

STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS & SANCTIONS IN MYANMAR

APRIL 2025 REPORT

Summary. This report reviews the April 2025 developments relating to human rights in Myanmar.

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I. Coup, Crackdown on Protests and Civilian Resistance

On April 2, the *Irrawaddy* reported that since the March 28 earthquake, the junta had carried out at least 21 airstrikes across Sagaing, Magway regions and Shan, Kachin, Rakhine and Kayah states.¹ Of note, on April 1, the junta bombed a site where 300 youths were en route to attend Kachin Independence Army (“KIA”) military training.² Thirty-eight people were killed and 20 others were injured in the bombing, according to a KIA spokesperson.³

On April 2, the junta declared a ceasefire in light of the earthquake.⁴ The declaration came after China urged the junta regime to prioritize earthquake relief.⁵ In response to the declaration, the KIA declared a ceasefire until April 20.⁶ However, despite these ceasefire declarations, on the morning of April 3, the junta regime targeted KIA-held Bhamo town and Indaw and Homalin townships in northern Sagaing Region, in addition to Waingmow Township near the Kachin State capital, Myitkyina.⁷

The Nyang-U-based People’s Democratic Army reported that junta soldiers entered Zee Zar Hmyin village on April 2 before opening fire and burning houses in nearby villages, including Kyaukpyin Kan.⁸ The civilian National Unity Government (“NUG”) reported that the junta conducted attacks in Nyaung-U on April 4.⁹

On April 9, the junta conducted airstrikes on civilians in Sagaing Region and Chin State, killing over 30 people.¹⁰ A junta jet dropped two bombs on Twi village in Mindat Township, southern Chin State, killing six people, including a pastor and an eight-month-old baby.¹¹ On April 10, the regime dropped two bombs on In Pin Hla village school in Kawlin Township, Sagaing Region, killing three people, including a child.¹² Also on April 10, a junta airstrike on Saizang village in Tedim Township killed a family of six, and destroyed four buildings, including houses and a school library.¹³

From April 13 to 16, the junta regime carried out at least 26 airstrikes on civilian targets, across seven of the country’s 15 regions, killing at least 23 people, and injuring approximately 50 others.¹⁴ The airstrikes targeted at least six monasteries during the four-day Thingyan festival.¹⁵

On April 22, junta forces bombed villages in Kawkareik Township.¹⁶

II. Political Developments

A. Rohingya Refugee Crisis

Myanmar junta have confirmed to Bangladesh that out of a list of 800,000 Rohingya refugees sheltered in Bangladesh, 180,000 Rohingya refugees are eligible for return to Myanmar.¹⁷ The final verification of another 70,000 Rohingya refugees is reportedly pending additional scrutiny of their photographs and names.¹⁸ The junta minister also confirmed that the verification of the remaining 550,000 Rohingya refugees on the original list will be undertaken on an expeditious basis.¹⁹

Six months after its launch, the partnership between the Republic of Korea and the United Nations Population Fund, titled “Combating Early and Forced Child Marriage in Rohingya Refugee Camps: Non-Formal Education in Safe Spaces,” has reportedly made significant progress in protecting and empowering Rohingya adolescents, youth and women.²⁰ The initiative has so far reached nearly 80,000 Rohingya adolescent girls and women in refugee camps across Cox’s Bazar and Bhasan Char Island.²¹ The project seeks to address the critical education gap through 96 safe spaces—including 39 women-friendly spaces, 57 community-based learning centers and eight adolescent and youth centers.²² These spaces serve as platforms where girls can gain vital life skills, education and social support.²³

After a devastating fire, UNICEF has built the first fire-resistant and climate-resilient school in the Rohingya refugee camps to support safe learning for children amid disasters and extreme weather.²⁴ In 2024, a total of 434 UNICEF learning facilities were either partially damaged or destroyed by disasters, disrupting the education of over 30,000 children – more than 1 in 8 children supported by UNICEF’s education programs.²⁵ Frequent repairs to these facilities are costly and have diverted dwindling resources needed for other education programming and humanitarian services.²⁶ In 2024, UNICEF received approval from the government of Bangladesh to build new durable, climate-resilient facilities in the camps.²⁷ These facilities include the first climate-resilient integrated nutrition facility and primary health center and the first fire-resistant and climate-resilient school.²⁸

B. Corruption

On April 30, the *Irrawaddy* reported that Chit Khine, chairman of the Eden Group, was released on April 12 after being charged with corruption three years ago.²⁹

C. International Community / Sanctions

On April 4, the United Kingdom announced it is allocating a further £10 million to the ongoing humanitarian response in Myanmar following the earthquake that struck the country in late March, bringing the pledged total to up to £25 million of support.³⁰ Also on April 4, the Finnish government announced that it will grant EUR 1 million in humanitarian assistance to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in response to the earthquake.³¹

