

ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight



Galvanizing the Burma Act?

Mixed views on possible
Trump policy on Myanmar

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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 CONTINUES TO PUSH FOR A SHAM ELECTION

Will 2025 be the year when Myanmar's illegitimate regime pulls off a national election?

It would be wise for international stakeholders – including the United Nations and foreign governments – to beware of the difficulties and dangers posed by the Myanmar junta trying to place a democratic fig-leaf over its illegal rule four years after their 2021 coup.

The Myanmar junta recently pushed forward with their census as a prelude to a proposed election in 2025. But observers should take heed of the status quo.

Since the military coup in 2021, opposition has been strong, with numerous groups, including the National Unity Government (NUG), the People's Defense Force (PDF), and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), actively resisting the junta's brutal rule. Little surprise that this strong and organized opposition diminishes the junta's credibility and complicates their ability to conduct a peaceful, uncontested national election.

As we know, the junta faces severe legitimacy issues both domestically and internationally. Many Myanmar citizens reject military rule, as do several foreign governments and international organizations, including ASEAN and the United Nations. This undermines the credibility of any election the junta might organize, making it likely to be viewed as a mere facade rather than a true democratic process.

In terms of practicality, the military's control is weak in various parts of Myanmar, particularly in ethnic minority regions where ethnic armed groups hold substantial power – demonstrated by the successes of Operation 1027 in northern Shan State and in other ethnic areas. Ongoing conflicts mean that conducting an election in these areas would be challenging and could face severe security risks, potentially leaving large

parts of the country unable to vote – with many unwilling to vote.

How the junta plans to organize an election is hard to envisage given the difficulties in areas such as voter registration, securing polling stations, and ensuring ballot integrity, especially in conflict-ridden zones. Economic sanctions and a deteriorating economy further strain their resources, making election organization noticeably harder. Questions would swirl around the political parties registered and allowed to take part, given the country's most popular party – the National League for Democracy – was scratched from the competition.

To top it all, the junta's actions have prompted sanctions from Western countries, limiting access to resources and international aid that could support the logistics of an election. China has said it supports the idea of an election, and no doubt other junta "friends" are providing a cautious thumbs up. But many governments have also explicitly condemned the idea of a junta-led election, applying additional pressure and complicating the junta's efforts to gain external recognition for the process. Few governments would accept the outcome of such a drive for legitimacy.

All this said, the Myanmar junta is growing desperate as they struggle to maintain some semblance of control over the country. That desperation may see the Myanmar generals forge ahead with their plans. This process will cause further division in society. But maybe that is what the junta wants.

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Cover photo of Donald Trump supporters celebrating the US election victory by AFP





US President-elect Donald Trump, seen here on the campaign trail. Photo: AFP

GALVANIZING THE BURMA ACT?

MIXED VIEWS ON POSSIBLE TRUMP POLICY ON MYANMAR

What difference will a Donald Trump presidency in the USA have for American policy towards Myanmar?

This is a question that a number of analysts have raised in the wake of the Republican Party landslide victory in the 5 November US election.

It is arguably rather early to make pronouncements given that US president-elect Trump is still finalizing his government picks and will not take up the role of US president and “leader of the free world” until 20 January 2025. In addition, Trump can be viewed as a divisive figure and the political stance of the analyst can come into play when trying to make an assessment.

LESSONS FROM EARLIER TENURE

If we take an overview, judging from Trump’s earlier presidency, clearly a key message will be “America First” emphasizing American interests and sometimes reducing involvement in complex international and regional issues.

Trump’s previous administration often took a more transactional approach to foreign policy, emphasizing economic and strategic interests over human rights. While US President Joe Biden’s administration has focused on condemning the Myanmar junta and supporting democracy, a Trump-led administration might deprioritize human rights issues, potentially reducing US pressure on the junta.

From the perspective of Washington DC, Trump may see Myanmar policy primarily through the lens of US-China relations. This could mean a stronger focus on countering Chinese influence in the region rather than on Myanmar’s internal political dynamics. Little surprise that tariffs may play an important role here. The administration might therefore seek alliances with regional actors primarily based on their stance toward China.

The previous Trump administration was known for preferring unilateral actions or bilateral deals over multilateral diplomacy. If this approach returns, the US might scale back collaborative efforts with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)



or the United Nations on Myanmar, possibly limiting coordinated pressure on the junta.

Trump's team may consider selectively revising sanctions if they view some level of economic engagement as beneficial to counterbalance China's influence. Alternatively, sanctions could intensify if the administration feels it aligns with a hardline stance on human rights violations, albeit with less coordination with international partners.

To contain China's influence, a Trump administration might increase support for regional allies like India and Thailand, which would indirectly impact Myanmar policy. However, this approach could focus more on the geopolitical balance than directly addressing Myanmar's crisis.

While a Trump administration might bring some continuity, it would likely take a less interventionist stance on Myanmar's internal issues, with a primary focus on broader US interests in the Indo-Pacific region, with China looming large.

ANALYSTS CHIP IN

One of the first analysts to step into the fray to offer comment after Trump's US election win was Myanmar analyst Miemie Winn Byrd, who has a good grasp of the internal activities of the US government and the broader political picture.

"Now, that both the Executive Branch and the Congress (both Senate and House) are going to be controlled by the Republicans, they should be able to speed up the full implementation of the Burma Act," Miemie Winn Byrd wrote in her Facebook post when it became clear Trump had won.

As she pointed out, Republican Senator Mitch McConnell stated his concern over the ineffective and slow pace of the Burma Act implementation by Joe Biden's Administration back in July 2024:

"We also have concerns over the State Department's and USAID's insufficient implementation, and unnecessarily narrow interpretation, of the



non-lethal assistance provisions of the Burma Act. Resistance groups are facing relentless military attacks and indiscriminate bombings by junta forces. Providing these groups with non-lethal items such as medical equipment, body armor, early warning radar systems, drone jammers, and similar tools for use against the junta's ISR drones will give them additional protection from these regime attacks. The slow pace of implementation and unnecessarily narrow interpretation of the "non-lethal assistance" authority provided by Congress have significantly hampered the U.S. government's efforts to provide timely and impactful support to resistance forces..." McConnell wrote.

US FOCUS ON CHINA

Others appear less gung-ho. NGO Human Rights Myanmar published a lengthy statement on what they see as concerns about possible changes in US government policy.

As they noted, Trump's first presidential term demonstrated a clear preference for US economic and strategic interests over human rights globally, rarely upholding international law while frequently fostering relationships with authoritarian leaders at the expense of the populations under their control. Re-adopting that approach, including at the UN, could further reduce already weak diplomatic pressure on authoritarians worldwide to curb their ongoing human rights abuses. This would almost inevitably reduce pressure on Myanmar's military, and encourage their authoritarian sponsors such as China and Russia to provide even more arms and political cover for atrocity crimes.

While the (Myanmar) military may often appear indifferent to diplomatic pressure, reducing scrutiny further would only embolden it to intensify its repressive actions, worsening the already severe conditions for Myanmar's people. Human rights defenders, journalists, political activists and CSOs would likely face even higher risks of detentions, harassment, and violence following a reduction in US pressure.

The NGO went on to say that the first Trump administration often seemed fixated on countering China's influence in Southeast Asia, prioritizing strategic competition over Myanmar's human rights abuses. An intensified focus on China in a second term

could potentially lead to an increase in US support for Myanmar's opposition movement, given the military's close alliance with China. However, it is also likely that this support will centre on counterbalancing Chinese power, rather than addressing the needs of the Myanmar people, such as ending human rights abuses, re-establishing democracy, and rebuilding civil society.

CHANGING US ROLE

Conversely, Trump's stated preference for a reduced US role in foreign affairs, often favouring a transactional approach, could lead to a US withdrawal from Myanmar altogether, creating more space for China's authoritarian government to exert influence, the NGO says. This shift could push Myanmar further into becoming a client state, akin to Cambodia and Laos, with likely increases in human rights violations as China's influence expands.

NGO Human Rights Myanmar goes on to note that the first Trump administration significantly cut global development funds, including for several UN agencies working on health and peace, with additional cuts blocked by Congress. While UN agencies in Myanmar have faced criticism regarding their effectiveness since the coup, further cuts would impact Myanmar's civil society as well, much of which relies on US grants and UN sub-grants. Although funding changes may take time to implement, and Congress generally leads on Myanmar policy, any reduction or delay in resources would inevitably hinder civil society's ability to monitor human rights abuses, deliver humanitarian aid, and advocate for marginalised groups.

The NGO says the new Trump administration may shift funding priorities toward ideological or faith-based organisations. Although Myanmar has a long tradition of faith-based civil society, US support should respond to local needs first and foremost rather than focus on advancing particular beliefs.

A substantial share of US aid has been directed to supporting Myanmar's refugees, including the Rohingya in Bangladesh. However, given Trump's history of promoting anti-refugee and anti-Muslim narratives, there is a risk that the U.S. could withdraw or reduce such support, jeopardising rights protections and resettlement opportunities for these marginalised populations.

US SANCTIONS

The first Trump administration may have initiated sanctions against the Myanmar military, but it also withdrew US support from international institutions that uphold accountability and human rights. A repeat of this stance would lead to decreased US backing for accountability mechanisms that are now challenging Myanmar's military leaders, such as the UN Human Rights Council, IIMM, International Criminal Court, and the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

NGO Human Rights Myanmar is concerned that while all free and fair elections are to be celebrated, the first Trump administration had a chilling effect on human rights globally and therefore a second term raises serious concerns for Myanmar. It is essential that all stakeholders - including civil society, opposition groups, and foreign governments - recognise these potential threats and work in concert to counteract them. To safeguard Myanmar's path to human rights and democratic governance, stakeholders should advocate for sustained US diplomatic pressure on Myanmar's military, emphasising the importance of accountability for ongoing human rights abuses.

Equally critical is ensuring that US funding priorities remain focused on addressing the needs of Myanmar's people. This requires active support for local CSOs, humanitarian aid efforts, and international accountability mechanisms, such as the UN Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court. By rallying together, stakeholders can help to preserve the resilience of Myanmar's civil society and uphold international human rights standards in the face of these new challenges, the NGO Human Rights Myanmar notes.

FUTURE FOR REFUGEES?

One concern is the United States may scrap its resettlement plan for Myanmar refugees currently residing in camps on Thailand's borders, a human rights expert says.

