

Advance unedited version

Distr.: General
2614 May 2025

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Fifty-ninth session

16 June – 11 July 2025

Agenda items 2 and 4

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

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Situation of human rights in Myanmar

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

This report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 55/20, in which the Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to, inter alia, monitor and assess the overall situation of human rights in Myanmar and report on pathways to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Myanmar for human rights protection, accountability, democracy and a civilian government. This report, based on extensive consultations, highlights the main pathways towards achieving this vision and identifies key constituencies that are working for change on the ground.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 55/20, the Human Rights Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor and assess the overall situation of human rights in Myanmar and submit to the Human Rights Council, at its fifty-ninth session, a comprehensive report thereon, including on pathways to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Myanmar for human rights protection, accountability, democracy and a civilian government.
2. This report builds on the observations made by the High Commissioner at the fifty-fifth session of the Human Rights Council on the need for a “visioning exercise” encapsulating the aspirations of Myanmar people, particularly youth.
3. The report provides an overview of the dire human rights situation, including the political economy that enables the Myanmar military (the military) in its repression, and the widening regional impacts of the situation in Myanmar. The report subsequently highlights some of the key constituencies that are striving to promote positive changes and build a peaceful, sustainable, democratic, and diverse Myanmar grounded in human rights. Drawing on the information gathered through extensive consultations with diverse sections of Myanmar society, the report identifies four main pathways towards achieving this vision – accountability, good governance, sustainable development, and actions by international and regional stakeholders – and provides positive examples that are already underway or emerging.
4. Finally, the report presents recommendations on actionable measures to tackle the root causes of the crisis, including unchecked political and economic military power, impunity, instrumentalization of laws and institutions, and an overall system based on racial discrimination and division. It details how Member States, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), can support the free and effective participation of the Myanmar people in building a new future for the country in which their rights are protected and respected.
5. At the time of writing, Myanmar has been devastated by a catastrophic earthquake which occurred on 28 March 2025, impacting the central regions, particularly in Mandalay and Sagaing. Thousands have died and the destruction of properties and infrastructures is widespread. In the period following the earthquake, the military continued its restrictive control of humanitarian access to affected areas, and despite declared ceasefires announced by the military and anti-military armed groups, military operations continued, inflicting further suffering on the civilian population. The High Commissioner expresses the utmost solidarity with the people of Myanmar and reiterates that responses must uphold human rights principles and address the needs of the civilian population without discrimination.¹

II. Methodology

6. To gather views and recommendations, between September 2024 and March 2025, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) carried out 126 in-person and online consultations across the country, with 36 groups and 391 people, including at least 176 women. The consultations built upon the interviews conducted with hundreds of victims and witnesses of human rights violations in Myanmar that have been reflected in previous reports.²
7. Participants in the consultations covered a wide representation of the Myanmar society, including village leaders, students, lawyers, artists, teachers, displaced persons, political prisoners, military defectors, and humanitarian, health, and media workers. Consultations also involved representatives of civil society organisations, including human rights defenders, women’s rights and LGBTQI+ persons and organizations, environmental

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/04/myanmar-military-actions-compound-dire-humanitarian-situation-aftermath>

² <https://bangkok.ohchr.org/myanmar/>

researchers, members of the Civil Disobedience Movement, and trade unionists, among others. These consultations cut across Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, and Hindu religious communities, and representatives of other ethnic, linguistic and religious groups, including the Kuki, Lisu, Pa-O, and Rohingya communities.

8. OHCHR submitted questionnaires to other duty-bearers, including the Permanent Missions in Geneva and New York affiliated with the military and National Unity Government respectively. Views were also gathered from Myanmar political entities, including committees of the National Unity Consultative Council, representatives of local governance structures, and anti-military armed groups and several Ethnic Armed Organisations. OHCHR also consulted with United Nations entities, received written contributions from think-tanks, analysts, and thematic experts, and undertook extensive desk reviews of laws, policies, reports, and data from local and international organizations.

III. The current human rights context and political economy of Myanmar

9. In 2011 Myanmar had initiated a democratic transition that led to landslide victories for the National League for Democracy during the 2015 and 2020 elections confirming the aspirations of the Myanmar people for a fully democratic system. However, in February 2021, this democratic transition ended abruptly after the military launched a coup. Ever since, a human rights crisis marked by violence and atrocities has affected every single aspect of life in Myanmar. According to credible sources,³ as of 31 March 2025, at least 6,473 civilians have been killed at the hands of the military, including 1,487 women and 748 children. Some 28,961 have been arrested, 22,165 remain detained, and 172 were sentenced to death by military-controlled courts that do not ensure any respect of judicial guarantees and fair trial rights.⁴ Violence has displaced over 3.5 million people, and nearly 20 million are in need of assistance⁵ while the military has persistently denied humanitarian access, even during natural disasters and the recent earthquake.⁶ Estimates suggest that over 1.5 million people have sought safety by crossing over international borders or by sea, through both regular and irregular channels, creating further regional human rights and humanitarian challenges.⁷ The crisis has made the management of other transnational problems more difficult, including health concerns related to cholera or other transmissible illnesses,⁸ transboundary environmental harm, and disaster management.

