



Only In Myanmar Made by Junta

Consequences of the Telecommunication Blackout

November, 2025

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I. Introduction

No one can deny the critical role of digital technology nowadays. The Internet has become an essential tool in people's daily lives worldwide as technology continues to advance. If used properly, these digital technologies can benefit not only politics and security but also the economy, social welfare, education, and healthcare. Authoritarian rulers around the world exploited the usage of the Internet to impose repressive laws, surveillance and restrict internet freedom, which has impacted the safety and lives of people. Improper use of technology for security and political purposes can be defined as the "the dark side of digital technology."

"The Rise of Digital Repression", authored by Steven Feldstein,¹ explains that authoritarian regimes controlled the digital liberty of the people in five strategies. ²

- i. Surveillance
- ii. Censorship
- iii. Social Manipulation and Disinformation
- iv. Internet Shutdowns
- v. Targeted persecutions of online users

Digital rights violations in Myanmar occurred during the civilian administration run by the National League for Democracy, and it deteriorated after the military coup in 2021. The military regime systematically violated digital liberty by imposing internet shutdowns, reducing internet speed, banning social media platforms, drafting repressive cybersecurity laws, shutting down independent media organizations, and imprisoning journalists and political activists.

According to the "Freedom on the Net" report, published by Freedom House, internet freedom in Myanmar has deteriorated gradually from 2020 to 2025, while China was ranked first, followed by Myanmar.³ A gradually developing relationship between the Chinese government and the Myanmar military caused a dangerous situation for the activists and revolutionary organizations in Myanmar.⁴ Based on the studies, the Myanmar junta

¹ [Steve Feldstein](#) (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace)

² [The Rise of Digital Repression](#) (Steven Feldstein - 2021)

³ [Myanmar Country Profile](#), Freedom on the Net, Freedom House

controlled telecom operators and cut off phone and internet connections nationwide at will. Moreover, they received technical help from China on internet shutdown and monitoring the digital activities of people.⁵ On top of the communication shutdown, the Myanmar military targeted the civilian population by committing atrocities such as burning towns and villages, indiscriminate mass offensive attacks using heavy artillery and airstrikes.

The restriction of digital liberty has affected people's daily lives across social life, the economy, education, and healthcare. It has disrupted the flow of information, leading to preventable loss of lives and property during natural disasters such as the Sagaing Earthquake in March 2025, the flood in August 2024, and Cyclone Mocha in May 2023.

Amid the ongoing national crisis, the communication blackout has further intensified the spread of propaganda and misinformation generated by the junta, which is gradually increasing. Although the military regime lost control over several territories in the country due to escalating resistance attacks, it continues to organize an illegitimate election that lacks the people's will, in an effort to prolong its power and gain international recognition.

This concise research paper examines how the Myanmar military restricts citizens' digital rights through its attempt to stage an authoritarian-controlled election, and the rise of propaganda and human rights violations as the election approaches.

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“In reality, the PSMS, or the CSISMS technologies, were chaotic and messy projects with invented names. Some family members of the military officials owned these technology companies. Some left the army and founded a company. Organizations like the Myanmar Computer Scientists Association include members with ties to the military. The military is an easy mark for them, one that they can easily exploit. That is why they advised the military and sold these technologies.”

Ko Kyaw Kyaw (pseudonym) - Digital Rights and Political Analyst

⁴ ရွေးကောက်ပွဲ လေ့လာစောင့်ကြည့်ရန် တရုတ်ကို စစ်ကောင်စီဖိတ်ခေါ် (Wai Wai, DVB, Aug/ 2025)

⁵ Burma Junta Adopts China's Digital Blueprint for Repression (Antonio Graceffo, Mizzima, May/ 2025)

2. Current Situation of Communication Shutdowns in Myanmar

The communication shutdown imposed by the Myanmar military can be categorized into three types: (a) nationwide shutdowns, (b) regional shutdowns, and (c) periodic shutdowns. In some areas, the shutdown occurred due to natural disasters rather than the regime's deliberate action. Those disasters primarily destroyed communication infrastructure, damaged telecom towers, and caused power cuts, leaving residents struggling to access phone and internet services.

