

To: Member and Observer States of the UN Human Rights Council
CC: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar

18 February 2026

Open Letter: The UNHRC Must Reject the Junta's Sham Election Results to Consolidate Illegitimate Rule and Advance Accountability

Excellencies,

We, the undersigned 235 Myanmar, regional, and international civil society organizations, urge the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to take decisive, principled, concrete and time-bound action to protect the rights and dignity of the people of Myanmar. As the Council considers its 2026 resolution on Myanmar, we call for the adoption of a robust resolution that:

1. Responds effectively to the escalating human rights and humanitarian catastrophe;
2. Unequivocally rejects the military junta's attempts to seize legitimacy through a sham electoral process conducted under the military-drafted 2008 Constitution and refuses recognition of any outcomes or governance structures arising from it;
3. Impedes the junta's capacity to carry out airstrikes and other atrocity crimes, including through measures that restrict access to aviation fuel, arms, and dual-use technologies;
4. Addresses transnational organized crimes and the criminal economies (or illicit financial networks) that enable the junta to continue its terror campaign; and
5. Advances accountability through all available international legal avenues.

Excellencies,

The Myanmar crisis is the direct consequence of the military's attempted coup in February 2021 and its subsequent campaign of systematic violence to unlawfully seize and consolidate power against the will of the people. Since then, the military junta has deliberately applied terror and repression with total impunity.

Over the past five years, the Myanmar military junta has waged a sustained campaign of terror attacks against civilians, marked by widespread and systematic violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. These abuses include indiscriminate airstrikes and shelling, massacres, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, conflict-related sexual violence, and mass arbitrary arrest and detention. Since February 2021, at least 30,476 political prisoners have been [arrested](#), 22,780 of whom remain [detained](#), while 7,804 people have been [killed](#). Documentation [records](#) at least 501 massacres, resulting in thousands of civilian deaths.

Hundreds of thousands of civilian [homes](#) and public buildings have been deliberately destroyed, often through coordinated arson and airstrikes, especially in Sagaing, Magway and Tanintharyi Regions and Chin, Karenni, Karen, and Rakhine States. The junta has [carried out](#) 9,794 aerial bombardments, including 7,330 airstrikes, 1,305 drone strikes, 820 paramotor attacks, and 339 gyrocopter assaults. These aerial attacks have resulted in 4,853 documented deaths. Since 2022, approximately 1,853 healthcare facilities have been [attacked](#). IDP camps, schools, places of worship, and [public gatherings](#) are repeatedly targeted.

On 10 December 2025, International Human Rights Day, the military conducted airstrike on Mrauk-U Hospital in Rakhine State, [killing](#) approximately 34 people and injuring more than ten. In January 2026 alone, 633 human rights violations were [documented](#), alongside 220 aerial bombardments that killed at least 69 civilians. Two major massacres occurred between 21 and 25 January: in Bhamo Township, Kachin State, at least 27 people were [killed](#) during a funeral and wedding; in Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine State, at least 21 people, including pregnant women and children, were killed. In February 2026, further airstrikes [targeted](#) displaced civilians in Sagaing Region, [killing](#) monastic novices, children, and villagers.

More than 3.6 million people are internally [displaced](#), while acute food insecurity has [continued](#) at catastrophic levels, affecting an estimated 12.4 million people in 2026. The junta's attacks on civilian population are deliberate. They form part of a widespread and systematic pattern that amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity including war crime of starvation of civilians. The Council must adopt urgent accountability and civilian protection measures.

In addition, Myanmar has [become](#) a regional hub for transnational criminal activities. The proliferation of cyber-scam centers, human trafficking networks, and illicit narcotics production has accelerated, particularly in areas under the control of the junta and junta-aligned armed groups, militias, and military-linked business networks. These criminal economies generate revenue streams for the junta and actors connected to it, helping the military evade and withstand international sanctions.

The consequences of these crimes extend far beyond Myanmar's borders and have directly [affected](#) neighboring ASEAN countries as well as the United States and Europe. Victims—often trafficked individuals—are subjected to forced labor, detention, torture, and other serious abuses that may amount to crimes against humanity, including enslavement and imprisonment. The symbiotic relationship between the military junta and transnational organized crimes is now a central feature of its survival strategy and must be explicitly addressed by the UNHRC and the international community.