10. Since the last comprehensive report,⁹ anti-military armed groups made significant advances gaining control over large swathes of territory. Military retaliation came regularly in the form of airstrikes and artillery shelling on populated areas, killing more civilians in 2024 than in previous years. Fighting was particularly intense in Rakhine, where the Arakan Army took control of the regional military headquarters and numerous bases, obtaining almost full control of the State. Rohingya civilians were caught between the military and the Arakan Army, regularly facing killings, disappearances, mutilations, arbitrary arrests, torture, destruction of villages, and widespread displacement. There are also reports of involvement of Rohingya armed groups and armed elements in hostilities. At the time of writing, conditions remain unconducive for safe and sustainable returns of Rohingya to Rakhine.

11. Myanmar has also been engulfed in a profound economic crisis further exacerbating the negative impacts of conflict, both nationally and regionally. Comparative performance analysis showcased massive economic losses and the diversion of resources away from

³ <https://aappb.org/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1275/document/myanmar-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025>

⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-earthquake-flash-update-2-31-march-2025>

⁷ <https://thailand.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11371/files/documents/2024-10/overview-of-myanmar-nationals-in-thailand-october-24.pdf>

⁸ <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-health-cluster-bulletin-february-2025>

⁹ A/HRC/56/23

development.¹⁰ Gross domestic product estimates suggest a 93.9 billion United States dollar loss since the coup,¹¹ with recovery to pre-pandemic level not expected before 2028.¹² Inflation rose sharply with expectation of further increases to 30 percent in 2024-2025, and the Kyat depreciated 40 percent compared to the United States dollar. Foreign direct investment commitments decreased, with data showing a 50 percent contraction in the first half of 2024 compared to 2023. Military spending was prioritized over investments in civilian infrastructure and services, and public debt has increased to 62 percent in 2024/2025. Over half of the population now lives below the poverty-line, experiencing rampant food insecurity.¹³ Commodity prices, including of rice, vegetables, edible oils, fish, meat, and beans, significantly increased, up to 30 percent on average nationally in the past year.¹⁴ Additionally, import restrictions on essential goods, such as cooking oil, medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, seeds, and fertilizers, have had a detrimental impact on a population already battered by poverty.

12. Underpinning the economic crisis is the military's control of the central bank and state-owned enterprises including the extractive sector. While targeted international sanctions have slowed some military revenue streams, these institutions remained key sources of revenue, sustaining the military's attempts to consolidate control. Additionally, financial measures enabling continued military spending, such as import substitution, foreign exchange controls, forced conversion and taxation of remittances at an artificial rate favouring the military, and a crackdown on informal money transfers, further enriched the military and impoverished the civilian population.¹⁵

13. Under the military, illicit economies thrived, far outpacing the formal economy. Since 2023, Myanmar has remained the world's largest producer of opium and synthetic drugs.¹⁶ It has become a major hub for transnational criminal activities, including online scamming operations, human trafficking, forced labour, other modern forms of slavery, and unregulated and illegal exploitation of natural resources. Neighbouring countries suffered the impacts with an ever-increasing number of their citizens falling prey to scammers and their territories becoming staging grounds for further illicit activities. Under military rule, regional crime groups have exploited the lack of rule of law, expanding their influence and control.¹⁷

14. Economic crisis has had broader negative international economic effects, particularly in the region, including disruptions in cross-border trade and investments, supply chains, and inflationary pressure. Estimates indicate that the region also bears the opportunity costs of the coup, with a combined potential loss in gross domestic product of neighbouring countries estimated to be 162.4 billion United States dollars between 2022 and 2026.¹⁸ The crisis has made management of other transnational problems more difficult, including health concerns related to cholera or other transmissible illnesses,¹⁹ transboundary environmental harm, and disaster management.

IV. Constituencies for change

15. Amidst this military-created crisis, there have been some positive developments, not least the emergence of constituencies for change that have shown steadfast courage and resilience despite military violence while advocating for new and transformative visions of the future. As in previous decades of military rule, grassroots and civil society organizations

¹⁰ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/myanmar/publication/myanmar-economic-monitor-reports>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ <https://www.wfp.org/news/myanmar-brink-conflict-fuels-hunger>.

¹⁵ <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SAC-M-The-Military-Money-Myanmar-ENGLISH.pdf>.

¹⁶ https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Myanmar/Myanmar_Opium_Survey_2024.pdf.

¹⁷ <https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2023/INTERPOL-issues-global-warning-on-human-trafficking-fueled-fraud>.

¹⁸ <https://www.priceofwar.org/#/simulation/10000/MMR/2022>.

¹⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-health-cluster-bulletin-february-2025>

have continued to support the Myanmar people in countering military repression. Religious institutions and community-based organizations have sought to fill gaps left by failing state services, such as health and education. Human rights defenders and civil society have maintained attention on violations through strengthened cooperation with regional and international advocacy networks. In longstanding conflicts in Myanmar's border regions, Ethnic Armed Organisations have enabled varying forms of local administration and systems to assist those in need. Over the past decade, and particularly since the 2021 coup, a new generation of human rights defenders has emerged, promoting new thinking on identity, human rights, economy, and environment through innovative use of communication and new technologies, and inspired by Myanmar's history of gradual but fragile opening and democratization.

