

Press Statement: Civil society calls for disaster relief for earthquake survivors and affected communities in Myanmar

Aid agencies must ensure relief is not exploited by the military junta

We—the undersigned 265 Myanmar, regional, and international civil society organizations—express our deepest sorrow for communities across Myanmar and Thailand devastated by the earthquake on 28 March 2025. As Myanmar faces yet another humanitarian crisis amidst the military junta’s intensifying campaign of terror against the Myanmar people, it is imperative that the international community immediately mobilize resources and direct disaster emergency relief to survivors and affected communities of the earthquake. This must be channeled through local community groups and frontline responders in collaboration with the National Unity Government (NUG), Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs), and civil society. We emphasize that these disaster relief efforts, through any implementing partners, must not be exploited, manipulated, or weaponized by the military junta for its political and military gain.

The earthquake on Friday—a severe 7.7 magnitude and the region’s most devastating in nearly seven decades—has caused over 2,500 confirmed [deaths](#)¹ and left communities across Myanmar shattered, homes and [religious](#) infrastructure destroyed, and tens of thousands of lives [in peril](#). With hospitals overwhelmed, roads and bridges collapsed, and aftershocks threatening further destruction, immediate and unimpeded humanitarian assistance is crucial. Areas hit by the earthquake include Sagaing, Mandalay, Magwe, and Bago Regions, eastern and southern Shan State, and Naypyidaw. Most of these areas are under the effective control and administration of the NUG, EROs, and People’s Defense Forces. In affected areas under its control as well as under the resistance’s control, the junta will attempt to weaponize aid to attack and leverage gains over the resistance movement. Myanmar’s history provides stark warnings about the dangers of [channeling](#) aid through the military junta.

During Cyclone Nargis in 2008, the then military regime cynically [weaponized](#) disaster relief efforts to manipulate results of its sham referendum. International aid was [obstructed](#) from entering the country and withheld from desperate survivors to coerce their favorable vote for the military-drafted constitution in exchange for aid—all measures employed to secure its control and meddling in politics. Many local volunteers from the democratic movement were arrested and imprisoned by the regime for attempting to deliver assistance. This heavily delayed critical assistance and caused masses of civilian casualties. Once aid was finally allowed into Myanmar, the military regime and their officials diverted and misused it for personal and political gain, including benefiting constituencies with ties to the regime. This is but one example of the Myanmar military’s grotesque manipulation of human suffering for consolidation of political power and personal profit.

The military’s pattern of aid exploitation [persists](#) today, as [evidenced](#) by the junta’s obstruction and manipulation of relief efforts in response to recent natural disasters, namely Cyclone Mocha in 2023 and Typhoon Yagi in 2024, and its relentless commission of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity against civilians across the country. Even after the earthquake on Friday, the military junta repeatedly [bombed](#) civilian areas in Chaung U Township in Sagaing Region, Phyu Township in Bago Region, and [Naung Cho Township](#) in northern Shan State—areas under its illegitimate declaration of state of emergency for natural disaster management. Earlier this month, the junta had already [shut down](#) seven private hospitals in Mandalay following an accusation of their employment of healthcare professionals from the Civil Disobedience Movement, severely limiting healthcare capacity in Mandalay, now torn by the earthquake. Against this backdrop, the junta has systematically [imposed](#)

¹ Statistics by [Myanmar Earthquake Response Coordination Unit](#), a local coordination group

years-long internet and phone line shutdowns, coupled with an aggressive crackdown on VPN usage, significantly restricting the flow of information about the devastation inside Myanmar and hindering emergency response efforts. The junta's callous contempt for human life, even in the face of widespread earthquake devastation, underscores its unsuitability to oversee aid—and more importantly, its willingness to manipulate any humanitarian response.

At this critical time, we welcome the NUG's [announcement](#) of a two-week pause in its offensive military operations in earthquake-affected areas, effective today. However, the military junta has continued dropping bombs in earthquake-affected Pauk Township, Magwe Region, as recently as this morning. We look to the UN's and ASEAN's facilitation to ensure the junta ceases all military offensives, especially the immediate halt of ongoing airstrikes.