In stark contrast to the junta's violence, the people of Myanmar have continued to organize, resist, and build alternative political and social systems under extraordinary risks. Civil society organizations, human rights defenders, women, youth and LGBTIQA+ activists, and democratic resistance groups have established people-led governance from the ground up, challenging the military-constructed, centralized, repressive state system and exclusionary nationalism. Through

survivor-centered documentation, rights-based advocacy, community education, mutual aid, and local administration, communities are actively shaping a different political landscape that seeks to ensure a peaceful and sustainable future based on principles of human rights, justice, and federal democracy.

Against this backdrop, the junta attempted to manufacture political legitimacy through a systematically coerced and tightly controlled process. The military junta weaponized the entire electoral system—[deploying](#) the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), mobilizing pro-junta networks, and relying on fear, intimidation, and force—to impose a predetermined outcome. This carefully stage-managed process was falsely presented as a “return to democracy,” a narrative decisively rejected by the people of Myanmar. The election was neither legal nor legitimate. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights publicly [affirmed](#) that the military-imposed elections failed to respect fundamental human rights and only deepened violence and societal polarization.

The junta-controlled Union Election Commission (UEC) functioned as a direct instrument of military command, seeking to fabricate consent through surveillance, exclusion, and coercion. The three-phase election, held between December 2025 and January 2026, unfolded amid the widespread public boycott and junta’s heavy militarization and collapsing territorial control. Polling stations were largely empty, with participation limited to pro-military supporters or individuals coerced through threats of arrest, economic punishment, or pressure on family members. Electoral secrecy and voluntariness were systematically dismantled through surveillance, forced advance voting, and arrests under so-called election protection laws, under which at least 404 people—324 men and 80 women—were detained. In addition, the junta’s sham election took place amid ongoing [massacres and airstrikes](#). The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documented and [reported](#) that at least 170 people were killed in more than 408 military aerial attacks during the voting period between December 2025 and January 2026.

While we acknowledge the UNHRC resolution adopted on 4 April 2025, the crisis—now entering its sixth year—demands far stronger, more concrete, and time-bound actions from UN mechanisms and the international community.

The UNHRC must unequivocally reject the sham election and its outcomes and make clear that no UN mechanism will recognize or engage with any governance structures arising from it. Any recognition, engagement, or technical cooperation that confers political legitimacy on the junta, including in the aftermath of its sham election, risks normalizing the junta’s atrocity crimes and further emboldening it.

The Council must explicitly recognize and address the symbiotic relationship between the Myanmar military and transnational organized crimes and call for coordinated international action to dismantle these networks and cut off a key source of financing for the military.

We further urge the Council to call for a comprehensive global arms embargo, including targeted sanctions on aviation fuel, cutting the financial flows that sustain the military's decades-long impunity. Any sale, supply, or transfer of weapons, aircraft, drones, or fuel directly facilitates atrocity crimes and may therefore give rise to state and individual responsibility for aiding and abetting the Myanmar military's crimes under international law.

The Council must also mobilize political support for concrete accountability measures, including the referral of the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or the establishment of an ad hoc or hybrid international criminal tribunal. We urge the Council to actively support the NUG's declaration under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute, accepting ICC jurisdiction, and to increase support for cases under the principles of universal jurisdiction, including those pursued in Argentina, Timor-Leste, and other national courts.

Finally, the UN must move beyond reliance on ASEAN's failed Five-Point Consensus and adopt an approach that support a Myanmar people-led, rights-based solution grounded in international law, justice, and accountability.

Excellencies,

We urge you to support the people of Myanmar in their unwavering resistance against the criminal military junta and tireless efforts to build a federal democracy from the ground up, despite immense suffering. We urge the Council to match their courage with decisive action—by rejecting the junta's sham election and its results, dismantling the military's capacity to continue committing war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other international crimes, and advancing accountability without delay.

For further information, please contact:

- Naw Cherry, Karen Peace Support Network; kpsn14@gmail.com
- Nai Aue Mon, Human Rights Foundation of Monland; auemon@rehmonnya.org
- Salai Za UK Ling, Chin Human Rights Organization; zauk@chinhumanrights.org
- Khin Ohmar, Progressive Voice, info@progressive-voice.org

Signed by 235 civil society organizations, including 27 organizations that have chosen not to disclose their names:

1. #MilkTeaAlliance - Friends of Myanmar
2. 5/ Lapantang Strike Column
3. 5/ of Zaya State Strike Committee
4. 8888 Generation (New Zealand)
5. Action Committee for Democracy Development (ACDD)
6. A New Burma (ANB)
7. Ah Nah Podcast – conversations with Myanmar
8. All Arakan Youth Organizations Network (AAYON)

