



**ND- Burma**



# **DEMOCRACY DIES WHERE DICTATORS THRIVE**

**Human Rights Violations by the Military Junta Post-Sham Election**

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Cover Photo : Human Rights Defenders and Promoters (HRDP)



## Introduction

More than five years after the attempted coup in Burma on 1 February 2021, coup leader Min Aung Hlaing declared himself president on 3 April 2026.<sup>1</sup> Weeks later, on April 20, the junta announced a ‘100-Day Plan’ outlining its intention to seek peace, economic recovery, and infrastructure modernization, and to invite armed groups to negotiations.<sup>2</sup> This is the latest sham effort by the junta to mislead the international community with diplomatic theatre that lacks credibility, especially as conflict continues to rage across most of the country.

Min Aung Hlaing’s self-appointment led him to claim that *“Myanmar has returned to the path of democracy.”*<sup>3</sup> Such a statement deliberately ignores the devastating impacts of human rights on civilians. A civil war waged by the junta has plunged thousands into irreversible poverty, decimated progress towards gender equality and protections for the most vulnerable, and eroded livelihood pathways, such as agriculture, on which the majority of civilians in rural areas depend to sustain themselves. The international community must not be fooled. In the short period between early April and mid-May 2026, despite the junta’s so-called commitment to ‘peace and security,’ attacks against civilians were widespread. Over 140 civilians have been killed by airstrikes alone since the 100-day peace announcement, with nearly 300 aerial attacks taking place between 20 April and 1 June.<sup>4</sup>

1 Min Aung Hlaing: Myanmar’s coup leader becomes president, BBC, 3 April 2026

2 100-Day Plan Expectations vs. Realities, Institute for Strategy and Policy – Myanmar, 5 May 2026

3 Myanmar’s coup leader Min Aung Hlaing sworn in as president, Al Jazeera, 10 April 2026

4 Over 140 civilians killed by airstrikes in Myanmar since ‘100-day peace offer’ from Min Aung Hlaing, Democratic Voice of Burma, 5 June 2026

The suffering of the nation's people has not been of concern to the dictators of Burma, who have continued to seek illicit pathways to grow their profits at the cost of local lives. Military-aligned companies have consolidated economic control, allowing them to prosper despite facing several sanctions across Europe and North America. By extension, crony companies serve as key joint venture partners and de facto regulators for state-owned enterprises overseen by the junta's Ministry of Natural Resources, facilitating the lucrative extraction and export of minerals that are mined on the backs of local workers, who are underpaid, exploited, and employed as day labourers in resource-rich regions of the country.<sup>5</sup>

While millions displaced are subjected to immense hardships, including a lack of clean water, adequate shelter and nutrition, a rigged and corrupt election resulted in yet another illegal power-grab that the terrorist regime is now using as a catapult to assert legitimacy through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and international stakeholders. While ASEAN did not formally recognize the sham election, problematic engagement has increased since coup leader Min Aung Hlaing made himself President, including through diplomatic outreach. Thailand, in particular, has sought to bring Burma back into the regional bloc by encouraging its invitation to various summits and meetings.<sup>6</sup> The junta also continues to seek support from China, Russia and India to leverage their position.

As the junta embraces their illegal rule, it is critical to note that voting did not take place in every part of the country due to conflict ravaging many areas, making it impossible to cast ballots.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the junta has insisted that their supposed victory was a 'landslide.' In reality, extractive and intimidating practices were carried out by

5 Treasury Sanctions Regime Officials and Military Affiliated Cronies in Burma on One-Year Anniversary of Military Coup, 31 January 2022

6 Thai foreign minister seeks ASEAN talks with Myanmar counterpart, Reuters, 5 May 2026

7 Myanmar Junta Plans Voting in 102 Townships, The Irrawaddy, 21 August 2025

junta supporters and members of the Burma Army to violently coerce civilians in local villages and towns to vote for the pro-military Union Solidarity and Development Party.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, the hijacking of the legal system continued with laws going into effect which directly undermined voter independence and integrity, including the Law on the Protection of Multiparty Democratic General Elections, which criminalized speaking out or inciting violence against the election or election workers.<sup>9</sup> Jail sentences for those found guilty were three years to a maximum of life imprisonment or even the death penalty.<sup>10</sup> This blatant weaponization of the rule of law led to the unlawful detainment of civilians.<sup>11</sup>

Attacks also dramatically increased in areas where the junta was seeking to control areas to hold voting, where once again civilians were forced to bear the impact of the junta's volatility.<sup>12</sup> In the lead-up to the December 2025 vote, the military engaged in a widespread civilian-targeting campaign, recording over 210 deadly attacks that resulted in at least 191 civilian fatalities between December 28, 2025 and late January 2026.<sup>13</sup>

