

STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS & SANCTIONS IN MYANMAR

DECEMBER 2019 REPORT

Summary. This report reviews the December 2019 developments relating to human rights in Myanmar. Relatedly, it addresses the interchange between Myanmar’s reform efforts and the responses of the international community.

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I. Political Developments

A. Rohingya Refugee Crisis

As noted in previous reports, in November 2017 Myanmar signed a memorandum of understanding (the “MoU”) with Bangladesh to repatriate the Rohingya refugees who fled Myanmar after a violent military-led crackdown in northern Rakhine State in August 2017.¹ In the two years that have passed since the MoU was signed, very few Rohingya have voluntarily returned to Myanmar, with the majority of Rohingya refusing to return until they are guaranteed physical safety, citizenship rights and access to basic services.² Both Bangladesh and Myanmar have blamed the other country for causing delays in repatriation.³

At the end of November 2019, China’s ambassador to Bangladesh proposed to allow one member from each Rohingya refugee family living in Bangladeshi refugee camps to visit Myanmar and observe whether it’s safe for the rest of the Rohingya to return to their villages.⁴ After observation, the nominated member could report to their family on the current situation in Rakhine using Chinese government-provided cell phones. The director general of Myanmar’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that repatriation negotiations with Bangladesh remain ongoing, and that Myanmar would consider the Chinese government’s proposal to aid in the repatriation process.⁵

Meanwhile, Myanmar continues to blame Bangladesh for delays in the repatriation program. The Bangladesh government issued a response saying that Myanmar is responsible for the prolongation. Myanmar claims that the delays stem from refugees’ refusal to provide all information requested on repatriation application forms and are ignoring a section where they must pledge to respect and abide by the country’s existing laws.⁶

Myanmar is facing genocide charges for its treatment of the Rohingya at the International Court of Justice (the “ICJ”) in a lawsuit brought by The Gambia on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.⁷ As a result, it appears that the Myanmar government will not move forward with the repatriation process until the genocide case is complete and possibly not until Myanmar’s next elections are held in late 2020.⁸ Former information minister Ye Htut posits that given the political pressure from lawsuits in international courts, the Rohingya refugees may continue to make uncompromising demands.⁹ Ye Htut also stated that the Myanmar government will avoid any issues that may cause its ruling National League for Democracy party to be politically vulnerable as the 2020 general election approaches.¹⁰

B. Corruption

In December, the Anti-Corruption Commission (“ACC”) sued Win Aung, former deputy head of the Agriculture Farmland Management and Statistics Department for Ye Township in Mon State, for an alleged solicitation of bribes.¹¹ The ACC alleges that Win Aung asked fourteen farmers who were applying to regain farmland—land that had been taken by the Myanmar military in the 1990s—to pay a bribe in connection with their applications.¹² The total amount of bribes that Win Aung solicited totals about 5 million kyat.¹³

The ACC also sued Dr. Kyi Lwin, the medical superintendent of the Mandalay orthopedic hospital, on charges of corruption.¹⁴ The ACC's investigation found that the superintendent had requested bribes totaling 14 million kyat from two businessmen in exchange for helping them to win a contract to establish car parking fees at the hospital.¹⁵ The ACC additionally sued Aung Kyaw Oo, the director of the Mandalay Regional Administration Department of Medical Treatment, for taking bribes in connection with the establishment of a contract for the operation of the hospital's bicycle and motorcycle stands.¹⁶

C. International Community / Sanctions

The United States imposed sanctions on four Myanmar military leaders in December, including Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, his deputy, Vice Senior General Soe Win, and two subordinates who headed the elite army divisions that spearheaded the crackdown on the Rohingya, Brigadier General Than Oo and Brigadier General Aung Aung.¹⁷ The sanctions freeze any U.S. assets held by the sanctioned individuals and prohibit Americans from doing business with them.¹⁸ However, the sanctions do not re-impose economic sanctions on Myanmar or target military-owned companies that dominate some sectors of Myanmar's economy.¹⁹ A former U.S. State Department official familiar with the sanctions said, "This is not likely to be the last round of sanctions."²⁰ Myanmar's military spokesman has called the imposition of new sanctions "targeted political pressure."²¹

