



Beneath the Cracks

*Devastation and Destruction by the
Junta in the Earthquake Aftermath*





Photo Credit: mmlwin

Background on the Earthquake in Burma

One month ago, on 28 March 2025, a devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck Burma and neighbouring Thailand. In an instant, lives were changed forever. Buildings buckled and fell to the ground, leaving many trapped and buried under rubble, fearing for their lives. Places of worship and religious sites were also shattered. Aftershocks [continued](#) in the weeks after the initial earthquake.

The hardest hit areas included the Sagaing and Mandalay regions. [Eighty percent](#) of the townships in Sagaing were destroyed. Recent estimates at the time of writing indicate that at least 3600 [people were killed](#) and [thousands more wounded and missing](#), with more than 17 million living in the areas affected who are in urgent need of assistance.

International and regional emergency response teams were dispatched, and even the junta made a rare [appeal](#) for humanitarian assistance, though not without preceding their agenda. Those with immediate access to the country were the junta's long-time allies, including Russia, India and China, with others, such as Taiwan, being [denied](#) entry.

Civil society organizations immediately [cautioned](#) against the junta's weaponization of aid, which predates their response to previous natural disaster relief efforts in the country, including Cyclone Nargis in 2008, Cyclone Mocha in 2023 and, most recently, Typhoon Yagi last year.

Over 250 organizations [amplified calls](#) for humanitarian assistance through localized pathways, including the cooperation of community-based organizations on the ground in Burma, which hold the capacity, knowledge, and experience to respond in a crisis.

The statement urged the international community to, “*immediately mobilize resources and direct disaster emergency relief to survivors and affected communities of the earthquake. This must be channeled through local community groups and frontline responders in collaboration with the National Unity Government (NUG), Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs), and civil society.*”

The earthquake came at a time when Burma is deeply embedded in a worsening war promoted and prolonged by the terrorist junta. With millions already displaced in the country, emergency efforts were complicated and high-risk. The military junta [admitted](#) to firing at a Chinese Red Cross convoy attempting to deliver aid in Mandalay when shots suddenly sounded in Nawnghkio Township, northern Shan State.

In addition, less than 24 hours after the earthquake, the junta began deploying airstrikes and targeting emergency-affected areas. The regime [banned](#) international journalists and foreign media from reporting on the quake and the sweeping attacks which followed, with reports emerging that humanitarian aid and assistance would be restricted.

The junta has stated that groups must be [‘approved’](#), in yet further evidence of their weaponization of aid. This consequential call has forced volunteers to pause their life-saving efforts. In response, the National Unity Government (NUG) has [accused](#) the regime of exploiting aid distribution for political and military gain.



The NUG [declared](#) a two-week halt to the fighting and shared [plans](#) that *“together with resistance forces, allied organizations, and civil society groups, to carry out rescue operations under the ‘People to People’ initiative.”* A statement by the Three Brotherhood Alliance [announced](#) a one-month ceasefire from 1 to 30 April to *“support the prompt and efficient execution of post-earthquake relief initiatives.”* The Ministry of Defence of the NUG [added](#) that 13-20 April would be designated as the “National Week of Mourning and Solidarity.”

The military junta [declared](#) a twenty-day ceasefire, but attacks have persisted, nonetheless. ND-Burma member, the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) [reported](#) that at midnight on April 10, an airstrike on civilian targets in Tedin Township killed four children and two adults. A seventh civilian was critically injured, three homes were destroyed beyond repair, and ten others were damaged. In Mindat township, a separate airstrike killed six people, including two children.

Even during the traditional annual New Year activities in the middle of April, the junta [continued](#) to carry out attacks, including airstrikes on Buddhist monasteries, resulting in country-wide deaths and injuries during the festive days when people typically visit religious sites.

Assaults by the junta amid emergency relief have occurred in [Rakhine State](#), [Shan State](#), [Karen State](#), [Karenni State](#) and others. According to ALTSEAN-Burma, since the junta’s

“At a moment when the sole focus should be on ensuring humanitarian aid gets to disaster zones, the military is instead launching attacks,” UN Human Rights Office



‘ceasefire’ was announced, [at least 90 attacks](#) have taken place. In addition, between March 28 and April 22, the junta [carried out](#) at least 294 attacks using jets and artillery. This led to the deaths of over 200 people and injuries to 462. The UN Human Rights Office spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani, addressed the continued violence in Burma amid rescue efforts and [stated](#), *“At a moment when the sole focus should be on ensuring humanitarian aid gets to disaster zones, the military is instead launching attacks.”*

The immediate violations of the junta’s ceasefire prompted the NUG to [claim](#) that the military’s ceasefire announcement was a hoax and [state](#) in their report, ‘Aid Under Attack,’ that the junta has systematically transformed disaster relief into a political tool. These concerns extended to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Mr. Tom Andrews, who [urged](#) the UN Security Council *“to convene and consider adopting a resolution to address ongoing attacks by the military junta in Myanmar.”*

In the weeks following the quake, hope for survivors has sadly diminished. Crematoriums are [overwhelmed](#), and [calls](#) have been made for body bags amid the need for assistance. The scorching temperatures of the dry season have presented additional challenges as relief teams work in extreme heat. Rainy weather followed the earthquake a week later, [complicating and delaying](#) response efforts—those without homes slept in tents, desperate for clean water, power, and adequate shelter.