As communities across Myanmar mobilize to support one another amidst the devastation, we call on United Nations agencies, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), neighboring countries, international organizations, and the wider international community to collaborate *directly* with Myanmar's legitimate stakeholders—namely the NUG and EROs—and civil society to [ensure](#) aid is not obstructed, manipulated, or weaponized by the junta. Aid can and must reach earthquake survivors and affected communities without delay through [border-based channels](#) which have proven the most effective. The NUG's swift activation of the Emergency Operation Coordination Committees following the earthquake exemplifies its readiness and capacity to lead relief efforts in collaboration with ethnic and community partners. We commend the prompt and impactful responses to this disaster, particularly through crowd-funding efforts, including by the [NUG](#) and [Myanmar Earthquake Response Coordination Unit](#) comprised of Myanmar civil society organizations, which have already provided essential support to affected communities.

We once again remind the international community, particularly aid agencies, that humanitarian assistance *must* be guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, do no harm, and operational independence. The UN Country Team must fully embody these principles in their action, remembering the hard lessons learned from past engagements on aid with the military junta and past military regimes. Disaster response to this latest catastrophe must prioritize collaboration with stakeholders who demonstrably value the lives, safety and well-being of the Myanmar people—the NUG, EROs, and civil society—while actively preventing the junta from obstructing or exploiting aid delivery. Failure to do so will deepen the already dire humanitarian crisis and guarantee further abuses by an illegal body notorious for its active destruction of human lives.

We urge the UN, neighboring countries, and the wider international community to remember Myanmar's painful history of the military's manipulation of aid in times of natural disasters, and act resolutely to protect affected and vulnerable communities from exploitation and further suffering. The people of Myanmar deserve aid that alleviates suffering—not aid weaponized against them.

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Signed by 265 civil society organizations, including 7 organizations that have chosen not to disclose their name.

1. #MilkTeaAlliance Calendar Team
2. #MilkTeaAlliance Friends of Myanmar
3. 5/ of Zaya State Strike
4. 8888 Generation (New Zealand)
5. A-Yar-Taw People Strike
6. Action Committee of Basic Education Students (ACBES)
7. Ah Nah Podcast – Conversations with Myanmar
8. All Aung Myay Thar San Schools Strike Force
9. All Burma Democratic Front in New Zealand
10. All Burma Federation of Student Unions (Monywa District)
11. Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI)
12. Alliance of Students' Union – Yangon (ASU-Yangon)
13. ALTSEAN-Burma
14. Anti-Junta Alliance Yangon-AJAY
15. Anti-junta Forces Coordination Committee (AFCC -Mandalay)
16. Arakan Rohingya National Union (ARNU)
17. ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum Philippines Process
18. Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR)
19. Asia Pacific Solidarity Coalition (APSOC)
20. Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD)
21. Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)
22. Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters (HRDP)
23. Association of Spring Rainbow (ASR)
24. Association Suisse-Birmanie
25. Athan – Freedom of Expression Activist Organization
26. Auckland Kachin Community NZ
27. Auckland Zomi Community
28. Aung San Suu Kyi Park Norway
29. Basic Education General Strike Committee (BEGSC)
30. Basic Education Worker Unions - Steering Committee (BEWU-SC)
31. Blood Money Campaign (BMC)
32. Burma Affairs and Conflict Study (BACS)
33. Burma Action Ireland
34. Burma Campaign UK (BCUK)
35. Burma Canadian Network
36. Burmese Community Group (Manawatu, NZ)
37. Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK)
38. Burmese Rohingya Welfare Organisation New Zealand
39. Burmese Women's Union (BWU)
40. Campaign for a New Myanmar
41. Campaign for Popular Democracy
42. CDM Medical Network (CDMMN)
43. Chanmyatharzi Township People's Strike
44. Chaung Oo Township Youth Strike Committee
45. Chin Community in Norway
46. Chin Community of Auckland
47. Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO)
48. Chindwin (West) Villages Women Strike

