



**Chin  
Human  
Rights  
Organization**

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Consultative status  
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2018



## **Survivors of War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity Bring a Case Against the Myanmar Junta in Timor-Leste**

**Dili, 13 January 2026:** A group representing survivors of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Myanmar junta have presented a criminal complaint to the Public Prosecutor's Office in Timor-Leste, requesting the opening of an investigation.

According to the head of the delegation, Salai Za Uk, Executive Director of the Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO), the criminal file includes “evidence of the gang rape of a pregnant woman; the massacre of ten people, including a journalist and a 13-year-old boy, who was among eight people who had their throats slit; the deliberate killing of one Christian Pastor and three Deacons; a disproportionate and indiscriminate aerial attack on a hospital which killed four medical staff and four patients, and a series of attacks on Christian churches”.

Accountability for these crimes is permissible in Timor-Leste under the principle of universal jurisdiction, which allows state authorities to take action regardless of where the crimes took place or the nationality of the victims and perpetrators.

Jose Teixeira, who together with his colleague Nuno Marrazes are the lead lawyers in the case, from the Timorese law firm Da Silva Teixeira & Associados Lda, said “the case will place minimal pressure on Timor-Leste’s judicial system. All the evidence we presented has been meticulously documented and reconfirmed by CHRO. In addition, the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) established by the UN, has a large body of verified evidence which can be made available to the Timorese authorities as part of their investigation”.

The crimes in the Timor-Leste complaint were committed in Myanmar's predominantly Christian Chin State, which according to Salai Za Uk has seen "a deliberate, systematic, widespread, disproportionate and indiscriminate campaign of violence against civilians".

Since July 2022, the military junta had carried out around 1,000 documented air strikes in the state. More than 4,600 homes have been destroyed by airstrikes or deliberately burnt down. 478 civilians have been killed, including 91 women and 79 children. At least 19 medical facilities, 25 schools and 127 religious buildings, including 78 churches, have been damaged or destroyed, according to CHRO figures.

The situation in Chin State is reflected across the country. According to the latest data from the UN and other credible sources, as of 31 March 2025, at least 6,473 civilians were killed by junta forces, including 1,487 women and 748 children. Over 30,000 have been detained and over 22,000 remain in detention. Nearly 2,000 people have died in military detention, with well documented cases of dozens being tortured to death. 172 people have been sentenced to death by military-controlled courts.

The UN estimates that violence in Myanmar has displaced more than 3.5 million people - over 5 per cent of the population - and although nearly 20 million are in need of assistance, according to the UN, the military has consistently blocked humanitarian access, even after natural disasters, including the earthquake in March 2025. Best estimates indicate that more than 1.5 million Myanmar people have crossed international borders by land or sea in search of safety, through regular and irregular channels, which has created a regional refugee crisis with dire human rights and humanitarian challenges.

The complainants hope that the case will resonate powerfully with the Timorese people, given Myanmar and Timor-Leste's similar modern histories. Like Timor-Leste, says Salai Za Uk, "Myanmar was ruled for generations by Western colonials and, like Timor-Leste, Myanmar's post-independence period saw vicious atrocity crimes perpetrated against innocent people. Since the coup there have been numerous attacks by the Myanmar junta on unarmed demonstrators in which thousands have been killed. They bring to mind the infamous Santa Cruz Massacre in Dili in 1991 in which over 250 demonstrators were murdered in cold blood".

The Timor-Leste case is supported by the Myanmar Accountability Project, whose director, Chris Gunness, argues that "if the authorities in Timor-Leste took the simple step of opening an investigation it would send a powerful message, widely accepted across the ASEAN, that the situation in Myanmar is unsustainable and must change. The legal case in Dili offers an opportunity for solidarity with some of the most marginalized and isolated people in the ASEAN region".

Salai Za Uk appealed for support to Timorese civil society, the Catholic Church and all Timorese people of conscience. "Given the position on human rights and accountability taken by leading

politicians and other influential voices in Timor-Leste, the Chin People earnestly believe that our call for accountability will be heard. And we fervently hope that as Christians, our prayers for justice, peace and dignity, on behalf of the people of Myanmar, will be answered”.

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