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Feb 16, 2026

## Summary of Monthly Situation Update for January 2026

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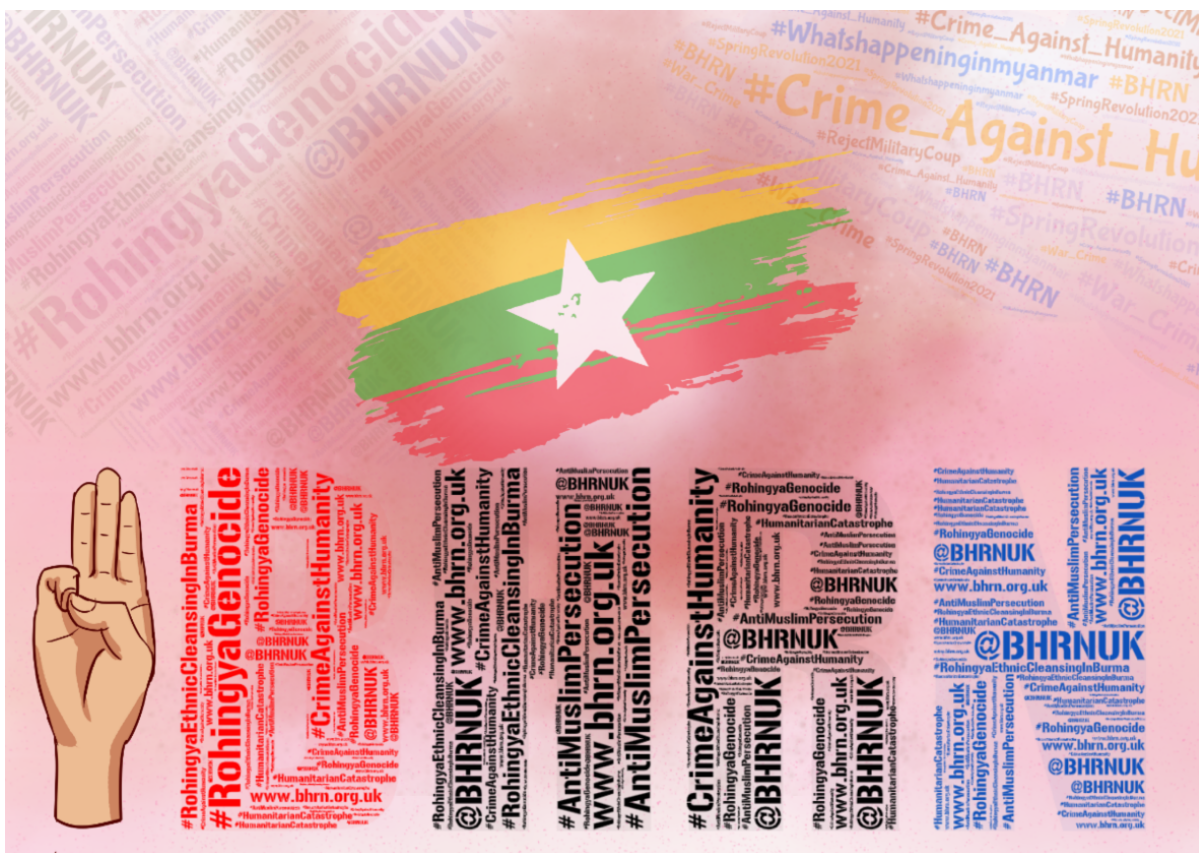
Every month BHRN provides a summary of situation update for the previous month's important event in Burma. More detailed

previous months' event in Burma. More detailed information for each paragraph contained in the update is available in more details upon request.

## Methodology

This report is based on primary and secondary sources, including on-the-ground documentation by BHRN and other human rights groups and media reports from trusted national and international outlets. It provides a detailed analysis of key events during the month, situating them within international legal frameworks and offers policy recommendations to guide international responses, humanitarian action, and justice efforts.

For more information about any of the incidents documented in this report, or to request interviews or supporting materials, please contact Kyaw Win, Executive Director of BHRN at [kyawwin@bhrn.org.uk](mailto:kyawwin@bhrn.org.uk).



