

# CLAWS Newsletter



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by Anjali Manhas

## Domestic Affairs

1. On World Labour Day, Myanmar's National Unity Government (NUG) emphasized efforts to hold the military junta accountable for labour rights violations under Article 33 of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The Acting President reiterated support for building a fair society, and the CRPH pledged to strengthen labour laws. Meanwhile, the junta continued aerial bombings in Bago and Magway Regions, killing civilians, including women and a child. (Mizzima, News from Myanmar)
2. More than a month after Myanmar was struck by two powerful earthquakes on 28 March 2025, killing over 3,800 people and destroying more than 55,000 homes, the crisis has intensified due to continued military attacks, limited humanitarian access, and worsening weather. Nearly 6.3 million people are in urgent need of aid, while ongoing airstrikes—243 in total since the quakes—undermine fragile ceasefires. UN officials have called for an immediate end to violence, restoration of civilian rule, and urgent funding, as only 12% of the \$275 million aid appeal has been met. Meanwhile, health risks are growing with limited medical access and rising threats of cholera, malaria, and dengue due to stagnant water and inadequate shelter. (UN News)
3. Myanmar's military junta has extended its temporary ceasefire until May 31, 2025, to aid post-earthquake reconstruction efforts. The ceasefire, initially declared in early April, followed the devastating March 28 earthquake that killed over 3,700 people and caused widespread destruction. This move came in parallel with similar ceasefires declared by anti-junta armed groups to facilitate humanitarian relief. Despite the ceasefire announcement, military airstrikes and artillery attacks have reportedly continued in certain regions, raising concerns about the sincerity and effectiveness of the truce. (Reuters)
4. Reports of continued junta violence including aerial bombings, political prisoner assaults, and resistance attacks across Myanmar. (Spring Revolution Daily News)
5. The NUG reported that USD 192.76 million in international earthquake relief aid has gone missing under Myanmar military junta control, with aid being manipulated for political leverage. (Radio NUG)
6. The Myanmar opposition's shadow government, the National Unity Government (NUG), reported that a junta airstrike on May 12, 2025, killed at least 17 students and injured 20 others at a school in Depayin, Sagaing region, an opposition-controlled area. This attack occurred despite a declared ceasefire following the devastating March 28 earthquake, aimed at facilitating relief efforts. The ongoing conflict in Myanmar has intensified since

the military coup in 2021, with the junta facing resistance from ethnic minority armies and the NUG. While the military extended the ceasefire until May 31, airstrikes and artillery attacks have persisted in parts of the country. The junta has not commented on the airstrike. This incident highlights the fragile security situation and humanitarian crisis amid Myanmar's political turmoil. (Reuters)

### **Foreign Affairs**

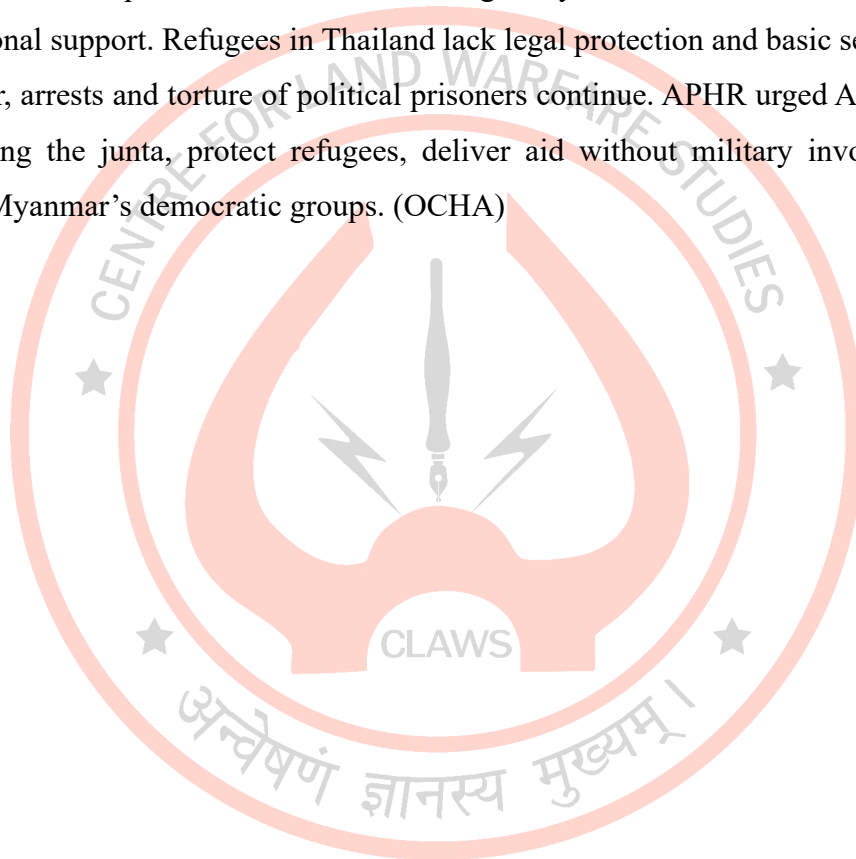
1. At the UN, Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun warned of potential misuse of nuclear energy by the junta. Labour organizations inside and outside Myanmar, including in Thailand, called for fair wages and justice for workers. Ethnic armed groups like CDF Asho and CDF Thantlang remained active, with new training and attacks on junta forces. Malaysia urged the junta to extend the ceasefire for humanitarian relief post-earthquake. Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing downplayed labor issues, blaming workforce shortages on migration and emphasizing official remittances. He also claimed to have identified over 9,000 illegal foreign entrants and announced disaster support funds for earthquake-affected insurance workers. (Mizzima, News from Myanmar)
2. Myanmar junta leader Min Aung Hlaing visited Moscow for Russia's Victory Day celebrations on 9 May. According to junta-run Myawaddy TV, he held separate meetings with foreign leaders, though their identities and his exact departure date remain undisclosed. Russian media reports indicate that leaders from China, Brazil, Serbia, Venezuela, and Cuba were invited. The visit, Min Aung Hlaing's fifth to Russia since the 2021 coup, aims to boost bilateral cooperation in economic, defense, and strategic sectors. He will be accompanied by top junta officials and his wife, Daw Kyu Kyu Hla. (Mizzima, News from Myanmar)
3. On May 9, 2025, Chinese President Xi Jinping met Myanmar's military leader Min Aung Hlaing in Moscow during the 80th anniversary celebrations of the Soviet Union's victory in the Great Patriotic War. Xi emphasized the strong "pauk-phaw" (fraternal) ties between China and Myanmar, reaffirming the importance of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and pledging continued support for Myanmar's development, sovereignty, and post-earthquake recovery in Mandalay. He called for deeper strategic cooperation, especially through the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, and urged Myanmar to ensure the safety of Chinese personnel and crack down on cross-border crimes. Min Aung Hlaing expressed gratitude for China's swift disaster aid and reaffirmed Myanmar's commitment