The plan, which aims to relocate some 60,000 minority group refugees to a third country that offers them permanent residence so that Thailand can close

these camps, was previously discussed by the Thai and US governments when the Democrat Party was leading the country, notes Phil Robertson, director of Asia Human Rights & Labour Advocates (AHLRA). With the Democrats' defeat in the election, the US might cancel the plan altogether, as president-elect Trump does not prioritise human rights issues, claims Robertson.

RELIANCE ON CHINA

In a commentary entitled "A Second Trump Term: How Will Each Southeast Asian State Respond?" written by Joshua Kurlantzick and published by the Council on Foreign Relations in May 2024, it is said that the Myanmar junta "would obviously rely on China since the United States has downgraded its relationship with Myanmar and imposed a range of sanctions on the junta. Were the opposition to triumph in Myanmar, they might take a different approach. Even then, China's geographical proximity to Myanmar and its significant investment and infrastructure provision are crucial. Given that the United States has historically played a relatively minor role in Myanmar, even if the junta falls, Myanmar will likely remain closer to China and may even strengthen this relationship over the next four years."

OPPORTUNITY FOR MYANMAR?

Lucas Myers, in a report entitled "US Policy on Myanmar for 2024 and Beyond" published by the Wilson Center, believes the US has an opportunity to support Myanmar's resistance going into the Trump presidency.

"From a US national interest perspective, the United States faces an unmissable opportunity to support the establishment of a stable, federal, inclusive, and democratic Myanmar government. Following the events of Operation 1027 and follow-on offensives, Myanmar's resistance is at a critical juncture, and increased support from the United States and likeminded allies and partners could prove crucial in defeating the junta on a shorter timeline.

"If the United States successfully provides expanded support for Myanmar, it can 1) hasten a resistance victory, 2) reduce the risk of post-war instability, 3) counter undue Chinese influence in Myanmar, 4) ensure

a more stable ASEAN and Southeast Asia, and 5) assist in the establishment of a democratic government in a region facing rising authoritarianism.”

Myers calls for the following policy action:

- The United States should increase the pace of implementation of the BURMA Act and ensure it is adequately funded.
- The United States should legally, politically, and diplomatically align, define, and formalize its relationships with key resistance actors and increase the tempo of public and private engagements with them.
- The United States should work to persuade US allies and partners, as well as important regional actors like China, that the military junta in Naypyidaw is the primary source of instability in Myanmar and that the pro-democracy resistance represents the best option for long-term stability.

- As the United States continues to affirm support for ASEAN’s Five-Point Consensus, US engagements with ASEAN should focus on persuading member states to increase engagements with the pro-democracy resistance and hold the junta accountable.

- The United States should increase the tempo of targeted sanctions on Myanmar military and associated entities to ramp up economic pressure on the junta, particularly targeting entities supplying heavy artillery and aircraft supplies.

- The United States should increase the provision of cross-border humanitarian aid by working with and routing through resistance actors.

GUESSING GAME

All in all, it may be too early to be sure what a Trump presidency will mean for Myanmar and the ongoing crisis in the country. But expect changes in US government policy after US President Trump settles in to his role after 20 January 2025.

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Children in an IDP camp in Myanmar.
Photo: AFP

DIRE STRAITS AS MYANMAR'S INTERNALLY DISPLACED EXCEED 3 MILLION

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Myanmar has surpassed 3 million, with over 1.7 million concentrated in the country's northwest, including Chin State, Magway, Sagaing, and Mandalay regions. The rest are in the country's peripheral areas of north, northeast, southeast, and western parts. This region now accounts for nearly half of Myanmar's displaced population, as people flee their homes to escape military operations by junta troops.

Many IDPs are forced to flee repeatedly as junta forces advance. Initially, they seek refuge in neighbouring villages, often staying in monasteries, schools, or other communal spaces. However, these temporary shelters are frequently raided, forcing further displacement. Some IDPs resort to hiding in farmhouses located miles from their villages, but these too may be targeted by artillery fire or military raids.

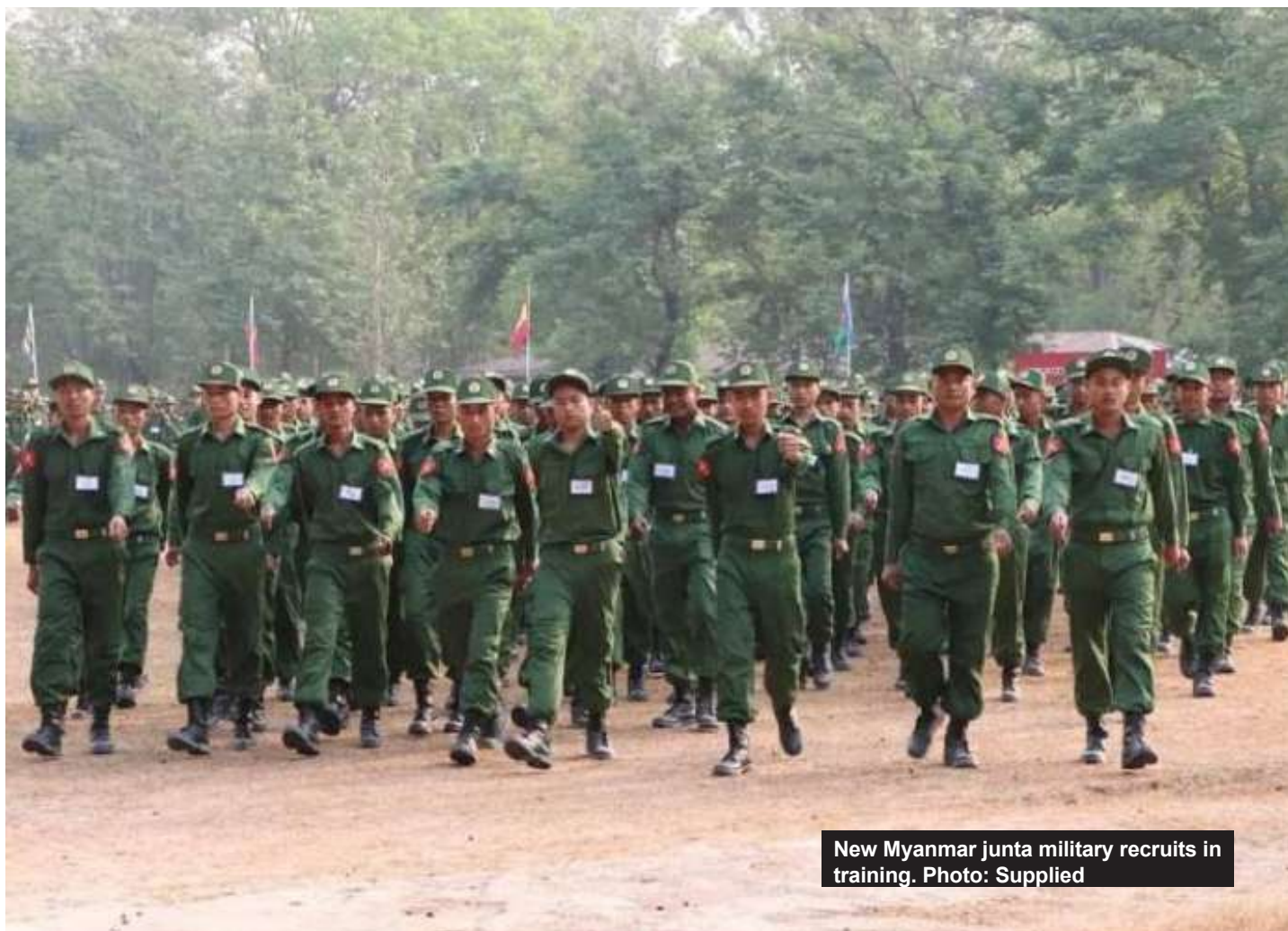
The geographical conditions of the northwest worsen the plight of the displaced. The region's dry zone, with its open plains, offers little forest cover for protection or shade. As Myanmar transitions into autumn, the weather becomes a harsh combination of

daytime heat and nighttime cold, exacerbating health issues among vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and nursing mothers.

The displaced populations face severe shortages of food, blankets, and warm clothing. Essential medical care is virtually non-existent, as the junta continues to restrict the flow of humanitarian aid to areas under the control of resistance forces. Many IDPs fled their homes with minimal possessions, leaving them ill-equipped to cope with the harsh conditions.

Conflict zones in central Myanmar remain largely inaccessible to international aid organizations. However, some support is trickling in from neighbouring countries. On November 11, Mizoram State's government in India announced a rice distribution programme for Myanmar refugees.

A refugee from a rural camp in India expressed gratitude for the initiative but noted delays in reaching remote areas. "It must start from the urban area, but there are many camps in the countryside. We haven't received anything yet. We are very grateful to the central



New Myanmar junta military recruits in training. Photo: Supplied

government (India) and the Mizoram government for their support," they said.

The escalating humanitarian crisis underscores the urgent need for unrestricted aid access and international intervention to address the growing displacement and suffering in Myanmar.

Poorly trained conscripts sent to the frontlines

Since the resumption of Myanmar's Conscription Law in February 2024, the junta has conscripted over 20,000 individuals to support its faltering military campaigns. The regime is currently operating 16 military training schools, each accommodating around 200 trainees. However, the latest conscription batch, No. (6), faced delays due to difficulty in meeting the recruitment target, prompting intensified enforcement of the conscription process.

The junta primarily uses a lottery system to select conscripts, but reports indicate growing exploitation and corruption in the system. Wealthy families often pay bribes or hire replacements to avoid military

service, with the cost of substitution ranging from MMK 2 million to 10 million (approximately USD 450 to 2,250), depending on the region. In some areas, villages collectively raise funds to support those willing to enlist, attracting poorer families who see the payments as an opportunity to alleviate financial burdens.

Aung Gyi, a PDF fighter who was conscripted under this system, and then defected, shared his story: "I replaced a youth from my village for 4 million MMK (about 800 USD) because I urgently needed money for my wife's pregnancy delivery costs." He is among many forced to enlist under dire circumstances.

The junta has been deploying conscripts to the frontlines in Rakhine and Karen States, where conflict has escalated. The junta's failed Aung Zeya operation resumed in late September, reinforced with conscripts. Two defected junta soldiers, who surrendered in the Ann battle zone, revealed that they were part of a group of 85 conscripts from the Bago Region. They underwent training at a military school in Yeni town and were sent to the battlefield. "We were not recruited through the lottery system but were arrested unfairly," one of them said. Many of their fellow conscripts were killed in action, while some managed to escape despite



Rohingya men conscripted into the Myanmar military seen here in training. Photo: Supplied

threats from commanding officers.