16. Meanwhile, different political actors and ethnic organizations have begun embracing new ideas, shaped by their experience in local governance, democracy, and military-led peace negotiations. This has included a growing recognition of past mistakes and unrealized opportunities, the importance of partnership with civil society, the nature and scale of past human rights violations, the need for genuine accountability, and a vision inclusive of all ethnic communities. Changing narratives on the Rohingya acknowledging their being part of Myanmar and recognizing the need for profound legal reforms including laws on citizenship, race and religion, have been encouraging.

17. The following sections identify some of the key constituencies that are creating the conditions for Myanmar's inclusive and democratic future. These "constituents for change" have made enormous sacrifices and commitments, individually and collectively, to preserve civic space and advance democracy and human rights. They provide a shining example of hope for what a peaceful and democratic future can become.

1. Women

18. Women from diverse communities and backgrounds, including urban and rural communities, grassroots activists, academics, industry workers, doctors, nurses, teachers, politicians and advocates, have been at the forefront of pro-democracy campaigns, in living fulfilment of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.²⁰ They have staged various forms of protest to express peaceful dissent. More than 4,200 women²¹ remain deprived of liberty for their opposition to military rule, with widespread and systematic reports of sexual violence in detention.

19. Building on existing networks, women's groups, organizations and networks have been critical in ensuring that the civilian population could receive life-saving assistance, access to healthcare, essential services, and economic opportunities despite enormous constraints and personal security risks. Women's groups continued to be a key resource for the civilian population to alleviate their suffering, providing conflict-affected communities with food, water, medicine, hygiene kits, and mental health assistance. They supported families of political prisoners and participants in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Women's groups have also been key in documenting and reporting on human rights violations and acting as key resources for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic and intimate partner violence.

20. Although women in Myanmar have played key societal and political roles for decades, the coup brought forward a more concrete realization of the need to change the patriarchal fabric of Myanmar and promote women to leadership roles. Breaking barriers as fighters, drone operators, and medics at the frontline, women have rejected patriarchal norms, challenged exclusion, and advocated against maintenance of traditional gender roles, including through effective mechanisms to prevent and address violence.

21. Women also rose up demanding inclusion in decision-making and representation in new governance charters and systems, propelling bottom-up, inclusive, local governance mechanisms. In Kayah, for example, women have played a pivotal role in the formation of the Karenni Interim Executive Council, as underscored by the election in June 2023 of the

²⁰ <https://dppa.un.org/en/women-peace-and-security>

²¹ <https://aappb.org/>

second Joint General Secretary of the Burmese Women's Union as First Secretary of the Supreme Council. Paving the way for further inclusion of women, the Interim Arrangement reestablishing the foundations of Kayah State provides for a minimum of 30 percent women's representation in public administration.

2. Youth

22. The group most affected by the military coup has been the youth of Myanmar, individuals aged between 18 and 35 years old. They came of age when Myanmar was experiencing political and economic opening and rapid social change, which was brutally interrupted by the military coup. Once the peaceful expression of dissent became too dangerous, many young people left family, education, and employment behind and joined armed resistance with little or no training or equipment. Military violence, killings, arrests, torture, disappearances, conscription and forced recruitment, restrictions on movements and access to online information, and displacement within and outside Myanmar, have disproportionately impacted the younger generation. Loss of educational and livelihood opportunities will have longer term generational impacts, exacerbating poverty and instability.

23. Meanwhile, youth have played key roles including establishing alert and reporting networks for protection, humanitarian purposes, and supporting communities in resisting unlawful evictions and addressing mining-related environmental impacts. Youth have also contributed to the formation and development of local governance structures, including by providing financial support and expertise from abroad. Politically, this youth generation is shaping a new vision for Myanmar by overcoming racial barriers, challenging norms of gender identity, and empowering each other through advocacy and political participation. Looking ahead, youth remain the single most precious resource of Myanmar, and every effort must be made to sustain and harness their energy and secure their life opportunities.

3. Civil society organizations and grassroots networks

24. Despite limited resources, crippling financial cuts, challenges in receiving funds, and the direct dangers posed by the military, local organizations and community-led initiatives have contributed massively to strengthening resilience and saving lives by stepping forward to effectively address humanitarian, health, education, food, hygiene, and shelter needs of the violence-affected population, including in the aftermath of natural disasters such as the recent earthquake. As previously highlighted,²² persons with disabilities and organizations working on protecting their rights, including on mental health, will continue to have vital roles to address the massive needs caused by military violence.

25. Civil society organizations have also continued to play an essential role in building trust among communities and promoting social cohesion, by undertaking advocacy, documenting and reporting on human rights violations and abuses, and countering disinformation and military propaganda. They have also assumed the role of intermediaries between international actors and local communities and have been instrumental in grounding emerging governance systems in human rights. Civil society voices, from the grassroots to policy makers, must therefore be heard and included in decision-making while rebuilding Myanmar.