Our findings indicate that the military has employed a “Great Firewall” in towns where internet access remains, blocking virtual private networks (VPNs)⁶, software, malware, and websites – resulting in severe digital restrictions.⁷ In these areas, Psiphon is the only accessible VPN, while most other free VPN services remain blocked.⁸

Since January 2025, an increasing number of townships in Myanmar have lost connectivity. By April 2025, the military regime had cut off communication in 138 townships. Additionally, the Sagaing Earthquake in March 2025 further disrupted connectivity in some of those affected areas.



Figure 1: Number of townships experienced monthly communication disruptions in 2025

⁶ War on citizens: How the junta's VPN ban is strangling communication in Myanmar (Global Voice, June/ 2024)

⁷ The Internet Coup (InterSecLab, September/ 2025)

⁸ ပြည်တွင်းမှာလူသုံးများတဲ့ VPN အချို့ချိတ်ဆက်မရမှုတွေ ပြန်လည်ဖြစ်ပွား (KKO, Voice of Myanmar, September/2025)

As of September 2025, approximately 131 townships across Myanmar were experiencing a communication blackout. Among them, the following townships have remained cut off for more than four years: Ayadaw, Gangaw, Kanbalu, Kani, Kawlin, Mingin, Myaung, Pale, Pinlebu, Salingyi, Wun Tho, and Ye-U in the Sagaing Region; Falam, Kanpetlet, Matupi, Mindat, Paletwa, Tedim, Thantlang, and Tonzang in Chin State; and Gangaw and Htilin in the Magway Region.

Townships that have endured blackouts for over three years include Demoso, Loikaw, Bawlakhe, Hpasaung, and Mese in Karenni State; Hakha in Chin State; and Chaung-U, Kalewa, Lahe, Leshi, Paungbyin, Khin-U, and Sagaing in the Sagaing Region. Meanwhile, Wetlet, Monywa, Depayin, Homalin, and Minbu in the Sagaing Region, and Hpruso in Karenni State, have been disconnected for more than two years. Townships that have faced over a year of blackout include Theinni, Muse, Kyaukme, Kutkai, Namhkam, Namtu, Pinlaung, and Hsi Hseng in Shan State; Bhamo, Chipwi, Hpakant, Injanyang, Kawnglangphu, Machanbaw, Mansi, Mogaung, Momauk, Myitkyina, Nogmung, Putao, Shwegu, Sumprabum, Tanai, Tsawlaw, and Waingmaw in Kachin State; Banmauk, Indaw, and Htigyaing in the Sagaing Region; Yay in Mon State; Mogok in Mandalay Region; and Shadaw in Karenni State.

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'In Karenni State, the military can organize elections only in Loikaw. However, they are carrying out offensive attacks in the surrounding areas, including the borders of Shan and Karenni States and Demoso Township. In some border regions, the military has conducted large-scale operations to reclaim control. It appears that they are also planning additional offensive attacks, so I believe we can expect more such actions in the future.'

Saw Chit Aye - Chief Editor of Katarawaddy Times

Based on conducted interviews, these communication shutdowns were implemented with specific objectives.

1. To gain military advantage and sever communications among the revolutionary forces
2. To obscure grave war crimes and human rights violations from the local and international media.
3. To conduct aggressive disinformation and propaganda campaigns⁹