The sanitation and hygienic conditions are worsening as local communities [appeal](#) for toilets and bathing materials. In what has been deemed a ‘[shelter crisis](#),’ many have been scrambling for food as restaurants and vendors were destroyed in the earthquake. Civilians are also facing water shortages, and key travel routes have been disrupted due to damaged roads and bridges. Meanwhile, amid the destruction, the junta has shamelessly [directed](#) severely affected communities in Mandalay who have lost their homes that they still need to pay their electricity bills.

Women’s organizations have [called](#) for the emergency response to be sensitive to the gender-specific needs of the most vulnerable. This includes urging aid that prioritizes gender-sensitive support, ensures access to menstrual care, provides safe shelters, and delivers medical assistance to women, particularly those who are pregnant, new mothers, and infants. There were 8.8 million women and girls [affected](#) by the earthquake, including nearly 5 million in the areas hardest hit, further reinforcing the need for WASH materials and protection and enforcement of women’s rights, including those who are ethnic minorities, LGBTQI+ and who have disabilities.

Civilians in Burma have experienced widespread suffering. In addition to the country harbouring the world’s longest civil war, the deeply unpopular military junta has consistently moved to undermine and dismiss democratic norms and principles through a series of sweeping coups. Then, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, over four years ago on 1 February 2021, an attempted coup saw Min Aung Hlaing arrest, detain and kill pro-democracy activists and politicians. The military’s reign of terror has been ongoing and has led to a worsening humanitarian crisis, with millions displaced and the country’s economy

and social landscape significantly eroded. Another frustration for people in Burma has been witnessing the junta's invitations to regional and international political arenas. Just days after the earthquake, coup leader, Min Aung Hlaing [travelled](#) to Bangkok for the BIMSTEC, in a move that was [protested](#) and [widely criticized](#).

Furthermore, the earthquake's aftermath has presented several new challenges. This short briefing paper by the Network for Human Rights Documentation - Burma (ND-Burma) will present data from our member organizations and various case studies of how the earthquake has impacted them and their communities.

Impact of the Earthquake as Documented by ND-Burma Members

As documented by ND-Burma members, several obstacles persist in the response and recovery. The cases listed below are a combination of desk research and member data. All documented cases of human rights violations occurred after the earthquake, demonstrating the lack of adherence to the ceasefire that the junta declared, and their ongoing disregard for civilian life.

This briefing aims to highlight the junta's negligence in the aftermath of the earthquake. ND-Burma acknowledges the numerous cases of rights violations nationwide and notes that those included in our briefing do not encompass all the attacks, but rather those recorded by our member organizations. ND-Burma recognizes the significant losses suffered by victims and survivors, both in terms of loved ones and property. The exclusion of any cases is not intentional, nor is it meant to imply oversight or a lack of acknowledgment of the challenges and hardships on the ground.



Chin State

ND-Burma member, the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), reported several cases of human rights violations by the junta in the aftermath of the earthquake. Between 2 and April 18, the military junta launched 17 separate airstrikes across four townships in Chin State—averaging one attack per day. CHRO [condemned](#) the wave of airstrikes in a press release, detailing the following cases:

On 9 April 2025, a village in Mindat Township came under aerial bombardment, killing six civilians, including an eight-month-old baby and a Christian pastor from the Assembly of God Church. The church itself, along with multiple homes, was completely destroyed in the assault—an unmistakable and illegal attack on civilians and a place of worship.

Nine others were severely injured, including four children, and they are in critical condition due to their serious injuries. In addition, a church was destroyed along with a total of twelve houses. At the time of the attack, there were no ethnic revolutionary forces or armed actors present. There was also no fighting in the area. This was yet another deliberate assault on civilian lives by the military junta.

In a separate incident in Tedim Township, another six people were killed, including four children under the age of 17, when junta aircraft dropped bombs on a residential neighbourhood. These airstrikes were launched without any discernible military objective, underscoring the regime's intent to inflict terror and suffering on the civilian population.


CHRO has [repeatedly called](#) for the junta to stop the weaponization of aid, as thousands are suffering from a lack of access to humanitarian aid, stating on the social media platform, X: *"Humanitarian aid is not a bargaining chip. It's a lifeline."*



Photo Credit: The Chin Human Rights Organization

CHRO also reported that the Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA), the only junta-affiliated armed group operating in Chin State, is [accused](#) of burning down an entire village of 75 houses in Nakzang of Tonzang Township on April 4, prompting a call for emergency relief aid for displaced families of nearly 350 people.

On April 13, another case [reported](#) by CHRO took place at 4 PM when the junta launched an airstrike on Mindat, destroying the Myoma Baptist Church. No injuries were reported, as worshippers had avoided the church due to its vulnerability to air attacks. It was the second church destroyed by an airstrike in the area within a week. In response, CHRO [stated](#), *“The air strikes are a cruel and calculated attempt by a desperate regime to reassert control by terrorizing an already devastated population.”*



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Photo: The junta deployed two bomb attacks on Hpwi village, Mindat Township, Chin State and destroyed 12 houses, including the AG Church. The attack took place on 9 April 2025 and killed six civilians, including an eight-month-old infant, a person with disabilities and a pastor. Nine others were wounded.

