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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Written statement submitted by Human Rights Now, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status*

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[17 August 2026]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

Since its Sham Election, Myanmar's Military Continues to Commit Mass Violations and Violence Against its Civilian Population

Following the Myanmar military's sham election held last December and January, which extended its illegitimate rule begun by its February 2021 coup five years ago, the military has continued mass human rights violations and military strikes against civilians, mass arbitrary arrests and physical and sexual violence against detained persons, and restrictions on aid that have created a humanitarian catastrophe for millions of displaced people. Human Rights Now (HRN) calls on the military to end the conflict and aid restrictions, free all arbitrarily detained persons, and restore democratic rule in Myanmar. We further call on the international community to increase pressure on Myanmar's military to meet its obligations through sanctions and arms embargoes and to greatly expand its aid contributions.

1. The Current Situation in Myanmar

Myanmar's sham general election between December 2025 and January 2026 resulted in an illegitimate legislative majority for the military party and former Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing claiming the presidency in April 2026, after he had already illegitimately served as leader following the 2021 coup. This was despite independent election observers finding that it was a sham election due to the dissolution of major opposition parties and jailing of their members, heavy restrictions placed on the press, coercive measures for voting, over 20% of townships being excluded due to conflict, and other fatal problems.[1] Only a few countries have recognized the military's rule. Currently the military is attempting to bolster its legitimacy by meeting with its regional neighbors despite dismissing the ASEAN Five Point Consensus.[2] Min Aung Hlaing has also proposed amending the 2008 Constitution to further consolidate illegitimate military rule.[3] Meanwhile, the military's violations against civilians have only increased over the last year, emphasizing its illegitimacy.

2. Civil and Political Rights Violations

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, the military has arbitrarily arrested over 31,759 political prisoners since the 2021 coup, with at least 14,694 remaining detained.[4] And according to the recent Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar's report (IIMM report), they face horrific conditions including systematic torture, sexual violence, denied medical care, and other abuses.[5] More than 200 people were arrested before the December election under the 2025 election protection law, which criminalized peaceful criticism of the election with sentences up to 20 years, a flagrant violation of freedom of expression, and it even has the death penalty for election disruptions.[6] In July 2026, eight activists were sentenced to 37 years under the law and the counterterrorism law, and a ninth to 27 years under the counterterrorism law, for their involvement in a protest calling for an election boycott.[7] Key opposition leaders including NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi remain imprisoned.

3. Status of Armed Conflict and Continuing Attacks on Civilians

Despite the military's attempt to change its image by its sham transition to civilian government, it has accelerated military attacks on civilians over the last year. The IIMM report documented that in a six-month window alone (August 2025 to January 2026), at least 702 civilians—including 224 women and 153 children—were killed by the military.[8] Between 27 March and 2 April 2026, the military launched at least 24 distinct airstrike attacks across 18 townships in seven regions, resulting in 22 civilian deaths and 43 injuries.[9] One strike against civilians gathered in front of a school in Chaung-U, Sagaing, last October killed 23 people, including four children, and wounded more than 60.[10] In total, more than 8,200 civilians have been killed by the military since the coup.[11]

The military predominantly kills by aerial attacks, which have targeted “homes, schools, medical facilities, religious buildings and camps for internally displaced persons, causing deaths, injuries and destruction”; they increasingly use paramotors and drones that can fly silently, giving civilians no time to flee or seek shelter; and they continue widespread deployment of internationally banned antipersonnel landmines and domestically manufactured cluster munitions.[12] In 2025, 745 people were killed or injured by landmines, a quarter of them children.[13] The military also continues to practice forced conscription, including through nighttime raids and abductions, and there has been a severe increase in the recruitment of child soldiers, who are forcibly deployed to active frontlines and utilized as “human shields.”[14]

4. Humanitarian Catastrophe and Obstruction of Relief

The continuing conflict and the military’s intentional obstructions have sustained an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Over 3.6 million people are internally displaced, with more than 15 million facing acute food insecurity.[15] Over 3 million people were forced to flee their homes in a recent six-month period alone due to expanding combat zones, as rebel controlled areas are overcome by Myanmar’s military bolstered by forced conscripts.[16] The military intentionally blocks humanitarian access to conflict-affected regions and IDP encampments at the same time as the international community has dramatically cut aid contributions.[17] It lays landmines in abandoned villages to prevent IDPs returning.[18] In March 2025, following the catastrophic M7.7 earthquake, the military violated its own ceasefire by continuing air bombardments on resistance areas, deliberately preventing emergency medical supplies and food from reaching survivors.[19]

The deliberate destruction of medical infrastructure and blockades on fuel, electricity, and pharmaceuticals have caused a near-total breakdown of public healthcare, leading to, among other health crises, severe maternal mortality risks and a complete lack of reproductive healthcare for women in IDP camps.[20]