4. Pro-democracy actors

26. Resolute rejection of military rule was clearly expressed by civil servants from across public institutions who resigned *en masse* to join the Civil Disobedience Movement. Sacrificing their jobs, homes, and life security, many protested against the military seizure of power and are now helping organize alternative governance mechanisms. Others with specialised skills, including doctors, lawyers, teachers, and engineers, have applied their knowledge and expertise in areas outside military control. Trade unionists have been forced underground, but continued advocacy and support for Myanmar workers and maintained links with international trade union networks.

²² https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024-10/a_hrc_57_56_auv-1.pdf

27. The Federal Democratic Charter, proclaimed in March 2021,²³ has provided a common framework for the democratic movement and created the basis for institutions, such as the National Unity Government or the National Unity Consultative Council. The latter represents a positive example of civilian and military actors cooperating toward the development of democratic institutions, although additional efforts are needed to ensure effective representation and participation of diverse communities.

5. Media

28. Without the courageous work of those working to shine a spotlight on the situation inside Myanmar, the crisis could have been forgotten. This includes human rights defenders, documenters, journalists, photographers, social media professionals, editors, and all media workers. Since the coup, 15 media outlets were shut down,²⁴ 193 media workers arrested, of whom at least 57 remain languishing in detention,²⁵ and many journalists, including women and professionals from ethnic communities, forced to relocate abroad. At great personal risk, and despite restrictions, internet shutdowns, and surveillance, the media in Myanmar continued to provide communities with life-saving information, including during natural disasters. Independent media's reporting on violations and abuses committed by all parties has laid the basis for future accountability.

29. In shaping post-crisis Myanmar, a robust civic space with independent media will be of primary importance to democracy, transparency and accountability at all levels. Media contributions will be essential to overcome military-imposed narratives fostering ethnic and religious divisions, discord, and discrimination, while promoting rights, equality, and inclusion. Strong independent media will strengthen democracy and justice, promote reconciliation, and play an important role in healing society from decades of military-controlled disinformation.

V. Pathways to change

30. In the following section, ideas and recommendations gathered through OHCHR's consultations on key pathways to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Myanmar, are summarized under four broad pathways: accountability, governance, development, and international and regional action.

1. Accountability

31. Having suffered decades of military violations, interlocutors resoundingly anchored their vision for future democratic transformation of Myanmar around accountability and justice. As impunity has characterized military rule, interlocutors unanimously underscored that peace requires accountability and reconciliation. Freeing all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, was consistently indicated as necessary. Interlocutors adamantly stressed that perpetrators from all sides must be brought to justice and emphasized the importance of criminal accountability, whether through domestic, international, or hybrid legal systems. Progress at the international level took the form of an application for an arrest warrant in November 2024 by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court,²⁶ now pending before the Pre-Trial Chamber, and the conclusion of written proceedings in the contentious proceedings in the International Court of Justice between The Gambia and Myanmar. Further, a court in Argentina²⁷ issued arrest warrants under the principles of universal jurisdiction. Many interlocutors called for broader and more incisive efforts, including the referral of the entire situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court.

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<https://mofua.nugmyanmar.org/uploads/publications/WmSsxrT486Vd6jGq2o6CJ7XzUL7mAXp32rGrAGoq.pdf>

²⁴ <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/myanmars-internet-freedom-and-press-freedom-worsen>

²⁵ <https://aappb.org/>

²⁶ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/bangladesh-myanmar>.

²⁷ <https://legalactionworldwide.org/accountability-rule-of-law/argentina-court-issues-arrest-warrants-for-genocide-and-crimes-against-humanity-committed-against-the-rohingya-community/>.

32. Interlocutors highlighted human rights defenders, anti-military armed groups, and pro-democratic actors are already seeking knowledge and further resources to lay the foundation for transitional justice initiatives. While developing comprehensive transitional justice processes may require time, it is clear there is increasing openness within Myanmar's society to truth-telling, recognition of crimes, including past violations against ethnic groups such as Rohingya, Rakhine, Kachin, Chin, and Karen, and developing new narratives free of ethnic chauvinism. Interlocutors also emphasised the compelling needs for reparation, return to places of origin, respect for cultural rights, including minority language rights, and an end to discrimination as key guarantees of non-recurrence. These processes will need to be Myanmar-owned and led and ensure full inclusion of victims and all communities.

33. Former political prisoners emphasized the role of the judiciary itself in human rights violations, with judges systematically failing to exercise independent authority, sentencing individuals without evidence, and imposing imprisonment to tens of thousands. During consultations, lawyers unanimously denounced the judicial system as having become entirely subsumed by the military, where defence counsel have to work under a constant fear of being arrested and in the absence of any fair trial guarantees. Hence, following the end of the crisis, it will be paramount to ensure to reconstitution of a judiciary based on the principles of human rights and rule of law.²⁸ Pathways toward judicial independence will require cultural and institutional changes, with new laws, full vetting of judicial actors, recruitment of new professionals, representation of diversity, and procedures required to ensure the fair administration of justice in accordance with international standards.