49. Civil Information Network (CIN)
50. Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)
51. Civil Society Organizations Coordination Committee (Monywa)
52. Co-operative University Mandalay Students' Strike
53. Coalition Strike Committee – Dawei
54. Community Resource Centre
55. Creative Home (CH)
56. CRPH & NUG Supporters Ireland
57. CRPH Funding Ireland
58. CRPH Support Group, Norway and members organizations
59. Daung Sitthe Strike
60. Dawei (Ashaetaw) Women Strike
61. Dawei Youths Revolutionary Movement Strike Committee
62. Defend Myanmar Democracy (DMD)
63. Democracy for Ethnic Minorities Organization (DEMO)
64. Democratic Party for a New Society, Norway
65. Depayin Township Revolution Steering Committee
66. Depayin Women Strike
67. Doh Atu - Ensemble pour le Myanmar
68. Educational Initiatives Prague
69. Emergency Management Committee - Mandalay
70. Equality Myanmar (EQMM)
71. Ethnic Youth General Strike Committee (Mandalay)
72. ETOs Watch Coalition
73. Federal Myanmar Benevolence Group (NZ)
74. Former Political Prisoners and New Generation Group – Monywa
75. Free Burma Campaign (South Africa) (FBC (SA))
76. Free Rohingya Coalition (FRC)
77. Friends Against Dictatorship (FAD)
78. From Singapore to Myanmar (FS2M)
79. Gangaw Women Strike
80. Gender Equality Network (GEN)
81. General Strike Collaboration Committee (GSCC)
82. General Strike Committee of Basic and Higher Education (GSCBHE)
83. General Strike Coordination Body (GSCB)
84. Generation Wave (GW)
85. Generations' Solidarity Coalition of Nationalities (GSCN)
86. Global Myanmar Spring Revolution (GMSR)
87. Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF)
88. Human Rights Educators Network (HREN)
89. Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)
90. Human Rights Working Group
91. India for Myanmar
92. Industries Strike
93. Info Birmanie
94. Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID)
95. Inter Pares
96. International Association, Myanmar-Switzerland (IAMS)
97. International Campaign for the Rohingya
98. International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net)
99. International Peace Bureau

100. Italia-Birmania.Insieme
101. Jubilee Campaign
102. Justice & Equality Focus (JEF)
103. Justice For Myanmar (JFM)
104. Justice Movement for Community-Innlay
105. K'cho Ethnic Association (Europe)
106. Kachin Association Norway
107. Kachin Legal Aid Group (KLAG)
108. Kachin State Civilian Movement
109. Kachin Student Union
110. Kachin Women Association Thailand (KWAT)
111. Kalay Township Strike Force
112. Kalay Women Strike
113. Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)
114. Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN)
115. Karenni National Women's Organization (KNWO)
116. Karenni Society New Zealand Overseas Mon Association. New Zealand
117. Keng Tung Youth
118. Kontras
119. Kyae Lak Myay
120. Kyain Seikgyi Spring Revolution Leading Committee
121. Kyauktada Strike Committee (KSC)
122. La Communauté Birmane de France
123. Latpadaung Region Strike Committee
124. LGBT Alliance
125. LGBT Alliance Myanmar (Kalay Region)
126. LGBT Alliance Myanmar (Kyaukse Region)
127. LGBT Community Yangon
128. LGBT Union – Mandalay
129. Magway People's Revolution Committee
130. Magway Region Human Rights Network
131. Maharaungmyay Township People's Strike
132. Mandalay University Students' Strike
133. Mandalay Alliance Coalition Strike
134. Mandalay Medical Family (MFM)
135. Mandalay Regional Youth Association - Revolution Core Group
136. Mandalay Strike Force (MSF)
137. Mandalay Women Strike
138. Mandalay Youth Strike
139. Mandalay-based People's Strike
140. Mandalay-Based University Students' Unions (MDY_SUs)
141. MayMyo Strike Force
142. Mekong Watch
143. Milk Tea Alliance Thailand
144. Minority Affairs Institute
145. Monywa LGBT Strike
146. Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee
147. Monywa Women Strike
148. Monywa-Amyint Road Strike Leading Committee
149. Monywa-Amyint Road Women Strike
150. Movement for Alternatives and Solidarity in Southeast Asia