Photo Credit: The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO)



KARENNI STATE

While Karenni State was less affected by the earthquake, several buildings [collapsed](#), including two Christian churches in Nee Du Khu and Hoh Wam Upper Village in Demoso Township, a church in Lae'i village, and another church in Wari Khu village, Pekhon Township, on the Shan-Karenni border. The relief effort in Karenni State has been led by local people and supported by the Karenni Interim Executive Council (IEC). Religious sites are among the many local infrastructures being further destroyed by the regime.

Another concern for Karenni people has primarily been the muddy waters, including from the Nansanphu stream in Demoso township, which is a source of drinking water and irrigation for local people. With water in these vital streams [unavailable](#), thousands have been impacted by the polluted water.

In addition to the water crisis, two days after the earthquake, the military carried out [airstrikes](#) in Hpruso Township, Karenni State, using 500-pound and 300-pound bombs.



KACHIN STATE

Following the earthquake, civilians in Kachin State have also been [targeted](#) with airstrikes and increased ground offensives by the junta. A spokesperson from the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) [stated](#) that the Burma Army has '*escalated its military operations and launched unilateral attacks in Kachin State.*'

Two days after the earthquake on March 30, the junta launched airstrikes on Bhamo Town and KIA Brigade 9 territory in the Hpakant area. Then again, on 31 March, the junta and one of its allied militia groups fired attacks against the KIA in Hpa-kant.



SOUTHEASTERN BURMA

As documented by ND-Burma member, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland, (HURFOM) the military has targeted their areas in Southeastern Burma with various artillery attacks, airstrikes and the ongoing recruitment of young men and women in their illegal forced conscription bid.

Additionally, between April 14 and 18, the junta conducted a series of bombings in Kawkaik, forcing over 10,000 individuals from at least 40 villages to flee, as reported by independent local sources.

The majority of these displaced civilians—predominantly women, children, and the elderly—are currently housed in temporary shelters throughout Mawlamyine, Mon State and Hpa-an Township in Karen State. According to HURFOM, the military has targeted areas in Southeastern Burma with various artillery attacks, airstrikes and the ongoing recruitment of young men and women in their illegal forced conscription bid.


After the 7.7 to 7.9 magnitude earthquake in Sagaing, Human Rights Defenders (HRD) Network and Moulmein Youth teams reached some affected areas around April 4. Thanks to support from HRDs already conducting needs assessments in Mandalay and Sagaing, HURFOM successfully delivered essential supplies such as food, dry bags (DB bags), and shelter kits to those in need.

Unfortunately, starting from April 6, the teams began facing serious restrictions and harassment from junta forces, their General Administration Department (GAD) officials, and allied groups. They issued inhumane orders stating that only regime-approved emergency response teams were permitted to assist quake victims. As a result, HURFOM faced challenges as it continued delivering support to remote areas in Inle, Kyaukse, and parts of Sagaing.

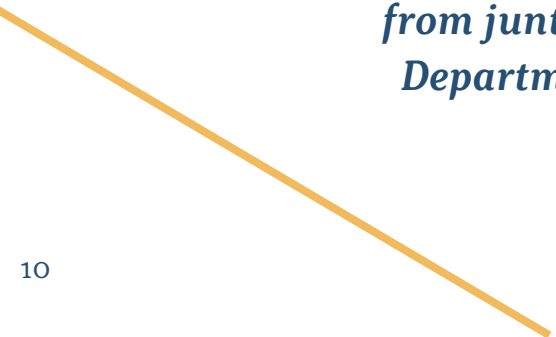
The team delivered resources personally and securely, without going through banking channels that demanded up to 10% in ‘service fees,’ which were viewed as unethical. Instead, the team members withdrew the funds gradually through trusted individuals in the network, after explaining that the money was for humanitarian purposes.

HURFOM local volunteers reported that 95% of survivors fled with nothing, and around 24% lost between one and four family members. HURFOM learned that many children had never experienced such a terrifying natural disaster. They were shaken, anxious, and exhibiting signs of trauma.

Worse still, local youth volunteers began facing threats of arrest and forced conscription. This led many civil society organizations and community-based groups to pause their relief efforts due to fear that their young team members might be forcibly recruited. With the remaining funds from communities in Moulmein, HURFOM supported locally organized efforts while ensuring the dignity of beneficiaries.



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Mon State

Case 1

On the night of March 29, at 10:45 PM, junta forces launched indiscriminate artillery shelling from Waw Township, Lat Pan village in Bago Region, near the Mon State border, across the Sittaung River. The shells struck Khaywe village in Monsu Ward, Kyaik Hto Township, Mon State— areas already suffering from the aftermath of the recent earthquake.