34. While the National Unity Government has taken steps towards accountability, including establishing a complaints mechanism for human rights violations committed by its combatants and administrators, OHCHR regularly received calls for enhanced efforts toward transparency across all sectors and levels of government. Interlocutors shared concerns related to collection and distribution of revenues, status of court proceedings and complaints of human rights violations, sexual and gender-based violence, and decision-making on political appointments. Anti-military armed groups have also been responsible for abuses including forced recruitment, arrests, killings, extortions, gender-based violence, and the imposition of limitations on the rights of other minority communities, including on freedom of movement.²⁹ As duty-bearers, they must fully uphold their human rights obligations and their actions must be directed at supporting civilian institutions in enhancing protection of civilians and meeting the essential needs of the population in their areas of control.

2. Good Governance

35. Interlocutors across all demographics highlighted the Myanmar people's continued aspiration for a civilian-led, federal democratic society based on strong local institutions with representatives elected in free and fair electoral processes. These institutions should be transparent and based on inclusiveness, respect for diversity, equality, and human rights. Interlocutors emphasized this would require a profound transformation in state structures, with some calling for the complete dismantling of the current system and establishment of a fully civilian government without decision-making roles for the military or armed actors.

36. Broad and meaningful public consultations to inform the drafting processes of a federal constitution, along with State and Regional constitutions granting local autonomy and rights, are generally considered as foundational steps toward democratic progress. Legal professionals also stressed the need for comprehensive legislative review processes to enhance compliance with human rights obligations, particularly removing decades-long discriminatory approaches based on race, religion and sex, including the 1982 Citizenship Law which detrimentally impacted the Rohingya and other minority communities. They highlighted the need to end practices of instrumentalization of laws, for example on defamation, to silence dissenting opinions.

37. All interlocutors stressed that any future governance system must promote and protect civic space and fundamental freedoms as essential components for accountability and democracy. Media, human rights groups, women's groups, student unions, and strike

²⁸ A/HRC/57/56.

²⁹ https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025-02/AnnualUpdateontheHumanRightsSituationinMyanmar2024v.final_.pdf

committees among others, are essential actors to hold duty bearers, including armed groups, accountable. Interlocutors stressed the importance of peaceful protests in holding duty-bearers to account, including for environmental protection and natural resources management.

38. Many of those consulted identified the long-standing top-down and centralized system of governance as a key aspect that has fostered instability. Therefore, many favoured a bottom-up approach with emphasis on decentralization and local autonomy. Although some interlocutors expressed concerns that this could result in further fragmentation and even violence, others recognized that the realization of democratic aspirations will require time, significant international assistance, and adaptability. As evidence, they stressed that Myanmar's ethnic states have had a long history of political organization and capacities developed over decades of responding to the needs of their communities due to the military's violence and repression.

39. The following examples highlight some of the emerging forms of governance at the local level, which represent promising possibilities for the future. Some are highly decentralized, emphasizing community governance, while others prioritize stronger hierarchies with more centralized decision-making. In general, they are focussed on basic service delivery including education and healthcare, with some introducing multilingual learning, ethnic-based curricula, and health services improvements. Some have set up legal systems and specialized institutions, such as judiciary and police, while others have promoted localised economic activities, such as trade and agriculture.

40. In some areas under its control, the National Unity Government reported having established administration structures focused on law enforcement, justice, education, and healthcare, emphasizing a firm commitment to principles of inclusiveness and transparency. Courts reportedly functioned under civilian control, processing 788 criminal and 350 civil cases in 2024. In the health sector, 106 hospitals, and 808 fixed and 192 mobile clinics were reported as operational in 2024, offering emergency and long-term treatments. Basic education is reportedly offered to over 800,000 students in 5,700 schools employing more than 62,000 teachers. In the higher education sector, degree courses are being offered under 198 interim university councils. However, consultations with students and researchers revealed that, to date, National Unity Government-issued educational certifications are often not recognized abroad, hampering opportunities for further learning and employment.

41. As previously reported,³⁰ the Karenni Interim Executive Council has developed a collective leadership model, where seven political, military, and civilian leaders, including two women, share executive functions. Governance is structured into ten departments, each led by three to four leaders, with representatives from Ethnic Armed Organizations, civil servants, members of parliament, and activists. By reorganizing and extending administration to 16 townships, the Council reportedly was able to provide healthcare services through over 100 clinics in towns and villages. It also stated that it has local judicial systems with nine courts, ensuring civilian-led justice, and a reformed police, with over a dozen police stations committed to democratic policing principles.

42. The Palaung State Liberation Front, the political wing of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, reported that it strived to establish governance and administrative structures in recently acquired territories in Shan and Mandalay. They established a centralized administration with 13 departments, including defence, health, education, revenue, judiciary, and economic development. Women and youth were reportedly more prominently involved in public administration, with 80 percent of staff in education and health sectors being youth and 40 percent women. Women accounted for nearly half of the participants in the basic police training programme, showing the progress possible towards gender equality in the security sector. They organized a judiciary system with four district courts and twelve township courts handling criminal, narcotics, and civil cases. Since the coup, the Palaung State Liberation Front reportedly sought to expand education access, increasing the number of schools from 374 in 2022 to over 650 by 2024, with plans to open

³⁰ A/HRC/56/23

a total of 700 schools. However, concerns were shared as education in Ta'ang language is the only available option.