“In Karen State, new conscripts were crammed into three civilian lorries escorted by a military jeep heading to Myawaddy, the junta’s lost border city,” said a local witness. One of the defected soldiers recalled, “When we tried to flee, army officers shot at us, killing two. We had to hide without food or water.”

Conscripts sent to the Rakhine frontlines are prohibited from contacting their families. Even in cases where soldiers are injured or killed, communication is restricted. Two conscripts from the Ayeyarwaddy Region sustained severe injuries in the Ann battle during the first week of November. While initial notifications were sent to their families in Tharbaung Township, no further updates have been provided.

A person close to the families shared their concerns: “The families are extremely worried because there’s no news. This is happening not just to them but to other families across town, including those who lost loved ones.”

The junta’s heavy reliance on poorly trained conscripts has drawn widespread criticism for its exploitation of vulnerable populations and its inability to sustain its military campaigns without sacrificing civilian lives.

Rohingya conscripts used by the junta

The Myanmar junta has reportedly conscripted Rohingya individuals from villages in Sittway, Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Kyaukphyu, forcing them into military service against their will. Local sources indicate that many of these individuals, who were coerced through threats and incentives targeting uneducated communities, have been deployed to conflict zones in Rakhine State, particularly in Ann and Taunggok.

According to Rakhine military analysts, these recruits underwent only 45 days of basic military training before being sent to the frontlines. “They barely received sufficient training to handle weapons, and the junta’s older service soldiers positioned themselves behind these inexperienced recruits. As a result, the Rohingya conscripts suffered significant casualties,

particularly at the Metaung strategic hill battle, where over 100 Rohingya bodies were found,” one analyst revealed.

Sources report that Rohingya conscripts were transported to Ann in September and October via Kyaukphyu-based naval ships. The most recent deployments occurred on November 2 and 5, with recruits from Sittwe being sent to Ann and Taunggok.

Observers suggest that the junta’s decision to involve Rohingya recruits is a strategic move to attract international attention amid their inability to counter the Arakan Army’s (AA) offensive effectively. Despite resistance from some recruits, the majority were forced to join, with a small number managing to escape.

The use of Rohingya conscripts has raised concerns among human rights groups, as it underscores the junta’s exploitation of vulnerable communities in its ongoing conflict with the AA.

Tharyarwaddy Prison

FEMALE POLITICAL PRISONERS ENDURE SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AND TORTURE AT MYANMAR'S THARYARWADDY PRISON

Around 15 female political prisoners transferred to Tharyarwaddy Prison in Bago Region from Insein and Obo Prisons have been held in solitary confinement for nearly two years, according to sources.

Confined in Wards 5 and 8 for one year and eight months without justification, these prisoners endure harsh conditions, including frequent invasions by poisonous animals such as snakes, centipedes, and scorpions. Requests for help from prison staff are often met with scolding and accusations of causing trouble.

A former political prisoner recently released from Tharyarwaddy Prison said, "It is true that political prisoners have been held in Ward No. 8 and Ward No. 5 without committing any crime since they were transferred to Tharyarwaddy Prison."

Reports indicate that male political prisoners in the prison's Male Dormitory face extortion and torture.

New arrivals are charged exorbitant "form fees" of up to 250,000 kyats, with those unable to pay subjected to beatings, shackling, forced labour, and solitary confinement. A source detailed their ordeal, saying prisoners were forced to work under the sun, beaten daily for up to 25 days, and allowed to see their families only after a month.

Torture by fellow inmates, reportedly under the direction of warden U Ye Yint Naing, has also been highlighted. Inquiries made to prison officials about the treatment of political prisoners, including those held for years in the women's dormitory, have reportedly been ignored.

A former inmate described the conditions in both Insein and Tharyarwaddy Prisons as severely detrimental to the health of political prisoners, citing extreme heat, overcrowding, insufficient sleeping space, lack of clean water, and inadequate nutrition as major issues.

The inmate also highlighted the various forms of torture inflicted by prison authorities and officials. Mizzima reached out to Tharyarwaddy Prison officials for comment but did not receive a response.

The Political Prisoners Network Myanmar (PPNM) reported similar abuses in Kalay Prison, where 28 prisoners were shackled from 15 March 2022 to 4 January 2024 over alleged escape plans.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), 27,653 people have been arrested for opposing the military coup, with 21,099 still in custody as of 11 November.



Photo: AFP

MYANMAR WOMEN FACE MANY TROUBLES DUE TO CONFLICTS AND FLOODS

UN Women Asia and Pacific released a report on 8 November stating, "Almost two months after Myanmar was impacted by severe flooding, more than 1 million people have been affected, including approximately 600,000 women and girls who face unique and heightened challenges, from health risks to protection needs."

Floods have destroyed farmland, livestock, and agricultural equipment – decimating sources of income for women in agriculture and small-scale businesses, the report says.

Access to clean water and sanitary facilities has become a critical concern. The impact of displacement and crowded shelters has heightened the risk of gender-based violence (GBV), with 67 percent of camps reporting safety concerns for women and girls.

As the flood response continues, funding remains a significant constraint. With only 28.5 per cent of the 2024 Humanitarian Needs Plan funded, there is an urgent need for additional resources.

The UN says that war affects more than 600 million women and girls globally, which increased by 50% in the last decade.

The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in the UN Annual Report on Women and Peace and Security (WPS), released in September 2024, "The data and findings in the present report paint a stark picture. Amid record levels of armed conflict and violence, progress made over decades is vanishing before our eyes."

"In 2023, the proportion of women killed in armed conflicts doubled compared with the previous year," this report says.

UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous said at the UN Security Council that the hope of women was vanishing as armed conflicts and violence against women are rising to record-high levels.



UNHCR

UNHCR WARNS MYANMAR REFUGEES FACE DUAL THREATS OF CONFLICT AND EXTREME CLIMATE DISASTERS

A report from UNHCR, released on 11 November, emphasizes how the intersection of climate change and conflict worsens the situation for forcibly displaced populations, including refugees from Myanmar.

The report is as follows.

People forced to flee war, violence and persecution are increasingly finding themselves on the front line of the global climate crisis, a new report warns, exposing them to a lethal combination of threats but without the funding and support to adapt.

The report, released today by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, in collaboration with 13 expert organizations, research institutions and refugee-led groups, uses the latest data to show how climate shocks are interacting with conflict, pushing those who are already in danger into even more dire situations.

Of the more than 120 million forcibly displaced worldwide, three-quarters live in countries heavily

impacted by climate change. Half are in places affected by both conflict and serious climate hazards, such as Ethiopia, Haiti, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan and Syria.

According to the report – No Escape: On the Frontlines of Climate Change, Conflict and Forced Displacement – by 2040 the number of countries facing extreme climate-related hazards is expected to rise from 3 to 65, the vast majority of which host displaced people. Similarly, most refugee settlements and camps are projected to experience twice as many days of dangerous heat by 2050.

“For the world’s most vulnerable people, climate change is a harsh reality that profoundly affects their lives,” said UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi. “The climate crisis is driving displacement in regions already hosting large numbers of people uprooted by conflict and insecurity, compounding their plight and leaving them with nowhere safe to go.”

For example, the devastating conflict in Sudan has forced millions of people to flee, including 700,000 who have crossed into Chad, which has hosted refugees for

CORE DEVELOPMENTS

decades and yet is one of the countries most exposed to climate change. At the same time, many who fled the fighting but remained in Sudan are at risk of further displacement because of severe flooding that has blighted the country.

Similarly, 72 per cent of Myanmar's refugees have sought safety in Bangladesh, where natural hazards such as cyclones and flooding, are classified as extreme.

"In our region, where so many people have been displaced for so many years, we see the effects of climate change before our very eyes," said Grace Dorong, a climate activist and former refugee living in South Sudan. "I hope the voices of the people in this report help decision-makers to understand that if not addressed, forced displacement – and the multiplying effect of climate change – will get worse. But if they listen to us, we can be part of the solution, too."

The report also highlights that climate financing is failing to reach refugees, host communities and others in fragile and war-torn countries, so their ability to adapt to the effects of climate change is fast deteriorating.

At present, extremely fragile states receive only around US\$ 2 per person in annual adaptation funding, an astounding shortfall when compared to \$161 per person in non-fragile states. When investment does reach fragile states, more than 90 per cent goes towards capital cities, while other places rarely benefit.

The findings are published during COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, where UNHCR is calling for increased climate finance that reaches those most in need. The refugee agency is also urging states to protect forcibly displaced people who face the additional threat of climate disasters, and to give them and the communities that host them a voice in finance and policy decisions.

"The climate emergency represents a deep injustice," Grandi said. "People forced to flee, and the communities hosting them, are the least responsible for carbon emissions yet are paying the highest price. The billions of dollars in climate financing never reach them, and humanitarian assistance cannot adequately cover the ever-widening gap. Solutions are at hand, but we need urgent action. Without proper resources and support, those affected will be trapped."

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OVER 210,000 DISPLACED IN MYANMAR AMID ONGOING CONFLICT; URGENT AID NEEDED

Over 210,000 people in 18 townships across Myanmar are in urgent need of food, clothing, and basic assistance due to ongoing clashes between the junta and resistance forces, according to local defence forces and humanitarian organizations.

In Rakhine state, towns such as Ann, Taungup, Gwa, and Maungdaw, along with Taungoo in Bago region, and several townships in Sagaing Region including Budalin, Kanbalu, Indaw, Depayin, and Pale, as well as Madaya, Myingyan, Taungtha, Natogyi, and Nganzun in Mandalay Region, are experiencing severe conflict. Additionally, Mindat and Falam townships in Chin State are also witnessing intense fighting.

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently exceeds 210,000 in these affected areas. Local public administration members, community members, and social organizations are calling for urgent aid to support those in need.

In Rakhine State, ongoing intense fighting in Ann, Taungup, Gwa, and Maungdaw townships has displaced nearly 40,000 people who are in need of aid. In Ann, road blockages and supply shortages have created a critical need for food aid. In Ponnagyun township, artillery bombardments by junta forces have displaced 60,000 people, forcing them to seek shelter in monasteries, schools, and camps. With the cold season

approaching, blankets and warm clothing are urgently needed, according to a Ponnagyun Youth Association official.

“Basic necessities are severely lacking. Some displaced people can barely afford one meal a day, while others rely on firewood from forests to stay warm,” said a local volunteer from Ponnagyun Youth Association said.