On April 10, the United Nations (“UN”) called for an additional \$241.6 million to aid those in the regions most affected by the earthquake in Myanmar, while also channeling \$134 million from the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for Myanmar.³² In the revised plan, the UN identified approximately “two million newly affected people in urgent need of assistance, adding to the 4.3 million who were already in need.”³³

On April 11, the spokeswoman for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ravina Shamdasani, denounced Myanmar’s governing military for breaching the temporary ceasefire and reiterated that the “sole focus should be on ensuring humanitarian aid gets to disaster zones.”³⁴ In her remarks, Shamdasani noted that “[Myanmar] military forces have reportedly carried out over 120 attacks [and m]ore than half of them after their declared ceasefire was due to have gone into effect.”³⁵

Malaysian Prime Minister and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (“ASEAN”) chair, Anwar Ibrahim, said on April 18 that he had spoken with junta chief Min Aung Hlaing and “told him it’s important to cease fire . . . [and] allow for humanitarian efforts to cover all of Myanmar, irrespective of where they are or what political position they take.”³⁶ On April 28, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that Malaysia and Vietnam had “unanimously agreed to continue humanitarian assistance to all Myanmar citizens without restrictions to ensure the well-being of the people in the country.”³⁷ This decision was reportedly agreed during talks with his Vietnamese counterpart, Pham Minh Chinh and called on all parties to “continue the ceasefire to ensure the safety of humanitarian aid workers.”³⁸

The human rights group Justice for Myanmar accused ASEAN on April 23 of “deepening its complicity in war crimes and undermining its commitments” by inviting Myanmar’s military to attend the defense ministers’ counterterrorism meeting in March.³⁹

On April 24, *BBC News* announced it would be launching a “direct-to-home satellite video channel delivering *BBC News* Burmese content . . . to cater for what the corporation sees as an urgent ‘audience in need’” to replace the channel “formerly used by *Voice of America*” following the United States’ funding freeze for the service.⁴⁰ In a statement, the global director and deputy executive of *BBC News*, Jonathan Munro, said the “corporation believed it had to act swiftly to ensure a vulnerable audience were well served with independent information” and that the new video services would be “offering a critical information stream for an audience struggling to recover from the [earthquake].”⁴¹

The European Union announced on April 25 that it had “renewed for another year sanctions against [Myanmar] junta boss Min Aung Hlaing and other generals as well as various institutions linked to the regime.”⁴² In the announcement, the European Union reiterated “its strongest condemnation of the actions taken by the Myanmar military since February 1, 2021, and call[ed] for the end of all forms of violence and the release of all prisoners arbitrarily detained” as well as warning of potential further sanctions.⁴³

Human rights groups Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights issued a joint press release on April 28 “documenting the impact of the Myanmar junta’s attacks on health works and hospitals since the 2021 coup and the effect on responses to the devastating 28 March earthquake.”⁴⁴ In a statement, the groups called on the UN Security Council to “hold an open meeting on Myanmar and pass a resolution calling on the junta to immediately facilitate humanitarian relief efforts without obstruction and cease attacks on healthcare facilities, transportation and health workers.”⁴⁵

On April 30, Malaysia’s Foreign Minister, Wisma Putra, said that the Malaysian government had urged both the State Administration Council and the NUG to “maintain and broaden the ceasefire declared after the [earthquake].”⁴⁶ In the statement, the Malaysian Foreign Ministry called for a “comprehensive humanitarian ceasefire [that] is essential to facilitate safe, impartial, and effective humanitarian operations across the country, as well as ensure the safety and security of humanitarian and medical teams operating on the ground.”⁴⁷

III. Civil and Political Rights

A. Freedom of Speech, Assembly and Association

Protesters displayed a banner calling Myanmar's junta chief a "murderer" as he joined a regional summit in Bangkok on April 4.⁴⁸ Myanmar's opposition NUG condemned his presence at the summit, calling it an affront to justice "given the immense suffering has inflicted on the people of Myanmar."⁴⁹ In a statement, the NUG said, "Allowing the junta leader and his representatives to participate in regional and international forums risks legitimizing an illegal regime."⁵⁰

Myanmar's March 28 earthquake destroyed two women's wards at Obo Prison, Mandalay Region, killing at least six female political prisoners, according to the Political Prisoners Network Myanmar ("PPNM").⁵¹ The PPNM said injured Obo prisoners were being denied hospital treatment.⁵² Families have not been allowed to contact the injured prisoners, the group said.⁵³ The prison reportedly lacks sufficient rubbing alcohol, cotton wool, antiseptic solutions and bandages.⁵⁴ "Prisoners, confined to their cells, were unable to escape the earthquake's impact," said Thaik Tun Oo, a director of PPNM.⁵⁵ "Many were killed because they were locked in their cells. We urge the authorities to ensure the safety of prisoners, provide medical treatment and properly inform the families of the deceased."⁵⁶ A joint statement released by seven organizations focused on political prisoners states that 30 prisoners, including 20 political prisoners, were killed in the March 28 earthquake.⁵⁷