43. In Chin, the Chinland Council established highly decentralized structures, with 18 local governments across 900 villages, based on localized decision-making involving women, youth, and ethnic communities. These structures reportedly deal with education, health, judiciary, law enforcement, and economic development, and apply laws on taxation, civil society, and the judiciary. Based on their Education Strategic Plan, education is reportedly being delivered to over 60,000 students in over 600 schools, employing 4,000 teachers with plans to launch the Chin National University in 2025. In healthcare, the Council aims at achieving universal health coverage by operating 18 hospitals, over 50 primary health centres, and 12 mobile medical teams providing services in remote areas.

44. In Mon, the New Mon State Party has organized local structures into three main departments: political, administrative and military, covering three districts and eleven townships, with direct governance over special administrative regions. Judicial structures grew from community-based mechanisms to address disputes to handle local civil and criminal cases. Significant progress was reported in education, healthcare, and administration of justice, with 143 Mon national schools serving over 14,000 students, and employing over 900 teachers, while seeking to provide multilingual education in Mon, Burmese, and English. Interlocutors identified challenges for students and graduates with the validity of degrees from non-accredited schools and universities. Healthcare coverage was reportedly provided to over 118,000 people across 157 villages, with doctors, nurses, and field supervisors delivering primary healthcare, vaccinations, and maternal health services.

45. Economic instability, lack of investments to strengthen and repair infrastructure, and limited taxation capacities were identified during consultations as additional barriers to the sustainable provision of public services, and economic and social development. In many cases, these structures are affiliated with or dependent on non-state armed groups which have also committed human rights abuses, including forced recruitment and extortion, or are sometimes involved in illicit economies and resource extraction. It will therefore be important to ensure the civilian character and authority of these structures in relation to armed groups that control the territory in which they have been established, and to ensure they are held accountable for their human rights obligations.

3. Sustainable Development

46. Over decades, military domination and exploitation of the economy and natural resources concentrated wealth in a very small segment of the population – namely the military itself and its patronage networks. This dominion has been exerted through institutional controls, expropriation of land and natural resources, and the entrenchment of corruption and cronyism in favour of affiliated business networks. Entrenched societal, legal, and economic discrimination against religious and ethnic communities limited their economic opportunities. Since the coup, the military prioritized a war economy, structured around extraction, production, and allocation of resources to support military efforts over infrastructural and economic development.

47. Interlocutors stressed that pathways to democracy will require a radical departure from this predatory form of economy towards a people-centred approach based on policies aligning with human rights obligations prioritizing equality, social justice, and sustainable development. This would require investments in infrastructure, education, health, and social protection, and the development of sustainable and inclusive policies on land and natural resources administration.

48. Priority should be given to ending the military's economic dominance. Lifting the fiscal burden of military spending, ensuring parliamentary oversight, dismantling military-controlled businesses and banks, ending all forms of forced conscription and labour, and enacting legislation preventing the military from re-engaging in business activities are some of the necessary measures to reorient the current war economy towards peaceful and sustainable economic development. Experts argued that nationalization of military-controlled conglomerates is essential, and their assets abroad could be used to fund reconstruction and development. Setting up independent anti-corruption and public finance transparency bodies would contribute to end decades of malpractices.

49. This economic transformation will require multilayered and multisectoral interventions. In reforming the banking and financial sectors, the current system will need to be restructured and recapitalized to restore public trust and ensure financial stability. Such measures would include restoring full access to consumers' bank accounts, replacing fixed foreign exchange rates with a floating rate, and lifting import restrictions. Budgetary decision-making should be under civilian, parliamentary oversight, based on consistent fiscal rules that guarantee debt sustainability. A comprehensive tax reform should be broad-based, simple and transparent, while avoiding regressive taxes, including on food and fuel, that burden the most disadvantaged. In a future context free of widespread surveillance, digital financial services should also be strengthened to increase access to the formal banking system, transparency, and accountability.

50. Just and transparent economic regulation is equally important in areas currently governed by non-state actors, with respondents underlining the critical importance of reforming taxation and natural resources management at all levels. While new duty-bearers are developing and implementing taxation policies, interlocutors emphasized a lack of consistent practices that allowed for arbitrary imposition of fees and discriminatory approaches against the most vulnerable. The nexus between non-state armed groups and the illicit and extractive economy will need to be ended.

51. Private international investors and businesses will also play a critical role in recovering from the current economic crisis. When conditions allow, investments, job creation, fair wages, and respect of workers' rights, will all support democracy while the economy flourishes. By encouraging an environment respectful of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human rights,³¹ the private sector can help transform Myanmar. In the short term, international businesses and investors must apply heightened due diligence in any transactions with Myanmar. Unionists expressed concerns about remaining foreign business operations inadvertently enabling labour exploitation in absence of freedom of association. Experts stressed that foreign investments should be contingent on respect and protection of labour rights and the ability of unions to freely operate, including by setting minimum wages commensurate with dignified living conditions, and adopting anti-discrimination policies to protect women and workers from minority communities.

52. Interlocutors also stressed the importance of enhancing environmental governance, including sustainable management of natural resources. Adopting policies and measures promoting green energy, climate-resilient agriculture, and disaster-resilient infrastructure to prevent and mitigate the negative impact of natural disasters, could also produce sustainable results for future generations.

