

Country Focus Report

Burma/Myanmar

July 2025

Introduction to the Enabling Environment

What we understand by an Enabling Environment is the combination of laws, rules and social attitudes that support and promote the work of civil society. Within such an environment, civil society can engage in political and public life without fear of reprisals, openly express its views, and actively participate in shaping its context. This includes a supportive legal and regulatory framework for civil society, ensuring access to information and resources that are sustainable and flexible to pursue their goals unhindered, in safe physical and digital spaces. In an enabling environment, the state demonstrates openness and responsiveness in governance, promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making. Positive values, norms, attitudes, and practices towards civil society from state and non-state actors further underscore the supportive environment.

To capture the state of the Enabling Environment, we use the following six principles:

Six key enabling principles:

1. Respect and protection of fundamental freedoms
2. Supportive legal and regulatory framework
3. Accessible and sustainable resources
4. Open and responsive State
5. Supportive public culture and discourses on civil society
6. Access to a secure digital environment

In this Country Focus Report, each enabling principle is assessed with a quantitative score and complemented by an analysis and recommendations written by our Network Members (NMs). Rather than offering a singular index to rank countries, the report aims to measure the enabling environment for civil society across the 6 principles, discerning dimensions of strength and those requiring attention.

Brief overview of the Country context

This report provides an analysis of the enabling environment (EE) for civil society in Myanmar/Burmaⁱ over the past 12 months, set against the backdrop of ongoing political turmoil and armed conflict. On 1 February 2021, the Myanmar military—hereafter referred to as "the junta" or "the regime"—led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, launched a [coup 'd'état](#) following the National League for Democracy's (NLD) landslide victory in the 2020 general elections. This abrupt seizure of power ended a fragile period of democratic [transition](#) and triggered widespread civilian [resistance](#).

In the immediate aftermath of the coup, citizens across Myanmar mobilised in mass, [non-violent protests](#). Civil servants and healthcare professionals initiated the [Civil Disobedience Movement](#) (CDM), refusing to work under the illegitimate military regime. The junta responded with brutal repression, including arbitrary arrests, torture, and lethal force against peaceful demonstrators. This escalation led many civilians to take up arms, joining existing Ethnic Resistance Organisations (EROs), forming new resistance groups, and aligning with the People's Defence Forces (PDFs) under the civilian-led [National Unity Government](#) (NUG) formed in exile by a coalition of parliamentarians and other political leaders ousted by the

ⁱ This report uses the names 'Myanmar' and 'Burma' interchangeably. 'Myanmar' is used in alignment with constitutional and international standards, while 'Burma' reflects the preference of civil society groups involved in the report's production, who use the term as a form of resistance to the junta's claimed legitimacy amid heinous human rights violations.

military's coup. Notably, this wave of resistance extended [into central regions](#) of Myanmar that had previously seen little organised dissent.

Reflecting the scale and spread of the conflict, ACLED has [documented](#) the emergence of over 2,600 new non-state armed groups since April 2021. Among the most significant developments [was Operation 1027](#), launched on 27 October 2023 by three ethnic armed organisations, the Arakan Army, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, which—with support from People's Defence Forces—rapidly expanded across the country, capturing towns, strategic infrastructure, and military bases. Operation 1027 fighters have also been [accused of abuses](#), including forced civilian recruitment, [extra-judicial killings](#), [torture](#). Most notably, during the Arakan Army's capture of [Buthidaung on 17 May 2024](#) and its offensive [in Maungdaw Township](#) on 5 August 2024, Rohingya neighborhoods were shelled, looted, and burned, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of Rohingya civilians—many of whom were killed on the banks of the Naf River while attempting to flee to Bangladesh.ⁱⁱ

The [junta invoked](#) the 2010 People's Military Service Law to conscript men aged 18–35 and women aged 18–27 for up to five years, citing severe troop shortages. At least 14 batches of 5,000 soldiers, an estimated 70,000 in total have been [forcibly conscripted](#).