Prior to the sham election, the former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, unequivocally rejected the military junta's so-called election, declaring it neither free, fair, nor legitimate.<sup>14</sup> There were also warnings to observers that this election would be rigged as it occurred with 'total surveillance.'<sup>15</sup> *"To endorse an election under these conditions is to endorse both physical*

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8 Myanmar: Repressive tactics intensify before junta-imposed elections Amnesty International, 22 December 2026

9 Ibid

10 Ibid

11 Myanmar arrests hundreds under new election law ahead of December vote, Reuters, 19 December 2025

12 The Junta Is Ramping Up Its Attacks on Civilians Ahead of Its Sham Elections, Special Advisory Council - Myanmar, 12 December 2025

13 UN decries deadly Myanmar airstrike, amid mounting military attacks on civilians, UN News, 8 October 2025

14 "Illegitimate elections yield illegitimate results": UN expert urges rejection of Myanmar junta's sham poll results, UN OCHA, 23 January 2026

15 "Voting under the barrel of a gun," A Country At War, Not At the Polls, The Human Rights Foundation of Monland, 13 November 2025

*and digital repression,”* stated ND-Burma member organization, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland.<sup>16</sup>

While the junta moves to expand its presence in parliament, loyalists to the regime are carrying out an authoritarian agenda in which human rights violations are being perpetrated daily. The democratic opposition and the emerging federal bodies have been branded ‘armed terrorist factions,’ and face daily threats to their well-being and security. Thousands have been killed in the last five years, with the situation looking to only worsen as 16 million people are in need of life-saving humanitarian assistance.<sup>17</sup>

Further, this briefing paper by the Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma (ND-Burma) will draw on a combination of desk research, cases, and case studies from our member organizations to highlight how military impunity persists in the aftermath of the sham election and, specifically, how human rights violations have continued since the junta announced its 100-Day plan.

It is clear that the ruling regime has no intention of promoting or protecting human rights. ND-Burma strongly calls on the international community not to be fooled by the election, which not only lacked transparency but also failed to meet basic electoral standards.<sup>18</sup> As human rights violations continue, accountability is needed to ensure justice for victims.

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16 Ibid

17 As conflict fuels suffering in Myanmar, UN publishes humanitarian report forecasting most urgent needs for 2026, United Nations Myanmar, 10 December 2025

18 Military elections fail 5 key international standards, Human Rights perpetrated, Myanmar, 27 January 2026



## Observations by ND-Burma Members Post-Sham Election

The general election took place in three phases, beginning on December 28, 2025, and concluding early in 2026. Staggering statistics on the human rights violations perpetrated by the military junta during the sham election period were widely documented.<sup>19</sup>

According to ALTSEAN Burma, between 20 December 2025 and 30 January 2026, there were 1,288 armed clashes and attacks against civilians, which killed 281 civilians in 178 (out of 330) townships.<sup>20</sup> The junta also launched 308 airstrikes across 89 townships.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, as the polls took place, the junta held nearly 23,000 political prisoners, which was notably the highest figure reported in Southeast Asia.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, data collected by the civil society group, Athan, indicated that by the end of December, at least 130 townships across Burma had experienced phone and internet shutdowns.<sup>23</sup>

ND-Burma members also documented cases of the military junta violating civilians' rights and freedoms, notably since Min Aung Hlaing declared himself President in April 2026. The following are observations, data and cases from ND-Burma members between early April and mid-May.

<sup>19</sup> Bombs to Ballots: Myanmar Junta's Bloody Race for Recognition Exposing the junta's campaign of terror to stage a sham election, The Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma, 1 October 2025

<sup>20</sup> FROM SHAM TO SCAM: Overview of Burma/Myanmar's Fraudulent Election (25 Dec 2025 - 31 Jan 2026), ALT-SEAN-Burma, FIDH, 6 February 2026

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Monthly Overview: Terror Tactics Continue Amid Second and Third Phases of the Military Junta's Sham Election, The Human Rights Foundation of Monland, 2 February 2026



- ❖ The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) reported that seven individuals were arrested under political pretenses in May 2026. Moreover, forty-nine pro-democracy activists and civilians lost their lives. Among them, three died under various circumstances following their arrest.<sup>24</sup> AAPP observed that the military junta's "100-Day Plan" is not a peace initiative. Instead, the junta continues carrying out aerial attacks against innocent children, women, schools, and religious facilities, while maintaining control over the population through fear and oppression.<sup>25</sup>



- ❖ In Chin State, the displacement rate is six times the national average due to sustained junta war crimes and atrocities since the failed 2021 coup. The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) referred to the sham election as an 'illusion' intended to distract the international community from the crimes being committed. Many families have been displaced multiple times. Thousands remain in forests, informal camps, or across the border in India, surviving with very limited humanitarian assistance. Of additional concern is that the military junta has seated its appointees in the Chin State parliament in Hakha while its air force continues bombing communities across the state.