9. All Burma Democratic Front in New Zealand
10. ALTSEAN-Burma
11. Anti-Dictatorship in Burma – DMVPA Area
12. Anti-Junta Alliance Yangon – AJAY
13. Anti-junta Forces Coordination Committee – Mandalay (AFCC - Mandalay)
14. Anyar Pyit Taing Htaung Lay Myar Strike Committee
15. Arakan CSO Network
16. Arakan Youth Peace Network
17. Asia Democracy Network (AND)
18. Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR)
19. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
20. Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)
21. Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters (HRDP)
22. Association of Spring Rainbow (ASR)
23. Association Suisse Birmanie (ASB)
24. Athan – Freedom of Expression Activist Organization
25. Auckland Kachin Community NZ
26. Auckland Zomi Community
27. Ayadaw Strike Committee
28. Ayeyarwaddy West Development Organisation (AWDO), Magway
29. Ayeyarwaddy West Development Organisation (AWDO), Nagphe
30. Blood Money Campaign (BMC)
31. Budalin Strike Force
32. Burma Action Ireland
33. Burma Canadian Network
34. Burma Concern
35. Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)
36. Burma Solidarity Philippines (BSP)
37. Burmese Atheists
38. Burmese Community Group (Manawatu, NZ)
39. Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK)
40. Burmese Rohingya Welfare Organisation New Zealand
41. Burmese Women's Union (BWU)
42. Campaign for a New Myanmar
43. CDM Medical Network (CDMMN)
44. Chin Community of Auckland
45. Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO)
46. Chindwin Riverside Villages Strike Committee
47. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
48. Civil Information Network (CIN)
49. Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)

50. Creative Home (CH)
51. CRPH & NUG supporters Ireland
52. CRPH Funding Ireland
53. Dagon University Student's Union (DUSU)
54. Defend Myanmar Democracy (DMD)
55. Democracy for Ethnic Minorities Organization (DEMO)
56. Democracy Youths of Myanmar
57. Democracy, Peace and Women's Organization
58. Educational Initiatives Prague
59. Equality Myanmar (EQMM)
60. Ethnic Youth General Strike Committee (Mandalay)
61. Federal Corner
62. Federal Myanmar Benevolence Group (NZ)
63. Federation of Basic Education Worker Unions (FBEWU)
64. Free Burma Campaign (South Africa) (FBC (SA))
65. Future Light Center (FLC)
66. General Strike Collaboration Committee (GSCC)
67. Generation Wave (GW)
68. Generations' Solidarity Coalition of Nationalities - GSCN
69. German Solidarity with Myanmar e.V.
70. Hpakant Hmawlae Strike Force
71. Human Rights Educators Network (HREN)
72. Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)
73. India for Myanmar
74. Info Birmanie
75. Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID)
76. Inle Women Union
77. Inter Pares
78. International Campaign for the Rohingya
79. Italia-Birmania.Insieme
80. Justice & Equality Focus (JEF)
81. Kachin Women Association Thailand (KWAT)
82. Kalay Township People's Strike Steering Committee – KPSSC
83. Kani Township Strike Steering Committee
84. Kantbalu Township Strike Force
85. Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)
86. Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN)
87. Karen Swedish Community (KSC)
88. Karen Women's Organization (KWO)
89. Karenni Civil Society Network – KCSN
90. Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG)

91. Karen National Women's Organization (KNWO)
92. Karen Society New Zealand
93. Kawthoolei Women's Network
94. Keng Tung Youth
95. Kyaek Myay
96. Kyan Rescue Committee (KRC)
97. Kyauktada Strike Committee (KSC)
98. La Communauté Birmane de France
99. Latpadaung Anti-coup Strike Force
100. Latpadaung Region Strike Committee
101. Legal Aid for Human Rights
102. Let's Help Each Other (LHEO)
103. LGBT Alliance Myanmar
104. Magway People's Revolution Committee
105. Magway Region Human Rights Network (MHRN)
106. Mandalay Medical Family (MFM)
107. Mandalay Regional Youth Association – Revolution Core Group (MRYA - RCG)
108. Mandalay Strike Force (MSF)
109. MATA Sagaing
110. MayMyo Strike Force
111. Mekong Watch
112. Metta Campaign Mandalay
113. Milk Tea Alliance Calendar Team
114. Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee
115. Monywa-Amyint Road Strike Committee
116. Myanmar (CRPH) Support Group, Norway
117. Myanmar Accountability Project (MAP)
118. Myanmar Action Group Denmark
119. Myanmar anti-military coup movement in New Zealand
120. Myanmar Campaign Network (Australia)
121. Myanmar Community Group Christchurch New Zealand
122. Myanmar Community Group Dunedin New Zealand
123. Myanmar Emergency Fund – Canada (MEF – Canada)
124. Myanmar Engineers – New Zealand
125. Myanmar Gonye (New Zealand)
126. Myanmar Labour Alliance (MLA)
127. Myanmar Muslim Revolutionary Force
128. Myanmar People Alliance (Shan State)
129. Myanmar Student Christian Movement
130. Myanmar Students' Union in New Zealand
131. Myaung People Strike Steering Committee