Atrocities committed by the junta have escalated sharply, with daily reports of detentions, indiscriminate killings, and forced displacements. As of 24 June 2025, [29,316 civilians had been detained](#), with 22,163 still in custody. Between 1 February 2021 and 31 May 2025, military operations [led to the deaths of 14,626 civilians](#), often through deliberate attacks on schools, hospitals, and camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). By 16 June 2025, the conflict had [displaced over 3.25 million people](#), underscoring the devastating human toll and the junta's systematic targeting of civilian populations. These actions reflect a broader pattern of repression against fundamental freedoms, as documented by [CIVICUS](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), and [Freedom House](#).

Over the past year, the situation has further deteriorated. According to a December 2024 [BBC investigation](#), the State Administration Council (SAC)—the official name for Myanmar's military junta—now controls only about 21% of Myanmar's territory. The remaining areas are governed by a range of actors, including the NUG, established Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs), and newly formed resistance groups. In response to its

shrinking territorial control, the junta has [intensified its attacks](#) on civilians, [employing air and drone strikes](#), committing [widespread atrocity crimes](#), and using torture—including [sexual](#)

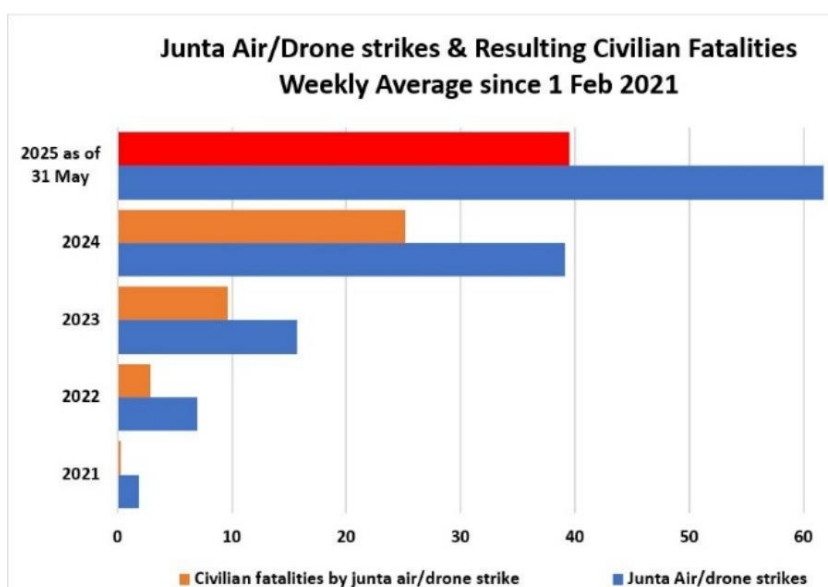


Figure 1. Junta air/drone strikes & resulting civilian fatalities.
Data from <https://acleddata.com/>

ⁱⁱ The Arakan Army has [disputed](#) these accusations, stating that it gave enough early warning for civilians and blaming the atrocities on the junta military and Rohingya militias.

[violence](#)—as a weapon of war. These abuses disproportionately target women, girls, and LGBTQ+ individuals and are carried out with impunity.

The regime's [economic mismanagement](#) has compounded the crisis. The Burmese Kyat has lost 80% of its value, and as of March 2025, the [UN estimates](#) that nearly 15 million people—approximately one-third of the population—face acute food insecurity.

Overall, Myanmar's governance landscape remains deeply fragmented due to [decades of armed resistance](#) and the fallout from the 2021 military coup. As a result, [there is no single](#), unified authority governing the entire country. Various entities [maintain distinct approaches](#) to governance and civil society in their captured areas, leading to significant variation in the enabling environment across different regions.

Myanmar's 2008 military-drafted constitution guarantees the military 25% of parliamentary seats and broad autonomy, [including veto and oversight power](#) over constitutional amendments and exemption from key checks and balances across all branches of government.

While most civil society organisations do not recognise the junta as the legitimate government of Myanmar, this report seeks to provide a balanced analysis of the six core principles of the enabling environment for civil society. The findings reflect a composite view, incorporating conditions in both junta-controlled and resistance-held areas. However, given the junta's continued repression and its control over key administrative and economic mechanisms, the assessment necessarily places greater emphasis on the realities within junta-held territories, while acknowledging the more favourable conditions for civic engagement in areas under resistance control.