The ICJ held hearings on December 11-13 to address a request for preliminary measures against Myanmar.²² The hearings did not consider whether Myanmar is guilty of genocide.²³ Instead, The Gambia urged the ICJ to impose provisional measures demanding that Myanmar take action to prevent further genocide, not destroy any evidence related to previous acts of genocide, take no action to "aggravate" the existing dispute, and file a report at the end of four months on the efforts made to comply with the demands.²⁴ During the first day of the ICJ hearings, The Gambia presented its case against Myanmar, including graphic accounts of mass murder and rape.²⁵ The Gambia argued that all seven primary indicators of genocide were present, including sexual violence.²⁶

During the second day of the ICJ hearings, Myanmar contested the application of the legal term genocide to the facts, attacked the accuracy of reports by the UN Fact-Finding Mission ("FFM") and the UN Special Rapporteur, and argued that the ICJ lacks jurisdiction over Myanmar.²⁷ Myanmar also contested the number of Rohingya affected by the 2017 government crackdown, arguing that the FFM and UN Special Rapporteur reports are "flawed" and should not be admitted to the court.²⁸ Aung San Suu Kyi asked the ICJ to reject the Rohingya genocide case.²⁹ She claimed that no international body has gathered enough holistic evidence to support the case. However, she failed to mention that international investigators and media are barred from entering the area.³⁰

Aung San Suu Kyi argued that the situation was too complex for the international community to understand, with violence perpetrated by many different actors. She also asserted that any violations, if they occurred, were committed by rogue soldiers and were not Tatmadaw policy.³¹ Myanmar also argued that there was no genocidal intent as the majority of the Rohingya remain alive. She framed the "clearance operation" by the Tatmadaw as not directed towards civilians but rather as part of an "internal conflict."³² Aung Sun Suu Kyi also noted that

a judicial process is already underway in Myanmar to address the situation, and that the international legal system would neutralize those efforts.³³

The Gambia's lawyer condemned Aung San Suu Kyi's silence over the plight of the Rohingya and stated, "Armed conflict can never be an excuse for genocide."³⁴ Additionally, The Gambia's lawyer noted that Aung San Suu Kyi refused to refer to the Rohingya by their name, effectively denying the Rohingya's existence as a group.³⁵ The Gambia's lawyer also dismissed Aung San Suu Kyi's insistence that the Tatmadaw should be left to probe the allegations itself, stating that an internal probe is not credible when top Myanmar generals have themselves been accused of genocide.³⁶

During the hearings, the Union of Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development, a public-private Myanmar entity organized to help rehabilitate and develop Rakhine State, denied allegations that it was complicit in the genocide because it seized land from the Rohingya.³⁷

The Netherlands and Canada issued a statement prior to the ICJ hearings pledging to support The Gambia. In addition, Bangladesh offered to lead a team to offer technical support, if requested.³⁸ Eight female Nobel Prize winners also issued a joint statement before the ICJ hearings urging Aung San Suu Kyi "to publicly acknowledge the crimes, including genocide, committed against the Rohingya."³⁹ Seventeen Shan organizations and forty-eight Karen organizations issued statements welcoming the ICJ and International Criminal Court investigations against Myanmar.⁴⁰

The UN General Assembly approved a resolution condemning human rights abuses against Myanmar's Rohingya and other minorities.⁴¹ The resolution calls on Myanmar to take urgent measures to combat the incitement of hatred against the Rohingya and other minorities in Rakhine, Shan, and Kachin States.⁴²

The Japanese ambassador to Myanmar said that the Japanese government firmly believes that no genocide was committed in Myanmar and expressed hope that the ICJ will reject The Gambia's request that provisional measures be taken against Myanmar.⁴³ The ambassador further stated that if the ICJ imposes provisional measures, "Japan will look at ways to help Myanmar handle the process smoothly."⁴⁴ The ambassador did not rule out the possibility that human rights violations nevertheless occurred in Rakhine State.⁴⁵

II. Civil and Political Rights

A. Freedom of Speech, Assembly and Association

Several members of the Daungdohmyoset thangyat theatrical group were sentenced to six months in prison for criticizing the military in their performances.⁴⁶ The Mayangone Township Court sentenced the group's four leaders under Section 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law for sharing satirical videos and photos on Facebook.⁴⁷ The group and its members have already faced a handful of similar suits throughout the year in various townships. In October, five members were sentenced to a year in prison with hard labor after a military officer filed suit

under Section 505(a) of the penal code.⁴⁸ Other members faced suit in April and May for “pushing military officers to disregard or fail in their duties” and causing “potential mutiny” through satirical performances.⁴⁹ The group claims that its members have illegally been sued multiple times for the same actions.⁵⁰