In Sagaing Region, battles in Budalin, Kanbalu, Indaw, Depayin, and Pale townships have displaced around 60,000 people. Residents from over 10 villages in Kanbalu fled after junta troops and Pyu Saw Htee militias arrived in the area.

A member of the People’s Administration in Budalin Township said, “Junta troops have been stationed there for months, and many locals have been forced to flee are unable to return home. While local efforts continue, there are substantial shortages, and without external aid, it will be very difficult.”

Currently, the People’s Defence Forces (PDF) are engaging in battles to reclaim Indaw Township in Sagaing Region. Resistance forces are also attacking junta bases in Pale Township.

“We’re living in makeshift huts in the forest. Rain soaks everything, and cold winds make it unbearable. We manage with whatever we can find,” said a displaced resident from Kanbalu.

Mandalay Region faces similar challenges, with 10,000 people displaced by ongoing shelling in Madaya. Airstrikes in Myingyan, Taungtha, Natogyi, and Nganzun townships have forced 20,000 more to flee despite no ground fighting in the area.

In Taungoo township, Bago Region, clashes since 8 November have displaced around 4,000 residents from over 700 villages. Flooding in September has further compounded the crisis, leaving families struggling to recover.

In Chin State, heavy fighting in Mindat and Falam townships has displaced 20,000 people. Many have sought refuge in nearby towns as temperatures drop, exacerbating the need for blankets and clothing, as reported by an IDP from Falam Township.

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management under the National Unity Government (NUG) issued a weather advisory on 11 November, warning of a cold front expected to bring lower temperatures to northern and central Myanmar between 12 and 15 November.

Local volunteers and organizations continue to provide aid but face severe resource limitations. Displaced people across the affected regions are calling for urgent support to meet their immediate needs.



Red Cross boat in action in Rakhine State.
Photo: AFP

ARAKAN ARMY SECURES CONTROL OVER 12 TOWNS, POISED TO CAPTURE MORE AMID EXPANDED MILITARY CAMPAIGN

The Arakan Army (AA) announced that it has successfully taken control of 12 towns during its year-long military campaign, with plans to capture four more, including Ann and Maungdaw. The conflict, which began on 13 November 2023, has seen the AA expand its stronghold across Rakhine State and parts of Chin State.

Among the secured territories are Kyauktaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Rathedaung, Buthidaung, Ponnagyun, Myebon, Pauktaw, Thandwe, and Kyeintali, alongside junta camps in Paletwa, Chin State. In Maungdaw, the AA now controls most of the city, with resistance persisting only at Border Guard Police Commanding Office No. 5.

The AA's operations in Ann resulted in the capture of eight key military bases, including the Western Regional Military Command's Field Artillery Regiment 374 and Air Defence Force base. Nine additional bases and the Western Regional Military Command Headquarters itself are currently under AA assault as clashes continue.

Reports indicate that AA forces are targeting junta troops retreating from these bases, with fighting now concentrated around the Western Regional Military Command Headquarters. The AA credits its success to strategically exploiting the weaknesses of opposition forces, bolstering its position in both the Arakan and Paletwa regions.

In October 2023, the "Three Brotherhood Alliance" comprising the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), Ta'ang national Liberation Army (TNLA), and AA forces initiated "Operation 1027" in northern Shan State. Meanwhile the Karenni National Defence Force (KNDF) launched "Operation 1111" in

Karenni State on 11 November 2023.

The AA has stressed the nationwide coordination among revolutionary groups, including the "Three Brotherhood Alliance" and the Karenni National Defence Force (KNDF). These groups launched simultaneous operations in late 2023, targeting the junta's outposts, bases, and police stations. The AA emphasizes the success of these coordinated efforts, which resulted in capturing key military installations, command centres, and regional headquarters across Myanmar.

Across Myanmar, revolutionary organizations with a shared goal of dismantling the State Administration Council (SAC) have launched a coordinated series of attacks, striking either simultaneously or in succession. Reports indicate that fighting remains active across the country as these groups press forward in their campaign against the junta.

In addition to military achievements, the Arakan People's Revolutionary Government is working to provide food security and public services in newly occupied areas. Despite challenges, the administration has expressed confidence in addressing the needs of residents affected by the conflict.

The AA has also honoured the sacrifices of its soldiers, allied forces, and health workers who lost their lives during the campaign. It extends gratitude to the people of Rakhine State for their support, as well as to allied revolutionary organizations and individuals contributing to the resistance effort.

With operations ongoing and a strengthened foothold in Rakhine State, the AA continues to challenge the junta's control while seeking to stabilize conditions in its newly occupied territories.



ABOUT 300 MYANMAR JUNTA SOLDIERS SURRENDER TO AA AMID INTENSE FIGHTING IN ANN TOWNSHIP

Around 300 junta soldiers, including several officers, have surrendered to the Arakan Army (AA) during ongoing clashes in Ann Township, Rakhine State. According to local residents and military sources, AA flags have also been raised at several departmental offices in the area.

The AA initiated its offensive to seize control of Ann in the third week of September, with reports surfacing of junta troops surrendering by early October.

“A commander and a few officers surrendered, but the majority were regular soldiers. I didn’t ask for details about their battalion,” said a source close to the AA.

On 12 November, residents reported seeing AA flags hoisted at multiple government offices located about 500 yards from the police station in Ann. However, local sources noted that ongoing junta airstrikes have prevented the AA from taking full control of the town.

“The military is conducting airstrikes, which is why Ann Town is not yet under control. The situation is dire for the Military Council,” said one resident.

Western News, a Rakhine-based news agency, reported on 11 November that a battalion commander and approximately 300 soldiers, including several majors, surrendered during the battle for Ann.

The AA, which last issued a statement about Ann on 7 October, announced at the time that it had seized control of Mae Taung Strategy Hill and several front-line

camps. These positions were key defensive bases for the Western Regional Military Command based in Ann. After Mae Taung fell, the number of soldiers deserting reportedly increased significantly.

The AA has not released any further information regarding the battle for control of Ann Town since 7 October.

Meanwhile, local sources confirmed that on 4 November, officials from the Ann District General Administration Department fled to Magway via military helicopter, as fighting continued to escalate.

On 10 November, the AA allegedly attacked a junta helicopter departing Ann, forcing it to make an emergency landing in Sidoktaya Township, Magway Region. The AA has not yet released an official statement regarding the incident.

Fighting remains intense in Ann Township, with reports of airstrikes near the Pepa Dong checkpoint along the AA-controlled Ann-Padan highway. Clashes are also reported behind the district administration office near the Ann police station. The AA has also engaged with Infantry Battalion 371 and the Provost Unit near Maw Si Sai Hill, situated between New Ann Town and Old Ann Town.

“The situation for the Military Council is critical, and even their senior leaders are aware of this,” said a military source.



Resistance drones release mortar bombs over Shante Air Base. Photo: Supplied

DRONE STRIKE DAMAGES MILITARY AIRCRAFT AT MYANMAR JUNTA'S SHANTE AIR BASE

Six military aircraft were reportedly damaged in a coordinated rocket attack involving 24 drones at the Myanmar military's Shante Air Base in Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region, and the nearby Light Infantry Division 99 base. The attack, part of the "Golden Eagle 1111" drone operation, was confirmed by U Naung Cho of the Meiktila Township Revolution Force during an interview with Mizzima.

U Naung Cho stated on 13 November that preliminary reports showed two Y-12 aircraft sustained minor damage, while subsequent updates revealed damage to three training aircraft and one fighter jet. The assault, carried out in the early hours of 11 November, targeted hangars in the aircraft production and maintenance areas, officer housing, and the Light Infantry Division 99 base compound. The attack also caused significant damage to facilities damage and injuries.

"A factory caught fire, and equipment used for aircraft maintenance, along with the ammo store, was destroyed. Four junta soldiers and one officer from LID 99 was injured," U Naung Cho said.

Following the attack, the junta imposed stringent measures, shutting down both the airbase and the Light Infantry Division base, confiscating mobile phones from soldiers' families, and restricting communication between military units. Increased security measures, including inspections at township entry and exit points, were also enforced.

Local residents reported a curfew from 7 pm with widespread inspections but no home searches reported yet.

"The junta imposed a curfew that the public are not

to go out after 7 pm and inspections are then being conducted all across the township. We haven't heard of searching homes yet," said a local resident.

U Naung Cho further revealed that officials from the Tatmadaw's Military Security Affairs unit are under scrutiny, and personnel from the General Administration Department in Meiktila are being reassigned.

The Meiktila Revolution Force stated that the Golden Eagle 1111 drone mission took nearly a year to prepare, with some drones, vehicles, and motorcycles damaged during training.

The operation was carried out by Meiktila drone units, Meiktila Battalion 3, 1825 Sagaing District Drone Unit, Myingyan District Battalion 8, allied forces, and with technical support from the National Unity Government (NUG)'s Ministry of Defence and the Shar Htoo Waw Technology team.

This is not the first time the Shante Air Base has been targeted. On 29 April 2021, it was hit with 107 mm rockets. Revolutionary forces allege that the airbase is a key hub for launching airstrikes across Sagaing, Magway, and Mandalay regions.

The Meiktila Revolution Force issued a public notice urging residents to boycott the junta's election efforts and avoid collaborating with military authorities. They also warned businesses against aiding the junta and called on government employees to support the people instead of oppressing them.

Mizzima has not independently verified the reported damages or injuries and attempts to reach the junta's spokesperson Major General Zaw Min Tun for comment were unsuccessful.



Photo: KNDF

KNDF PLANS STRATEGIC SHIFT AMID INTENSIFIED JUNTA ASSAULTS AS OPERATION 1111 MARKS ONE YEAR

On the first anniversary of Operation 1111, the Karenni Nationalities Defence Force (KNDF) announced plans for a transformative approach to ongoing military operations in areas under the control of Karenni revolutionary forces. This was confirmed by an official from the KNDF Central Information Department during an interview with Mizzima.

"After four or five months, we had to temporarily suspend Operation 1111. However, we are preparing to evolve it into a new strategy," the official said.

Launched on 11 November 2023, Operation 1111 resulted in the seizure of seven towns: Mese, Shadaw, Mawchi, Demoso, Nanmaekhon, Ywarhit, and Moby. While Karenni forces continue to control these towns, counterattacks by the military junta forced them to relinquish several camps in Loikaw and Pekon Townships.

During the operation, Karenni forces captured 12 camps in Loikaw. However, the junta has since reclaimed all but three, Kontha, Kayantharyar, and Ponchaung. Similarly, camps in Pekon, including Nanphamu, Banmauk, and Nawngwoe, were abandoned due to junta offensives.