Short Video for Summary of Situation Update - January 2026



## 1. Info-graphs of BHRN's Report



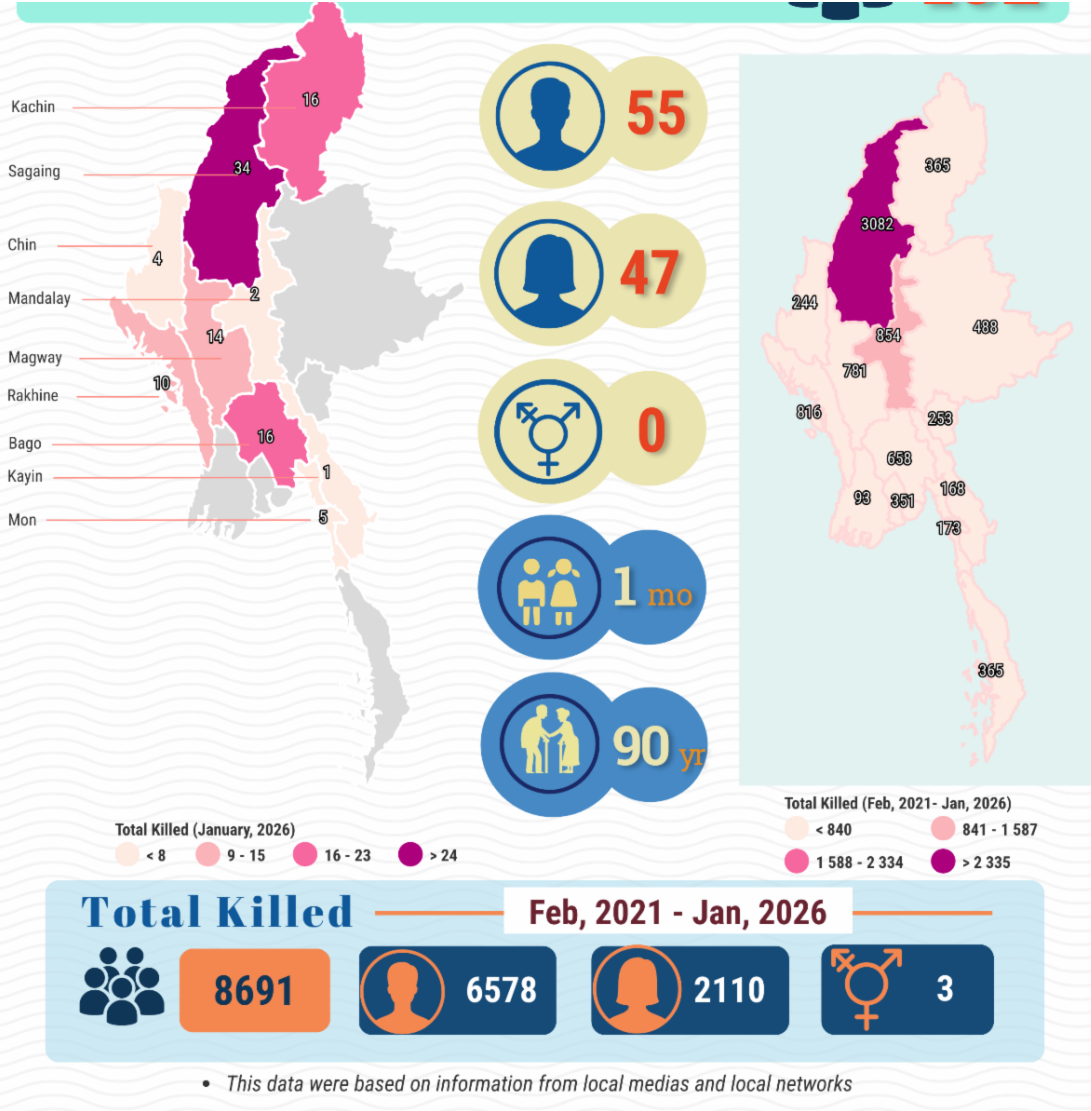
# Monthly Situation Update

~ January 2026 ~

Total Civilians Killed by the Military



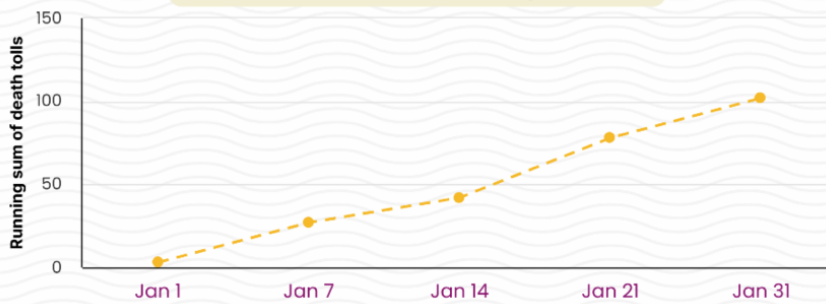
102



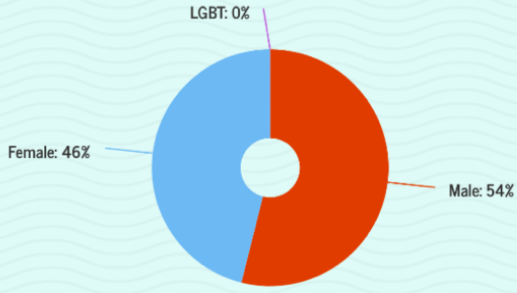
## Monthly Situation Update

January 2026

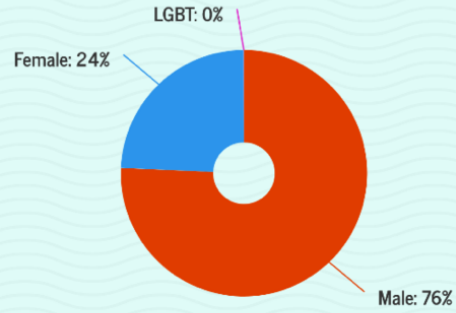
### Total Killed in January, 2026



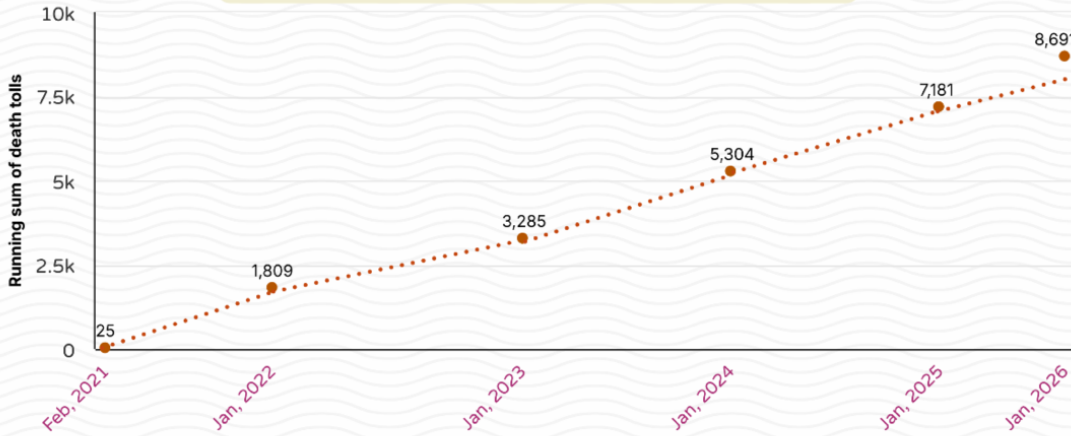
### Total Killed - Gender Ratio (January, 2026)



### Total Killed - Gender Ratio (Feb, 2021 - Jan, 2026)



### Total Killed in Feb, 2021 - January, 2026



• This data were estimated based on information from local medias and local networks