Despite the devastating earthquake on March 28, the junta has showed no regard for humanitarian principles and deliberately fired heavy artillery at civilian areas. Two elderly civilians were injured in the attack. The couple sustained wounds when a shell landed near their home. This incident is a heartbreaking reminder that even in the wake of a natural disaster, the junta continues to disregard civilian safety and international humanitarian law.



Case 2:

Two civilians were injured, and a home was destroyed after junta troops launched artillery shells into a village in Mon State's Thanbyuzayat Township. The attack occurred on the evening of April 5, at 6 PM, when artillery fired from the Waekalee-based military command exploded inside the residential area of Kalaing Padaw village. There was no active fighting in the area at the time.

The injured were identified as Nai Kin, 38, and his wife, Mi Tin, 36. Nai Kin reportedly sustained severe injuries to his right hand and abdomen, while Mi Tin was hit on her left arm and right leg. Their home, owned by Daw Mee, was also destroyed in the fire, and five family members were displaced. The couple is now receiving medical treatment at Mawlamyine General Hospital.

Despite the junta's announcement of a temporary 20-day ceasefire due to earthquake-related concerns, artillery shelling and airstrikes have continued in parts of Mon State and other areas.



Case 3

In Kyaikhto Township, Mon State, junta forces shot and killed a local man based on unverified accusations that he was supporting local resistance groups. After the killing, they also took away his body. The incident took place near the cemetery in Sootpanu Village. The victim, U Aung Kyaw, owned a local fish farming business.

At 5 AM on April 4th, a convoy of five military trucks carrying over 50 junta troops arrived at his fish farm. Shortly after, they shot and killed U Aung Kyaw.



Photo: On the early morning of April 16, at 6:00 AM, junta forces launched a deadly airstrike using jet fighters and heavy artillery on Nwar Chan Gone village, near Kyon Doe Town in Kawkaik Township, Karen State. **Photo Credit:** The Human Rights Foundation of Monland



Karen State

Case 1

Even as communities across the country continue to suffer from the devastating impacts of war and natural disasters, the military junta has once again shown blatant disregard for civilian lives.

At around 5:30 PM on April 1, the junta's Light Infantry Battalion No. (12), positioned at a newly established artillery base, fired five rounds of 120mm artillery shells into Wait Sar Kone village, Kyon Doe Township, Karen State, despite the absence of active fighting in the area. Tragically, a 57-year-old woman was killed. Witnesses say she was struck with such shock by the blast that she fell backwards, hitting her head and suffering fatal brain injuries.

While thousands of civilians are already displaced and struggling to survive after losing their homes and possessions, the junta continues to target peaceful villages. Their attacks have not spared religious sites, hospitals, schools, or residential areas.

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Case 2

Despite no clashes reported in the area, two civilians were injured and several homes destroyed after junta airstrikes hit villages in Hpapun Township, Karen State, according to a statement released by the Karen National Union (KNU) Headquarters.

On the evening of April 8, around 5:30 PM, junta jet fighters dropped two bombs on the Balaewor and Htee Thae Khlu villages. Residents said the sudden airstrikes forced many to flee their homes in fear.

As a result of the attack, residents Saw Pana Mu and Saw Dae Si were injured. Homes belonging to Saw Karnae Mu, Saw Pana Mu, and Saw Daw Ne in Balaewor Village were heavily damaged. In Htee Thae Khlu, the home of Naw Kyar Hae and several others was also hit and partially destroyed.

Photo: On April 15, 2025, at around 11:50 AM, during the Burmese New Year holidays, the military junta launched an airstrike targeting a Buddhist monastery in Kanni village, Kyondoe town, Kawkareik Township, Karen State. **Photo Credit: The Human Rights Foundation of Monland**



This assault occurred despite the junta's recent announcement of a temporary ceasefire in response to the earthquake disaster. However, communities across several states and regions continue to experience daily artillery shelling and airstrikes.



Case 3

In Kawkareik Township, Karen State, junta forces have continued their indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas using both artillery and drones. These brutal offensives have left at least eight innocent people, including young children, injured and several homes damaged or destroyed.

On the evening of April 10, at 6:00 PM, junta troops stationed in Kawkareik Township launched a drone strike on Maungma Ywa Thit village. The attack wounded a 10-year-old girl, a 55-year-old man, and a 50-year-old woman—all local villagers.

Just two days earlier, on the night of April 8th at 10:27 PM, the junta launched more artillery attacks using 120mm and 122mm heavy weapons. Shells landed in several villages, including Ankaung, Kyaiktalite, and Daukphalan in Kawkareik Township.

The shelling damaged civilian homes in Ankaung village, injuring five more people: a 40-year-old man, a 26-year-old man, a 14-year-old girl, a 9-year-old boy, and a 6-year-old boy.

These targeted attacks on residential communities came in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in the country, during what should have been a time of rescue and relief efforts. Instead, the military junta has continued its deliberate assaults on unarmed civilians, deepening the suffering of those already in crisis.



Case 4

On April 15, at 11:50 AM, during the Burmese New Year holidays, the military junta launched an airstrike targeting a Buddhist monastery in Kanni village, Kyondoe town, Kawkareik Township, Karen State. Local sources confirmed that at least six civilians were killed, and around 19 others were injured, including monks and laypeople observing the Uposatha precepts at the monastery.