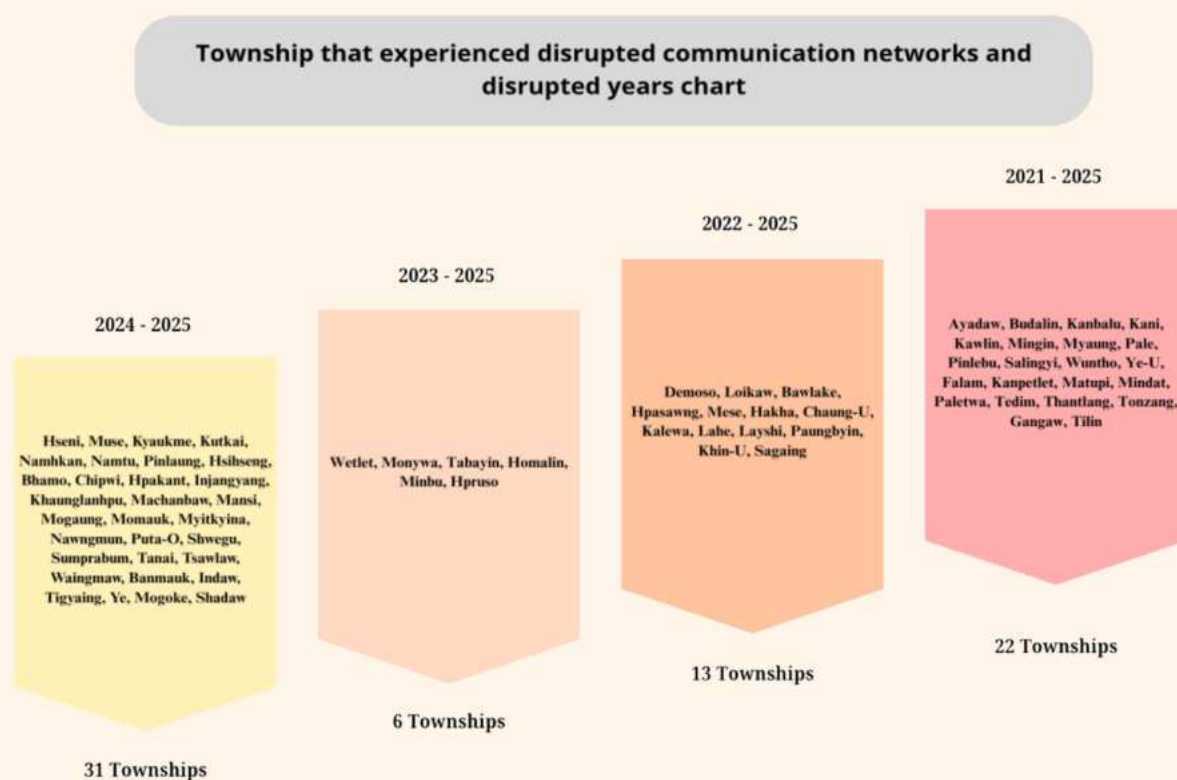


Figure 2: Township that experienced disrupted communication networks and disrupted years chart

(Remark: The numbers and statistics mentioned above are based on Athan's data and do not include townships that have experienced communication shutdowns for less than one year.)

⁹ Excerpts from Interviews

3. Surveillance Strategy of the Military Regime

The Myanmar military has restricted the digital rights of the people since the coup, and it has surveilled the activities of the people to target individuals opposing them and punish them. The military regime has received assistance in artificial intelligence technology from superpower nations such as China, India, and Russia.

Primarily, the regime has utilized systems such as Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) and Person Scrutinization and Monitoring System (PSMS). The PSMS technology operates by combining artificial intelligence, facial recognition, CCTV systems, and the national database. These systems were designed to monitor people's activities and personal information.

Analyzing the digital surveillance strategy of the Myanmar military found that the regime extended the use of the PSMS system in its controlled areas. According to the interviews of individuals in Sagaing and Magway regions, the military cannot utilize the PSMS system in resistance-controlled areas, but has activated it in areas under its control.¹⁰ This finding has highlighted that the military used more surveillance technologies to control people in its controlled areas.

Additionally, the regime has escalated in performing data collection and integration efforts. Since the 2021 coup, the military regime has collected personal information of the people, including SIM card data, household registration, national identity, biometric data, and banking information.¹¹ The surveillance strategy has become more effective as the military uses this personal information alongside PSMS technology. More than 1,650 people have been arrested under the PSMS technology.¹² It highlights the regime's intent to control citizens' personal information, which harms their privacy and security. The military utilized this technology as a tool to arrest its opposition and pro-democracy activists, and it is a violation of the fundamental rights of citizens.

¹⁰ Excerpts from Interviews

¹¹ [Privacy violations and discrimination in Myanmar](#) (Human Rights Myanmar, Jun/ 2025)

¹² [PSMS စနစ်နဲ့ လူတစ်ယောက်ချင်းစီ စောင့်ကြည့်ခံနေရလား](#) (BBC, Aug/ 2025)

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“The military collected the census data, but they were unable to obtain accurate information. As everyone knows, people were afraid to allow them inside. There are so many rumors. They could not accurately collect data on the number of people living there or their activities. They could not guarantee the accuracy of the data they gathered. The military constantly announced plans to organize an election, so they would manipulate the voting results based on the census data they had.”