132. MyaYar Knowledge Tree
133. Myingyan Civilian Movement Committee
134. Nelson Myanmar Community Group New Zealand
135. Network for Human Rights Documentation – Burma (ND-Burma)
136. New Bloom (Taiwan)
137. New Myanmar Foundation (NMF)
138. New Step Women Empowerment Group (NSWG)
139. New Zealand Campaign for Myanmar
140. New Zealand Doctors for NUG
141. New Zealand Karen Association
142. New Zealand Zo Community Inc.
143. No Business With Genocide
144. Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica (NLTA)
145. Olive Organization
146. Overseas Mon Association, New Zealand
147. Pale People's Strike Steering Committee
148. Political Prisoners Network – Myanmar (PPNM)
149. Progressive Muslim Youth Association (PMYA)
150. Progressive Voice (PV)
151. Pwintphyu Development Organisation (PDO)
152. Pyithu Gonye (New Zealand)
153. Queers of Burma Alternative (QBA)
154. Rohingya Maiyafuñor Collaborative Network (RMCN)
155. Rural Community Development Society
156. Rvwang Community Association New Zealand
157. Save Myanmar – USA
158. Save Myanmar (San Francisco)
159. Save Myanmar Fundraising Group (New Zealand)
160. SEA Junction
161. Shan Community (New Zealand)
162. Shan MATA
163. Shwebo Strike Force
164. Sisters2Sisters
165. Sitt Nyein Pann Foundation (SNPF)
166. Southern Initiatives (SI)
167. Southern Youth Development Organization (SYDO)
168. Spring Revolution Myanmar Muslim Community (SRMMC)
169. Spring Traveller
170. Sujata Sisters Group (NZ)
171. Ta Mar Institute of Development
172. Ta'ang Women Organization (TWO)

173. The Ladies Organization
174. The Nation Voice
175. U.S. Campaign for Burma (USCB)
176. Union of Karen State Youth (UKSY)
177. Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)
178. University of Medicine Mandalay Student Union Revolutionary Front – UMMSURF
179. University Students' Unions Alumni Force
180. Volunteers in Myanmar
181. Wetlet Strike Committee
182. White Coat Society Yangon (WCSY)
183. Women Alliance Burma (WAB)
184. Women for Justice (WJ)
185. Women Lead Resource Center
186. Yadanabon University Students' Union (YDNBUSU)
187. Yangon 4 Brothers
188. Yangon Deaf Group
189. Yaw Land's IDP Support Network
190. Yinmarbin-Sarlingyi All Villages People Strike Leading Committee
191. Youth Empowerment (YE)
192. Youth Resources Strike Committee – Chaung U Township
193. ဂန်ဂေါ်ဖြိုးတိုးတက်ရေးအဖွဲ့
194. ပြမ်းချမ်းရေးစာသင်ခန်း - Peace Classroom
195. စွန်ရဲဌာနေ (လေကြောင်းရန်ကာကွယ်ရေးကွန်ယက်)
196. တမာဘောလိပ်
197. နှစ်ဦးတမာရပ်ဝန်း
198. နားဆင်သူများအဖွဲ့
199. ပွဲမမထြုံး
200. မင်းလှတောင်သူများအစုအစွဲ
201. မျက်မောက်ခေတ်
202. မျိုးဆက်-Generations
203. မလိအင်ဗွပ်အမျိုးသမီးများအဖွဲ့
204. ယိမ်းနွဲပါး
205. ရင်းမြစ်ဌာနေ (လေကြောင်းရန်ကာကွယ်ရေးကွန်ယက်)
206. သင့်မြတ်လိုသူများအဖွဲ့
207. သမိုင်းသယ်ဆောင်သူများ
208. အညာလွင်ပြင်ရပ်ဝန်း