Eyewitnesses said the bombs, dropped by military jets, directly hit the Kanni monastery compound. One bomb struck a Probox vehicle, killing all three people inside. Another landed on the monastery itself, killing at least three more individuals who were

there for religious observance. The current death toll may increase as rescue efforts continue.

“A total of six bodies have been found—three inside the monastery and three in the vehicle. Among the injured were four monks and over 19 people who came to observe the precepts. The military jets are still circling overhead, and the fighting continues. The area remains highly unsafe,” said a resident.

The airstrike came amidst escalating clashes between the junta’s troops and allied resistance forces. Since the evening of April 14, the junta has been shelling villages along the Kyondoe road using howitzers and heavy artillery. Joint resistance forces have reportedly launched counteroffensives near the Yinkwetaung military camp, close to the Military Operations Command No. 12.

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Case 5

On April 16, the junta launched another attack early in the morning. The deadly airstrike and heavy artillery targeted Nwar Chan Gone village, near Kyon Doe Town in Kawkareik Township, Karen State. The bombs hit villagers and vehicles preparing to flee the area, killing at least 14 civilians.

A second attack on April 16 occurred just after 12:40 PM, when the junta launched yet another airstrike targeting civilians in Karen State, this time dropping bombs on Myaukkanmayaik village, Kawkareik Township, using a Harbin Y-12 aircraft.



Case 6

On April 17th, at noon, junta airstrikes dropped two bombs each on Thon-Sat-Thon-Su Village and Kyaik Tha Lite Village in Daung Pha Lan village tract, Kawkareik Township, Karen State.

According to preliminary reports, a school building in Kyaik Tha Lite and a residential home in Thon-Sat-Thon-Su were hit. One woman was reportedly injured.

“A school in Kyaik Tha Lite was seriously damaged, and a few houses were also hit. What’s certain is that there were no armed resistance forces active

or based anywhere near these villages. This was an indiscriminate attack,” said a 37-year-old male resident of Kyaik Tha Lite.

Following the bombing, many villagers sought safety in the nearby forests, gardens, and hills, setting up makeshift shelters wherever possible. *“Some have even started digging bunkers there to protect themselves in case of another airstrike,”* the resident added.

Tanintharyi Region



Case 1

Two men in their early 50s and another in their late 30s were arrested in Khaung Pyan village. Several residents of Zar Dee have also reportedly been detained, but due to ongoing communication blackouts, the total number remains unclear.

Since the military arrived, villagers from at least five communities within the Zar Dee tract have been displaced. As of April 2, troops remain stationed in Zar Dee and Khaung Pyan, and most villagers have already fled to seek safety.

On April 1, junta aircraft were seen flying twice over the Zar Dee area, monitoring from the sky and adding to the community’s fear of impending violence. Residents worry that heavy fighting could soon erupt in nearby villages, including Pa Ya, Khway Ma Phaw, Deik Takaw, and Kha Rin Chaung, leading to thousands more fleeing as a precaution.



Case 2

On the morning of April 7, junta troops operating near Zardee Village Tract, Yebyu Township, Tanintharyi Region, arbitrarily detained around 20 local men from Phar Chaung Inn village and forced them to serve as porters. The military column, estimated to be about 100 soldiers, arrived in Phar Chaung Inn at approximately 7:50 AM after advancing from the direction of Zardee village. On arrival, they began detaining men they encountered in the area and forced them to carry military equipment.

Locals also recalled that on March 31, more than 400 junta soldiers entered the Zardee area and arbitrarily detained several elderly residents and at least 12 women from Zardee, Khaung Pyan, and Deiktakaw villages. Those individuals were held for two days before being released.

With fears growing of further military operations, thousands of residents from Paya, Khwaemaphaw, Zardee, Khaung Pyan, Deiktakaw, and Khayin Chaung have now been displaced, leaving their homes behind in fear of renewed violence.



Case 3

Villages in Yebyu Township remain under threat, with ongoing artillery fire and unexploded ordnances continuing to terrorize residents as of April 23. What began with a devastating artillery attack on the night of April 21 has now escalated into a prolonged crisis, forcing hundreds to flee their homes and seek shelter in nearby fields and farmlands.

At least three houses and a local monastery were struck by junta-fired artillery shells in Sein Bon village, located in the Nat Kyi Sin village tract. The damage was compounded by reports that shells had hit a general store and two homes near Sein Bon station.

Though no casualties were reported during that night's bombardment—thanks to an earlier evacuation—villagers say the psychological toll and physical destruction have been severe.



Photo: On the morning of April 7, junta troops operating near Zardee Village Tract, Yebyu Township, Tanintharyi Region, arbitrarily detained around 20 local men from Phar Chaung Inn village and forced them to serve as porters. **Photo Credit:** The Human Rights Foundation of Monland

Displacement is rapidly increasing. Entire families from Sein Bon and neighbouring Phayathonezu are now sheltering in makeshift tents in nearby gardens, fields, and even roadside patches—too afraid to go into the forest due to landmines and the risk of further air or artillery strikes.