Daw Hnin Hnin Hmway - the associate secretary of the New Society Party

According to a technology-sector expert, companies partnered with the military or linked to retired officers deceptively marketed systems such as PSMS to the junta purely for profit. He said, **“In reality, the PSMS, or the CSISMS technologies, were chaotic and messy projects with invented names. Some family members of the military officials owned these technology companies. Some left the army and founded a company. Organizations like the Myanmar Computer Scientists Association include members with ties to the military. The military is an easy mark for them, one that they can easily exploit. That is why they advised the military and sold these technologies.”**¹³ From a technological standpoint, while the functions of these programs are extremely simple, it has been consistently demonstrated that companies have deceived and sold the Myanmar military technologies that serve their own interests. In addition, the military lacks transparency in purchasing these technologies and is corrupt, allowing both local and international companies to be involved in the process.

¹³ Ko Kyaw Kyaw (pseudonym) - Digital Rights and Political Analyst

4. Illegitimate Election and the Military Propaganda

The junta imposed digital restrictions to curb the role of independent media and generated a greater volume of propaganda. The regime and its supporters have generated a significant amount of propaganda through military-owned media, TV channels, and daily newspapers. For example, staff members of the Ministry of Information were instructed to write comments on social media to promote the image of the regime and its online propaganda projects.¹⁴

The social media websites of the military's ministries labeled independent media publications as "false news" under the guise of "fact-checking".¹⁵ On social media platforms like Telegram, pro-military groups generated hate speech based on race, religion, sexual identity, and other characteristics.¹⁶

"It is completely clear that the military's propaganda mechanism is becoming more systematic and powerful. They have established websites and applications across various digital platforms and maintain a presence on every social media site. Their most prominent platform is Telegram, and recently, they have also become more visible on YouTube."¹⁷

The military and its lobbyists have harnessed social media platforms such as Facebook, Telegram, TikTok, and YouTube to spread propaganda, maintaining their grip on power. This propaganda is particularly focused on the upcoming military-organized election, as Ko Thit Nyan analyzed. Analysis of the propaganda mechanism of the military shows that it strategically emphasizes topics of mass interest to divert public attention¹⁸, using them as salient stimuli¹⁹, and has constructed a systematic propaganda apparatus across the media platforms.²⁰

¹⁴ Facebook တွင် ပြန်လည်ခေါင်းထောင်လာသည့် စစ်တပ်၏ စိတ်ဓာတ်စစ်ဆင်ရေး (စတုန်းအောင်, Myanmar Now, Aug/ 2025)

¹⁵ အရှိန်မြင့်လာတဲ့ စစ်အုပ်စုရဲ့ အွန်လိုင်း ဝါဒဖြန့်လှုပ်ရှားမှုများ (DVB Fact Check, Aug/ 2025)

¹⁶ Excerpts from Interviews

¹⁷ Ko Thit Nyan - Communication and Public Officer (Myanmar Internet Project)

¹⁸ Point of view and perceptions of causality in attribution of behavior. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (Taylor, S. E., & Fiske, S. T. 1975)

¹⁹ Why do we focus on items or information that are more prominent and ignore those that are not? (Salience Bias. The Decision Lab, Pilat D., & Sekoul K, 2021)

²⁰ A Preliminary Analysis of the Myanmar Military Junta's Media Propaganda (Tea Circle Myanmar, Mar/ 2021)

As the military succeeded in diverting public attention and interest, they deliberately created misinformation, disinformation, and logical fallacies²¹ by applying the “Causal Attribution Theory”²² to influence public perceptions and attitudes toward politics and revolution. In doing so, they made people perceive fabricated political dramas as real events, as part of their propaganda objectives. Fake news, disinformation, and propaganda distributed by the military lobbyists' Telegram channels, related to “the Bomb Explosion at the World Heritage Gokteik Viaduct”²³ in Shan State, which happened in late August 2025, can be a typical case study.

Regardless of the lack of evidence on the perpetrators of the explosion, the pro-military accounts on social media platforms and Telegram channels claimed that the resistance forces did it. Moreover, they promoted a narrative of “destroying a heritage site” in their propaganda to gain greater public attention.