B) Assessment of the Enabling Environment

Principle 1: Respect and protection of fundamental freedoms

Score: 1.4ⁱⁱⁱ

Myanmar's civic space is classified as “closed”—the lowest rating on the [CIVICUS Monitor](#)'s scale. This score reflects the regime's systematic repression of civic space following the coup in 2021. Over the past four years, thousands of activists, protesters, and civil society actors have been arrested and imprisoned on fabricated charges. The environment remains severely restricted, with the junta continuing to arbitrarily detain, torture, and extrajudicially kill individuals who speak out against its rule. These practices [have intensified](#) over the past 12 months, further entrenching a climate of fear and silencing dissent across the country.

1.1 | Freedom of Association

While the [Constitution of Myanmar](#) nominally guarantees fundamental freedoms—including the rights to association, expression, and peaceful assembly under Articles 354(a), (b), and (c)—these protections have been systematically undermined, [mainly by the military junta](#). The continued enforcement and manipulation of the colonial-era 1908 [Unlawful Association Act](#) has become a central tool of repression, used to criminalise civil society actors and restrict civic space. Individuals with any [real or perceived affiliation](#) to the National Unity Government

ⁱⁱⁱ This is a rebased score derived from the [CIVICUS Monitor](#) rating published in December 2024. The country is rated as *closed* in the Monitor, with a score of 10/100, which has been converted to fit our 1–5 scale.

or resistance forces are routinely branded as terrorists and subjected to arbitrary detention, further eroding the legal and practical foundations of freedom of association.

Under junta rule, the ability of citizens to organise around shared beliefs or participate in civil society is effectively non-existent. The regime's actions reflect a broader strategy of dismantling independent civic structures and silencing dissent. This includes targeted violence against humanitarian actors—over 40 aid workers [have been killed](#) since 2021—demonstrating the junta's disregard for both civilian life and international humanitarian norms.

A particularly egregious example occurred in May 2024 in Arakan State, where junta forces [rounded up](#) villagers in Sittwe Township. Eyewitness accounts describe brutal interrogations, sexual violence, and executions. Men with tattoos associated with the Arakan Army (AA) [were mutilated and killed](#), while women were beaten and raped. The massacre resulted in the deaths of 76 civilians, including five women. This incident underscores how the regime weaponises association—however symbolic—as a justification for atrocity crimes, further shrinking the space for civil society and reinforcing a climate of fear.

The junta's systematic targeting of individuals based on perceived affiliations has rendered the freedom of association not only legally meaningless but physically dangerous. Civil society actors operate under constant threat, and the mere act of organising or expressing solidarity with resistance movements can result in torture or death. This environment not only violates international human rights standards but also severely impairs the ability of civil society to function, advocate, or provide services—deepening the crisis of governance and accountability in Myanmar.

1.2 | Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

In areas under the control of the military regime, the right to peaceful assembly is effectively nonexistent. Citizens are unable to gather, protest, or publicly advocate for their rights without facing severe repercussions. Despite this, [over 409 non-violent public protests](#) and movements were recorded across Myanmar in 2024, demonstrating continued civic resilience. However, in 2025, public participation has declined sharply, largely due to the junta's escalating violence against any form of dissent, including peaceful demonstrations.

Four years after the coup, the regime's brutal crackdown on protests has [significantly eroded](#) both the willingness and capacity of civilians to engage in public assembly and protests. The chilling effect of this repression is evident in a 2023 [civil society survey](#), where 95% of respondents reported being unable to strike or demonstrate peacefully.