Despite setbacks, Operation 1111 disrupted the junta's supply lines and targeted frontline camps across Karenni State.

"We didn't fully capture Loikaw, but we seized numerous camps and blocked supply routes from Loikaw to Demoso, Hpruso, Bawlakhe, and Hpasawng. Now, the junta relies heavily on air support to sustain its forces. We have captured many of their frontline camps, and now only the town-based camps remain to be taken," the KNDF official said.

The junta has escalated airstrikes and ground offensives, particularly in Pekon and Pinlaung, in a bid

to regain lost territories as the dry season approaches.

According to the KNDF, the military is expected to launch an offensive toward Hpruso and Bawlakhe, with routes through Pekon, Moby, and Demoso serving as key pathways for their advance.

Airstrikes were reported on 10 and 11 November in Hpasawng Township, targeting Wanaung, Nangkit, Thanlwin Bridge, Parpu, and the 5 Mile area, despite a lack of ongoing clashes in those locations.

"The junta is trapped inside Hpasawng town, which explains their indiscriminate bombing of surrounding areas," said U Banyar Khun Aung, Secretary of the Karenni State Interim Executive Council (IEC).

From 11 November 2023 to 11 November 2024, a total of 48 civilians were killed in junta airstrikes, 69 were killed by artillery shelling, and 43 lost their lives due to landmines, shootings, killings in custody, and explosive remnants of war, according to the Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG). Additionally, the year-long operation also destroyed 556 houses and 249 civilians were injured and thousands displaced.

Security has reportedly tightened in Loikaw ahead of the operation's anniversary. An aid worker warned of the possibility of airstrikes on the day of the anniversary, adding that the number of displaced people continues to rise.

"The situation is worsening, especially for those fleeing Pekon and Nanmaekhon. With the junta advancing through aerial bombings, we must remain extremely vigilant," IDPs aid worker said.

Karenni State currently hosts 420 displacement camps sheltering over 250,000 people, with many forced to live in nearby villages under precarious conditions, according to U Banyar Khun Aung.

KNLA AND ALLIES SEIZE LONGSTANDING JUNTA CAMP IN KAREN STATE

The Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and allied forces reportedly captured the Kuseik junta camp, a military outpost established in the 1950s along the Hpapun-Kamarmaung road near Kuseik village in Hpapun Township, Karen State.

On 6 November, the KNLA joint forces launched an assault on the camp, which housed soldiers from the Yebyu-based Light Infantry Battalion 406 under the No. 8 Military Operations Command (MOC-8). By 9 November, the camp was seized after junta troops abandoned it.

Lieutenant Colonel Saw Kler Doh, spokesperson for KNLA Brigade 5, said, "This camp has existed for decades, dating back to when military bases were first established in Hpapun in the 1950s. Soldiers from LIB-406 of MOC-8 have been stationed here."

The bodies of eight junta soldiers were discovered during the capture of the camp, while the remaining forces fled. Two members of the KNLA joint forces sustained injuries during the operation.

The KNLA reported that they seized heavy weaponry, firearms, ammunition, and three communication jammers from the junta soldiers.

Following the loss of the camp, two junta jet fighters bombarded the area around Kuseik on 9 November, according to KNLA Brigade 5.

Lieutenant Colonel Saw Kler Doh highlighted that since the military coup, the KNLA has targeted supply routes, forcing the junta army to abandon over 60 of its 72 camps in Mutraw District over the past four years. The junta now controls just 11 camps in the district, with the capture of Kuseik reducing that number to 10.

The KNLA and its allies have successfully cut off ground supply routes, leaving junta forces dependent on air support to maintain their presence in the region.



Citizen photo

MYANMAR JUNTA AIRSTRIKE ON MOGOK CITY KILLS FOUR, DESTROYS HOMES

The junta launched an airstrike on Mogok city, Mandalay Region, at around 11:00 pm on 11 November, killing four people and destroying at least nine homes in areas controlled by revolutionary forces, according to local residents.

A Mogok resident described the devastation, "As far as I know, U Khaing Myint's home, U Tun Sein's home, and several others were destroyed. The entire Lel Oo neighborhood in the east was wiped out. Three people from the eastern side and Ko Kyaw Soe Paing from the west of the city were killed."

The aerial bombardment targeted the eastern Lel Oo ward and the western Lu Hta ward, causing injuries and forcing residents to evacuate overnight for safety.

"Some were injured in the attack. It happened at night, and we had to flee immediately. This morning, local social groups have started search and clearing efforts," said another resident.

Mogok has been under the control of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the People's Defence Forces (PDF) since they seized it in July. Since then, the junta has intensified its airstrikes on the city.



Rescue work at a bomb site. Photo: Supplied

JUNTA AIRSTRIKES KILL 31 IN MANDALAY AND NORTHERN SHAN STATE

Airstrikes by Myanmar's military junta on 11 and 12 November targeted areas controlled by the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) in Mogok Township, Mandalay Region, and Nawngkhio Township, northern Shan State, resulting in 31 fatalities, including four women, according to local residents and the Ta'ang Women's Organization (TWO).

In Mogok's eastern Lel Oo and western Kyatpyin neighborhoods, a late-night airstrike on 11 November killed 20 people and injured 13 others.

"The death toll has risen with 13 others injured. We don't yet know their identities," a spokesperson for the TWO said.

Reports from local sources indicate that several victims succumbed to their injuries at the hospital, and approximately 50 civilian homes sustained significant damage. Although Mogok appeared calm the following day, residents expressed fears of further attacks, prompting some to flee.

In Nawngkhio Township, an airstrike on 12 November struck the Lan San tea house, killing 11 people. Local sources warned that the death toll may increase as many injured victims remain in critical condition.

"A glass pane in our house was shattered, and the incident at the tea house, along with those at the pub, betel quid stall, and the drivers and passengers returning to Kyaukme and Lashio with at least five

people per vehicle will likely result in at least 30 injuries," said a resident of Nawngkhio Township.

Additional strikes targeted Inn Hpo village near the Taung Hkam battlefield, causing further casualties and forcing residents to evacuate the area.

"There were also casualties in the airstrike on Inn Hpo village, but only the surrounding villages knew about it. Locals have now been fleeing for a few days," said a resident of Nawngkhio.

Mizzima has not been able to verify the exact number of casualties or the extent of the damage in Inn Hpo.

Local residents link the junta's intensified airstrikes on civilian areas to the military chief's recent return from China.

On 12 November, the TNLA issued a warning urging the public to remain vigilant, avoid large gatherings, and follow airstrike alerts.

Data from the Human Rights Action Network (HRAN), a coalition of five Ta'ang organizations, revealed that Operation 1027 in northern Shan State has caused 320 civilian deaths in 2023 alone. An additional 401 civilians have been killed or injured by artillery shelling, and 129 have lost their lives or limbs to landmines, bringing the total casualties to 1,011, including women and children.



Photo: EPA

AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S LAWYERS SEEK APPROVAL FROM MYANMAR JUNTA FOR MEETING REGARDING AUCTION OF ICONIC UNIVERSITY AVENUE PROPERTY

Lawyers representing detained State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi have once again petitioned Myanmar's military junta for permission to meet with her regarding the ongoing auction of her property at No. 54, University Avenue, Yangon.

A source close to the court informed Mizzima on 13 November that the request was submitted roughly two months ago, though the precise date is unclear.

Since December 2022, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been held incommunicado, denied access to her legal team. Her lawyers have been seeking written permission to discuss the property auction case with her since January 2023, but the junta has yet to respond.

The property, which includes Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's historic residence, is set for a third auction attempt with a reserve price of 290 billion kyats. The auction was initiated by her brother, U Aung San Oo, and brought to the Kamayut Township Court on 22 October. Previous auctions in March and August, with reserve prices of 315 billion and 300 billion kyats respectively, failed to attract any bidders.

At a recent court hearing, the legal team deferred filing an objection to the auction and requested permission to submit it at the next hearing, scheduled for 21 November.

The inheritance dispute over the nearly two-acre property, originally owned by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's mother Daw Khin Kyi, dates back to 2000. In 2016, the Western Yangon District Court awarded the two-story house and half of the land to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, while granting the one-story building and the remaining land to U Aung San Oo. However, U Aung San Oo appealed for the entire property to be auctioned, with proceeds divided equally. Though initially dismissed, his appeal was upheld by the Union Supreme Court in August 2022, following the military coup.

The National Unity Government (NUG), Myanmar's parallel government, has designated the property as a provisional national cultural heritage site. It warned that violations of restrictions related to the site would face legal consequences under relevant statutes.



Photo: AFP

CHINA BANS TRANSPORTING GOODS TO MYANMAR THROUGH THE SINPHYU-JIEGAO BORDER GATE IN MUSE

Traders from northern Shan State said that local residents in Muse were facing difficulties as China has banned transporting of goods through the Sinphyu-Jiegoa border trade gate in Muse since 11 November.

China banned all small-scale trading through this border gate by light trucks and motorcycles. Local residents from Muse said that China opened Manweik gate in Muse for transporting inflowing and outflowing goods. Light trucks and motorcycles were lining up at the Manweik gate to enter Myanmar to import Chinese goods, but Myanmar closed the gate from their side.

Myanmar authorities let empty trucks and motorcycles pass through the gate but all other vehicles carrying goods were blocked at the gate.

Similarly, on the morning of 11 November, vehicles with goods were blocked at Pankham bridge on the outskirts of Muse going to Namkham.

China Ruili City Foreign Liaison Office reportedly sent a letter to Muse District Administration Office on 8 November stating that all passenger vehicles, motorcycles, three-wheeler motorcycles and rickshaws will not be allowed to transport goods from the Sinphyu gate starting from 11 November and requested that the Myanmar side understand this new regulation.

Transporting goods from Myanmar to China has been almost stopped since fighting erupted in this area last year. Only Chinese goods have been imported through Muse border trade post.

China tightened more restrictions on border trading at the Muse trade post after the junta chief recently attended the 8th Greater Mekong Sub-region Summit (GMS) held in Kunming, China and met with Chinese businesspersons there.

Moreover, the junta recently closed all major trade routes one by one in Shan State where military tensions have risen in recent days. Local residents said that the junta closed Lauksauk-Kyaukgu road and Taunggyi-Loilem-Leikha road.

After the roads and bridges were damaged on the Lashio-Hsipaw-Kyaukme highway in the wake of Operation 1027 in northern Shan State, traders must use the alternative Lauksauk-Kyaukgu highway.

When China closes all exports to Myanmar at the border trade posts in northern Shan State, the junta banned trade routes for goods across the entirety of Shan State.