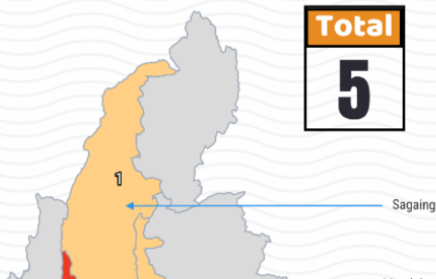


## Monthly Situation Update

January 2026

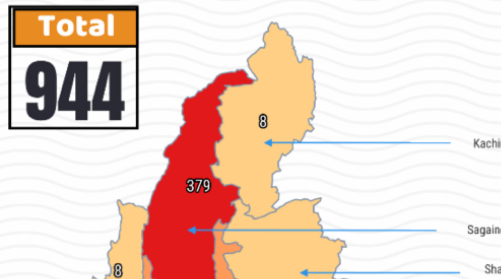
### Torture & Extra Judicial Killing

Killed in 24 hours of arrest and in Interrogation - in **January, 2026**

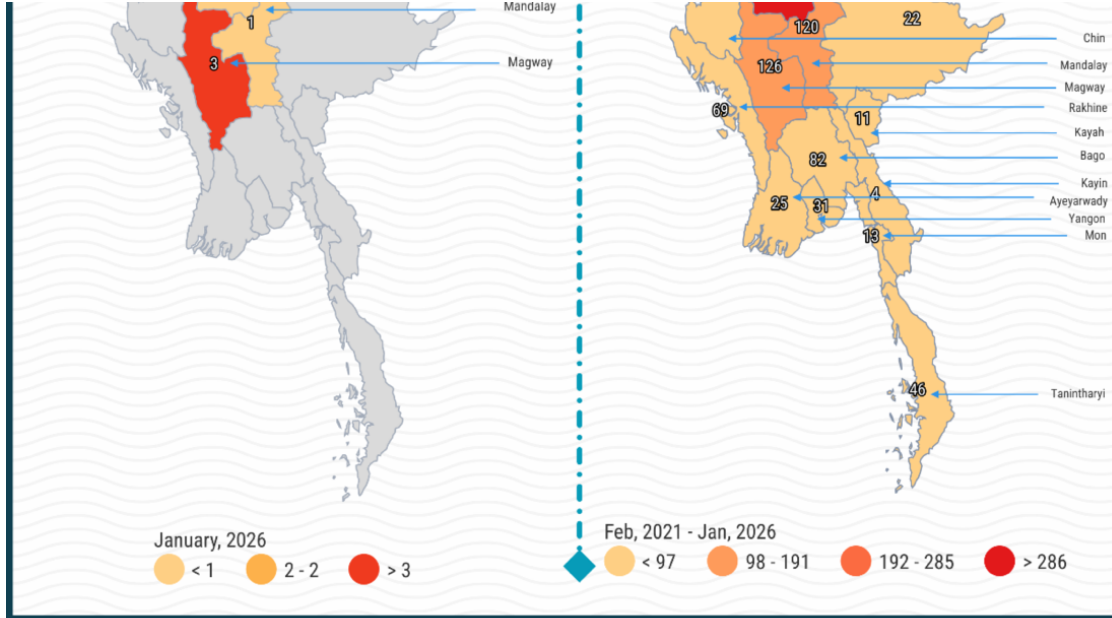


**Total**  
**5**

Killed in 24 hours of arrest and in Interrogation - **Feb, 2021 - Jan, 2026**



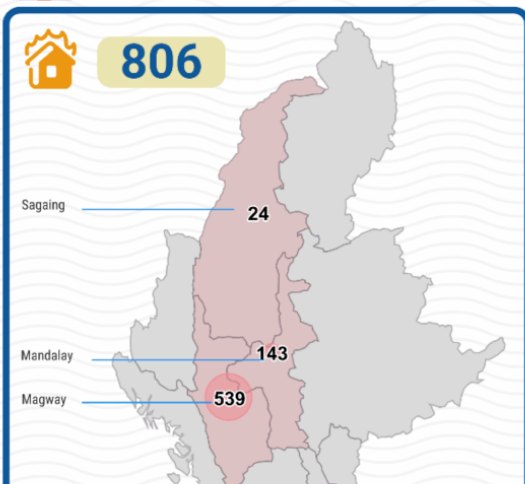
**Total**  
**944**



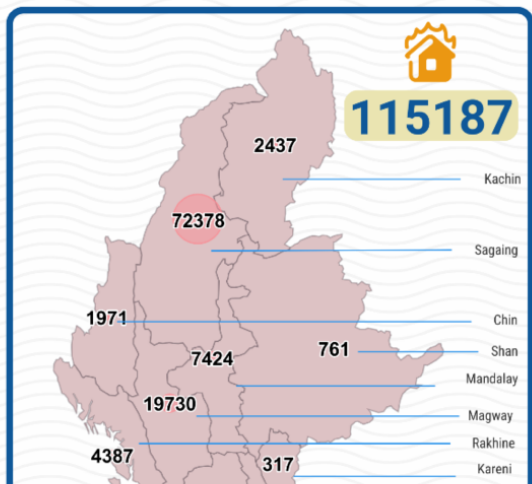
• This data were estimated based on information from local medias and local networks

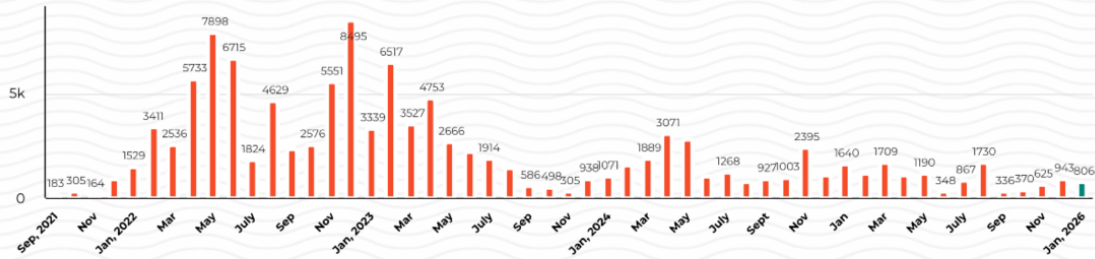
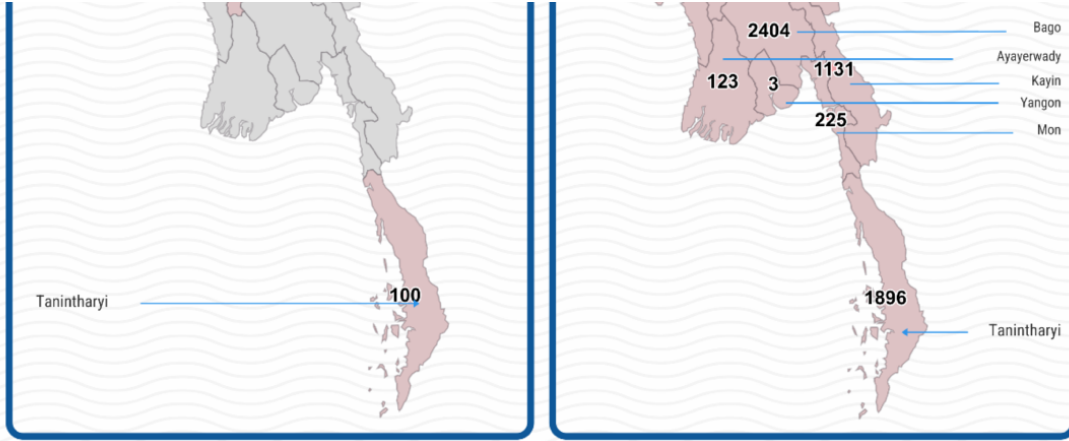
**BHRN** Burma Human Rights Network **Monthly Situation Update** January 2026

**Arson attack on civilians in different Regions (January, 2026)**



**Arson attack on civilians in different Regions (Sep, 2021 - Jan, 2026)**





• This data were estimated based on information from local networks and local medias

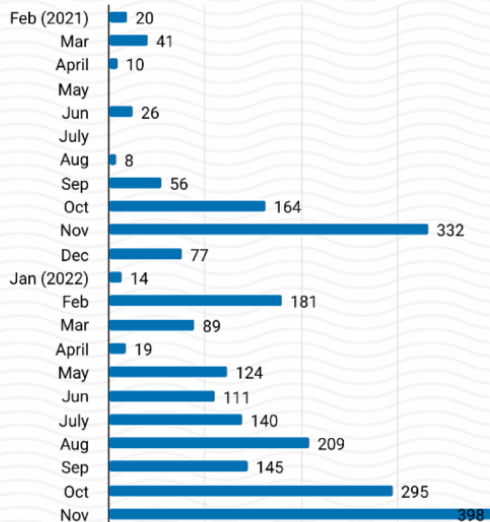


# Monthly Situation Update

January 2026

## Rohingya arrested for travelling without official permission

### The number of Rohingya being arrested



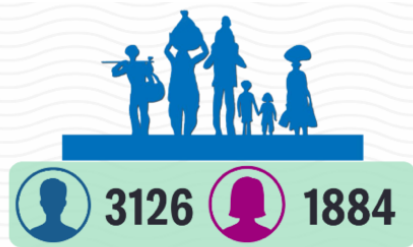
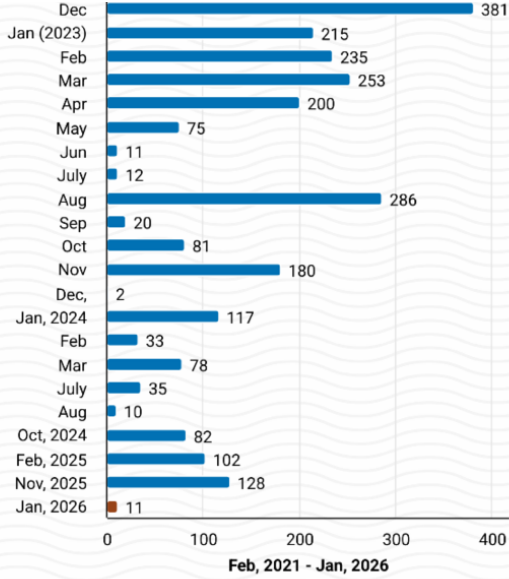
### Arrested in January

11 persons

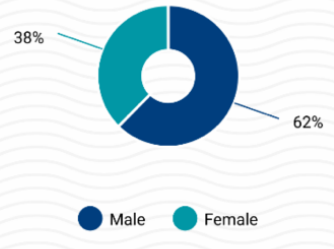


### Arrested in Feb 2021 - Jan 2026

5005 persons



Arrested in Feb 2021 - Jan, 2026



• This data were estimated based on information from local networks and local medias



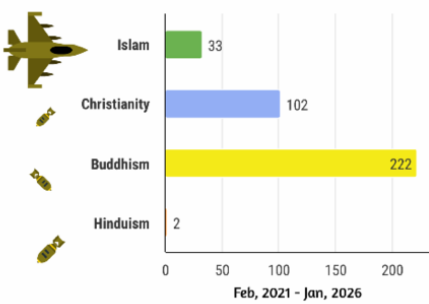
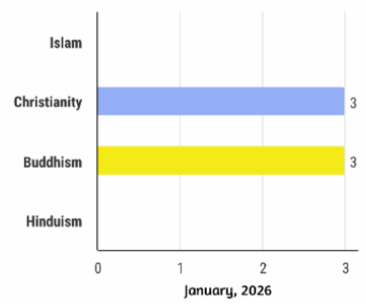
## Monthly Situation Update