The Mawrawaddy Navy base in Ohn Pin Kwin village tract reportedly fired heavy artillery toward the area between April 20 and 22, targeting lands near Ya Pu village. Shells also rained down from junta positions based in Kalain Aung, hitting civilian infrastructure and farmlands alike.

In addition to structural damage, the aftermath has revealed a more hidden danger: unexploded bombs. Residents report finding live shells in the rubble, making it too dangerous for anyone to return to their homes.

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MANDALAY REGION

Mandalay was one of the hardest-hit areas of the earthquake and the more than [140 aftershocks](#) that followed in the weeks after. At least 1,778 people were killed in this part of the country, with many more buildings severely destroyed, including the city's airport. Revered as the 'city of gold,' Mandalay has now been somberly overwhelmed with death as bodies are cremated in stacks with the ['smell of death,'](#) filling the air.

Rescue teams have made extensive efforts to reach survivors, although supplies remain limited as thousands need support. Nevertheless, survivors have resorted to trying to help those trapped inside collapsed buildings with their [bare hands](#). Delays in receiving aid are partly due to the destruction of key transportation routes, such as the Ava Bridge, which collapsed in Mandalay following the earthquake.

The junta, during the destruction and recovery efforts and the Burmese New Year, continued to [relentlessly fire](#) airstrikes in areas including Mandalay. The attacks took place despite the ceasefire declared by the junta. One of the airstrikes on April 11 in Natogyi township damaged a monastery and wounded three monks, one of them being a child. Between April 19 and 20, the junta [attacked](#) different parts of the country, including in Mandalay where 24 people were killed in various villages.



SAGAING REGION

The Sagaing region has endured extreme violence and brutality in Burma following the failed coup. Attacks have been ruthless, carried out by some of the regime's most brutal battalions, leading to widespread displacement. With civilians facing such hardship, the earthquake became the latest obstacle that they had to persevere through.

Many challenges now persist for survivors of the earthquake in the Sagaing region as a health and shelter crisis looms, with many victims [suffering](#) from heat and dehydration. These illnesses are only worsening by the day due to the destruction of critical and life-saving clinics and hospitals.

Once again, as civilians are met with despair, suffering and uncertainty, the junta's attacks have not spared even the most vulnerable. On the Eve of the Burmese New Year, the military carried out airstrikes which [killed 11 and injured 51](#) in the Sagaing region. Between April 21 and 22, an additional 13 villagers [died](#) in airstrikes.

The junta has [claimed](#) it will extend its 'ceasefire' until 30 April 2025. However, this announcement comes at a time when the attacks since their last declaration of a pause in fighting have continued unabated.



SHAN STATE

Inle Lake, in Southern Shan State, was one of the areas [hardest hit](#) by the earthquake, with many of the homes built on stilts collapsing and sinking into the lake, leading to 90 [confirmed deaths](#) in the surrounding villages.

ND-Burma member, the Pa-O Youth Organization (PYO), also issued a statement [urging](#) donors to use boats to transport humanitarian assistance instead of keeping supplies on the shores. They also called for local channels of aid to be used, ensuring that it reaches those who need it most.

The earthquake also impacted internally displaced people from Karenni State who had fled to neighbouring Shan State for shelter. There is an urgent need to meet the needs of the growing displaced communities.

As a result of the powerful earthquake, total of 753 houses were destroyed, 12 people were injured, and two people were confirmed dead in Pinlaung Township, Southern Shan State. These figures are based on data collected by Pa-O Youth Organization (PYO) from accessible areas only.

PYO notes that it is possible that there are additional villages not yet included. The data reflects the total number of damages and casualties collected from the currently reachable locations.