A Kachin activist has been released from prison after completing his sentence for giving broken scales to a judge in Myitkyina Township.⁵¹ Ko Paul had originally been sentenced to fifteen days in prison for violating the Peaceful Assembly Law after leading a public performance marking the eighth anniversary of the renewed conflict in Kachin State.⁵² Upon receiving the sentence, Ko Paul handed broken scales to Judge Than Tun to express dissatisfaction with the sentence. Ko Paul then received an additional three months in prison for “insulting and disrespecting the court.”⁵³ Ko Paul has advocated for reforms to bolster freedom of expression, saying “If we cannot amend those laws which bar us from freedom of expression, the democracy we achieve will not be genuine.”⁵⁴

Five Karenni activists have been released after spending six months in prison for criticizing local officials’ decision to erect a statue of General Aung San.⁵⁵ The activists were charged under Article 10 of the Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens due to the criticism’s alleged negative effect on state officials’ reputations. Kayah State parliamentarian Thae Reh has questioned the efficacy of charging activists under the statute, saying “The government needs to explain who this article is for. I thought this article was to protect the people. In practice, this article is used to oppress people. I think this article is unfair.”⁵⁶

Social activists in Rakhine State have organized demonstrations to demand restoration of internet services in multiple townships.⁵⁷ Internet services have been restricted for over six months in various townships, including Paletwa in Chin State and Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Rathedaung, Ponnagyun, Mrauk-U, Kyauktaw, Minbya and Myebon in Rakhine State.⁵⁸ The government-sanctioned restrictions have imposed an especially heavy burden on information sharing among businesses and the healthcare sector. It remains unclear when the government plans to restore service to the affected townships.

An ongoing curfew in Paletwa Township has prevented local Christians from celebrating Christmas in their customary fashion.⁵⁹ The curfew, which runs from 6:00 pm until 6:00 am every night, prevents people from being out in public as well as gathering in groups of five or more.⁶⁰ The government issued the curfew in response to ongoing skirmishes between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army (“AA”).

In the 45 months since the Union Parliament’s current term began, 37 civilians have been sued by members of Parliament and their associates for defaming parliamentarians, according to a report by Athan, a Myanmar organization advocating for freedom of expression.⁶¹ Athan’s report said that 13 such lawsuits by lawmakers were filed under the Telecommunications Law.⁶² Six other lawsuits were filed under the Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens, and three were filed under Section 500 of the Penal Code for defamation.⁶³ According to Athan member Ko Ye Wai Phyo Aung, most of the lawsuits against civilians are over political criticism

against parliamentarians and all 11 members of Parliament who sued civilians directly are members of the ruling NLD party.⁶⁴ Critics have argued that the government should amend the Telecommunications Law and adopt a law that prohibits lawsuits by members of Parliament against civilians.⁶⁵ The military has also filed 30 cases related to freedom of expression against 77 people using the Telecommunications Law and the Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens, according to Athan.⁶⁶

B. Freedom of the Press and Censorship

In a report detailing the challenges the media continues to face in Southeast Asia, two international journalist organizations have noted no improvement in media freedom in Myanmar since Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy took office in 2016.⁶⁷ The report showed that 59% of journalists saw "no significant improvement" in media freedom over the past year, while 25% thought it "worsened to some degree," and 16% said it "seriously declined."⁶⁸ In addition to numerous lawsuits against journalists, the report also highlights the risk that disinformation campaigns on social media could disrupt the 2020 general election.⁶⁹ Journalists in Myanmar fear repercussions, especially when covering events in ethnic areas.⁷⁰ The report provides evidence that the military, ethnic armed groups and businesses often resort to draconian laws or illegal means to respond to journalists who write unfavorable reports about them.⁷¹

Sixteen member organizations of the Freedom of Expression Advocacy Cooperation ("FEAC") met on December 7 to map out a strategy to push for amendment to Myanmar laws to promote and protect media freedom and freedom of expression.⁷² The 16 groups will advocate for amendments to the News Media Law, Electronic Transactions Law, Telecommunications Law, Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens, Burma Official Secrets Act, Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law and Penal Code Law.⁷³

III. Economic Development

A. Economic Development—Legal Framework, Foreign Investment

Hong Kong-based CNTIC VPower Limited is planning to invest over \$500 million to build a 400-megawatt LNG fired power station in Thaketa Township, as well as a 150-megawatt LNG fired power station in Kyaukphyu Township to generate and distribute electricity, according to the Myanmar Investment Commission ("MIC").⁷⁴ The company plans to spend over \$363 million to build the power station in Thaketa and over \$140 million to build the power station in Kyaukphyu. By the end of the fiscal year ended 2019, a total of fifty countries had invested a total of \$82 billion in Myanmar, with Hong Kong coming in 11th place among foreign investors with investments totaling \$8.6 billion.