The military regime controlled celebrities and public figures behind the scenes, utilizing their entertainment in the propaganda mechanism.²⁴ The regime instructed these celebrities to create propaganda vlogs and urged the military-controlled veteran politicians to encourage the public to participate in their election.²⁵

Although the junta intensified its offensive operations in resistance-controlled territory and continued to impose telecommunications shutdowns, it gradually eased the shutdowns to maximize the effectiveness of its propaganda campaigns.²⁶ Another interesting point is that military and electoral party candidates systematically included the disruption of communication lines as an incentive in their campaigning activities. Observations suggest that while the military primarily targeted and cut communication lines to regain control of territories they had lost, it was also found that they gradually eased the communication cuts in some urban areas under their control to make propaganda efforts more effective and

²¹ [Disinformation as a weapon in Myanmar](#) ((Human Rights Myanmar, Jun/ 2025)

²² [Inferring Dispositions Using Causal Attribution](#) (Anonymous, LibreTexts Social Sciences)

²³ ကမ္ဘာကျော် ဂုတ်ထိပ်တံတား မိုင်းခွဲဖျက်ဆီးခံရ၊ နောင်ပိန်ကျေးရွာမှာ တိုက်ပွဲပြင်းထန်နေ (Kyaw Zin Win, Myanmar Now, Aug/ 2025)

²⁴ လွိုင်ကော်၌ စစ်တပ် ထောက်ခံသည့် ရန်အောင်နှင့် စိုးမြတ်သူဇာ အပါအဝင် အနုပညာရှင်များ သီချင်းလာဆို (DVB, Aug/2025)

²⁵ Excerpts from Interviews

²⁶ အကြမ်းဖက်စစ်တပ်ပိုင် Mytel ဖုန်းလိုင်းပြန်ဖွင့်ပေးထားသည့် စစ်တွေတွင် လျှပ်စစ်မီးပါပေးမည်ဟု သတင်းထွက် (Thinzar Nwe, Narinjara, Aug/ 2025)

successful.²⁷ In July 2025, the military regime enacted laws directly related to the sham election. According to “the Law on Protecting Multi-Party Democratic General Elections from Obstruction, Hindrance, and Destruction”, anyone found guilty can be punished with imprisonment of at least ten years to life.²⁸ They also forced the people to cooperate in every aspect of implementing this election,²⁹ and officials from the neighborhood administration offices threatened not to issue the nightly registration permits to anyone who refused to cooperate.³⁰

The General Secretary of the New Society Political Party stated that the military’s census data cannot be accurate and may therefore influence the election result. **“The military collected the census data, but they were unable to obtain accurate information. As everyone knows, people were afraid to allow them inside. There are so many rumors. They could not accurately collect data on the number of people living there or their activities. They could not guarantee the accuracy of the data they gathered. The military constantly announced plans to organize an election, so they would manipulate the voting results based on the census data they had.”**³¹ This point highlights that the military regime intends to shape its desired outcomes in the political process by misusing people’s digital information. It also raises concerns about the transparency and fairness of the election.

²⁷ မိုးညှင်းမြို့ပေါ်မှာ Mytel အင်တာနက်လိုင်းပုံမှန်ပြန်ရ (Zaw Zaw, Kachin News Group, Sep/ 2025)

²⁸ ရွေးကောက်ပွဲနှောင့်ယှက်သူကို ထောင်ဒဏ်တသက်အထိချနိုင်သည့် ဥပဒေ စစ်ခေါင်းဆောင်ထုတ်ပြန် (DVB, Jul/ 2025)

²⁹ မန္တလေးသို့ စစ်ဘေးရှောင်လာသူများ၏ မှတ်ပုံတင်များကို စစ်တပ်က သိမ်းယူနေပြီး မဲထည့်မှ ပြန်ပေးမည်ဟုဆို (Myanmar Pressphoto Agency, Sep/ 2025)

³⁰ ရန်ကုန်တွင် အစမ်းမဲပေးလေ့ကျင့်ရန် မလာသူများကို ဧည့်စာရင်းပေးမည် မဟုတ်ဟု ခြိမ်းခြောက် (Min Sett,DVB, Sep/ 2025)

³¹ Daw Hnin Hnin Hmway - the associate secretary of the New Society Party

5. Human Rights Violations Following the Telecommunication Shutdowns

The junta recognized that public freedom of expression can be more powerful when independent media and social media platforms work together. It believes that cutting off the connection between these three pillars can control the people. That is why the junta imposed the communication shutdowns and oppressed the independent media since organizing the coup in 2021. Ko Thit Nyan discussed the following to highlight the harmful impact of shutting down information flow alongside the oppression of independent media and journalists. **"People do not have access to the news and information due to the telecommunications blackouts. Then, the volume of propaganda, rumors, and stimulation increased. Then, people do not have the right perspectives, and it leads them to make poor decisions."**³²