Freedom of assembly and association

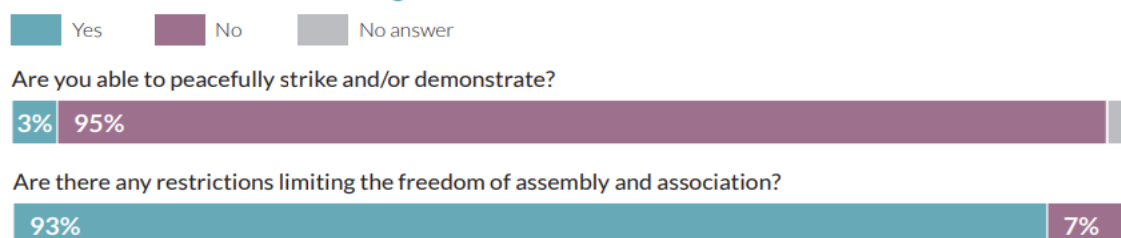


Figure 2: Freedom of Assembly and Association – [CSO survey](#)

Burmese lawyer and politician Nyo Nyo Thin [aptly summarized](#) the situation, stating that “freedom of organisation—a fundamental democratic right—has now been banned.” A

prominent trade unionist [Thet Hnin Aung](#), previously imprisoned for his role in the Civil Disobedience Movement, was forcibly disappeared after his release in June 2023, then [re-sentenced](#) to seven years of hard labour under terrorism charges—likely in retaliation for his activism.

The suppression of peaceful protest has had far-reaching consequences for the enabling environment. As traditional avenues for civic expression have been closed off, many civilians [have turned to armed resistance](#) as an alternative means of opposition. Others have adapted their tactics, resorting to symbolic or covert forms of protest to avoid detection and retaliation. This shift reflects not only the regime's intolerance for dissent but also the resilience and adaptability of civil society actors under extreme pressure.

The junta's systematic denial of peaceful assembly rights has dismantled a core pillar of civic engagement. The inability to publicly mobilise or express dissent undermines democratic participation and silences critical voices. This environment not only stifles civil society but also fuels instability, as the suppression of peaceful avenues for change pushes communities toward more confrontational and potentially violent forms of resistance. The erosion of peaceful assembly rights thus represents a profound threat to both civic space and long-term prospects for democratic governance in Myanmar.

1.3 | Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression in Myanmar remains severely curtailed, with panel participants unanimously assigning the lowest possible score for this dimension. Despite constitutional guarantees, the reality on the ground reflects a systematic and violent suppression of speech, dissent, and identity. Successive regimes have long weaponised nationalist narratives—particularly [Buddhist supremacy](#)—to marginalise non-Buddhist ethnic minorities. Over the past 12 months, this pattern has intensified, with both the junta and the Arakan Army escalating their persecution of Rohingya communities in Rakhine (Arakan) State.

The constriction of civic space has disproportionately impacted vulnerable groups, particularly women, girls, and LGBTQ+ individuals. In [detention facilities](#), these groups face targeted sexual violence, including rape, sexual torture, and threats of execution. Transgender women and gay men are especially vulnerable, [often subjected](#) to brutal treatment as a form of humiliation and control. These abuses not only violate international human rights norms but also serve as a deliberate strategy to silence and terrorise marginalised voices.

The junta has also weaponised legal frameworks to criminalise expression. On 10 January 2024, a closed military court [sentenced](#) award-winning documentary filmmaker Shin Daewe to life imprisonment under the [2014 Counterterrorism Law](#)—an increasingly repressive tool used to punish dissent. Her conviction for allegedly “financing and abetting terrorism” exemplifies the regime's use of judicial mechanisms to eliminate critical voices and suppress artistic and journalistic freedom. Most recently, in July 2025, leading anti-coup activist Wai Moe Naing was [brutally beaten](#) by prison staff upon arrival at Obo Prison, sustaining serious head injuries and being denied medical care. He [remains in solitary confinement](#) with restricted access to family and support, emblematic of the junta's ongoing campaign to silence prominent voices through physical and psychological abuse.

The junta's suppression of independent media is emblematic of its broader strategy to control narratives and obstruct transparency. As of February 2025, at least 221 journalists from nearly 100 media outlets [had been detained](#) on fabricated charges, reflecting the regime's systematic effort to silence dissent and prevent the dissemination of information about state conduct and human rights abuses.

Importantly, threats to freedom of expression are not limited to junta-controlled areas. On 8 July 2024, a 16-year-old member of the All-Burma Federation of Students' Union (ABFSU) was [found murdered](#) in a resistance-held area following internal disputes. Although the National Unity Government [condemned](#) the killing and detained suspects, the incident underscores the fragility of civic protections even within opposition-controlled territories. It also highlights the need for accountability and human rights standards across all actors, not just the junta.