A manufacturing-centered development led by Taiwanese investors is under construction northwest of Yangon.⁷⁵ The 890-hectare Htantabin Technology Park will generate 150,000 jobs and attract over \$330 million in investments over the next eight years, and those backing the project estimate that this figure could potentially rise to \$840 million in fifteen years. The project is led by a Taipei-based lace maker, Wedtex Industrial Corporation.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar is currently working to grant foreign investors, including three new listed companies, the opportunity to trade their shares in 2020.⁷⁶ The Myanmar Capital Market Media Workshop, jointly organized by Yangon Stock Exchange and Myanmar Journalism Institute, was held on December 5 at the stock exchange with the goal of providing more awareness about the stock exchange to the media.

Regulations which are intended to relax Myanmar's existing ban on alcohol imports have moved to the attorney general for approval, according to the commerce ministry.⁷⁷ The regulations need only the approval of the cabinet, according to Deputy Director Cho Thet Mu, and do not need to go to parliament. The alcohol market liberalization, the first under Aung San Suu Kyi's government, will likely pave the way for more direct foreign investment in the beverage industry. Up until now, the restrictions on alcohol imports have resulted in massive quantities of foreign alcohol being smuggled into Myanmar, fueling illicit trade and hurting Myanmar's tax revenue.

B. Economic Development—Infrastructure, Major Projects

On December 7, China's State Councilor Wang Yi told Myanmar's State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi that China is willing to work with Myanmar to promote the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor ("CMEC") "from conceptual planning" to the construction of a "landmark project."⁷⁸ Wang also said infrastructure connectivity is the backbone of the CMEC and the two sides should cooperate on the ground.⁷⁹ According to the Myanmar government, China has proposed 38 projects under the CMEC whereas Myanmar has only approved nine projects and has only publicized three including the construction of three economic cooperation zones in Kachin and Shan States, the Kyaukphyu SEZ and the Muse-Mandalay railway project.⁸⁰

According to *Myanmar Times*, 22 Japanese companies have met with Myanmar companies to explore possible partnerships in the operation and maintenance of the water system in Yangon via a public-private partnership mission in December organized by of the Japan Machinery Centre for Trade and Investment and Japan External Trade Organisation.⁸¹ Phyo Min Thein, chief minister of Yangon said, "Many people don't have sufficient water in Yangon" and "the Japan-Myanmar partnership will help us get sufficient water supply."⁸²

The Myanmar government plans to release a master plan for micro, small and medium enterprises in February 2020.⁸³ Min Ye Paing Hein, Deputy Minister of Planning, Finance and Industry, announced the plan at the 1st Conference of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.⁸⁴ The plan aims to develop human resources, use a larger variety of techniques, help secure comprehensive loans, provide infrastructure for development, develop current markets and reach out to new ones, amend laws and regulations, and provide more support and training.⁸⁵

C. Land Seizure

The Myanmar military has sued 41 farmers in Kayah State for "allegedly trespassing and farming on land seized by the military."⁸⁶ If found guilty, the farmers face between three months and seven years in prison.⁸⁷ The land in question had been farmed by members of the townships for about 50 years, and the farmers allegedly hold the required land registration certificates.⁸⁸ As of mid-December, 30 of the farmers had been granted bail but 11 were still detained. The

farmers have reportedly “been sued several times under the same laws by different military officers” and their families are “suffering considerable hardship because of lost income and disruption” resulting from the suits.⁸⁹

Protests were held in Botataung Township in Yangon by victims of land seizures.⁹⁰ This latest protest is reportedly the 32nd protest on this issue and over 70 former landowners attended.⁹¹ The land in question was rented by the Ministry of Defence from the farmers in 1974 and was subsequently seized.⁹² Landowners demanded compensation and about 277 landowners were compensated.⁹³ The 70 landowners that have not been compensated have continued to protest.⁹⁴

Protests were also held in Sagaing region over claims that a Chinese-backed company has failed to pay reasonable compensation after seizing farmland for a mining project.⁹⁵ Locals argue that they should be paid for more than 2,000 acres of confiscated land as well as the right to use water from a nearby river.⁹⁶ They allege that they were promised compensation for the farmland in 2015 but they have not yet received it.⁹⁷ It is expected that the regional government will need to make a determination as to the compensation owed to the farmers.⁹⁸