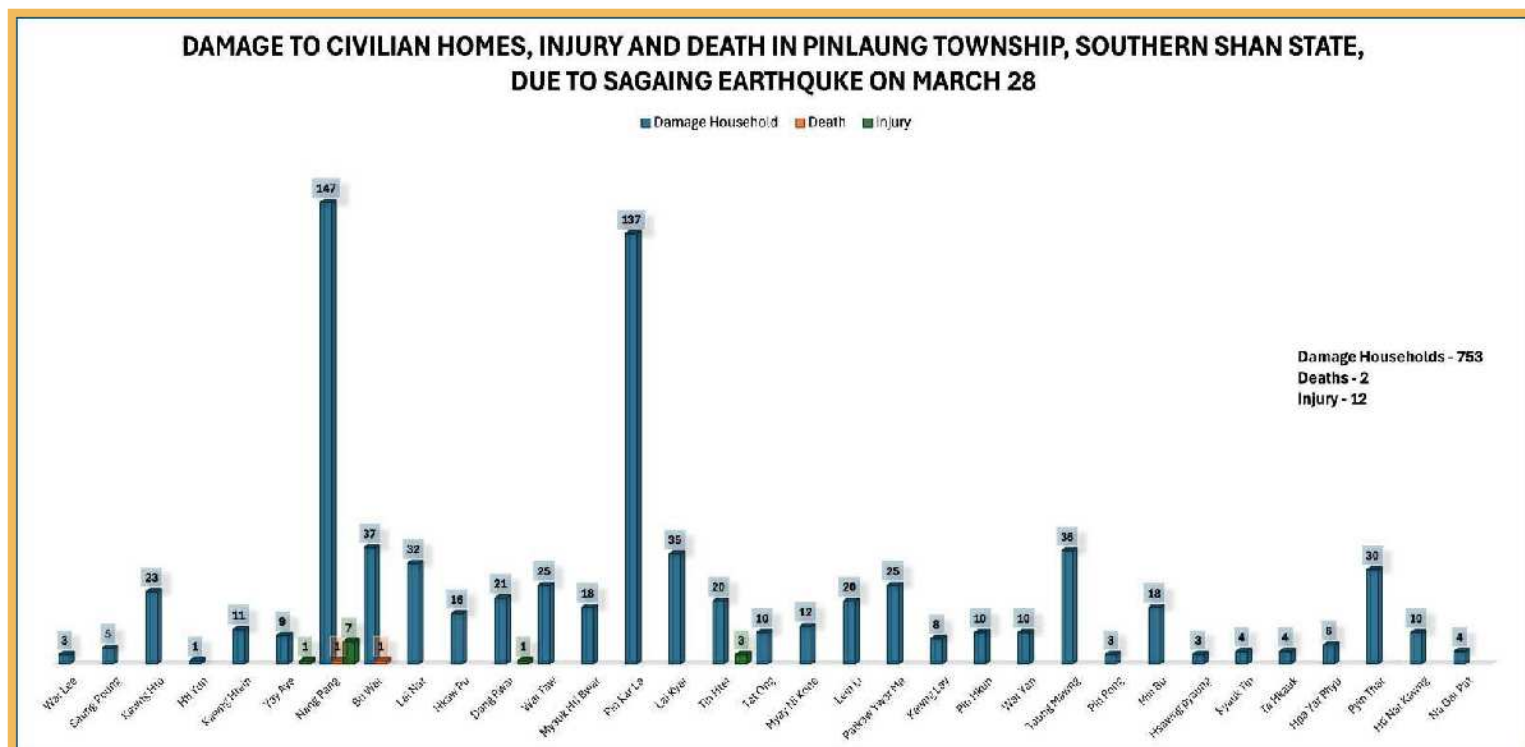


Photo Credit: The Pa-O Youth Organization

Although the military junta officially declared a temporary ceasefire from April 2 to April 22, it continued to launch airstrikes in various regions, including the Ta'ang areas in Shan State.

ND-Burma member, the Ta'ang Students and Youth Union (TSYU) reported that on the night of April 5 at 10:00 PM, the military junta used jet fighters to drop 250-pound bombs on Nam Hu Saung and Naung Lin villages in Nawnghkio Township, destroying six houses in the villages.

A local resident said, *"The military junta frequently carries out attacks in this area. Villagers can no longer stay there—they've moved elsewhere. On that night, although no one was hurt, several houses were destroyed."*

Earlier on April 1, the military junta also carried out an airstrike in Lwe Khwin village, Nawnghkio township, injuring three local men and two women. Currently, armed clashes continue around Taung



Photo Credit: The Ta'ang Students and Youth Union

Khan village and Owm Ma Tee village in Nawngkhio township between the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA)/joint forces and the military junta. The military junta has also reportedly been using chemical gas bombs in attacks in that area.

While the entire country was facing the impacts of an earthquake, the military junta launched an airstrike on Naung Lin Village in Nawangkhio Township—an area under the control of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA).

As a result, six female soldiers from the Danu National Liberation Front and one male soldier were killed. In addition, three civilians were injured, and many houses in the village were destroyed.

A local resident said, *“There was no fighting in Naung Lin Village, though armed forces were present. The actual battlefield was far away. The military junta intentionally carried out the bombing, possibly based on specific intelligence they had received.”*

The military has continued to conduct repeated airstrikes in Nawngkhio township, where an active armed clash is ongoing. On the evening of March 26, it launched further airstrikes on Thone Se village, Shwe Nyaung Pin village, and Owm Ma Kha village. In Owm Ma Kha, three men and one woman were injured. In Thone Se, two women and three men were killed.



Photo: *The monastery and residential buildings for Kirini and Falkhon refugees in Hayar village of the Inlay region were nearly destroyed and have collapsed. It is known that supplies and food are still urgently needed. Photo Credit: The Pa-O Youth Organization*

Conclusion

As documented by ND-Burma members, survivors who have faced significant challenges in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake continue to suffer due to the military's mismanagement of the crisis. The long-term and short-term impacts of the recent earthquake will be consequential.

With the regime targeting aid workers, blocking key supply routes and continuing to delay meaningful and effective emergency response efforts, there are concerns it will be many more years before sites of destruction are cleared.

In addition, the ongoing airstrikes and ground attacks have been debilitating for communities that have already suffered immensely from the junta's worsening assaults in ethnic areas since the attempted coup on 1 February 2021. The junta's failure to adhere to its own ceasefire in the aftermath of the earthquake is evidence of its lack of interest and commitment to the protection of the people.