CHRO reported that from the beginning of April 2026 to mid-May, airstrikes caused the destruction of dozens of homes, as well as religious buildings. Indiscriminate firing and arbitrary arrests by the junta led to the deaths of local people. In addition, property rights were routinely violated, with at least 80 houses intentionally burned down in Falam Township.

<sup>24</sup> May, 2026 Monthly Chronology, AAPP, 3 June 2026

<sup>25</sup> Ibid



- ❖ Human Rights Defenders and Promoters (HRDP): In April, in the Bago Region, there were four civilian houses destroyed by paramotors, which have emerged as a rising threat to civilian safety. Airstrikes in the Bago Region also led to the death of two men and three wounded men.

By contrast, in May, HRDP reported that in the Sagaing Region, two elderly women were killed by shelling. In the Bago region, three civilian homes were also destroyed in attacks by the junta. Destruction of properties led to additional homes being destroyed, as well as the injury of an elderly woman. Drone attacks also persisted, with another home ruined. In the Magway Region, the deliberate burning of 400 homes in a village left many without a safe place to live.

*12 April 2026,  
nearly 400 houses  
were burned  
down in a village  
in the Magway  
Region (photo  
credit: HRDP)*





- ❖ The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) denounced the election as a “sham” orchestrated to entrench military rule rather than restore civilian government. Throughout May 2026, HURFOM documented a worrying increase in cases of violence against women and children across targeted areas of Mon State, Karen State, and the Tanintharyi Region.<sup>26</sup> In May alone, as a result of the junta’s violence, many across HURFOM communities have been displaced. Residents from at least 10 villages in Tanintharyi Township, Myeik District, have been forced to flee their homes as junta troops advance through the area.<sup>27</sup> Landmines also pose a threat, as local residents said they are afraid to travel to gardens, plantations, and forested areas, fearing that more landmines or explosive remnants may remain.



- ❖ Comparatively, in Kachin State, the Kachin Women’s Association-Thailand (KWAT) documented an alarming rate of attacks and deliberate targeting of civilians, undermining the safety and security of women and children who no longer feel safe in their communities. KWAT reported several cases of unlawful arrest by the military junta across its focus areas, as well as six cases of shelling that led to civilian casualties and property destruction. Two airstrikes by the junta were also reported.



- ❖ The Pa-O Youth Organization (PYO) reported that no major armed clashes were reported in its operational areas, including Mawkmai, Hsihseng, Hopong, Taunggyi, Loilen and Pinlaung townships, though occasional fighting between armed groups continued in the border areas between Shan State and Karenni State, particularly around the townships of Mawkmai, Hsihseng, and Pinlaung. As these incidents occurred in remote forested areas, they did not directly affect local people.

<sup>26</sup> May 2026 Monthly Overview, The Human Rights Foundation of Monland, 1 June 2026

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

“  
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However, PYO noted that local communities continued to experience human rights violations stemming from the conflict’s ongoing impacts. These violations include various forms of extortion disguised as taxation, such as monthly payments demanded by the military junta and the Pa-O National Organization/Army (PNO/A) under the pretext of military conscription, as well as vehicle taxes imposed based on vehicle type. In addition, armed groups reside in local communities in order to provide security. As a result, local residents are compelled to cook for them, deliver meals, and provide rice and other supplies.

In some areas, land confiscation continues. Land rights activists and others who have opposed such practices have been arrested and imprisoned, while a significant number of conflict-displaced persons remain unable to return to their homelands.



- ❖ The Ta’ang Women’s Organization (TWO) noted several cases of landmine explosions since the junta’s self-appointment to govern. A local man from Mang Nar Village, Kaung San Village Tract in Tangyang Township – an area controlled by the junta – sustained severe injuries to his face, especially his eyes as well as his arms, in a handmade mine explosion, according to local sources. At 4:00 PM on April 21, the resident was reportedly attempting to detonate a mine for fishing in a nearby stream when it exploded.