Villagers in Kachin State are also requesting compensation for land lost to the Namjim Industrial Zone, a Chinese-backed development project.⁹⁹ The Zone was launched in May 2018.¹⁰⁰ At the time of the seizure, the land in question was listed as unoccupied or fallow. As a result, the Land Record Department director has indicated that farmers are eligible for compensation for their crops only, not the value of the land.¹⁰¹

Refugees from fighting in Shan State have expressed concern that their land might be confiscated for Chinese-backed infrastructure projects while they are absent.¹⁰² In particular, plans for a reservoir were reported in the local media but owners of land in the area have not been contacted by the government regarding these plans.¹⁰³

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation has “almost finished a review of farmland confiscated during military rule and will hasten its return this year” according to officials.¹⁰⁴ The Ministry makes up only a part of the review process and there are other government bodies that will also need to review and approve the return of land.¹⁰⁵

IV. Peace Talks and Ethnic Violence

A. Ethnic Violence

Troops from the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army’s (“KIA”) 36th Battalion engaged in a gunfire fight in the Mungbaw area of Muse Township in northern Shan State in mid-December.¹⁰⁶ According to KIA sources, Tatmadaw troops entered a road junction near Mungbaw village, where the KIA troops were stationed, and the two forces then began fighting.¹⁰⁷ Locals said that Tatmadaw troops also occupied the area controlled by the KIA’s Brigade 6 in Mong Ko, Muse District earlier in December.¹⁰⁸

Two people in Shan State have been injured due to a landmine explosion in December, making Shan State the region with the highest number of casualties from landmines.¹⁰⁹ In 2019, there were reports of 19 people killed and 59 others injured in Shan State.¹¹⁰ Rakhine State has

the second-highest number of casualties, with 13 people killed and 27 wounded.¹¹¹ Kachin State ranks third with six people killed and 24 wounded.¹¹² Shan State locals report that if a civilian steps on a landmine and is not killed instantly, then they will be murdered by the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (“TNLA”) to avoid reputational damage.¹¹³ Reportedly, the TNLA is attempting to obfuscate the fact that civilians are being killed or injured by landmines and there are local rumors that TNLA troops have injected something into mine victims in order to kill survivors.¹¹⁴ In addition, civilians report that they have to give the TNLA 500,000 kyat in compensation for any exploded mine—even if they are killed or injured in the blast or if one of their cattle steps on the mine.¹¹⁵

B. Peace Talks

Members of the Northern Alliance, consisting of the Kachin Independence Army, the TNLA, the AA and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, met Myanmar government representatives in Kunming, China on December 14 in an unsuccessful attempt to end the deadlock in peace negotiations.¹¹⁶ The TNLA did not provide details of the proposal made during the meeting, but a proposal submitted by the Northern Alliance in September called for a ceasefire agreement, continued peace negotiations and cooperation on the return of those displaced by the fighting. It also called for a military code of conduct and the formation of a peace-monitoring team involving China. Both sides agreed to meet informally in late January.¹¹⁷