The systematic suppression of expression—through violence, legal persecution, and social exclusion—has created an environment where civil society actors operate under constant threat. The targeting of filmmakers, students, and minority groups reflects a broader strategy to dismantle independent thought and public discourse. In such a climate, advocacy, journalism, and community organising have become acts of resistance, often carrying life-threatening consequences. The erosion of freedom of expression not only undermines democratic participation but also weakens the foundations of civil society, making recovery and reconciliation increasingly difficult.

Principle 2: Supportive legal and regulatory framework

Score: 1.0

Myanmar's legal and regulatory framework remains deeply hostile to civil society, functioning less as a system of governance and more as a mechanism of control. Rather than enabling civic engagement, laws are deliberately designed or manipulated to restrict the formation, operation, and independence of civil society organisations. Panel participants unanimously assigned the lowest score, reflecting the pervasive use of vague or punitive legislation—such as the Unlawful Associations Act and Counterterrorism Law—to criminalise activism, suppress dissent, and dismantle grassroots organising. The absence of legal protections, coupled with the regime's arbitrary enforcement of laws, has created a climate of fear and legal precarity that severely undermines the enabling environment for civil society.

2.1 | Registration

The legal framework governing civil society registration in Myanmar is designed to obstruct, rather than enable, the formation and operation of independent organisations. In October 2022, the junta repealed the 2014 Association Registration Law and [introduced](#) the Organisation Registration Law, imposing excessively restrictive and politically motivated requirements, forcing CSOs to formally register with the regime. CSOs—both local and international—must [disclose](#) sensitive information including funding sources, operational locations, staff lists, and a government recommendation letter. Registration is denied if any member is deemed politically unacceptable, effectively banning organisations engaged in human rights, democracy, women's rights, or LGBTQ+ advocacy.

The law also [prohibits registered organizations](#) from contacting individuals affiliated with armed resistance or those labelled as “terrorists” by the regime, further narrowing the scope of permissible civic engagement. As political analyst [Oliver Slow noted](#), the law grants sweeping powers to punish any organisation whose activities challenge the junta's authority. Unregistered organisations face [penalties and prison time](#) whereas organisations considered “illegal labour groups” [are particularly vulnerable](#), facing threats of arrest and violence. For example, organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) must first obtain approval from the Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities before applying to register—yet none has succeeded under the new law.

Panel participants emphasised that the law places CSOs in an impossible position: registering [exposes them](#) to surveillance and retaliation, while operating unregistered risks criminal penalties. As a result, many organisations have [opted to ignore](#) the law entirely, choosing to operate underground or relocate abroad. The law has significantly [shrunk civic space](#), forcing CSOs to abandon public engagement and formal operations.

The impact is uneven across territories. In junta-controlled areas, registration is virtually impossible and dangerous; in contested zones, restrictions are [harsh and unpredictable](#); and in resistance-held areas, CSOs enjoy relatively more freedom but lack institutional support and resources. One LGBTQ+ activist noted that under the previous NLD government, registration and support were accessible—“after the coup, everything has gone.”

The Organisation Registration Law exemplifies how legal frameworks are weaponised to dismantle civil society. By imposing unattainable requirements, denying registration without justification, and criminalising unregistered activity, the junta has effectively banned independent civic organising. The absence of appeal mechanisms and the politicisation of registration procedures have created a legal environment where CSOs cannot safely or legally exist. This has forced civil society into survival mode—operating covertly, relocating, or dissolving—undermining democratic resilience and civic participation across Myanmar.

2.2 | Operational Environment

Myanmar’s legal framework imposes [severe and arbitrary restrictions](#) on the ability of CSOs to determine their own objectives, carry out legitimate activities, and access funding. The junta’s regulatory environment is not merely unsupportive—it is actively designed to [obstruct](#) independent civic action. CSOs are required to seek approval for virtually all activities, and those that do not align with the regime’s interests are routinely denied permission or targeted for repression. Reporting requirements are excessive, vague, and bureaucratically burdensome, creating a climate of legal uncertainty and operational paralysis.