Telecommunication shutdowns block the flow of information, which also causes economic slowdowns, inflation, and higher grocery prices, among other consequences. People face greater hardship in fundamental public services, such as education and healthcare. Moreover, the military regime imposed telecommunications blackouts in resistance-controlled areas and increased offensive operations.³³

"In Karenni State, the military can organize elections only in Loikaw. However, they are carrying out offensive attacks in the surrounding areas, including the borders of Shan and Karenni States and Demoso Township. In some border regions, the military has conducted large-scale operations to reclaim control. It appears that they are also planning additional offensive attacks, so I believe we can expect more such actions in the future."³⁴

³² Ko Thit Nyan - Communication and Public Officer (Myanmar Internet Project)

³³ AA ထိန်းချုပ်မြို့နယ်များပါ မြို့နယ် ၆၃ ခုကို စစ်အုပ်ချုပ်ရေးကြေညာမှု ဘာတွေဖြစ်လာနိုင်မလဲ (Development Media Group, Aug/ 2025)

³⁴ Saw Chit Aye - Chief Editor of Katarawaddy Times

Ma Snow from the Pakokku region explained the regime's attempt to expand its control over more territory before the election. She said, **"They have been conducting offensive attacks in our area for more than two months. I believe they are trying to establish polling stations for their election here."**³⁵ Many local people lost their lives daily due to indiscriminate air attacks, as telecommunication blackouts blocked the flow of information, especially the warnings about airstrikes and ground operations. Our studies found that telecommunications blackouts not only blocked information flow, causing damage across many sectors, but also threatened the security and survival of people.

"In some countries, the 'right to the internet' means the 'right to information'. But in our country, the 'right to the internet, or access to the internet' means the 'right to live'. We have lost so many preventable deaths just because we can't connect to the internet, or make a phone call."³⁶

The regime drafted and enacted the Cybersecurity Law to restrict free expression on the internet and further weaken the digital rights of the Myanmar people.³⁷ Regarding this law, the director of The Red Flag, an organization advocating for digital rights in Myanmar, explained: **"They attempted to control more by using the Cybersecurity Law. According to that law, using a VPN is a criminal offense."**³⁸ The military junta drafted the Cybersecurity Bill in January and enacted it by the end of June 2025. Following its passage, more random checkpoints to inspect civilians' mobile phones were seen in some cities.³⁹ The law includes provisions that restrict media freedom and free expression. Individuals found to have sent, used, distributed, or shared electronic information deemed unlawful face penalties ranging from six months to three years of imprisonment, fines of 5 to 20 million kyat, or both.

³⁵ Ma Snow - incharge of the Pakokku Youth Development Organization

³⁶ Ko Kyaw Kyaw (pseudonym) - Digital Rights and Political Analyst

³⁷ [Cyber Security Law Draft - 06 February 2021](#) (Open Development Myanmar)

³⁸ Ma Wah Wah Phaw - Director of The Red Flag

³⁹ [Myanmar Junta Launches Street Phone Checks as Cybersecurity Law Takes Effect](#) (The Irrawaddy, Aug/ 2025)

Ko Kyaw Kyaw (*pseudonym*), a digital rights and political analyst, explained in an interview that the Cybersecurity Law instills fear among the public and creates challenges for anti-coup forces, including activists and organizations.⁴⁰ According to the associate general secretary of the New Society Party, although the junta repeatedly drafted and revised multiple provisions to repress the population in different ways, it continues to carry out arbitrary arrests and killings, targeting individuals ranging from underage children to elderly people who oppose them.

“In my opinion, the Cyber Security Law is just a reason. If they want to punish, they will. They might take someone today and kill tomorrow. Then, they would inform the family to collect the body.”⁴¹

6. Conclusion

The military regime imposed communication shutdowns and utilized digital technologies as tools intended to block the information flow and oppress freedom of expression, to maintain its power as a strategy to suppress the Spring Revolution.

a. Digital Repression and Human Rights Violations

The regime focused on drafting, amending, and enacting the Cybersecurity Law and other laws, constructing the Great Firewall, banning social media websites, and VPN networks. Due to the telecommunications shutdowns imposed on domestic operators, people struggled to access information promptly, which harmed the social life, economy, education, and healthcare of local people. Ground attacks and airstrikes have also gravely threatened the safety and survival of people.