SOUTH KOREA DONATED \$2 MILLION TO THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN BANGLADESH

Seoul. Photo: Pin Onganankun

On 13 November, the World Food Programme (WFP) announced that the Republic of Korea has increased its support by contributing an additional US\$2 million. This timely funding has allowed WFP to provide full rations, worth US\$12.50 per person, to nearly 76,000 Rohingya for two months.

The announcement continues as follows.

“We are pleased that this latest contribution, along with Korea’s rice donation in July and August, has helped many Rohingya families meet their essential food needs. The Republic of Korea stands committed to easing the Rohingya’s plight and we hope more partners will join us in supporting them,” said PARK Young-sik, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Bangladesh.

Over recent years, the Government of Korea through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has steadily contributed to WFP’s Rohingya food assistance in Bangladesh. In addition to food assistance, WFP has been supporting the population with nutrition, school feeding, resilience-building, and disaster risk reduction assistance, while also assisting host Bangladeshi communities in Cox’s Bazar with nutrition, livelihood support, and resilience-building.

Despite ongoing needs, humanitarian partners have been facing significant funding challenges,

resulting in reduced assistance in 2023. Food rations had to be cut from US\$12 to US\$10 in March, and further down to US\$8 in June. Following these ration cuts, WFP’s monitoring showed a sharp decline in food consumption among Rohingya families. Global acute malnutrition (GAM) levels rose to 15.1 percent – surpassing the 15 percent emergency threshold per WHO classification, and the worst since the 2017 influx.

Compounding the crisis, frequent hazards such as fires, climate shocks, including floods and landslides, and insecurity in the camps, have further exacerbated the Rohingya’s vulnerability.

Thanks to the international support, WFP was able to increase rations at the beginning of 2024 and restore full rations in August to US\$12.50 per person per month. For the first time, fortified rice was also added to the assistance package. However, to maintain full rations and sustain the rest of its operations into the coming year, WFP needs nearly US\$80 million in funding.

“The contribution from the Republic of Korea is not only timely but critical – it has helped us save lives and alleviate hunger at a time when the Rohingya are facing unimaginable challenges. Thank you, RoK and the Korean people for your compassion and solidarity,” said Dom Scalpelli, WFP Country Director.



Kyaw Swar Tun

FORMER MIZZIMA REPORTER RELEASED FROM MYANMAR'S INSEIN PRISON

Former Mizzima journalist Kyaw Swar Tun was released from Insein Prison at approximately 10:30 am on 14 November after serving most of a three-year sentence.

"He was freed this morning around 10:30 am. His health is good, and his family was there to meet him," said a friend who visited him at the prison.

Kyaw Swar Tun was arrested on 8 September, 2022, by police from Thingangyun Township. He was later sentenced to three years of hard labour under Section 505 (a) of the Penal Code.

Upon his release, he expressed concern for other journalists still detained in Myanmar.

"He conveyed his wish for the remaining journalists in prison to be released as soon as possible," his friend said.

Since the military coup in 2021, Myanmar has become one of the most dangerous places for journalists. Seven journalists have been killed, while 60 journalists and three media workers remain detained, according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

The 2024 RSF World Press Freedom Report ranks Myanmar 171st out of 180 countries, highlighting the perilous conditions for the press in the country.

Since the military coup on 1 February, 2021, a total of 5,945 people, including pro-democracy activists and civilians, have been killed by the junta and pro-military groups during the ongoing Spring Revolution, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP). The report further states that 27,674 people have been arrested in connection with the junta's seizure of power, with 21,120 individuals currently in detention. Of these, 9,520 are serving prison sentences.



Photo: AFP

BIDEN AND SUBIANTO REAFFIRMED THEIR SUPPORT FOR ASEAN'S EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE CRISIS IN MYANMAR

On 12 November, President Joseph Biden expressed support for ASEAN's efforts to resolve the crisis in Myanmar during a meeting between the leaders of the United States and the Republic of Indonesia, commemorating 75 years of diplomatic relations.

President Biden and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto reiterated full support for ASEAN's central role and the implementation of the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus and expressed appreciation for the work of the ASEAN and UN Special Envoys on Myanmar.

The two leaders denounced and called for the immediate cessation of the continued acts of violence against civilians. They urged all parties to exercise utmost restraint, ensure the protection of civilians, and create a conducive environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. President Biden and President Subianto also called on the Myanmar regime to create the conditions for national dialogue that re-establishes Myanmar's path to inclusive democracy.

Included in the long statement was the following reference to Myanmar:

President Biden expressed support for ASEAN's efforts to resolve the crisis in Myanmar. Our leaders reiterated full support for ASEAN's central role and the implementation of the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus, and expressed appreciation for the work of the ASEAN and UN Special Envoys on Myanmar. The two leaders denounced and called for the immediate cessation of the continued acts of violence against civilians. They urged all parties to exercise utmost restraint, ensure the protection of civilians, and create a conducive environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. President Biden and President Subianto also called on the Myanmar regime to create the conditions for national dialogue that re-establishes Myanmar's path to inclusive democracy.



Photo: Supplied

MYANMAR MILITARY FORMS COMMITTEE TO ESTABLISH JOINT SECURITY VENTURE WITH CHINA

In line with a proposal from China, Myanmar's junta has formed a working committee to establish a joint venture security company, according to a report in the Myanmar Gazette published on 8 November.

The committee, created on 22 October, will oversee the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the proposed company. The working committee is chaired by the deputy minister of the Ministry of Home Affairs under the junta and includes 14 members, comprising officials from key ministries such as Home Affairs, Defence, Transport and Communications, Planning and Finance, and Foreign Affairs.

The committee's responsibilities will include determining the logistics of importing weapons and special equipment, ensuring that these actions do not infringe upon Myanmar's sovereignty or harm its defence and security sectors, and analysing whether the project offers any benefits.

Additionally, the committee will evaluate how the company will handle issues related to security, technology, and the violation of existing laws, cultural norms, and traditions once it is established.

The proposal for this security company emerged following Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Myanmar in August. During the visit he discussed the acceleration of China's Belt and Road Initiative, the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, and the safety of Chinese personnel and infrastructure projects in Myanmar.

A report released by the Myanmar Business Sector Accountability Support Centre in April 2022 regarding security companies stated that there are also private security companies in Myanmar, which typically provide a variety of services, including stationary security, patrolling, event security, cash handling security, and personal security.

Relations between Myanmar's junta and China have strengthened recently, with military leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visiting China from 5 to 10 November.



Photo: AFP

MYANMAR EMBASSY IN THAILAND WARNS VISA OVERSTAYERS WILL FACE FINES, ENTRY BAN

On 8 November, a day after junta chief Min Aung Hlaing met Thailand’s prime minister in China, the embassy in Bangkok issued a notice warning those who have overstayed in Thailand will face fines and even an entry ban, so all Myanmar nationals staying in Thailand for various reasons should abide by the visa rules and regulations imposed by the Thai Immigration Department.

Myanmar’s junta chief and the Thai PM discussed the rule of law and development measures, eradication of transnational crime, narcotic drugs and online gambling, enhancement of border trade, investment and business, labour issues, promotion of cooperation between ministries and departments of both countries, and Myanmar’s political progress, Myanmar’s state-run daily paper reported on 9 November.

On the same day, 8 November, an announcement was issued declaring that migrant workers in Thailand who overstay will have to pay 500 Baht per day, not to exceed 20,000 Baht, and they may also face a re-entry ban to the Kingdom. The re-entry ban will be for a period varying from one to ten years depending on the overstay period in Thailand.

A previous announcement on 7 November said migrant workers must have at least two-year’s validity for their passports or a Certificate of Identity (CI) to apply for renewal of their work permits.

The number of Myanmar nationals overstaying

in Thailand overstay has been increasing since the conscription law in Myanmar came into force.

Migrant workers who came to Thailand under MoUs are also not returning home even after the expiry of their visas and work permits. Labour activists in Thailand say many people decided to overstay in Thailand because of conflicts and unrest in Myanmar and the conscription law.

These labour activists estimate the number of Myanmar nationals in Thailand is at least six million, of which only over two million have valid passports and visas.

Tour operators in Bangkok say the Thai consulate in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, has cancelled issuing tourist visas to Myanmar passport holders.

Most Myanmar nationals enter Thailand on tourist visas valid for two months and then extended their visas monthly up to six months. They then leave for a neighbouring country to apply for another tourist visa for re-entry.

Myanmar nationals whose visas will expire soon are worrying about a similar tourist visa ban for Myanmar passport holders in other countries too.

The junta has put pressure on migrant workers in Thailand to pay 2% income tax and monthly transfer of 25% of their salaries to their families in Myanmar as remittances with the intention of getting foreign exchange from these workers.



Garment worker in Yangon. Photo: AFP

UNIONS FILE COMPLAINTS OVER MYANMAR GARMENT PRODUCTION

A global union announced Wednesday last week that it had filed complaints against three major clothing brands -- Next, New Yorker and LPP -- over their alleged continued sourcing of garments from junta-run Myanmar.

The Switzerland-based IndustriALL Global Union said that it and the two banned Myanmar unions CTUM and IWFM had filed the complaints against the three brands, accusing them of breaching internationally-agreed guidelines for responsible business conduct.

The companies did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) guidelines call, among other things, for multinationals to operate ethically and responsibly regarding human and labour rights, IndustriALL pointed out.

That, it said, was impossible while operating in Myanmar, which has been in turmoil since the military deposed Aung San Suu Kyi's government in 2021 and launched a crackdown that sparked an armed uprising.

IndustriALL -- an umbrella group representing some 50 million workers through more than 600 trade union affiliates -- warned in a statement that the textile and garment industry had become an important way for Myanmar's military rulers to "inject foreign money into a collapsing economy".

"Meanwhile, Myanmar's military junta has banned unions and arrested union leaders," it said, insisting that "there is no freedom of association; unions and other workers' organisations can't function".

Explaining the complaint -- filed at OECD national contact points in Britain, Germany and Poland, where the three companies are headquartered, as well as in the Netherlands -- it also pointed to reports of serious workers' rights violations and collapsing wages.

"Brands that stay in Myanmar are benefiting from an environment of fear, forced labour, and exploitation," IndustriALL general secretary Atle Hoie said in the statement.

"There are widespread, comprehensive reports on the extensive violations of workers' rights," he said.

"Human rights due diligence requires worker involvement and independent verification, which is impossible under the military rule."

IndustriALL is campaigning for brands to disinvest from Myanmar.