Unregistered CSOs are [prohibited](#) from opening bank accounts, effectively cutting them off from domestic and international funding sources. This restriction disproportionately [affects local organizations](#), particularly those working on human rights, democracy, and minority issues, which are already at heightened risk of surveillance and retaliation. While some international organisations operate under memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with the junta, they remain subject to [restrictive laws and scrutiny](#), and their relative operational freedom only underscores the vulnerability of local actors.

The September 2024 [amendment](#) to the Counter-Terrorism Law further entrenched these constraints by expanding the definition of “terrorism” to include opposition to the regime. This vague and politically charged legal tool has been used to arbitrarily arrest CSO members, [journalists](#), and activists, forcing many organisations to operate covertly or relocate abroad. As Athan Myanmar [observed](#), the junta has “intentionally capitalised on the absence of a clear legal standard” to suppress civic actors and dismantle public advocacy.

The legal and regulatory framework in Myanmar does not merely restrict civil society—it criminalises it. CSOs face a zero-sum choice: comply and risk exposure, or operate underground and risk imprisonment. The inability to access funding, the requirement for regime approval, and the threat of arbitrary legal action have collectively rendered the operational environment for civil society untenable. These conditions have fragmented civic networks, silenced advocacy, and pushed many organisations into exile, leaving Myanmar’s civil society dangerously weakened and disconnected from the communities it seeks to serve.

2.3 | Protection from Interference

Myanmar's legal framework offers no protection for CSOs from state interference. On the contrary, it enables and legitimises arbitrary dissolution, surveillance, and repression. All panel participants confirmed that their organisations operate without legal recognition, in direct defiance of the junta's restrictions. The law does not merely fail to protect CSOs—it actively criminalises their existence.

The junta has weaponised the Penal Code to suppress civil society activity, particularly through amendments to Chapter 6 on high treason. Provisions such as Sections 121, 124-a, 124-c, and 124-d [have been broadened](#) to punish a wide range of civic actions. Section 124-c, for example, [threatens](#) up to 20 years' imprisonment for those accused of obstructing law enforcement—language so vague it has been used to target peaceful protesters, CSO members, and activists. Between February 2021 and December 2024, at least 8,442 political prisoners were charged under the Penal Code, with 7,548 prosecuted under Section 505A for allegedly “causing fear to a group of citizens”, [according](#) to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP). These provisions are deliberately ambiguous, allowing the junta to arbitrarily criminalise civil society work.

Panellists described a pervasive “climate of fear and uncertainty”, where CSOs are subject to constant surveillance and interference. The Organisation Registration Law requires registered CSOs to [submit quarterly reports](#) through public accountants, enabling the junta to monitor their activities and finances. The junta has also targeted CSOs and NGOs with [direct surveillance](#), such as through [Chinese and Russian](#)-provided technology using facial recognition tools and AI surveillance systems to monitor and suppress dissent. These mechanisms are not administrative—they are coercive tools of control.

The junta's interference extends beyond Myanmar's borders. Panellists cited evidence of [transnational repression](#) (TNR), including collaboration with foreign authorities to target exiled activists in Thailand. These individuals face arrest, deportation, and upon return to Myanmar, torture, [forced conscription](#), or death. This extraterritorial reach further erodes any sense of safety or autonomy for civil society actors, even those operating in exile.

The absence of legal protections and the presence of active state interference have rendered civil society in Myanmar structurally and functionally vulnerable. CSOs can be dissolved without cause, raided without warrants, and criminalised without due process. The junta's use of surveillance technologies, legal intimidation, and transnational repression has created an environment where civic actors are not only silenced but hunted. This level of interference has decimated the operational space for civil society, forcing many organisations underground or into exile, and leaving those who remain at constant risk of violence and imprisonment.