January 2026

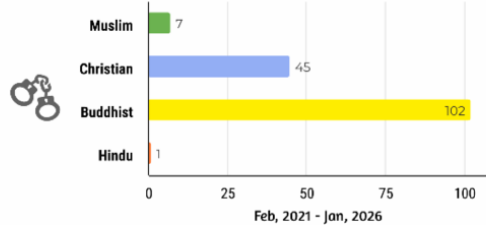
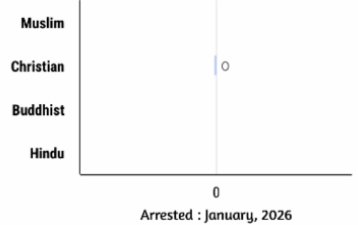


### Violation of Freedom of Religion and Belief (FORB)

#### Attacks and destruction of religious buildings



### Arrests of Religious Figures



# This Month in Myanmar - January 2026

## 2. News Summary and Analysis

The Myanmar military junta completed its three-phase electoral charade in **January 2026**, with the military-proxy Union Solidarity and Development Party claiming predetermined victory through systematic coercion, fraud, and violence. At least 404 people were [arrested](#) for minor acts of dissent such as refusing to display campaign materials or posting critical comments online. Junta forces killed dozens of civilians during the final voting days, including 22 [mourners](#) in an airstrike on a funeral ceremony in Bhamo Township. Despite widespread public rejection, demonstrated through protests, boycotts, and the near-total absence of voters at polling stations, the regime will convene a military-controlled parliament in March. This represents the consolidation of military dictatorship behind a facade of civilian institutions. The 2008 Constitution guarantees the military 25 percent of parliamentary seats, ensuring Min Aung Hlaing maintains absolute control regardless of which titles he and his loyalists adopt.

International responses fractured in ways the junta actively exploited. While the [European Union](#), [Japan](#), and [ASEAN](#) officially rejected the sham elections, China's Foreign Ministry publicly [congratulated](#) Burma, providing high-profile endorsement from the junta's primary arms supplier and UN Security Council protector. Thailand [endorsed](#) the process as "political transition" despite being part of ASEAN, while Cambodia and Vietnam sent [observers](#) in direct contradiction of the bloc's collective stance. This fragmentation allows the regime to claim divided international opinion and point to evidence of acceptance.

Multiple accountability mechanisms advanced simultaneously in January. The International Court of Justice [conducted](#) the first full merits hearings in a genocide case in over a decade, examining Myanmar's obligations for crimes against the Rohingya, while the Chin Human Rights Organization [filed](#) a universal jurisdiction complaint in Timor-Leste documenting 1,000 airstrikes and destruction of 78 churches in Chin State. A U.S. federal court [blocked](#)

and destruction of 78 churches in Chin State. A U.S. federal court [blocked](#) the Trump administration's termination of Temporary Protected Status for 4,000 Burmese nationals, ruling that the justification contradicted documented evidence of ongoing violence.

Systematic attacks on civilians continued throughout January as junta forces deliberately targeted schools, hospitals, churches, monasteries, ceremonies, and displacement sites. The 22 January funeral [bombing](#) in Bhamo killed 22 civilians and wounded over 28 others. Airstrikes destroyed educational facilities, a medical clinic, two churches, and a monastery across Sagaing, Chin State, and other regions. Over 13,000 residents fled 26 villages in Pauk Township as military operations advanced. Resistance forces captured territory in multiple regions, the Kachin Independence Army and All Burma Students' Democratic Front [seized](#) nearly all regime outposts in Katha Township, while the [unification](#) of Chinland Defense Force factions into the Chin People's Army represented strengthened command structures. However, the junta's [recapture](#) of Banmauk Township through sustained aerial bombardment revealed critical vulnerabilities for resistance forces holding urban areas against air campaigns. Internal tensions emerged as the National Unity Consultative Council [suspended](#) the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw from meetings.

### 3. Political, Legal, and International Developments Affecting Myanmar

#### Political, Legal, and International Developments Affecting Myanmar

##### 1. Junta Completes Sham Elections to Establish Military-Controlled Parliament

The Myanmar military junta completed its three-phase electoral process on 25 January 2026, with the military-proxy Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) claiming predetermined victory: 231 of 263 seats in the lower house and 52 of 78 seats in the upper house. The elections, held on 28 December 2025, 11 January, and 25 January, were marked by systematic coercion, widespread public rejection, and continued military operations

coercion, widespread public rejection, and continued military operations against civilian populations.

Voter turnout remained negligible despite intensified pressure tactics during the second phase on 11 January. Authorities documented ballots photographically to enable later identification and reprisals, eliminating ballot secrecy and transforming voting into coerced performance under surveillance. The Union Election Commission publicly acknowledged technical failures with voter lists and electronic voting machines before the third phase. Voting was cancelled entirely in at least 67 townships, primarily in ethnic and conflict-affected regions, while advance voting mechanisms were exploited to fabricate participation rates.

The third phase on 25 January saw polling stations remain largely deserted. The USDP claimed victory in all 17 Yangon townships. In Salingyi Township, Sagaing Region, the junta opened a polling station within the China-owned Yangtze copper mining project while simultaneously shelling nearby villages and forcing residents to flee before pressuring those remaining to vote for the USDP.

On 20 January, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing announced the military-controlled parliament would convene in March and that he would transfer "state responsibilities" to the USDP. Election analyst Htin Kyaw Aye assessed that Min Aung Hlaing will appoint himself or a loyalist as president, installing military dictatorship behind civilian titles. The 2008 Constitution guarantees the military 25 percent of parliamentary seats (166 seats), ensuring continued dominance regardless of electoral outcomes. Min Aung Hlaing dismissed international criticism, stating: "Whether the international community recognizes this or not, we don't understand their perspective. The people's vote is the recognition we need."

The process systematically excluded genuine political participation. The National League for Democracy (NLD), which won landslide victories in 2015 and 2020, was disbanded in 2023. NLD leaders Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint remain detained since the 1 February 2021 coup.

Political parties that won 90 percent of seats in 2020 were barred from participating. At least 404 individuals were arrested under electoral laws for actions including posting critical comments online or refusing to display USDP campaign materials.

Violence continued during the final voting days. On 23 January, airstrikes hit a funeral ceremony in Bhamo Township, Kachin State, killing at least 27 people and injuring over 28 mourners. ALTSEAN-Burma documented 389 separate violent incidents during the second and third voting phases, including 102 airstrikes across 112 townships. Military operations continued even on the final voting day, with five civilians injured during artillery exchanges in Hpakant Township, Kachin State, on 25 January.

Public opposition remained visible despite repression. On 25 January, People's Voices Action activists staged protests in Yangon by projecting audio messages through Bluetooth speakers, while youth organizers distributed anti-election stickers. Karen communities mounted large-scale protests, and Burmese diaspora communities organized demonstrations in Australia and other countries.

### **Why It Matters:**

The junta's electoral process represents an attempt to institutionalize military rule rather than transition toward civilian governance. The 2008 Constitution's guarantee of 25 percent military seats, combined with the USDP's orchestrated victory, ensures Min Aung Hlaing retains control when parliament convenes in March. The process violated international electoral standards, including Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and contradicted ASEAN's stated requirement that violence must cease before credible elections can occur. The regime's arrest of 404 people for minor dissent, coerced participation through photographic ballot surveillance, cancellation of voting in 67 conflict-affected townships, and continuation of military operations killing civilians during voting indicate the exercise aimed to manufacture legitimacy rather than reflect popular will.

How the international community responds carries implications beyond

Myanmar. Recognizing the March parliament or engaging with officials whose authority derives from this fraudulent process would effectively normalize military dictatorship behind civilian facades and establish a precedent that sham elections under military coercion can successfully legitimize authoritarian rule. The March parliament should be understood as consolidating military control through institutional means, not as evidence of political opening.