151. Multi-Religions Strike
152. Muslim Youth Network
153. Mya Taung Strike
154. Myanmar Accountability Project (MAP)
155. Myanmar Action Group Denmark
156. Myanmar anti-military coup movement in New Zealand
157. Myanmar Campaign Network (Australia)
158. Myanmar Catholic Community In Norway
159. Myanmar Community Group Christchurch New Zealand
160. Myanmar Community Group Dunedin New Zealand
161. Myanmar Community in Italy
162. Myanmar Community in Norway
163. Myanmar Emergency Fund - Canada
164. Myanmar Engineers - New Zealand
165. Myanmar Global Support Foundation
166. Myanmar Gonye (New Zealand)
167. Myanmar Hindu Union
168. Myanmar Institute of Information Technology Students' Strike
169. Myanmar Labor Alliance (MLA)
170. Myanmar Labour News
171. Myanmar People Alliance (Shan State)
172. Myanmar Students' Union in New Zealand
173. Myaung Youth Network
174. MyaYar Knowledge Tree
175. Myingyan Civilian Movement Committee
176. Nelson Myanmar Community Group New Zealand
177. Network for Human Rights Documentation – Burma (ND-Burma)
178. Network of University Student Unions – Monywa
179. New Myanmar Foundation (NMF)
180. New Zealand Campaign for Myanmar
181. New Zealand Doctors for NUG
182. New Zealand Karen Association
183. New Zealand Zo Community Inc.
184. NLD Organization Committee (International) Norway
185. No Business With Genocide
186. No.12 Basic Education Branch High School (Maharaungmyay) Students' Union
187. North Dagon & East Dagon News
188. Norway Matu Community
189. Norway Rvwang Community
190. Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica
191. OCTOPUS (Youth Organization)
192. Pa-O Women's Union (PWU)
193. Pale Township People's Strike Steering Committee
194. Politics for Women Myanmar
195. Progressive Muslim Youth Association (PMYA)
196. Progressive Voice (PV)
197. Pyi Gyi Tagon Strike Force
198. Pyithu Gonye (New Zealand)
199. Queers of Burma Alternative (QBA)
200. Rainbows Talk
201. Representative Committee of University Teacher Associations (RC of UTAs)

202. Rohingya Community in Norway
203. Rohingya Maìyafuìnor Collaborative Network (RMCN)
204. Rvwang Community Association New Zealand
205. Samgha Sammaga-Mandalay
206. Save Myanmar Fundraising Group (New Zealand)
207. Save the Natural Resource (SaNaR)
208. Seinpann Strike
209. Shan Community (New Zealand)
210. Shan MATA
211. Shwe Pan Kone People`s Strike Steering Committee
212. Sisters 2 Sisters
213. Sitt Nyein Pann Foundation
214. Solidarity for People`s Education and Lifelong Learning
215. Southern Initiative
216. Southern Youth Development Organization
217. Stop the War Coalition Philippines
218. Sujata Sisters Group (NZ)
219. Support Group for Democracy in Myanmar (NL)
220. Swedish Burma Committee
221. Ta'ang Women's Organization (TWO)
222. Taze Strike Committee
223. Taze Women Strike
224. Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma (TACDB)
225. Thakhin Kodaw Mhine Peace Network (Monywa)
226. Thayat Chaung Women Strike
227. The 88 Generation Peace and Open Society (Monywa)
228. The Ladies Organization
229. The Mekong Butterfly
230. Think Centre, Singapore
231. Twitter Team for Revolution (TFR)
232. U.S. Campaign for Burma
233. Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA
234. Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
235. University Students' Unions Alumni Force
236. Volunteers in Myanmar
237. Wetlet Revolution Leading Committee
238. Wetlet Township Women Strike
239. White Coat Society Yangon (WCSY)
240. Women Advocacy Coalition – Myanmar (WAC-M)
241. Women Alliance Burma (WAB)
242. Women for Justice
243. Women Lead Resource Center (WLRC)
244. Women Peace Network (WPN)
245. Women's Organization Of Political Prisoners (WOPP)
246. Women's Peace Network (WPN)
247. Yadanabon University Students' Union (YDNBUSU)
248. Yangon Deaf Group
249. Yangon Women Strike
250. Yasakyo Township People`s Strike Steering Committee
251. Yinmarpin and Salingyi All Villages Strike Committee
252. Youth Empowerment

- 253. Youth for Democratization of Myanmar (UDM)
- 254. Zomi Christian Fellowship of Norway
- 255. Zomi Community Norway
- 256. စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်းဒေသ သပိတ်အင်အားစု
- 257. ယိမ်းနွဲ့ပါး
- 258. သမိုင်းသယ်ဆောင်သူများ