⁴⁰ Ko Kyaw Kyaw (*pseudonym*) - Digital Rights and Political Analyst

⁴¹ Daw Hnin Hnin Hmway - the associate secretary of the New Society Party

b. Propaganda Campaigns from the Regime

Since the Spring Revolution began over four years ago, the military has also sought a political exit, organizing an illegitimate election for the end of 2025. That is why the military regime intensified offensive attacks against the resistance areas, imposing telecommunication shutdowns and surveillance strategies, and widely distributing fake news, misinformation, and propaganda to pave the way for their sham election. The growing volume of the military's propaganda has caused vulnerability in the role of independent media.

The military and its lobbyists have weaponized social media platforms to spread hate and violent messages against diverse groups, as well as to propagate misinformation related to the illegitimate election. In doing so, they have:

- Encouraged celebrities and public figures to participate in their propaganda campaigns
- Deliberately fabricated issues or events to capture public attention
- Skillfully employed theories alongside logical fallacies, fake news, and propaganda to divert public focus and influence perceptions and beliefs regarding the current political situation.

c. Sham Election and Consequences

The junta restored connections for the military-owned operator MyTel in some areas where telecommunications blackouts had previously been enforced. The partial easing of the shutdowns was intended solely to maximize the effectiveness of the military's propaganda campaign. The military junta utilized technology to monitor and surveil people's movements, suppressing and restricting digital rights and freedom of expression. Telecommunication blackouts created vulnerabilities for independent media, and findings indicate an escalation in war crimes and human rights violations.

Furthermore, individuals in blackout areas experienced socioeconomic harm and faced life-threatening situations. Conversely, the weakening of independent media has allowed a greater spread of fake news, misinformation, and propaganda by the military.

7. Recommendations

For Civil Society Organizations

- Organizations should enhance awareness-raising initiatives about the internet literacy program to help people understand and critically distinguish between fake news, misinformation, and propaganda on social media platforms.
- To document and record evidence of incidents committed by the military regime, including human rights violations, intimidation, and reprisals before the illegitimate election, and other relevant evidence
- To seek technical assistance and other forms of support from international organizations, and then coordinate with local organizations.
- To work alongside local revolutionary forces and ethnic armed groups to ensure the regular availability of telecommunications, which is a basic necessity for the people.

For Local People Defense Forces and Ethnic Revolutionary Forces

- To protect and promote the right to information and freedom of expression of the people
- To seek technical assistance from the experts in the technology sector to ensure the regular availability of communications.

For International Organizations

- To immediately halt the financial assistance and support flowing to the Myanmar military and its partners.
- To condemn and reject the sham election that doesn't represent the people of Myanmar
- To provide technical assistance and implement human rights programs to protect the people of Myanmar who are being arbitrarily imprisoned or whose lives are threatened for peacefully protesting against the "election"

“It is necessary to protect local people who peacefully reject the election from arrest and imprisonment, and life-threatening intimidation, through technical assistance and human rights support programs.”

8. Research Methodologies and Challenges

This research paper combines qualitative and quantitative methods, drawing on interviews with experts from Myanmar’s digital rights community, independent political parties focused on democracy in Myanmar, grassroots activists, and independent journalists. Additionally, it incorporates data and information from local and international independent media, documentation from partner organizations, and data monitored by Athan researchers. Seven of the interviewees are technical experts from the digital rights community, political parties engaged in the democracy movement, political activists, and independent journalists, all of whom were interviewed via online calls.

Athan faced challenges in conducting in-person interviews in the field due to safety concerns and the intensification of the civil war. Obtaining responses from participants was delayed due to telecommunications shutdowns in the regions where respondents reside in Myanmar. Furthermore, interview conversations were occasionally interrupted by power outages or disruptions in internet connectivity. These challenges were encountered during the process of writing this paper.