- ¹ Radio Free Asia: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-rohingya-repatriation-seen-delayed-12162019170448.html>.
- ² Radio Free Asia: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-considers-chinese-envoys-proposal-11252019171932.html>.
- ³ *Id.*
- ⁴ *Id.*
- ⁵ *Id.*
- ⁶ *Id.*
- ⁷ Radio Free Asia: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-rohingya-repatriation-seen-delayed-12162019170448.html>.
- ⁸ *Id.*
- ⁹ *Id.*
- ¹⁰ *Id.*
- ¹¹ The Irrawaddy, December 3, 2019: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmars-ant-graft-body-sues-land-management-official-corruption.html>.
- ¹² *Id.*
- ¹³ *Id.*
- ¹⁴ The Irrawaddy, December 20, 2019: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/medical-superintendent-hospital-myanmars-mandalay-arrested-corruption.html>.
- ¹⁵ *Id.*
- ¹⁶ *Id.*
- ¹⁷ The Irrawaddy, December 11, 2019: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/us-slaps-sanctions-myanmar-military-chief-rohingya-rights-abuses.html>.
- ¹⁸ *Id.*
- ¹⁹ Myanmar Times, January 2, 2020: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/magnitsky-sanctions-no-impact-tatmadaw-businesses-experts.html>.
- ²⁰ *Id.*
- ²¹ The Irrawaddy, December 12, 2019: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/us-sanctions-military-targeted-political-pressure-spokesman.html>.
- ²² The Irrawaddy, December 6, 2019: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/factbox-genocide-case-myanmar-uns-highest-court.html>.
- ²³ *Id.*
- ²⁴ Frontier Myanmar, December 12, 2019: <https://frontiermyanmar.net/en/aung-san-su-kyis-day-in-court-icj-hears-genocide-arguments>.
- ²⁵ Mizzima, December 11, 2019: <http://www.mizzima.com/article/myanmars-su-kyi-told-stop-genocide-un-court>.
- ²⁶ Frontier Myanmar, December 13, 2019: <https://frontiermyanmar.net/en/rohingya-hope-for-justice-as-icj-hearings-conclude>.
- ²⁷ Myanmar Times, December 11, 2019: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/what-has-happened-so-far-summary-two-day-hearings-icj.html>.
- ²⁸ *Id.*
- ²⁹ The Irrawaddy, December 13, 2019: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-state-counselor-asks-world-court-reject-genocide-case.html>.
- ³⁰ *Id.*
- ³¹ Frontier Myanmar December 12, 2019: <https://frontiermyanmar.net/en/aung-san-su-kyis-day-in-court-icj-hears-genocide-arguments>.
- ³² Myanmar Times, December 11, 2019: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/what-has-happened-so-far-summary-two-day-hearings-icj.html>.
- ³³ Myanmar Times, December 13, 2019: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/state-counsellor-asks-court-dismiss-genocide-case-against-myanmar.html>.
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- ³⁶ *Id.*
- ³⁷ Myanmar Times, December 12, 2019: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/uehrd-parries-gambias-allegations-misdeeds-rakhine.html>.
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- ⁴¹ Mizzima, December 29, 2019: <https://www.mizzima.com/article/un-condemns-human-rights-abuse-against-myanmar-minorities>.
- ⁴² *Id.*
- ⁴³ The Irrawaddy, December 27, 2019: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/japan-backs-myanmars-claim-no-genocide-occurred-rakhine-state.html>.
- ⁴⁴ *Id.*
- ⁴⁵ *Id.*
- ⁴⁶ The Irrawaddy, December 12, 2019: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-military-wins-yet-another-court-case-satirical-performers.html>.
- ⁴⁷ *Id.*
- ⁴⁸ *Id.*
- ⁴⁹ *Id.*
- ⁵⁰ *Id.*
- ⁵¹ The Irrawaddy, December 16, 2019: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/kachin-activist-handed-broken-scales-judge-released.html>.

- ⁵² *Id.*
- ⁵³ *Id.*
- ⁵⁴ *Id.*
- ⁵⁵ Burma News International, December 16, 2019: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/remaining-karenni-youth-activists-released-prison>.
- ⁵⁶ *Id.*
- ⁵⁷ Burma News International, December 23, 2019: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/activists-demonstrate-yangon-restoration-internet-arakan-townships>.
- ⁵⁸ *Id.*
- ⁵⁹ Burma News International, December 20, 2019: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/paletwa-christians-cannot-be-happy-christmas-due-ongoing-war-pastor-says>.
- ⁶⁰ *Id.*
- ⁶¹ The Irrawaddy, December 24, 2019: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/37-civilians-sued-mps-criticism-since-nld-took-power.html>.
- ⁶² *Id.*
- ⁶³ *Id.*
- ⁶⁴ *Id.*
- ⁶⁵ *Id.*
- ⁶⁶ *Id.*
- ⁶⁷ Myanmar Times, December 3, 2019: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/journalists-see-no-major-improvement-media-freedom.html>.
- ⁶⁸ *Id.*
- ⁶⁹ *Id.*
- ⁷⁰ *Id.*
- ⁷¹ *Id.*
- ⁷² Myanmar Times, December 10, 2019: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/media-freedom-advocates-seek-changes-laws.html>.
- ⁷³ *Id.*
- ⁷⁴ Eleven Myanmar, December 5, 2019: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/hong-kong-to-invest-500-million-dollars-in-two-lng-power-stations>.
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- ⁸⁰ *Id.*
- ⁸¹ Myanmar Times, December 20, 2019: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/japanese-firms-offer-improve-yangons-water-infrastructure.html>.
- ⁸² *Id.*
- ⁸³ Myanmar Times, December 31, 2019: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/master-plan-myanmar-smes-ready-february.html>.
- ⁸⁴ *Id.*
- ⁸⁵ *Id.*
- ⁸⁶ The Irrawaddy, December 16, 2019: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-military-expands-trespassing-lawsuits-target-41-karenni-farmers.html>.
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