Principle 3: Accessible and sustainable resources

Score: 1.8

Over the past 12 months, civil society actors in Myanmar have faced growing challenges in accessing sustainable resources, primarily due to significant cuts in international aid. A global shift in donor priorities—from development and human rights to national security and geopolitical interests—has left many Burmese CSOs underfunded and vulnerable. On 26 January 2025, the United States [suspended](#) most foreign aid for 90 days, immediately halting all USAID-funded activities. This abrupt suspension had life-threatening consequences, including [the death](#) of three refugees along the Thai-Myanmar border who relied on USAID-funded oxygen machines. The subsequent [dismantling](#) of USAID further deepened the crisis. Other key donors, including [Sweden](#), the [Netherlands](#), and the [United Kingdom](#), also reduced their aid budgets, compounding the financial strain on grassroots organisations. As one

LGBTQ+ activist based in Thailand noted, “we had to try two, three, four times harder to maintain our work for the people on the ground in Myanmar.” These funding disruptions have not only undermined service delivery and advocacy efforts but have also forced many CSOs to scale back operations, reduce staff, or shut down entirely—shrinking civic space and weakening the resilience of civil society.

3.1 | Accessibility of Resources

Civil society organisations in Myanmar face significant and growing barriers to accessing funding and operational resources. The abrupt suspension of U.S. aid in January 2025 exposed the fragility of donor-dependent programming and the devastating consequences of unreliable funding. The freeze halted USAID-supported activities overnight, including life-saving medical support, resulting in the deaths of three refugees reliant on oxygen machines. This incident underscores the critical need for predictable and sustained funding mechanisms.

Domestically, the junta has imposed systemic restrictions that further obstruct access to resources. A December 2023 civil society [survey revealed](#) that 50% of respondents viewed the funding environment as “completely closed.” The regime’s [control](#) over key financial institutions—including the Central Bank of Myanmar and several state-run banks—has enabled it [to freeze CSO accounts](#), monitor transactions, and block access to both domestic and international funding. These institutions, often run by regime-aligned cronies, also facilitate military procurement, reinforcing the politicisation of financial infrastructure.

The Financial Action Task Force’s (FATF) [blacklisting](#) of Myanmar has compounded these challenges. It has increased administrative burdens for CSOs and heightened donor hesitancy, as transferring funds to Myanmar now carries reputational and legal risks related to money laundering. As a result, many organisations are forced to rely on informal and insecure channels to deliver aid, particularly in conflict-affected areas—further straining already limited budgets and exposing staff to personal risk.

The scarcity of funding, coupled with opaque approval processes and state-imposed financial restrictions, has severely undermined the sustainability of civil society in Myanmar. CSOs operate in a landscape where information on funding is limited, bureaucratic hurdles are excessive, and financial institutions are weaponised against them. The lack of tax exemptions or donor incentives further discourages support. These conditions have not only weakened the operational capacity of CSOs but have also eroded their ability to plan, scale, and respond to urgent needs—shrinking civic space and threatening the long-term viability of civil society.

3.2 | Effectiveness of Resources

Civil society organisations in Myanmar face significant constraints in utilising available resources effectively due to both junta-imposed restrictions and donor-imposed conditions. While some donors have [shown flexibility](#) around registration requirements, many still require formal registration under the junta’s CSO law—an unattainable and dangerous condition for most local organisations. In a context of limited internet access and heightened security risks, [donor demands](#) for detailed documentation—such as receipts, names, locations, and written evidence of activities—can expose individuals and communities to surveillance, arrest, or attack.

Panel participants expressed frustration with the rigid compliance culture among international donors, which often prioritises bureaucratic accountability over contextual sensitivity and solidarity. Local NGOs [reported feeling](#) distrusted and disempowered, with little input into funding decisions or programme design. This hierarchical relationship undermines the

autonomy of grassroots actors and limits their ability to respond to urgent, locally defined needs.

The impact of these constraints is compounded by widespread funding cuts. On 7 May 2025, 20 Karenni and Karen organisations [issued a joint statement warning](#) that 108,000 refugees along the Thai-Myanmar border faced starvation due to the collapse of donor support. No major donors stepped in to fill the gap, forcing organisations like The Border Consortium (TBC)—the sole provider of food and medical aid in the camps—to [lay off staff and suspend most operations](#). As formal funding channels dry up, many CSOs now rely on informal networks, including [diaspora communities](#) and personal contacts, to sustain their work.