In 2022, discussions it held with several large garment brands concluded with an agreement on the responsible disengagement from the southeast Asian country, which so far has been followed by the likes of H&M, Primark and Lidl.

"There is significant evidence of systemic violations of workers' rights and brands that remain in Myanmar cannot claim ignorance of the abuses," Hoie said.

"Brands that stay prioritise profits over human and workers' rights," he said, adding that the union was considering more complaints against the brands remaining in Myanmar.

AFP

INDIA INVITES SAC, POLITICAL PARTIES AND NCA SIGNATORY EAOS TO WORKSHOP WHILE JUNTA CHIEF ON CHINA VISIT

New Delhi. Photo: Supplied

India invited the State Administration Council (SAC) and its allied political forces to a democracy and federalism workshop while its rival China invited junta chief to attend two summits held in China.

The delegation to the Indian workshop consisted of 11 political parties aligned with the SAC, six Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) which signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), the junta's National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee (NSPNC) chairman and secretary, and the Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (CPR) totalling more than 20 members.

The visit took place from 4 to 7 November. The workshop discussed democracy and federalism with topics on division of power between the Centre and States, equality, and self-determination.

People said on condition of anonymity that anti-junta resistance forces were not part of the workshop hosted in New Delhi on November 5-6 by the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA). The ICWA is a think tank affiliated with the External Affairs Ministry focused on foreign policy issues, the Hindustan Times reported on 11 November.

In response to a question from The Hindu, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal confirmed that the ICWA had hosted delegates from Myanmar this week. He added that India has been holding such consultations "on a regular basis", the Hindu reported on 7 November.

"It is our understanding that such interactions

will contribute to developing Myanmar-led and Myanmar-owned solutions to address the country's current challenges," Mr. Jaiswal said, reiterating India's "steadfast support" for Myanmar's democracy and stability.

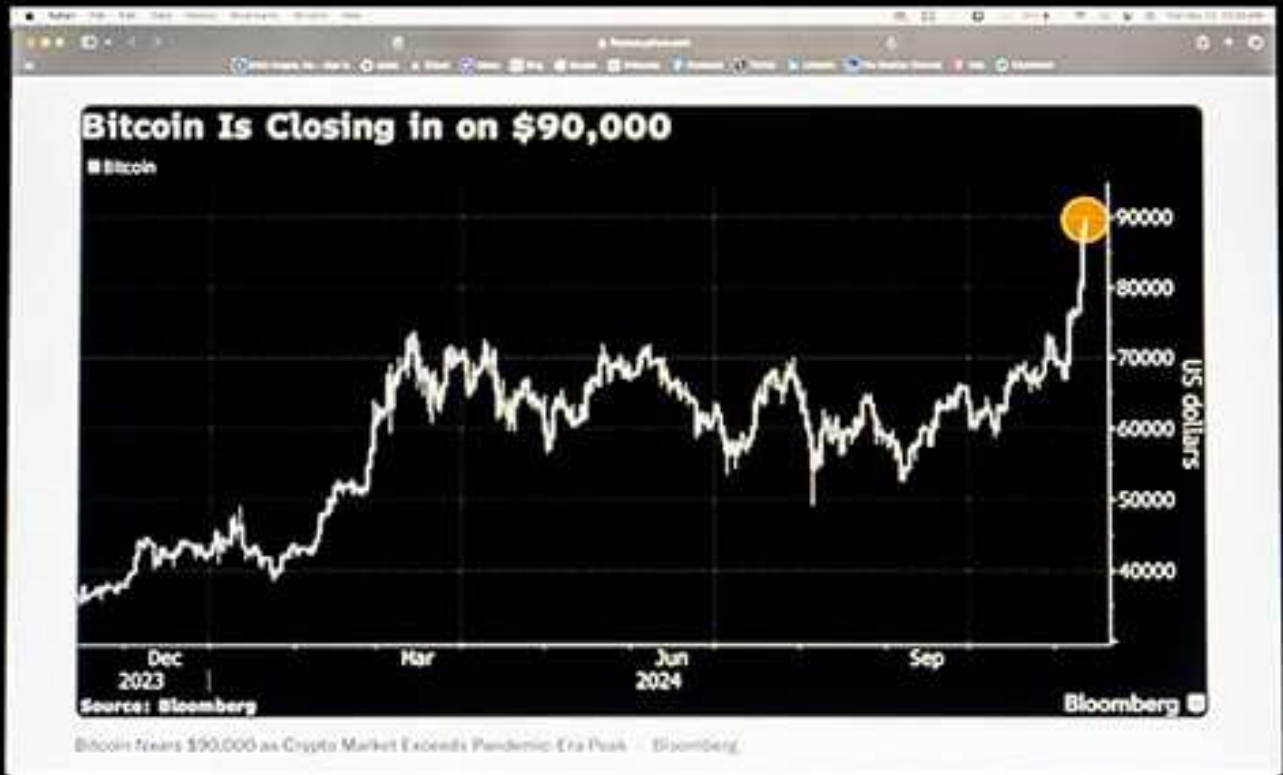
Unlike most events hosted by ICWA, the workshop was not open to the public or the media, the Hindustan Times reported on 11 November.

One of the delegates, Ko Ko Gyi, chairman of the People's Party, said to domestic media that Myanmar's issues could not be resolved by military means and they must be resolved by political means through the forums and debates on reform of the constitution.

Workshops and seminars on Myanmar issues are currently taking place more often in the neighbouring countries of India, China and Thailand. Political analysts assume that these discussions are paving the way for a path to negotiation and dialogue.

The delegation's visit came at a time when Myanmar's junta has suffered a series of humiliating defeats at the hands of resistance forces, the latest being the capture of several military headquarters and outposts in Rakhine State by the Arakan Army, the Hindustan Times reported.

India said it would give US\$400 million for a Kaladan sea port in western Myanmar in Rakhine State and another US\$250 million for building of roads to connect landlocked northeast India states with Thailand.



TRUMP VICTORY SIGNALS GOLDEN ERA FOR CRYPTO INDUSTRY

Donald Trump's triumphant return to the White House signals a potential golden era for cryptocurrencies, whose influential backers heavily supported his presidential bid.

After years of ascendancy following bitcoin's emergence, the cryptocurrency industry had fallen into a "crypto winter," plagued by scandals and hostile regulatory oversight.

But Trump's impending presidency has spurred an enthusiastic market response, with bitcoin surging more than 25 percent in a week and breaking through the \$90,000 mark for the first time.

The president-elect previously voiced opposition to digital currencies, but as a candidate pledged to make the United States "the world capital of crypto," a

dramatic shift met with an influx of financial and other support from the sector.

Crypto-affiliated groups spent some \$245 million on elections this year, according to the Federal Election Commission, much of it targeting the sector's Democratic opponents.

The Washington Post reports that Trump is already seeking crypto-friendly candidates for key government positions.

Many potential appointees have close ties to Elon Musk, the world's richest man who has become a constant presence alongside the president-elect and a vocal crypto advocate.

'Dampened innovation'

Among Trump's primary objectives will be the removal of Gary Gensler, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) chairman who has been a formidable opponent to the sector.

In the absence of clear regulations, Gensler took an aggressive stance toward digital currencies, treating them like traditional financial securities such as stocks and bonds.

The approach has prompted SEC lawsuits against major trading platforms including Binance, Coinbase, and Kraken, along with various smaller startups.

Katherine Snow, legal head at Thesis*, which develops Bitcoin-based applications, said the "lack of clear guidelines hasn't just dampened innovation -- it's driven companies offshore to countries with more transparent regulations."

The industry has been advocating for regulatory clarity from Congress, a cause once championed by crypto billionaire Sam Bankman Fried before his fraud-related downfall smeared the sector's reputation.

Hope now centers on the so-called FIT21 bill, which passed the House in May and awaits Senate consideration. The legislation would shift oversight to the CFTC, known for its lighter-touch approach to regulation.

According to eToro analyst Simon Peters, the regulatory shift could "accelerate the approval of new investment products" and increase capital flow into digital currencies.

Industry leaders are optimistic about moving away from a perceived hostility by President Joe Biden's administration.

'Lock us out'

Chandra Duggirala, CEO of incubator Tides. Network, said the skepticism from officials discouraged traditional banks from collaborating with crypto-linked entrepreneurs.

"We would love to not have to worry if our banks will lock us out," argued Burnt Banksy, founder of the XION platform.

Trump's commitment to the sector appears even more credible given his personal involvement in the space.

In September, he and his three sons launched World Liberty Financial, a cryptocurrency investment and lending platform, a move which now raises conflict of interest concerns.

The president-elect has also discussed establishing national bitcoin reserves, a move that could mainstream cryptocurrencies further.

The government currently holds approximately 210,000 bitcoins worth about \$18 billion, mostly from judicial seizures.

According to Snow, government bitcoin stockpiling would demonstrate America's commitment to innovation while attracting investment and talent, potentially shaping international standards for cryptocurrency worldwide.

AFP



Chinese school. Photo: Supplied

DETERIORATING CARE FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CCP'S CHINA: BLEAK FUTURE FOR NEXT GENERATION

SUN LEE

A food safety scandal erupted at a private school in the southern Chinese city of Kunming in early October 2024. Young Chinese students at a fee-paying, middle school in Yunnan province began falling ill, complaining of stomach aches and digestive issues. Parents of students at Changfeng Middle School discovered that their children had been suffering from frequent stomach issues since the start of the term. Initially these symptoms were dismissed as a seasonal stomach bug. As parents shared their problems in WeChat groups, a pattern quickly emerged. Something must be rotten in the school canteen. However, one concerned parent decided to investigate the school kitchen and found rotting, foul-smelling pork, ready to be cooked for the students. The parent then shared images of the spoiled meat in a group chat with other parents, demanding an explanation from the teachers who were also in the group.

The story, which became known as the "Stinky Meat Incident", developed rapidly over the days that followed, the latest in a spate of recent cases in China concerning food safety. School administrators met with parents in a move that aimed to reassure but had the opposite effect. Fuming at a vice principal pictured with a smile on her face and feeling like they were not taken seriously, the parents forced their way into the canteen

to inspect the ingredients for themselves, broadcasting their live investigation on their phones. They all agreed the meat smelt off, and at one point found what they thought was a smoking gun: a packet of frozen meat from Brazil with the year 2015 printed on it. Was this supposedly fancy school in fact serving their children decade-year-old "zombie meat?" The label, printed in Portuguese, referred not to the date of production of expiry but to the company's export registration certificate.