Ethnic groups remain particularly vulnerable to deprivations. Intense fighting in Rakhine State has driven over 150,000 Rohingya to flee across the border into Bangladesh since late 2023, where they face horrific conditions, extortion, and forced recruitment from both Myanmar’s military and other armed groups.[21] This has led many to attempt to flee to Malaysia by boat, with nearly 900 being reported dead or missing in 2025 by the trip, the highest mortality rate for refugee or migrant sea journeys in the world.[22] Notably Myanmar military officials have rejected recent reports that they would accept Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh or Malaysia, clarifying that a repatriation program is “focused solely on verified Myanmar nationals currently held in detention centers in Malaysia.”[23]

The collapse of governance has enabled a surge in illegal activity, turning regions of Myanmar into hubs for online scam centers, human trafficking, and synthetic drug production.[24] In Kachin and Shan States, unregulated rare-earth mining by unregulated entities has caused catastrophic environmental degradation, leaking toxic heavy metals and chemicals into local river networks.[25]

5. Failures by the International Community

Despite five years of illegitimate rule after a coup, a sham election, flagrant crimes against humanity and other grave violations against civilians, and a humanitarian catastrophe, the response by the international community has been grossly insufficient and has only gotten worse since the election.

Major donor countries have reduced aid, with one of the largest donors, the United States, virtually ending aid altogether in February 2025.[26] Despite the military’s total non-compliance with ASEAN’s Five-Point Consensus and UN Security Council Resolution 2669, including Min Aung Hlaing’s July 31 speech directly dismissing the ASEAN plan,[27] recent regional moves—including a series of regional trips to Thailand, China,

India, and Laos for "calibrated re-engagement", junta minister Than Swe being invited to informal ASEAN meetings in mid-2026, and ongoing discussion occurring for full re-engagement of Myanmar at the November 2026 ASEAN Summit—signal an alarming drift towards normalization and legitimization of the military's illegitimate rule.[28]

6. Calls to Action

HRN condemns the continuing mass violations that Myanmar's military commits against its civilian population and offers the following calls to action.

We call Myanmar's military to:

- Restore the 2020 democratically elected government of Myanmar;
- End all military actions and forced conscription;
- End attacks on civilians and allow unhindered humanitarian access;
- Release all arbitrarily detained persons, and end executions and abuses of detained persons;
- Repeal abusive laws, including the election protection law.

We call on the international community to:

- Reject the election results as illegitimate;
- Maintain targeted sanctions and embargoes on the military, including embargoes on weapons and jet fuel;
- Significantly expand humanitarian aid to Myanmar.

[1] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/01/illegitimate-elections-yield-illegitimate-results-un-expert-urges-rejection>

[2] <https://thediplomat.com/2026/08/reclaiming-the-backyard-aseans-realpolitik-push-on-myanmar/>

[3] <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/recasting-power-amending-the-2008-constitution/>

[4] <https://aappb.org/>

[5] <https://iimm.un.org/en/myanmar-mechanism-investigations-reveal-deliberate-attacks-civilians-myanmar-military-annual-report>

[6] <https://apnews.com/article/myanmar-military-elections-law-charges-opposition-ee991c57011f5bb2455675cf70554245>

[7] <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/7/29/myanmar-court-sentences-activists-to-37-years-over-election-protest>

[8] <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/06/1167777>

[9] Id.

[10] <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cnv97e42r7yo>

[11] AAPP, *supra*, note 4.

[12] Id.; <https://apnews.com/article/iimm-myanmar-airstrikes-arrest-civil-war-cf48f831f4f67dc422d01d08d12587d0>

[13] <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c20y6966xqzo>

[14] <https://www.bhrn.org.uk/en/report/monthly-reports/summary-of-monthly-situation/1298-jun-2025-summary-of-monthly-situation-update.html>

[15] <https://www.unocha.org/myanmar>

[16] IIMM Report, *supra*, note 5; BBC, *supra*, note 13.

[17] UN, *supra*, note 8.

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- [25] <https://globalwitness.org/en/press-releases/new-investigation-reveals-the-alarming-expansion-of-heavy-rare-earth-mining-in-myanmar-and-the-devastating-cost-for-communities-and-the-environment/>
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- [27] <https://apnews.com/article/myanmar-president-100-day-speech-road-map-asean-211a4ad2293462dbda35e86025a04881>
- [28] <https://apnews.com/article/thailand-myanmar-asean-min-aung-hlaing-40b15f180969717a7260e7093fa1d6fb>; <https://thediplomat.com/2026/08/reclaiming-the-backyard-aseans-realpolitik-push-on-myanmar/>