to economic cooperation and regional stability, aligning with China's global initiatives and shared future vision. Senior Chinese officials Cai Qi and Wang Yi also attended the meeting. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The People's Republic of China)

4. On May 14, 2025, Myanmar's Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, U Than Swe, met with Mr. Arnaud de Baecque, Resident Representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in Nay Pyi Taw. They discussed ongoing humanitarian support for victims of the March 28 Mandalay earthquake and the ICRC's future work plans in affected areas. The meeting underscores the junta-led government's emphasis on post-earthquake recovery and its engagement with international humanitarian organizations, amid ongoing domestic conflict and international scrutiny. Senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were also present. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of The Union of Myanmar)
5. On May 13, 2025, the Myanmar Embassy in Kuwait participated in a cultural exhibition during the 45th General Assembly of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), held from May 11–12 in Kuwait. The event was attended by representatives from Asian National Olympic Committees and international sports bodies, including the International Olympic Committee. While the assembly focused on preparations for upcoming games and reports from OCA committees, the Myanmar Embassy showcased the nation's cultural heritage through a booth featuring traditional products and cultural items, contributing to cultural diplomacy efforts amid Myanmar's ongoing internal crisis. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of The Union of Myanmar)
6. Following the 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck Myanmar on 28 March 2025, causing widespread destruction, Myanmar's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, H.E. U Thant Sin, received a donation of KRW 2,000,000 on 13 May 2025 from The Dongsin Presbyterian Church to support relief and rehabilitation efforts. In appreciation, the Ambassador presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the church representatives and expressed sincere gratitude. The contribution will be directed to the earthquake victims through Myanmar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of The Union of Myanmar)

## **Border Issues**

1. Karen National Liberation Army attacked a junta strategic camp on the Thai-Myanmar border, resulting in junta troops fleeing to Thailand. Myanmar junta detained foreigners involved in telecom fraud and other criminal activities, handing some back to their countries. (Spring Revolution Daily News)
2. A fact-finding team from ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) visited Mae Sot, Thailand, and found Myanmar's crisis worsening. Despite a ceasefire after the March 2025 earthquake, the military continues airstrikes, even in disaster-hit areas. Over 3,800 people died in the quake, and aid is not reaching many due to blocked borders and reduced international support. Refugees in Thailand lack legal protection and basic services. Inside Myanmar, arrests and torture of political prisoners continue. APHR urged ASEAN to stop recognizing the junta, protect refugees, deliver aid without military involvement, and support Myanmar's democratic groups. (OCHA)





## About the Author

Anjali Manhas is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), where she specializes in Defence and Strategic Studies with a focus on South Asian geopolitics. She completed her Master's in Defence and Strategic Studies from Rashtriya Raksha University, where she developed a strong foundation in security, international relations, and strategic analysis. Anjali's current research centers on Bangladesh, examining its security dynamics, regional relationships, and strategic posture in South Asia. Her work aims to contribute to policy development and strategic insights for enhancing regional stability and security. With a keen interest in defence and strategic affairs, Anjali is committed to advancing knowledge and fostering a deeper understanding of South Asian security issues.



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