Data Collection and Coding Method (a)

(Type of Cases)	(Description - Coding Method)
Speed Reduction (2G/3G)	In these areas, phone and internet access are limited to 2G/3G speeds, resulting in weak signals, frequent call drops, and connection difficulties.
Complete Blackout	People in these areas cannot access internet services from local operators such as ATOM (formerly Telenor), MPT, Ooredoo, and Mytel, and all Wi-Fi broadband services are also unavailable.
Internet Blackout	Internet access from ATOM (formerly Telenor), MPT, Ooredoo, and Mytel has been disconnected, leaving only basic phone services available. <i>Remark: In some areas, people are able to access wireless internet through satellite services that have gradually become available in certain towns and border regions.</i>
Phone & Internet Blackout	Both phone and internet services from at least one local provider are unavailable in these areas. <i>Remark: In some areas, people are able to access wireless internet through satellite services that have gradually become available in certain towns and border regions.</i>

Data Collection and Coding Method (b)

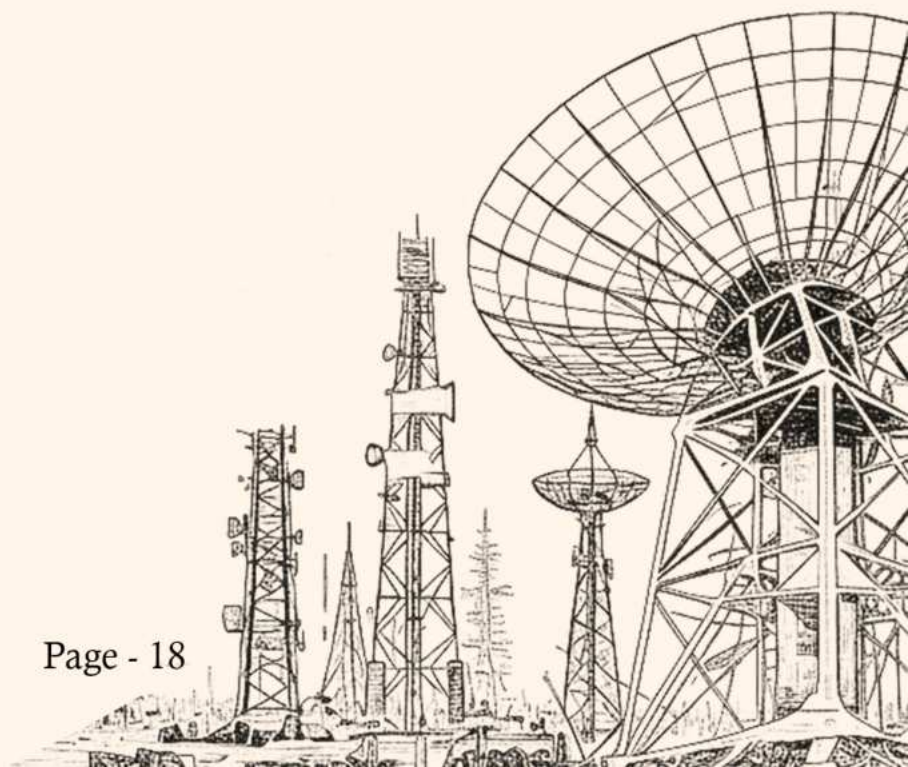
(Current Status)	(Description - Coding Method)
Ongoing blackouts	No active telecommunications signals are available for phone, internet, or both. However, wireless broadband access is possible through satellite service providers that have gradually entered certain local and border towns. <i>Remark: In some areas, only phone or internet connectivity from local mobile operators is available, while Wi-Fi broadband services remain inaccessible.</i>
Restored	At least one domestic operator has restored both phone and internet connectivity in these areas. <i>Remark: This does not imply that all domestic operators are accessible.</i>
Unknown	At least one domestic operator is reported to have restored phone and internet connectivity, although independent verification is not available. <i>Remark: This does not imply that all domestic operators are accessible.</i>

Background History of Athan Freedom of Expression Activist Organization

Athan - a non-profit organization for the Freedom of Expression Movement in Myanmar, was founded by youth activists on 15th January 2018 and intends to ensure the right to freedom of expression to practice in society.

Athan, a research-based organization, was established by combining two organizations, (RTTL) Research Team for Telecommunications Laws and (WSJ) We Support Journalists, to promote Freedom of Expression with three core approaches - research, advocacy, and awareness-raising. Our organization continuously researches and investigates laws, customs, regulations, and case studies that oppress freedom of expression and works on legal reform according to democracy standards, campaigns, and lobbying to achieve a broader level of freedom of expression in respective country categories based on our research and investigation.

Athan and its founder, Maung Saungkha, earned the Human Rights Tulip Award from the Netherlands in December 2018. Athan's ambition for Myanmar is to become a society with complete freedom of expression, which is one of the democratic standards.





FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
ACTIVIST ORGANIZATION