.

A leaked letter, allegedly from the Security Committee of Ruili City in China, demanded that the TNLA immediately cease fire with the Myanmar junta and cooperate with China to maintain stability in northern Myanmar and the border area, according to Shwe Phee Myay News Agency.

The letter called for measures to guarantee the safety of Chinese citizens and Chinese businesses in Myanmar, as well as to eliminate military actions that threaten the stability of the Chinese border area and the security of Chinese citizens' lives and property.

The document threatens "forceful disciplinary measures" if the TNLA does not comply.

In response, many Burmese Facebook users have voiced their disapproval of what they perceive as Chinese interference.

A Facebook user commented, "As a Myanmar citizen, I strongly condemn the threats made by the Security Committee of Ruili City against the Myanmar people and the TNLA. While I respect China as a good neighbor, I cannot accept their threats in Myanmar's internal matters."

Prominent 88-generation student leader Min Ko Naing also weighed in, writing, "We will not bow to fear, nor will we act rashly based on emotions. We will respond with wisdom and courage. No matter how much powerful countries try to disturb our revolution, the people of Myanmar have a clear message: We will not submit to bullying from any superpower, especially not when our revolution, built on the sacrifice of blood and lives, is nearing its goal."

As part of the Brotherhood Alliance, which comprised the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (widely known as Kokang Army), Arakan Army and TNLA, the Ta'ang armed group participated in a significant military campaign dubbed Operation 1027 against the Myanmar junta. This offensive, launched in northern Shan State, dealt a severe blow to Myanmar's military junta.

The alliance's forces managed to overrun numerous military installations, including hundreds of junta army bases. Their advance also led to the capture of about 20 towns and key trade corridors linking Myanmar to China, dramatically altering the region's power dynamics and drawing increased attention from China.



## SHADOW NUG ACTING PRESIDENT: MYANMAR'S REVOLUTION NEARS VICTORY, CALLS FOR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

In a powerful address during the "Insights on the Achievements of the Myanmar Spring Revolution" program on August 23, Duwa Lashi La, the Acting President of the shadow National Unity Government (NUG), declared that Myanmar's military junta is on the brink of collapse after more than three years of revolution, according to NUG's official Facebook page.

The Acting President praised the unwavering spirit of the Myanmar people, stating that their refusal to surrender freedom and democracy has become an inspiration to the world. He emphasized the significant progress made by the allied resistance forces and its People's Defense Force (PDF), which have successfully liberated nearly 80 towns and achieved historic victories.

However, the Acting President did not shy away from acknowledging the heavy toll of these achievements. He spoke solemnly of the "immense courage and self-sacrifice" required from the public throughout the revolution.

In a poignant moment, he paid tribute to the fallen heroes and expressed his deepest sympathies to their families, underscoring the human cost of the struggle for democracy.

Looking ahead, Duwa Lashi La called upon the international community to play a crucial role in bringing the conflict to a conclusion. He urged for official recognition of Myanmar's democratic allies and emphasized the need for timely support to "achieve victory for democracy in Myanmar."

The Acting President's address comes at a critical juncture in Myanmar's struggle, as the resistance forces continue to gain ground against the military junta.

# mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight



# DIGITAL MAGAZINE

Our relaunched magazine Mizzima Weekly provides readers with a more focused read on what matters in Myanmar and the wider region, with an emphasis on analysis, insight and providing key talking points.