Pro-democracy activists have urged the Czech government to investigate a Prague-based digital forensics company for selling phone-hacking software to the Myanmar junta's police force.⁵⁸ Justice for Myanmar ("JFM") said Compelson sold multiple licenses of MOBILedit Forensic Pro software to the Myanmar police.⁵⁹ The software is used to extract data from mobile phones, including bypassing security protections and retrieving deleted data from messenger apps.⁶⁰ JFM warned the app enables the regime "to target, surveil, and arbitrarily detain those it deems a threat."⁶¹ Many of those arrested by the junta have reported having their phones confiscated and accessed during torturous interrogations before lengthy prison sentences for their anti-regime activism, the group said.⁶² JFM spokeswoman Yadanar Maung said the Czech government must investigate whether Compelson violated Czech and EU law and ensure accountability as the junta "is using surveillance and digital forensics technology to target, arrest, torture, and murder activists and journalists, abuses that could have been aided by Compelson software."⁶³

According to a report by the Shan Human Rights Foundation ("SHRF"), the Myanmar regime is increasingly targeting civilians from the ethnic Danu minority in southern Shan State's Ywangan and surrounding areas in a campaign of extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, sexual violence and destruction of property.⁶⁴ The report notes that abuses seem to have been prompted by the growing influence of Danu and other resistance groups in the region.⁶⁵

B. Freedom of the Press and Censorship

The March 28 earthquake resulted in communications and mobile services outages across Myanmar.⁶⁶ The military junta's ongoing internet shutdowns and censorship measures are

reportedly exacerbating the disaster.⁶⁷ On March 31, 120 civil society organizations issued a joint statement urging the junta to restore internet access, lift all internet censorship measures, end all restrictions on media and media freedom and cease military aggression.⁶⁸ The joint statement also urges the international community to pressure the junta to lift the internet and media restrictions.⁶⁹

In mid-April, *Democratic Voice of Burma* (“DVB”) launched a daily shortwave radio program to disseminate critical news coverage related to the earthquake.⁷⁰ According to DVB’s editor, Aye Chan Naing, “Radio is a very old medium, but in times of crisis it is the most reliable and widely reached medium. We are happy that we have the chance to get back on the airwaves [in Burma to broadcast news] for earthquake victims, even if only temporarily.”⁷¹ DVB also began using shortwave radio to broadcast news after Cyclone Mocha in 2023.⁷²

On April 17, Hanthar Nyein, co-founder and executive producer of *Kamayut Media*, was released from Insein Prison as part of a nationwide amnesty to mark Myanmar’s New Year.⁷³ Hanthar Nyein was arrested with *Kamayut Media* co-founder Nathan Maung in 2021.⁷⁴ In March 2022, he was sentenced to two years in prison under Penal Code Section 505(a).⁷⁵ In December 2022, he received an additional five-year sentence under Article 33(a) of the Electronic Transactions Law.⁷⁶ Nathan Maung, a U.S. citizen, was released after a few months of detention in 2021.⁷⁷

According to the *Irrawaddy* on April 28, the U.S. funding freeze on the U.S. Agency for Global Media is threatening the survival of the fragile media landscape in Myanmar.⁷⁸ Due to budget shortfalls, more than 100 media professionals are facing layoffs, and others are working reduced pay.⁷⁹ Media organizations focusing on ethnic minority groups are reportedly at risk of disappearing altogether, since they rely heavily on U.S. donations.⁸⁰ In response to the funding freeze and subsequent layoffs, the Independent Press Council of Myanmar has begun providing emergency stop-gap assistance to affected journalists.⁸¹

IV. Economic Development

A. Economic Development—Legal Framework, Foreign Investment

There have been no material updates since the prior report.

B. Economic Development—Infrastructure, Major Projects

Myanmar’s infrastructure sector was significantly affected by the strong Myanmar earthquake that hit the country in March 2025.⁸² The *Irrawaddy* reports that Naypyitaw was one of the few places expected to withstand the powerful earthquake that struck central Myanmar, but the city, built only two decades ago, was severely damaged in the earthquake.⁸³ Russia’s State Atomic Energy Corporation is pressing on with its plan to build a nuclear power plant in Naypyitaw, despite the partial destruction of the city.⁸⁴ The junta announced at the Russia-Myanmar Business Forum that Russia and Russian companies would help build a nuclear power plant with total capacity of 110 megawatts in the country’s capital.⁸⁵ No other specific details about the project have been released, including its precise location or time frame.⁸⁶

C. Land Seizure

There have been no material updates since the prior report.