## **2. International Responses to Myanmar's Sham Elections**

International responses to the junta's elections revealed deep divisions that the regime actively exploited to claim partial legitimacy. The European Union maintained sanctions through at least April 2026, characterizing the process as incompatible with international standards due to pervasive violence, mass arrests, and ongoing armed conflict. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary stated the elections would deepen national divisions, citing the exclusion of pro-democracy forces and continued detention of political prisoners. The United States House of Representatives approved a \$121 million appropriations bill on 14 January for cross-border assistance, governance programs, and accountability efforts, including support for political prisoners, military deserters, and justice initiatives related to crimes against the Rohingya. The legislation, which requires Senate approval and presidential signature, represented continued U.S. support for democratic forces rather than direct engagement with the junta's electoral process.

ASEAN's collective position fragmented along predictable lines. On 21 January, Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan stated that ASEAN would not send observers or certify the elections: "We didn't send observers and by virtue of that, we don't certify the election." Malaysia's position was supported by the Philippines, which holds the 2026 ASEAN chairmanship. However, Myanmar's Information Ministry reported that Cambodia and Vietnam deployed observers alongside delegations from Russia, China, Belarus, and India. Thailand took the most contradictory position, with Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow endorsing the process as contributing to "an important political transition" despite ASEAN's collective stance. As the incoming 2027 ASEAN chair, Bangkok's position directly

stance. As the incoming 2027 ASEAN chair, Bangkok's position directly contradicts the Five-Point Consensus that Thailand formally supports.

Most consequentially, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun publicly congratulated Burma on completing the elections. As the junta's primary arms supplier, diplomatic shield at the UN Security Council, and largest trading partner, Beijing's high-profile endorsement signals willingness to recognize the military-controlled parliament regardless of how it was formed. This provides both diplomatic cover and continued material support for military operations. On 28-29 January, ASEAN Foreign Ministers convened in Cebu for the first major gathering under Philippine chairmanship, with the Troika mechanism (Malaysia-Philippines-Singapore) emphasizing continuity. Malaysia's 2025 chairmanship had conducted 200 engagements, including four stakeholder meetings with the National Unity Government, ethnic resistance organizations, and civil society groups.

Civil society responses highlighted the gap between official positions and accountability expectations. A coalition of 99 organizations from Burma and the Philippines condemned ASEAN Special Envoy Theresa Lazaro's 6 January Naypyidaw visit, characterizing regime engagement as risking legitimization of a "fabricated political order." Myanmar's UN Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun rejected the results on 11 January, stating: "No matter how they conduct this fake, fraudulent election, our revolution to end military dictatorship will continue." The Special Advisory Council for Myanmar declared that any entity legitimizing the military is "complicit in its crimes." Burmese communities in Canada delivered 1,000 signatures to Prime Minister Mark Carney urging rejection of any legitimization attempts.

### **Why It Matters:**

The fragmented international response creates strategic opportunities for the junta to claim divided opinion and leverage bilateral relationships to normalize military dictatorship. China's Foreign Ministry congratulations represent the most consequential endorsement, as Beijing serves as the regime's primary arms supplier, diplomatic shield at the UN Security Council, and largest trading partner. This high-level backing signals willingness to recognize the

military-controlled parliament regardless of how it was formed, providing both diplomatic cover and continued material support. Thailand's endorsement of the process as "political transition", despite being an ASEAN member that formally rejected the elections, further undermines regional cohesion and directly contradicts the Five-Point Consensus.

While Malaysia and the Philippines maintained clear positions against recognition, bilateral observer deployments by Cambodia and Vietnam gave the regime precisely what it sought: evidence of divided opinion that could be leveraged to claim partial international acceptance. The junta deliberately cultivated relationships with authoritarian-aligned states, Belarus, Russia, China, and Cambodia, demonstrating a strategy of seeking validation from governments with similar governance models. The ASEAN Troika provides institutional continuity on Myanmar policy, but effectiveness depends on members aligning bilateral actions with collective positions. Without coordinated consequences for states providing legitimacy, the junta will continue fragmenting international consensus and using bilateral relationships to normalize military dictatorship. How governments manage tensions between stated rejection of the electoral process and their diplomatic engagement, sanctions enforcement, trade policies, and asylum practices will determine whether international pressure compounds or dissipates in coming months.

### **3. ICJ Genocide Hearings Advance Accountability for Rohingya**

Multiple accountability mechanisms advanced simultaneously in January 2026. The International Court of Justice conducted full genocide hearings in The Hague, while civil society groups filed a universal jurisdiction complaint in Timor-Leste for war crimes in Chin State. These proceedings operate alongside ongoing International Criminal Court investigations and evidence collection by the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, creating multiple legal pathways for prosecuting atrocity crimes.

From 12 to 29 January, the ICJ conducted its first full merits hearings in a genocide case in over a decade, examining *The Gambia v. Myanmar*. The case, filed in November 2019, accuses Myanmar of violating obligations

under the 1948 Genocide Convention to prevent and punish genocide against the Rohingya, including killings, sexual violence, and actions deliberately inflicting conditions calculated to destroy the group. The hearings focused on military-led attacks in Rakhine State in 2016 and 2017, while also examining broader patterns of genocidal conduct. Rohingya survivors attended and provided testimony.

Multiple states, including Canada, the UK, Denmark, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, filed declarations of intervention supporting The Gambia's case in November 2023. No countries intervened in support of Myanmar. The ICJ previously ordered provisional measures requiring Myanmar to prevent genocidal acts and preserve evidence, which the junta has disregarded.

The hearings occurred amid renewed hate speech campaigns by ultranationalist forces aligned with the military. On 28 January, the pro-military Patriotic Association of Myanmar (Ma Ba Tha) held a rally in Yangon supporting the regime's delegation. Buddhist monk Ashin Thuseikta denied any genocide occurred, while ultranationalist figure Nay Myo Wai publicly stated: "If you don't want to be wiped out, don't come. If you come, we will do it." Evidence presented to the ICJ demonstrated how the military, affiliated media outlets, ultranationalist groups, and extremist monks orchestrated coordinated campaigns to incite hatred and violence against the Rohingya.

### **Why It Matters:**

The ICJ proceedings represent a landmark case in international genocide law, as the court has ruled on genocide only twice in nearly 80 years. The hearings advance legal interpretation of genocide to encompass the full range of atrocities suffered by the Rohingya, including killings, sexual violence, denial of citizenship, and conditions calculated to destroy the group. The January hearings gain additional significance from their coordination with complementary mechanisms: the Timor-Leste universal jurisdiction case addresses war crimes in Chin State, ICC investigations pursue individual criminal responsibility for crimes against humanity, and the IIMM documents evidence across affected regions. Each mechanism targets different legal aspects of the junta's atrocities, creating overlapping accountability

pressures.

The proceedings expose ongoing dangers facing the Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar. Hate speech campaigns during the hearings demonstrate that the junta permits and actively fuels incitement, reinforcing patterns of systematic persecution. How the international community responds will determine whether accountability mechanisms translate into meaningful pressure on the regime. States must increase funding to the IIMM for comprehensive documentation, provide diplomatic backing for the Timor-Leste investigation, and support ICJ compliance mechanisms. The court should affirm Myanmar's responsibility under the Genocide Convention and establish clear obligations for preventing future atrocities and protecting Rohingya populations both inside Myanmar and in regional refugee situations.

#### **4. U.S. Court Pauses TPS Termination for Burmese Refugees**

On 23 January, a U.S. federal judge ordered the Trump administration to postpone termination of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for nearly 4,000 Burmese nationals, issuing the order one day before TPS was scheduled to expire. The ruling came in response to a class action lawsuit arguing that termination would place thousands at risk of deportation to a country experiencing armed conflict and humanitarian crisis.

Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem announced the termination on 25 November 2025, claiming that Burma's conditions "no longer hinder the safe return" of Burmese nationals and citing "the end of its state of emergency, plans for free and fair elections, successful ceasefire agreements" and improved governance. This assessment contradicted a 19 November 2025 U.S. Mission to the UN statement noting ongoing civil war, attacks on civilians, and human rights violations in Burma. The UN Special Rapporteur called the planned elections "fraudulent" and warned that "elections cannot be free, fair or credible when held amid military violence and repression."

The court ruled: "The Court cannot discern a genuine basis for the Secretary's action in the record and finds it more likely that the decision to

Secretary's action in the record and thus it more likely that the decision to terminate TPS was not actually rooted in the reasons cited in the notice. It is more plausible that TPS was terminated to effectuate the Secretary's broader goal of curtailing immigration and eliminating TPS generally, not on her evaluation of changed conditions in Burma."

The termination was compounded by the Trump administration's travel ban affecting Burma. USCIS announced an indefinite freeze on processing immigration applications, including asylum benefits, for anyone from countries under the travel ban, blocking Burmese immigrants from pursuing alternative legal pathways. Burma is the first country for which the administration used the travel ban to justify ending TPS. TPS was initially granted to Burmese nationals following the 1 February 2021 military coup.

### **Why It Matters:**

The court ruling prevents immediate deportations but does not resolve contradictions in U.S. policy toward Myanmar. While the administration officially condemns the junta, the termination attempt and travel ban created conditions for deporting those fleeing military rule. The justification for termination contradicted documented conditions on the ground and the U.S. government's own UN assessments, suggesting the decision was driven by broader immigration policy goals rather than country-specific analysis.

The combination of TPS termination and travel ban restrictions created compounded vulnerability for Burmese nationals, particularly democracy activists, journalists, and ethnic minorities who face detention, torture, or forced conscription if returned. The case illustrates tensions between domestic immigration policy priorities and foreign policy positions on Myanmar, and demonstrates how judicial oversight can check executive actions that ignore documented country conditions. How the administration proceeds after this temporary stay will test whether U.S. policy maintains coherence between stated condemnation of the junta and protection decisions for those fleeing military rule.

## **5. Civil Society Advances Universal Jurisdiction Case in Timor-Leste**

On 18 January, the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) and the

On 13 January, the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) and the Myanmar Accountability Project filed a criminal complaint with Timor-Leste's Public Prosecutor requesting an investigation of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Chin State under universal jurisdiction principles. The filing represents a civil society-led accountability initiative operating parallel to ICJ and ICC proceedings.

The complaint documents systematic attacks on Chin State's predominantly Christian population since July 2022, including approximately 1,000 airstrikes that killed at least 478 civilians (including 91 women and 79 children) and destroyed over 4,600 homes. The evidence includes 78 churches damaged or destroyed among 127 religious buildings targeted, along with 19 medical facilities and 25 schools. Specific incidents documented include gang rape of a pregnant woman, massacre of ten people (including a journalist and a 13-year-old boy), deliberate killing of one pastor and three deacons, and an aerial attack on a hospital killing four medical staff and four patients.

Lead lawyer Jose Teixeira stated the case would place minimal pressure on Timor-Leste's judicial system, noting that evidence has been meticulously documented by CHRO and that the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) possesses additional verified evidence available to Timorese authorities. President José Ramos-Horta received the delegation on 14 January. The junta subsequently summoned Timor-Leste's chargé d'affaires, characterizing the filing as "blatant interference."

The complainants emphasized parallels with Timor-Leste's experience of colonial rule and post-independence atrocities, drawing comparisons between the junta's attacks on demonstrators and the 1991 Santa Cruz Massacre in Dili. The filing follows a successful universal jurisdiction case in Argentina that resulted in international arrest warrants for alleged genocide and crimes against humanity against the Rohingya.

### **Why It Matters:**

Universal jurisdiction allows states to prosecute grave international crimes regardless of where they occurred or the nationality of victims and

perpetrators, creating accountability pathways when domestic mechanisms have collapsed. The Timor-Leste filing demonstrates civil society's capacity to advance justice through creative use of international legal mechanisms and provides Chin State survivors an avenue to pursue accountability for systematic targeting of Christian communities, medical facilities, and civilian infrastructure.

The junta's threatening response reveals its sensitivity to accountability mechanisms and attempts to intimidate states from exercising universal jurisdiction. If Timor-Leste proceeds, it would signal that ASEAN member states can take concrete accountability action without waiting for regional consensus. The case operates alongside complementary mechanisms, ICJ proceedings for state responsibility regarding Rohingya genocide, ICC investigations for crimes against humanity, and IIMM evidence collection, creating overlapping legal pressures that address the full range of junta atrocities across Myanmar. How Timor-Leste responds to junta pressure will indicate whether states are willing to exercise universal jurisdiction despite diplomatic costs, potentially establishing precedent for other jurisdictions to pursue similar cases.

## **6. Regime Administration Returns to Strategic Territory Through Ceasefires**

On 21 January, regime employees including police and administration officials arrived in Mogok Township, Mandalay Region, following the Ta'ang National Liberation Army's (TNLA) handover of the town to the junta on 28 November 2025 as part of a China-brokered ceasefire. The TNLA had seized Mogok in July 2024. Regime media reported that the military reopened the 55-mile road connecting Mogok and Thabeikkyin townships on 19 January. Over 1,000 regime troops were escorted into Mogok by the TNLA in late November as part of the ceasefire arrangement.

Mogok represents a significant strategic asset as a major ruby mining center and revenue source. National Unity Government (NUG) People's Defence Force (PDF) units attempted to contest the handover, seizing a regime outpost in early December in what the PDF described as "guerrilla style"

outpost in early December in what the TNL described as "guerrilla style" attacks after the TNL completed its withdrawal. The NUG has not provided updates since 24 December.

The Mogok case illustrates how China-brokered ceasefires between the junta and ethnic armed organizations can result in strategically valuable territory reverting to military control, even in areas where resistance forces had successfully displaced regime presence. Similar dynamics have occurred in other border areas where Beijing has facilitated arrangements prioritizing stability and cross-border economic interests over resistance movement objectives.

### **Why It Matters:**

The Mogok handover exposes tensions between ethnic armed organizations' autonomous ceasefire decisions and broader resistance coordination. While the TNL may have strategic or economic rationale for the arrangement, returning regime administration to major revenue-generating areas directly strengthens the junta's capacity to fund military operations elsewhere. China's ceasefire brokering reflects Beijing's prioritization of border stability and protection of economic investments over support for democratic transition or accountability for atrocities.

These arrangements create fragmentation within the resistance movement, allowing the junta to consolidate control in economically valuable territories even as it loses ground elsewhere. The NUG's limited capacity to prevent or reverse such handovers highlights coordination challenges with ethnic armed organizations that maintain autonomous command structures and make independent strategic decisions. How resistance forces manage these tensions, between EAO autonomy and unified strategy, will affect their ability to sustain territorial gains and maintain military pressure on the regime.

## **7. Internal Resistance Dynamics: NUCC Suspends CRPH**

On 16 January, the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) confirmed that the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) has suspended it from formal meetings since November 2025 over what the group characterizes as "minor internal disputes." CRPH spokesperson Sithu

Maung stated that the NUCC has not set conditions or timelines for allowing resumed participation, though "limited coordination" continues between the groups.

The suspension follows temporary withdrawals by two of Burma's oldest ethnic armed groups, the Karen National Union (KNU) and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), from the NUCC in November 2025. The NUCC was established on 8 March 2021 as an alliance of ethnic armed groups seeking to build an inclusive federal democratic union, while the CRPH was formed on 5 February 2021 by NLD parliamentarians and elected representatives who rejected the coup. The CRPH served as a legislative body in defiance of the junta and was instrumental in establishing the National Unity Government in April 2021.

