

New Briefing Paper Calls for Greater Support for Locally Led Border Mechanisms

International aid must bypass the military junta and all junta-controlled mechanisms and go directly to the IDPs and all vulnerable communities

The Humanitarian crisis in Myanmar has been deteriorating since the military's illegal coup attempt in 2021 as the military junta continues its campaign of terror in its attempt to seize control of the country. While committing extreme violence and atrocities against the people for resisting their illegitimate and brutal coup attempt, the junta is weaponizing humanitarian aid for its military and political gain. Controlling access and distribution of aid, they seek to further suppress the population as a form of collective punishment.

The international community—including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), international donors, and humanitarian organizations—must immediately end all direct or indirect partnerships with the junta, including its civilian façade. Instead, the international community must direct support towards local humanitarian organizations, including those that are based along Myanmar's borders.

The briefing paper "[Blocked Aid, Unbroken People: Resisting Junta's Aid Weaponization](#)," which was launched today, highlights the alarming humanitarian challenges and how local responders and communities on the ground have developed diverse coping strategies for survival and resilience in Myanmar's Dry Zone, particularly in the Sagaing, Magwe and Mandalay Regions.

Moe Swe, of Ah Kyar Civil Society from Magwe, said: "There are many cases where the junta has seized and blocked aid for IDPs. The junta applies its Four-Cuts strategy not just to resistance groups, but also intentionally targets civilians to oppress them and make them suffer. This is a deliberate human rights violation against the people by the junta."

May Hnin, of Emergency Management Committee – Mandalay, said: "International aid is not reaching the IDPs on the ground in the dry zone. This is because international aid agencies and donors are more inclined to deliver aid through the military junta. I want to point out here clearly that this is a humanitarian crisis created by the military junta. Therefore, if humanitarian aid is just going through the junta, it will not resolve the crisis."

Shin Thant, of the Butalin Township Strike Force from Sagaing, said: "There are groups on the ground providing humanitarian aid from the resistance side, but it is very limited. So, we tried to reach out to the international groups like UNICEF and ICRC to seek support, but they lied to us

about having staff in the area where we live. None of them were on the ground. In fact, they were staying in cities that are under the control of the military junta and were pretending that they were supporting our people. Then, they claimed to be neutral. But I don't see that as neutral at all."

Adeliana Kamal, Independent Analyst, said: "These communities are not merely coping with suffering; they are resisting the structures producing it and building trusted alternatives. Resistance is not resilience, but resistance contributes to resilience. We must never allow "resilience" to become a flattering word for international abandonment. The response must therefore be locally led and internationally supported. Myanmar's humanitarian ecosystem already exists; ASEAN's role is to remove the barriers preventing it from being recognised, resourced, and protected."

Khin Ohmar, of Progressive Voice, said: "Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary and ASEAN Special Envoy Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro recently announced plans to lead a humanitarian mission to conflict-stricken Myanmar by the end of 2026. It has been almost nine months since ASEAN decided at its October 2025 Summit to deliver aid to conflict-affected communities. Why is there such a delay in saving lives? ASEAN has waited far too long. The Philippines, as the current ASEAN Chair, must immediately implement this decision and ensure aid goes through locally led border mechanisms."

The briefing paper was produced based on desk research—including news and reports by UN agencies and local human rights and humanitarian organizations—as well as interviews conducted between February and March 2026 with local humanitarian responders and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Download the full paper: <https://bit.ly/4wrZg9K>

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