V. Peace Talks and Ethnic Violence

A. Ethnic Violence

On April 7, the KIA, All Burma Students' Democratic Front and resistance allies defeated the junta's last base in Indaw Township, northern Sagaing Region, and seized the town.⁸⁷ On the same date, the Chin Brotherhood, consisting of six resistance groups, took control of Falam town in northern Chin State.⁸⁸ Thereafter, the junta regime carried out airstrikes on civilians in Sagaing Region and Chin State on April 9, which reportedly killed over 30 people.⁸⁹

As of April 2025, junta administrative staff have returned Lashio, northern Shan State as the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army ("MNDAA") retreated from the city under Chinese pressure.⁹⁰ The MNDAA had controlled the city since August 2024.⁹¹ According to a Lashio reconstruction member, the MNDAA left the city but will retain control of the surrounding area.⁹²

After the 7.7-magnitude earthquake on March 28, the junta regime declared a ceasefire until April 22, but conflict monitors say that fighting, including airstrikes, continued.⁹³ During the four-day Thingyan or New Year's festival, the regime reportedly carried out at least 26 airstrikes on civilian targets, including 20 townships in Magway, Sagaing, Mandalay and Bago regions and Rakhine, Chin and Kayah States.⁹⁴ According to the Karen National Union ("KNU"), the junta regime conducted around 110 mainly air and artillery attacks on civilian targets in territory controlled by the KNU during the ceasefire.⁹⁵ The Humanitarian and Development Coordination Office of the United League of Arakan also reported that the junta carried out 409 attacks on Arakan Army-controlled townships in Rakhine State during the ceasefire.⁹⁶ Further, junta troops reportedly attacked and burned villages near the World Heritage Site of Bagan in Nyaung-U Township, Mandalay Region.⁹⁷

On April 27, the Karenni Nationalities Defense Force and allies attacked around 100 troops from Light Infantry Battalion 422, approaching Mobye from the north.⁹⁸ At least one resistance fighter was killed, and a resident died in an explosion during the clash.⁹⁹ The next day, around 300 junta troops advanced on Mobye near the Karenni (Kayah) State border, and junta forces seized a resistance sentry base, with another estimated 15 regime troops killed or injured in the conflict.¹⁰⁰

In April, the Karen National Liberation Army and allies have reportedly attacked junta positions on the Asia Highway in Kayah State, and the junta reportedly carried out airstrikes in response.¹⁰¹ According to a local resident, junta airstrikes have killed at least 10 civilians and displaced many civilians in Kawkaik Township.¹⁰² A junta air raid on Kanni village on the outskirts of Kyonedoe town reportedly hit a monastery and killed six people, including a child, and wounded 17 others.¹⁰³

B. Peace Talks

After initially refusing to agree to a ceasefire in the immediate aftermath of the March 28 earthquake,¹⁰⁴ the junta announced on April 3 a unilateral ceasefire at least through April 22.¹⁰⁵ Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged a permanent ceasefire at an April 4 meeting with Min Aung Hlaing in Bangkok.¹⁰⁶

During another meeting with Min Aung Hlaing in Bangkok on April 18, Malaysian Prime Minister and ASEAN chair Anwar Ibrahim also implored that the junta comply with the ceasefire, though a later military regime press statement did not acknowledge the plea.¹⁰⁷ The regime made no move to extend the purported ceasefire, which expired on April 22,¹⁰⁸ despite continuing calls for peace from Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.¹⁰⁹

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- ³ *Id.*
- ⁴ The Irrawaddy, April 3, 2025: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-airstrikes-breach-quake-ceasefire.html>.
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- ⁶ *Id.*
- ⁷ *Id.*
- ⁸ The Irrawaddy, April 4, 2025: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-troops-rampaging-near-bagan-despite-disaster-truce.html>.
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- ¹⁰ The Irrawaddy, April 10, 2025: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/war-against-the-junta/myanmar-junta-airstrikes-kill-over-30.html>.
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- ¹² *Id.*
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- ¹⁴ The Irrawaddy, April 17, 2025: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/23-civilians-killed-in-myanmar-junta-airstrikes-over-thingyan.html>.
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- ²⁶ *Id.*
- ²⁷ *Id.*
- ²⁸ *Id.*
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- ³² UN News, April 10, 2025: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/04/1162111>.
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- ³⁴ Al Jazeera, April 11, 2025: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/11/un-denounces-myanmar-military-government-attacks-despite-post-quake-truce>.
- ³⁵ *Id.*
- ³⁶ The Irrawaddy, April 18, 2025: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/asia/asean-chair-urges-myanmar-junta-to-honor-quake-truce.html>.
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- ⁴⁴ Mizzima, April 30, 2025: <https://eng.mizzima.com/2025/04/30/21869>.
- ⁴⁵ *Id.*

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- ¹⁰⁰ *Id.*
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