### **Why It Matters:**

Internal disputes within Myanmar's resistance structures risk fragmenting unified opposition to military rule. The NUCC's suspension of CRPH combined with KNU and KNPP withdrawals signals tensions around representation, decision-making authority, and strategic direction. These dynamics matter because international actors increasingly recognize the NUG, NUCC, and CRPH as legitimate representatives of the Myanmar people. The European Parliament's November 2025 resolution explicitly recognized the NUG and CRPH, and Malaysia's 2025 ASEAN chairmanship included these bodies in stakeholder engagement meetings for the first time.

The disputes reflect deeper structural questions about post-coup governance. The CRPH represents electoral legitimacy from the 2020 vote that the military refused to accept, while the NUCC includes ethnic armed organizations that predate the NLD and have independent political mandates from their constituencies. Balancing these competing sources of authority within a unified framework requires sustained dialogue and compromise. Visible fractures provide the junta with propaganda opportunities and could complicate international support decisions.

How resistance leadership manages these tensions will affect their ability to sustain military pressure, maintain international backing, and lay the groundwork for eventual federal democratic governance. The pattern also raises questions about whether the resistance movement can maintain the coalition unity that has been a key source of strength since the coup, or whether organizational tensions will undermine coordination at a critical juncture when the junta seeks to consolidate control through its March parliament.

#### 4. Resistance Gains

Throughout January, resistance forces continued operations across multiple regions despite the junta's intensified military offensives during the electoral period. Armed groups conducted coordinated attacks on regime outposts, intercepted military supply lines, and seized strategic positions in Sagaing, Chin State, Bago Region, Mon State, and Magway Region. The month also saw significant organizational developments, with the unification of Chin resistance groups into a single military structure. However, resistance forces faced setbacks in some areas, particularly where the junta deployed aerial bombardment to retake previously liberated territory.

- **Late December–January - Katha Township, Sagaing Region:** The Kachin Independence Army (KIA), working alongside the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), captured nearly all regime outposts in Katha Township, located 223 miles (359 km) north of Monywa. KIA-led resistance forces launched their offensive against regime positions on 28 December. More than 100,000 residents from Katha and nearby villages were forced to flee their homes due to the fighting.

- **4 January - Padaung Township, Bago Region:** Arakan Army forces raided a Myanmar Army outpost in a 35-minute assault that killed ten soldiers, including Colonel Han Lin Aung of Military Operations Command 10.

- **4 January - Mandalay Region:** Sein Lwin, husband and second-in-command of Pyusawhti militia leader Thida Yumon (a former Thway Thout figure), was captured with drugs by Mandalay Region-based People's Defence Forces.

- **5 January - Falam Township, Chin State:** Chin resistance forces

ambushed a Myanmar Army unit near Thaing Ngin village, capturing weapons and soldiers during the engagement.

- [9 January](#) - **Bago Region:** PDF forces attacked more than 12 Tatmadaw positions across Bago Region and captured the village of Taw Kywe Inn.

- [10–12 January](#) - **Ye Township, Mon State:** Ramonnya Mon Army forces conducted multiple attacks on junta targets, including the regional operations command in Ye town. The attacks were linked to disrupting election-related activities during the second phase of voting.

- [12 January](#) - **Chinland:** The Chinland Defense Force (CDF) announced the unification of its four constituent groups into the newly-formed Chin People's Army (CPA). The CPA stated it will cooperate with the Chin Brotherhood, one of two major Chin resistance factions fighting the military regime. The organization declared its objective is to continue opposing military rule by "establishing a federal democratic system that guarantees self-determination for the Chin people." The CPA's political wing, the Chin People's Union (CPU), will operate within the Interim Chin National Consultative Council (ICNCC). This consolidation represents a significant organizational development for Chin resistance forces, potentially improving coordination and operational effectiveness.

- [12 January](#) - **Between Mindon Township and Thayet Town, Magway Region:** Resistance forces intercepted a junta military column transporting ballot boxes between Mindon Township and Thayet Town, killing four soldiers. The attack disrupted the regime's efforts to transport electoral materials during the second phase of voting.

- [18 January](#) - **Banmauk Township, Sagaing Region:** A joint force of Tatmadaw troops and the pro-regime Shanni Nationalities Army (SNA) recaptured the majority of Banmauk Township from the PDF, though resistance forces retained control of the Aung Thar Kone neighborhood. Banmauk has been under PDF control since 20 September 2025.

## Why It Matters

January's resistance operations occurred against the backdrop of the junta's sham electoral process, with several attacks directly targeting election infrastructure and personnel. The interception of ballot transport convoys and

infrastructure and personnel. The interception of ballot transport convoys and attacks on election command centers in Ye Township demonstrate resistance forces' strategic focus on disrupting the regime's efforts to manufacture legitimacy through fraudulent voting.

The unification of Chinland Defense Force factions into the Chin People's Army represents a significant organizational maturation for Chin resistance groups. Consolidating command structures and establishing formal political representation through the Chin People's Union could improve coordination between military and political wings of the Chin resistance movement and strengthen their position in any future federal democratic framework.

The KIA-ABSDF capture of Katha Township and the displacement of over 100,000 civilians illustrate both the military pressure that resistance forces can apply in certain areas and the humanitarian consequences of sustained combat operations. The regime's use of civilian displacement as a counterinsurgency tactic, forcing populations to flee areas under resistance control, continues to create protection crises that strain humanitarian response capacity.

The recapture of Banmawk Township by junta forces supported by the SNA reveals critical vulnerabilities for resistance forces. The PDF source's explicit attribution of the loss to aerial bombardment underscores how the junta's air superiority allows it to reverse territorial losses even when its ground forces cannot match resistance capabilities. This pattern, resistance forces seizing territory through ground operations, only to face retreat under sustained aerial attack, has repeated across Sagaing, Magway, and other regions. It highlights the urgent need for mechanisms to constrain the junta's access to aviation fuel and aircraft parts, which enable these bombardment campaigns that target both resistance positions and civilian populations.

The presence of pro-regime ethnic armed groups like the SNA fighting alongside the Tatmadaw also demonstrates the regime's strategy of co-opting certain armed organizations to supplement its overstretched forces. This creates additional complexity for resistance coordination and risks exacerbating ethnic tensions that the junta exploits to divide opposition

forces.

## 5. On the Ground: Escalating Violence and Human Rights Violations

### On the Ground: Escalating Violence and Human Rights Violations

In January 2026, junta forces intensified attacks on civilians across Myanmar, deploying airstrikes, artillery, drone warfare, and ground operations that deliberately targeted civilian infrastructure including schools, hospitals, churches, and displacement sites. The violence continued even as the regime staged its electoral charade, with military operations proceeding during all three phases of voting. Dozens of civilians were killed in strikes on schools sheltering students and displaced persons, medical facilities treating the wounded, funeral ceremonies, and residential areas. Thousands more were forced to flee their homes as military columns advanced through townships and aircraft bombed civilian settlements. These incidents reflect ongoing violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including potential war crimes under the Rome Statute.

#### *1. Targeted attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure*

Under international humanitarian law, civilians must never be the object of attack. Article 8(2)(e)(i) of the Rome Statute prohibits attacks intentionally directed against civilians in non-international armed conflicts.

- [2 January](#) - **Methe village, Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Region:** Three civilians were killed and seven others injured by Burma Air Force airstrikes.
- [4 January](#) - **Mataungta village, Salingyi Township, Sagaing Region:** Three civilians, two patients, and one doctor were killed when regime forces carried out gyrocopter attacks on a hospital.
- [5 January](#) - **Kongyi village, Khin-U Township, Sagaing Region:** Five civilians were killed and at least ten others injured when a Burma Air Force jet from Tada-U Air Force base in neighboring Mandalay Region dropped bombs on a school. The attack occurred eight days after previous airstrikes killed nine civilians in Khin-U Township on 27 December.
- [11 January](#) - **Hpruso Township, Karenni State:** Artillery and drone attacks damaged IDP shelters and destroyed property worth millions of

Myanmar Kyat, targeting displaced persons who had fled previous military operations.