*“They went to the stream to mine and catch fish. There were several people present, but only one was hit. The mine exploded in his hands just as he was about to throw it. It was a handmade mine. He lost fingers on both hands, and his entire face, including his eyes, was badly injured,”* a local resident said. The victim has been identified as 41-year-old Sai Ailu, an ethnic Shan man. He sought emergency medical treatment at Lashio General Hospital.



- ❖ The Tavoyan Women's Union (TWU) shared three cases of landmines planted by the military junta in local areas that led to civilians being injured or killed, as well as other human rights violations, including one airstrike, several cases of arbitrary arrest and indiscriminate firing. Young men in particular have been increasingly targeted in abductions and enforced disappearances as part of the regime's illegal and unlawful forced conscription bid.

Further, as ND-Burma members have made clear, the situation on the ground across the country is deteriorating. The military does not care about human rights or the safety and security of people who have been suffering from the worsening conflict since 2021. Despite the immense risks ND-Burma members face, they remain committed to preserving and promoting the truth. Their cases and on-the-ground observations amplify concerns about civilian safety and are a clear call to the international community that the junta's claims of normalcy are a farce. Much more coordinated and direct action is needed to hold the junta accountable and end military impunity.



## Conclusion

As this briefing paper clearly indicates, the military's sham election did nothing but advance its own interests. Local people are continuing to reel from the long-lasting impacts of the regime's war, against a backdrop of worrying levels of engagement that the junta is using to shield itself from the long-standing crimes it has committed. Exploitative and threatening tactics are being used against civilians as part of the daily erosion of their rights and freedoms, and any semblance of security has rapidly declined under the regime.

Further, the denial of life-saving treatment to traumatized populations who have lost nearly everything in a bid to survive exemplifies the junta's lack of morality and reiterates calls for a global arms embargo. As thousands seek refuge from the junta's violence, which has indiscriminately targeted civilians, soldiers are arresting and detaining local people as they attempt to reach safety. The challenges civilians face due to the military coup are worsening daily. The crimes being perpetrated daily must be condemned, and pathways to accountability supported.

Member organizations are taking significant risks to obtain documentation revealing the junta's disdain for its own people. Ethnic people have long suffered from violent forms of discrimination, which have only worsened and expanded since 2021. While bombs are dropped on children in communal areas, the self-imposed government of the military regime greets diplomats in Naypyitaw seeking to advance joint interests that are not rooted in human rights principles. It is clear that, against the backdrop of crimes they are perpetrating, the junta chief is desperate for recognition from regional and international bodies.

The false sense of legitimacy being sought must not be dignified by a response or engagement by the international community.

More pressure is needed to ensure the military faces consequences and accountability for its crimes against humanity. Vulnerable groups have been oppressed and denied their basic rights and freedoms, and will continue to be as the crisis continues to worsen.

We therefore call on global stakeholders to sever all ties with the so-called military leadership. Support, resources, and funds must be allocated to the pro-democracy movement and to human rights defenders spearheading positive change, notably to civil society organizations implementing social services at the local level.



## Recommendations

### To ASEAN, donors, and the international community

- ❖ Effectively and immediately end all ties with the self-appointed junta chief 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 military's assaults, including through transitional justice pathways.
- ❖ Refrain from inviting the coup-leader or military-backed representation to any meetings related to ASEAN or regional affairs, as their presence risks legitimizing their status as leaders of a country the people do not recognize.
- ❖ Refuse to legitimize the under the self-appointed junta chief in the aftermath of the sham election and instead effectively collaborate with civil society organizations and democratically elected officials in Burma on all matters related to peace, democracy, and meaningful steps towards justice.
- ❖ Urgently reform the deeply flawed 5-Point Consensus in line with recommendations and guidance from civil society organizations, which the Burmese military has utterly failed to follow.
- ❖ Enforce protection mechanisms to shield young men and women from the military's forced conscription efforts and assist them in seeking refuge and asylum in neighbouring countries with adequate safeguarding measures in place.

- ❖ Mandate protections for migrants and refugees living in neighbouring countries, after having fled for their safety, who are at risk of being deported back to Burma and into military custody
- ❖ Provide humanitarian aid to internally displaced persons through cross-border channels, in collaboration with local civil society organizations, community-based organizations, the National Unity Government, and federal bodies, including the Karenni Interim Executive Council, as well as ethnic armed organizations involved in humanitarian efforts.



ND-Burma is a network of 13 member organizations representing a range of ethnic nationalities, women, youth, and former political prisoners. Since 2004, ND-Burma member organizations have documented human rights abuses and advocated for justice on behalf of victims. The network consists of nine full members and four affiliate members.



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