4. International and regional actions

53. OHCHR consultations revealed consistent appreciation for actions taken by the international community, including the imposition of targeted sanctions on individuals, non-recognition of military representation in international and regional fora, calls for referral of the situation to international accountability mechanisms, and the provision of humanitarian support. However, their expectations are much higher. People felt that support they had received to sustain their democratic aspirations have not been commensurate with their sacrifices in the face of brutality. Due to perceptions of inactivity or appeasement of the military, and statements not being backed by actions, trust toward the United Nations and ASEAN is currently low, although their support is still considered vital to realizing these future goals.

54. An urgent priority would be a global arms embargo, including on jet-fuel, drones, and dual-use equipment, to hinder the military's reliance on air power and improve civilian protection. Military reliance on aerial weaponry, including use of drones and paramotors, have steadily risen over years, leading to a near doubling of civilians killed by airstrikes in 2024 compared to 2023,³² underscoring the need to continually update controls on the transfer

³¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/reference-publications/guiding-principles-business-and-human-rights>

³² https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025-02/AnnualUpdateontheHumanRightsSituationinMyanmar2024v.final_.pdf.

of such equipment. Sanctions should also apply to the military-controlled central bank, to curtail the ability of financial institutions to make and receive international payments. On the other side, fledgling financial institutions created by pro-democracy actors should be exempted from international sanctions and assistance provided for their institutional development and regulation.³³

55. There is also need to enhance international engagement and cooperation with the National Unity Government, Ethnic Armed Organizations, and other democratic actors. Challenges and divergent interests will continue to characterize the situation in Myanmar, which requires thinking beyond the traditional state/non-state binary and applying flexible, creative and adaptive approaches. Alternatives to military governance emerging in areas outside military control, as highlighted in this report, should be encouraged and supported. Efforts by civil society organizations to assist the civilian population should be acknowledged and vigorously sustained to ensure their democratic voices continue to shape the country. Small concrete steps, such as removing the mandatory registration requirement for Myanmar organizations to apply for funding opportunities or accepting to adapt to traditional money transfer mechanisms, can result in life-saving impacts. Provision of core and long-term funding with flexible reporting requirements can also produce significant impacts.

56. Violence, persecution, and risks of forced recruitment have led to tens of thousands to flee and seek protection abroad, mostly in the region, in addition to more than one million Rohingya refugees already in Bangladesh. However, interlocutors nearly unanimously indicated their intention to return home, whenever safe, to contribute to the establishment of a just and democratic society. Currently, many individuals cannot return to Myanmar or safely apply for personal documentation in military-controlled embassies due to security concerns for themselves and relatives inside the country. Repatriations can lead to violations of the non-refoulement principle as individuals are at risk of irreparable harm.³⁴ A practical way to support these individuals is the provision of valid long-term legal status with the possibility to access healthcare, education, and employment. Ensuring protection and humanitarian assistance to individuals seeking refuge and abroad is also crucial, preventing any pushbacks or refoulement.

57. This particularly applies to the Rohingya for whom the preconditions of safety, citizenship, and rights necessary for any sustainable return do not exist. Due to deepening food insecurity in Rakhine and the drastic cuts to humanitarian aid in Bangladesh, it is imperative that support is maintained and increased. ASEAN and international stakeholders should explore options for cross-border assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Rohingya. The upcoming international conference on the Rohingya at the General Assembly³⁵ should focus on new strategies to achieve comprehensive and durable solutions for the Rohingya community, both inside and outside the country.

58. In the longer term, the international community can also provide technical assistance for institutional and legal reforms, as well as critical support to transitional justice, reconciliation, and social cohesion processes. Under regional leadership, such support will be essential to a Myanmar-led political transition and institutional transformation.

VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

59. Extensive consultations conducted for this report support a resounding conclusion: the people of Myanmar have sacrificed their lives, their livelihoods and, in many respects, their futures in the name of rejecting the 2021 military's power grab and are demanding a new future. In the face of years of suffering and abuse, the vast majority of people have remained united in their defiance of military authoritarianism and violence. Once again, at a level not seen in previous decades of military rule, they are demanding genuine and inclusive democracy, civilian oversight over the military and control over the country, an end to

³³ <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SAC-M-The-Military-Money-Myanmar-ENGLISH.pdf>.

³⁴ A/HRC/57/56.

³⁵ A/RES/79/278

discrimination, federalism and autonomy at local level, and a people-centred and sustainable economy. Since 2021, those voices have only grown louder as the military coup cemented the desire for a profound change, grounded in accountability, human rights, inclusion and non-discrimination, and the rule of law, that people consider irreversible. Dismantling military-controlled institutions and economic structures are necessary preconditions for the realization and sustainability of these efforts. Examples of the emerging local administrations across the country demonstrate how people are already invested in and committed to a “bottom up” form of governance and the possibilities of decentralization and participatory decision-making.

60. Myanmar people recognize justice and accountability for past and ongoing human rights violations and abuses by all parties as central to the country’s democratic transformation. There is a growing recognition of past human rights violations and abuses, including against marginalized communities like the Rohingya. Breaking the entrenched patterns of impunity will be necessary to strengthen the rule of law, establish independent and credible State institutions, and prevent future crises.