- **14 January - Thaphanzeik reservoir area, Kyunhla Township, Sagaing Region:** At least eight civilians were injured when five Burma Air Force jets dropped bombs and fired rounds into gold mining sites in western Kyunhla Township. The attack targeted civilian economic activity, with an unknown number of bombs dropped on the mining area.

- **15 January - Natogyi Township, Mandalay Region:** Nine civilians were killed when junta forces bombed a football field using gyrocopter attacks.

- **15 January - Hnaw Pin village, Myaing Township, Magway Region:** Junta forces from Light Infantry Divisions 88 and 99 burned 76 houses, destroying homes, cattle sheds, and feed shelters along with over 1,000 baskets of peanuts. One woman over 60 years old, Daw Mya Shin, died after being trapped in the fire, unable to escape due to poor health and lack of physical mobility. The troops arrested approximately 20 villagers while they were fleeing, releasing them on the morning of 16 January. No clashes or military operations were occurring in the area at the time of the attack. - **BHRN Documentation\_1\_Magway/15Jan26**

- **16 January - Thit Nyo Pin village, Monywa Township, Sagaing Region:** Combined forces from the Northwestern Regional Military Command including Pyu Saw Htee militia from Taw Bu village, People's Militia, and junta troops from Units 33, 44, 77, 101, and 102 (approximately 150-160 personnel) shelled the village with paramotors and mortars before entering at 7:00 a.m., then burned 25 houses and two shops starting at 9:00 a.m. The forces detained approximately 30 civilians, including women and children, subjected detainees to severe beatings with groups of 20 soldiers assaulting individual victims, looted valuables, including 1 million kyats, and threatened to kill a 15-day-old infant and an elderly man during arrests. -**BHRN Documentation\_3\_Sagaing/16Jan26**

- **16 January - Taung Ma Taw Village, Monywa Township:** A 100-pound bomb dropped by a paramotor aircraft operated by junta forces struck a monastery compound, killing one monk and injuring three novice monks. The monastery building was also damaged in the blast. **BHRN**

**Documentation\_4\_Sagaing/16-Jan26**

- **[20 January](#) - Chaungtu village, Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine State:** At least 21 people were killed and 30 others injured by Burma Air Force airstrikes. The Arakan Army (AA) stated that the victims were regime troops and their families who were "scheduled for release," indicating the attack may have targeted individuals attempting to leave military service.
- **[22 January](#) - Bhamo Township, Kachin State:** At least 22 civilians were killed and more than 20 others injured when the Burma Air Force struck a funeral ceremony. The attack deliberately targeted mourners gathered for a burial, representing a particularly egregious violation of humanitarian principles.
- **[25 January](#) - Hpakant Township, Kachin State:** Five civilians were injured during artillery exchanges between regime forces and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) during the third round of voting on 25 January.
- **[26 January](#) - Ngapioh village, Shwebo Township, Sagaing Region:** Three civilians were killed and at least 12 others injured when the Burma Air Force carried out two rounds of airstrikes on a residential area and a school.

## *II. Attacks on Religious and Cultural Sites*

Under the Rome Statute, intentionally directing attacks against religious buildings not being used for military purposes is a war crime under Article 8(2)(e)(iv). Such attacks also violate the fundamental right to freedom of religion and destroy cultural heritage that provides communities with identity and cohesion.

- **[14 January](#) - Lente village, Falam Township, Chin State:** Two churches and an unknown number of houses were destroyed by a Burma Air Force airstrike.
- **[14 January](#) - Demoso Township, Karenni State:** Artillery and drone fire damaged a church.
- **[15 January](#) - Kani Township, Sagaing Region:** Two monks were injured, and monastic buildings were damaged when junta forces carried out a gyrocopter attack on a monastery.

## *II. Forced Displacement*

The systematic and widespread forced displacement of civilian populations, when committed as part of an attack against a civilian population, constitutes a crime against humanity under Article 7(1)(d) of the Rome Statute. Displacement through military operations that make return unsafe also violates fundamental rights to housing, property, and freedom of movement.

- **18 January - Pauk Township, Magway Region:** Over 13,000 residents from 26 villages fled into the mountains amid junta military operations.

#### *IV. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, and Forced Conscription*

Arbitrary arrest, detention, and forced conscription violate Articles 7(1)(e), 7(1)(f), and 8(2)(e)(vii) of the Rome Statute.

- **15 January - Hnaw Pin village, Myaing Township, Magway Region:** Troops from Light Infantry Divisions 88 and 99 detained approximately 25-30 villagers, predominantly women and children, including twin breastfeeding infants, while residents were fleeing the military advance. The detained villagers were held overnight at a monastery school, and at least one man, U Kyi Win, was beaten behind the school and required medical treatment at the village clinic before the detainees were released on the morning of 16 January. **-BHRN Documentation\_1\_Magway/15Jan26**

- **16 January - Pyay, Bago Region:** Pyu Saw Htee militia forces forcibly recruited four men as porters, including Ko Zaw Min, who was stopped while riding his bicycle near Block 1 after buying food at Myothit Market, and three youths arrested inside a motorcycle repair shop in Nawing Ward. All four were taken to Battalion 959, where families can negotiate for release, or the men are sent for training before being deployed to the front lines. **-BHRN Documentation\_2\_Bago/16Jan26**

## **6. Policy Recommendations**

- Refuse recognition of the military-controlled parliament convening in March 2026: States must deny diplomatic engagement with officials deriving authority from the fraudulent electoral process. They should refuse visas to USDP parliamentarians and exclude Myanmar from international forums where the junta attempts to claim representation through puppet government structures.

- Implement comprehensive aviation sanctions targeting fuel suppliers and aircraft maintenance providers: States should expand sanctions to include secondary measures against entities facilitating aviation fuel shipment to Myanmar. They must pressure Thailand and Singapore to cease aircraft maintenance services. States should sanction companies providing parts that enable continued bombardment campaigns killing civilians and reversing resistance territorial gains.
- Establish a regional refugee protection framework with binding non-refoulement commitments: All ASEAN states must align their asylum policies with their stated rejection of the junta's legitimacy. Deporting asylum seekers back is morally wrong and complicit in the crime that the junta is committing.
- Coordinate international pressure on China to cease enabling junta military operations and diplomatic legitimization: Beijing's Foreign Ministry congratulations provided a high-profile endorsement following the sham elections. China remains the junta's primary arms supplier, UN Security Council protector, and aviation fuel facilitator. States should jointly demand that China halt arms transfers, cease aviation fuel sales enabling bombardment campaigns, and stop providing diplomatic cover that fragments international consensus against military dictatorship.
- Provide substantial financial and diplomatic support to all accountability mechanisms advancing simultaneously: States should increase IIMM funding and provide diplomatic backing for Timor-Leste's universal jurisdiction investigation and assist in resisting junta threats. States should support the ICJ genocide case through amicus briefs and pressure for Myanmar's compliance with provisional measures. They must advocate for expedited ICC arrest warrants for those bearing the greatest responsibility.
- Protect Burmese refugees and asylum seekers from politically motivated deportation attempts: States should support the U.S. court

ruling blocking TPS termination and advocate for permanent protection status. They must pressure states attempting to deport democracy activists, journalists, and ethnic minorities who face detention, torture, or execution if returned. Governments rejecting the junta's legitimacy must extend protection to those fleeing military rule rather than criminalizing them.

- Counter the junta's March parliament narrative through coordinated international messaging: States should publicly communicate that the military-controlled parliament represents a consolidation of dictatorship, not a political transition. They must coordinate messaging emphasizing that Min Aung Hlaing maintains absolute control regardless of civilian titles. States should ensure international media coverage frames the March parliament as a puppet institution rather than a legitimate governance structure.

## **Background on the Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)**

Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN) is based in London, operates across Burma/Myanmar and works for human rights, minority rights and religious freedom in Burma. BHRN has played a crucial role in advocating for human rights and religious freedom with politicians and world leaders.

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