Innocent civilians in Burma continue to bear the burden of war and hostilities, fueled by a selfish, power-hungry regime. The international community and global stakeholders must take the calls from civil society organizations seriously, as it has been clearly stated that the junta is not a partner in aid and cannot be trusted to facilitate an emergency response that prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable.

The findings presented in this briefing paper, including cases from ND-Burma members, indicate the junta's trajectory in future emergencies involving any natural disaster. The human rights violations by the Burmese military are widespread and have not ceased or slowed, even when communities affected by the conflict and earthquake have already suffered so much.

These ongoing assaults by the junta should serve as a stark reminder to the international community of the immense distress faced by conflict-affected groups, particularly after a devastating earthquake that has introduced even more uncertainty amid yet another instance of disaster mismanagement by the Burmese Army.

In the aftermath of the earthquake and ongoing violence against civilians, despair and uncertainty loom as survivors seek support from their losses among the communities around them. Even amidst the junta's brutality and chaos following a national emergency, civilians remain resilient and continue to actively demand a future where the military neither rules nor influences their lives.

Furthermore, the international community must take seriously the realities on the ground and acknowledge that the challenges being faced are ongoing. The lives of innocent people are constantly under serious threat as the junta consistently evades accountability for their crimes, even amid recovery efforts where a severely traumatized community is striving to heal.

ND-Burma members call for localized pathways and channels of assistance to be established, ensuring that impacted communities receive life-saving aid. The international community, including regional actors, must not be blinded by the junta's sham efforts to use the earthquake relief effort as a bid for legitimacy. They must work with and through trusted networks and partners on the ground who are committed to a dignified recovery that values the lives of all people.

Recommendations

To the International Community

- Immediately refer the human rights situation in Burma to the International Criminal Court and further evaluate and consider all pathways to justice for victims of the military junta's mass crimes against civilians.
- Impose and enforce aviation fuel sanctions to deter the ongoing use of airstrikes by the military junta, especially during continuing emergency recovery and relief efforts in the aftermath of the earthquake.
- Demand accountability and impose consequences from the military junta for routinely violating its own ceasefires and launching attacks against innocent, unarmed communities.
- Immediately adopt a resolution which acknowledges the worsening of the human rights crisis on the ground in Burma and impose a global arms embargo which would halt the free flow of weapons into the conflict-torn country.
- Support civil society organizations on the ground and respective human rights defenders by advancing documentation and evidence of mass crimes against humanity perpetrated by the military junta.
- Enforce protections for women and girls who are at significantly higher risk of having their rights violated by the junta in crises such as disaster relief.
- Immediately dispatch a monitoring team to assess the human rights situation in Burma, particularly in conflict-affected areas and those severely affected by the earthquake.

To Donors

- Work with local civil society organizations with localized systems to ensure the safe and secure delivery of humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected areas.
- Provide long-term, flexible funding to ethnic humanitarian responders who are providing urgent emergency assistance to internally displaced people, including medical services to those who are wounded.
- Increase the provision and allocation of sanitary items as civilians struggle to access clean water and basic hygienic materials in the aftermath of the earthquake. Special care and gender-specific items must be allocated to women, especially those who are pregnant or expecting.
- Nutritional support, especially for children already malnourished by the war, must be supplied and channelled through local organizations to ensure dignified relief meets those in crisis in a timely manner.

Recommendations

- Reduce rigorous funding applications, which disadvantage local organizations due to language and capacity constraints.
- Funding models must be made available and easy to access in Burmese and ethnic languages to ensure an inclusive model of equal opportunity to funds and resources.
- Secure funding for documentation efforts to ensure the ongoing preservation and collection of human rights violations perpetrated by the junta and ensure accountability through international systems.

To the National Unity Government

- Advocate for local organizations and the international community to have localized systems recognized and supported, especially in the wake of the earthquake, where localized assistance is the most reliable way to save lives and protect civilians.
- Encourage diplomats and world leaders to end their existing relationships with the military junta and its affiliates, thereby dismantling any credibility or recognition, including that of ASEAN leaders.
- Coordinate effectively and consistently with ethnic service providers, civil society organizations, and human rights defenders in Burma to align advocacy calls and areas of support from displaced communities and those affected by the earthquake.

To ASEAN

- Effectively and immediately end all ties with the junta that has no interest in ending its attacks on civilians in Burma. These efforts must be redirected to pursue justice pathways for victims and survivors of the junta's assaults, including through transitional justice pathways.
- Refrain from extending invitations to the junta for any meetings requiring their participation that are related to ASEAN or regional affairs, as their presence risks legitimizing their status as the leaders of a country that the people do not recognize.
- Collaborate with civil society organizations and democratically elected officials in Burma, such as those associated with the National Unity Government and federal bodies including the Karenni Interim Executive Council, regarding all matters related to peace, democracy, and meaningful steps towards justice.
- Urgently reform the deeply flawed and problematic 5-Point Consensus of which the junta has utterly failed to adhere to.
- Support urgently needed humanitarian assistance in the wake of the earthquake through local channels.



Beneath the Cracks

***Devastation and Destruction by the Junta
in the Earthquake Aftermath***