Outrage intensified following the school's indifferent and arrogant handling of the situation. Rather than respond to parents' concerns, the school first tried to stop the complaints, as one parent explained: "Now someone in the group is saying that the school has files on all the parents. Are they trying to threaten us? We won't cause trouble, but we won't be afraid of it either!" Then, when the school finally responded, a two-hour meeting was chaired by the headmaster and the chairman of the education group running the school. However, instead of addressing the parents' concerns, they shifted the blame onto a low-ranking kitchen worker, who was made to stand before the parents and apologise. As he spoke, the vice principal stood by with her arms crossed and a smug smile, while angry parents demanded accountability.

To make matters worse, the school's chairman abruptly walked out mid-meeting, hands in pockets, ignoring the parents' pleas to address the issue, simply saying he had finished work for the day. Parents then surrounded the headmaster, pressing for answers, and his only response was: "I will take responsibility for what I should, and those who should be sentenced will be sentenced. I have dedicated my whole life to education, and I don't want our school to fall, nor do I want our children to be impacted." Despite the headmaster's beautiful words, the scandal quickly spread online and became a national news story.

State media reported that local authorities had launched an investigation on 16 October. But even the wording of this announcement fuelled more anger among parents, as it vaguely referred to the rotten meat as having an "abnormal sensory odour", suggesting a possible cover up. The preliminary findings were released the following day. Investigators revealed that the meat in question was not out of date, and had been slaughtered that day. However, it had spoiled due to improper handling. Stored in plastic bags for nearly four hours and then left at room temperature for over five hours, there was no cold chain transportation or proper refrigeration of the meat.

Additionally, while the company responsible for supplying the meat and managing the canteen holds a business and food business license, its qualifications only cover pre-packaged and bulk food sales. Despite lacking the necessary credentials for catering services, the company still won the contract to manage the school canteen. It was also revealed that the company charged an annual contracting fee of 400,000 to 500,000 yuan (\$55,000 to \$70,000 USD) for its services. This revelation left parents outraged. They questioned why a school that charges 26,000 RMB (\$3,600 USD) in annual tuition fees—along with an additional 14 RMB (\$2 USD) per meal—had awarded the contract to such an unqualified company.

Parents were also left wondering how the school could charge such high fees and still fail to provide healthy meals for their children. As one parent aptly put it: "The school only wants to collect tuition fees but doesn't want to take responsibility, so what is the point of parents sending their children here? In this world, what stinks is never the rotten meat, but the rotten heart blinded by greed." After the findings of the investigation were announced, the local police confirmed that three officials at the school had been suspended, the principal and legal representative were

dismissed, and the school was fined 100,000 yuan (around \$13,700 USD). The catering contractor was closed down, with 460,000 yuan (about \$63,000 USD) of illegal income confiscated, and was also fined 5.78 million yuan (around \$795,000 USD).

The school tried to silence the person who first reported it, which is one of the reasons why both situations quickly escalated, as a commentator notes: "What's truly frightening isn't the problem itself, but the refusal to face and properly address it. Instead, attempts are made to silence those who raised the issue and scapegoat those who are not in charge." "Tackling those who report the problem and not the problem itself is one of the oldest tricks in the book in the Chinese system. Food safety concerns are seeing a national resurgence and are serving as perhaps the only front left to hold power to account.

Chinese society does not value or encourage critical thinking, there is no reason to think critically about why China is the way it is because there's no way for people to actively and publicly pursue change. China values "harmony" above other values, and that means no conflict, not even positive critical conflict. The result is that very few people develop the capacity to see the reasons behind things. Even the cultural minorities are being wiped out, the Mongol and Tibetan languages have been purged from schools, there simply are no "others" inside China with which to dialogue about China.

Coupled with increasing incidents of juvenile crimes in rural China where left behind children are often bullied, as well as increasing jingoistic education pushed by the CCP state apparatus, it is evident that the worsening quality of school education, is a stark reflection of the dreary next generation Chinese school children.

With decades of China's forced household registration institution imposing restricted right to education for rural Chinese children, many suffer mental trauma and agony. Their children's stay in boarding schools with limited oversight of grandparents in the countryside, reflects a myopic view of China's way of development and forced projection of dubious China Dream often amplified by Xi Jinping.

Sun Lee is a pseudonym for a writer who covers Asia



RUNNING UP THAT HILL

“If I have one knife with me, I can survive for a long time, because with a knife, you can make your own weapon in the jungle. You don’t need much. I mean, you cannot hunt big animals, but you can still hunt a lot, like fish and small animals. Sometimes you don’t even need to eat animals, because there’s plenty of other food in the jungle.”

Lartar, the daughter of a Karen National Union (KNU) commander, was born in 1983 in a remote village in the mountains, where tiny, far-flung hamlets were connected only by animal tracks. Nonetheless, conflict found its way even there, and marked her life from an early age. In fact, some of her earliest memories are from when she was just three, and involve fleeing for her life because the military was targeting her father.

“This is our family life reality,” she says grimly during an Insight Myanmar Podcast. She adds that just a few years later, her mother gave her a choice: “‘You have to decide what you guys want.’ It’s pretty hard at seven years old to make a decision for your own life! My mom asked, ‘Do you want to go to school or you want to work, farming or running, and stay with the family. If you stay with the family, this is how you need to move around and get ready. You can never have things stable. You always need to move around.’” Lartar chose school, and since in her village there was just one, very small, monastery school, was sent to Karen-held territory.

There, her teachers were mostly KNU soldiers who taught part-time, constantly rotating in and out as they took time away from the front lines. Lartar lived with several other children, but with no one to properly

care for them. Food was scarce, and during the rainy season, flooding rivers cut off access to her family for months. After a year of hardship, Lartar decided to return home to attend the monastery school back in her home village.

But the military harassment didn’t stop, forcing them to relocate frequently. Lartar vividly recalls one particularly scary raid not long after she had returned to her village: Burmese soldiers looking for her father kicked in the door with their heavy jackboots at 2 a.m.! She, her mother, and two younger siblings were inside; her older brother had already gone into hiding to avoid being seized for forced labor—which usually meant being a porter for the military carrying their equipment, often across long distances. Frustrated by the fact that the father was not there, the military pointed guns at her mother’s head and stomach, and questioned her aggressively. Her mother lied, claiming her husband was merely a manual laborer for the KNU. Though informants had already betrayed his true role in the KNU, the chaos of the raid and her mother’s quick thinking sowed just enough doubt that the soldiers left. Fearing another attack, the family fled within hours, abandoning their crops and most of their belongings.

All this highlights the way the Myanmar military views the Karen, along with many other ethnic groups in the country. Simply put, entire minority populations are seen as enemies, and the military treats them as inherently suspect, undeserving of rights or legal protections. Arbitrary detentions, beatings, sexual violence and dispossession are commonplace. For this reason, Lartar recalls getting some military training at an early age, for example, becoming well-versed in using both the M16 and AK-47. “I learned pretty well about the weapons. My dad brought weapons in the house. There’s always guns, so we are very familiar playing with it,” she says. “If I see the military attack my family again, I think I will probably use it.”

CATCH THE PODCAST

Read more or catch the Insight Myanmar Podcast here:

<https://insightmyanmar.org/complete-shows/2024/11/3/episode-281-running-up-that-hill>

JUNTA ENERGY MINISTER MEETS CHINESE OFFICIALS AMID ONGOING CRISIS

Myanmar junta's Energy Minister Ko Ko Lwin met with Chinese energy officials in Beijing on November 11-12, discussing oil and gas cooperation amid international concerns over the Myanmar junta's legitimacy.

The talks with China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and National Energy Administration (NEA) focused on expanding crude oil access, pipeline operations, and potential (Liquefied natural gas) LNG terminal construction, according to the junta-controlled newspaper The Global New Light of Myanmar.

While these meetings signal continued Chinese economic engagement with Myanmar's military junta, they occur against a backdrop of widespread civil unrest and armed resistance against the regime. The UN and multiple international governments have condemned the junta's human rights violations since the 2021 coup.

The Myanmar-China energy partnership, particularly the oil and gas pipelines, remains strategically significant for Beijing's energy security. However, these projects have faced criticism from civil society organizations over environmental impacts and their role in supporting the Myanmar military junta.

The discussions also covered green energy cooperation and human resource development, though implementation may face challenges due to ongoing instability in Myanmar.

These meetings underscore China's pragmatic approach to Myanmar, balancing its economic interests with regional stability concerns, while maintaining ties with the military junta despite international isolation.



NUG'S VIRTUAL MEETING SPARKS PUBLIC OUTCRY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The opposition National Unity Government (NUG) held a virtual meeting on November 18, 2024, to discuss interim political arrangements for the Mandalay Region. NUG Prime Minister Mahn Win Khaing Than met with the Mandalay Coordination Committee via the Zoom platform, according to NUG's official Facebook page.

While the meeting focused on drafting interim political measures, a few citizens took to social media expressing frustration over the government-in-exile's approach. Users highlighted the disconnect between virtual politicking and ground realities.

"We trusted you for four years," wrote one citizen online. "While we face bombs and poverty, you live comfortably abroad."

Another user criticized the very nature of conducting politics from outside, calling it ineffective.

The virtual meeting included officials from the NUG Prime Minister's Office and committee members, who exchanged views on political frameworks and future arrangements for the Mandalay Region.

KIA CAPTURES FOUR JUNTA ARMY OUTPOSTS IN SEZIN; SOCIAL MEDIA USERS MOURN FALLEN KPDF FIGHTERS AND SHOWS STRONG SUPPORT

Kachin Independence Army (KIA)-led armed forces launched successful operations in the Sezin area, located at the border of Kachin State and Sagaing Region, on November 19, according to social media posts and news agencies.

They captured at least four outposts of the junta army and pro-junta Shanni Nationalities Army (SNA), including Shwe Twin Junction outpost, Pan Chae Kone, Mansein Chaung Hpyar outpost, and the base at Saipankone on the opposite bank of Sezin.

Prior to the capture, the junta conducted two airstrikes around 4 pm on November 18.

During these operations, two Kachin People's Defense Force (KPDF) fighters lost their lives. The KIA source mentioned that casualties and weapons seized from the junta side are still being assessed.

Facebook users responded with messages of condolence for the fallen KPDF members, praying for their peaceful afterlife.

Social media users also expressed well-wishes for the KIA and allied forces, hoping for their continued success, safety in future operations, and protection for local civilians.

The comments reflected strong public support for the resistance forces and the ethnic revolutionary organizations' ongoing struggle.

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.