61. Myanmar people call for a more effective and decisive approach by the international community, including through targeted sanctions, political engagement with democratic forces and emerging governance structures. They call on the international community to address immediate humanitarian needs and support those working for long-term systemic reforms through Myanmar-led processes to invest in the country’s future.

62. **In light of these findings, the High Commissioner reiterates his previous calls for a full referral of the Myanmar situation to the International Criminal Court by the Security Council and calls on the Myanmar military to:**

(a) **Respect the demands and the democratic aspirations of the Myanmar people and act to implement, in particular, the civilian oversight of the military;**

(b) **End violence perpetrated against the civilian population, including the Rohingya, and attacks on civilian objects, in line with relevant human rights obligations and international humanitarian law, and in compliance with Security Council resolution 2669 (2022) and the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice.**

(c) **Commit to fundamental security sector reforms to ensure the post-crisis military will respect human rights;**

(d) **Take all necessary measures, including removing obstacles to free movements and lifting import restrictions on goods and supplies, to guarantee that people in need receive and have access to humanitarian aid, both in-country and through cross-border assistance.**

63. **The High Commissioner further recommends that the National Unity Government and Ethnic Armed Organizations:**

(a) **Ensure that their governance structures are inclusive, participatory, transparent, non-discriminatory, and meet the demands of the people for equitable sharing of resources;**

(b) **Meticulously document human rights violations and abuses, and initiate appropriate proceedings with a view to holding perpetrators to account, breaking the cycle of impunity, impose sanctions to those found responsible commensurate to the violations and abuses committed, and providing justice and redress to victims;**

(c) **Proactively involve representatives of women, youth and ethnic communities in decision-making and leadership roles in governance structures that formulate policies and provide services to the public;**

(d) **Maintain efforts to ensure compliance of local governance structures with international human rights law, including through exchange of information and sharing of good practices;**

(e) **Hold frequent and open consultations with local communities, including minority groups such as the Rohingya, to develop a new social contract serving all the**

people of Myanmar, regardless of their ethnicity and religion, as the basis for a new Constitution and political framework;

(f) Take urgent steps to remove obstacles to safe, sustainable, and dignified return, particularly in situations of long-term displacement, such as for the Rohingya.

64. Further, the High Commissioner urges ASEAN members to:

(a) Demand the military end violence against civilians immediately, release all political prisoners, and authorize unhindered humanitarian access, including through the establishment of cross-border operations;

(b) Protect Myanmar people fleeing violence and seeking safety in the region, including by rescue-at-sea, granting international protection, providing solutions for long-term legal status, and access to fundamental services, including education, health, and employment opportunities;

(c) Ensure that procedures for the issuance of personal documents, permits to stay, residency documents, and work permits are clear, affordable, and implemented without discrimination to address legal and protection concerns of displaced Myanmar people and grant them access to public services and to employment market to sustain their lives and those of their families with dignity and rights;

(d) Undertake timely and concrete actions to allow displaced Myanmar students to access educational opportunities abroad, and for professionals, including medical doctors, teachers, legal actors, and engineers, to receive accreditation and permits to continue to work and assist members of the Myanmar community;

(e) Engage with the National Unity Government and other relevant democratic actors, including representatives of emerging local governance structures, to support the democratic aspirations of people and to contribute to the creation conditions for sustainable peace, stability, and development;

(f) Proactively implement the ASEAN Plan of Action on common concerns, including against transnational crimes and human trafficking in women and children, to strengthen compliance with human rights, promote accountability, and prevent reoccurrence of crimes.

65. Further, the High Commissioner urges Member States and the United Nations system to:

(a) Support the democratic aspirations of the people of Myanmar by exerting increasing steps to ensure the military respect and implement Security Council resolution 2669 and the relevant General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions;

(b) Ensure protection to civilians fleeing violence abroad by granting international protection, providing solutions for long-term legal status, and access to fundamental services, including education, health, and employment opportunities;

(c) Undertake timely and concrete actions to support Myanmar youth in contributing to the future democratic development of their country by providing those that have been displaced to access educational opportunities abroad, and for professionals, including medical doctors, teachers, legal actors, and engineers, to receive accreditation and permits to continue to work and assist members of the Myanmar community;

(d) Engage with new duty-bearers and democratic actors, including the National Unity Government as an essential step to advance democracy and to contribute to create and develop conditions for sustainable peace, stability, and development;

(e) Consult with civil society organizations to understand the technical, financial, humanitarian, and protection needs of the civilian population, and to co-design and implement programmes that effectively address their needs;

(f) **Plan for future necessary support to sustain the institutional transformation of Myanmar into a democracy, including by providing expert assistance on processes such as local governance, transitional justice and institution building;**

(g) **Provide critical food and non-food assistance for the Rohingya community in Myanmar and Bangladesh to ensure their survival and protection;**

(h) **Increase efforts to identify sustainable solutions for members of the Rohingya community, including resettlement to third countries, while working with democratic actors to create conditions to return voluntarily to Myanmar in safety and dignity with rights and citizenship and based on a free and informed choice.**

(i) **Ensure that the Human Rights Council and other relevant international bodies and mechanisms maintain attention on the developments in Myanmar and regularly monitor the implementation of these recommendations.**