Panellists emphasised that donor reporting requirements, while intended to ensure transparency, often become operational liabilities in conflict zones. The need to document activities, locations, and actors not only consumes time and resources but also increases the risk of reprisals. In such environments, rigid administrative processes can inadvertently restrict CSO activities and compromise safety.

Donor conditions and reporting frameworks, while well-intentioned, often fail to accommodate the realities of operating in Myanmar’s high-risk environment. The lack of flexibility, disregard for local input, and failure to adapt to security constraints have diminished the effectiveness of aid and weakened civil society’s resilience. Without more responsive and trust-based funding relationships, CSOs will continue to struggle to meet urgent needs, particularly in conflict-affected and junta-controlled areas.

3.3 | Sustainability

Sustainability has become a [critical vulnerability](#) for civil society in Myanmar. The relative certainty that once allowed CSOs to plan multi-year programmes and maintain staff has all but disappeared. Funding is now unpredictable, sporadic, and often dependent on a single donor or short-term emergency grants. Organisations are left scrambling for any remaining funding streams, undermining their ability to deliver consistent services or engage in long-term planning. This instability is particularly damaging in a context where CSOs have historically filled critical service gaps left by both the junta and previous governments.

The junta’s efforts to [obstruct aid](#)—through surveillance, legal restrictions, and financial controls—have been compounded by international funding cuts. These developments represent a strategic win for the regime, as they further isolate civil society and weaken its operational capacity. Donor restrictions have also narrowed the pool of accessible funding, leaving CSOs vulnerable to shifting political priorities. For example, the global retreat from funding initiatives related to [women’s rights](#), LGBTQ+ rights, and other so-called “[woke](#)” issues has left many organisations without viable support.

The consequences are stark. [The Border Consortium](#) (TBC), which has provided food, shelter, and support to Burmese refugees along the Thai-Myanmar border for over 30 years, has been forced to drastically reduce operations due to the lack of reliable long-term funding. Food rations have [been cut to below survival levels](#), and the organisation can no longer plan or sustain long-term projects. This case illustrates how funding volatility directly translates into humanitarian crises.

The collapse of predictable, multi-year funding has left CSOs unable to retain staff, sustain operations, or invest in long-term strategies. The absence of support for self-reliance—such as local fundraising or volunteer mobilisation—further compounds this fragility. In this environment, civil society actors are not only overstretched but structurally undermined, operating in survival mode rather than as stable institutions capable of driving social change.

Without urgent intervention to stabilise funding flows and diversify support mechanisms, the long-term viability of civil society in Myanmar remains in serious jeopardy.

Principle 4: Open and responsive State

Score: 1.0

After seizing power through a coup d'état, the military junta has demonstrated a consistent pattern of authoritarian governance that is fundamentally closed and unresponsive to the needs and rights of its citizens. The regime has violently suppressed peaceful protests, arbitrarily detained thousands, and committed widespread human rights violations. According to credible international sources, including the United Nations, the junta has been responsible for the [deaths of at least 14,626 civilians](#), with violence in 2025 reaching what the [UN has described](#) as “unprecedented” levels. Rather than engaging in dialogue or responding to civil society demands, the military regime has systematically dismantled democratic institutions, restricted freedom of expression and assembly, and targeted civil society actors. This environment has rendered meaningful civic engagement nearly impossible, violating the core tenets of an open and responsive state.

4.1. | Transparency

Myanmar's military junta exhibits a profound lack of transparency, severely undermining the enabling environment for civil society. The [2008 Constitution of Myanmar](#) also fails to guarantee the right to access public information. While it includes limited and heavily qualified provisions on freedom of expression (Articles 354), it contains no explicit recognition of the public's right to information held by state institutions. This legal vacuum, combined with the junta's authoritarian practices, has created an environment where public institutions operate without transparency or accountability. There are no procedures for filing freedom of information (FOI) requests, and in practice, requests for information are either ignored or met with retaliation.

The right to access public information is [neither recognized nor protected](#), and information—when released—is neither timely nor accessible. Although a [Draft Right to Information Bill](#) was introduced in 2016, its prospects have been effectively extinguished under the military junta. Since the 2021 coup, the regime has not only failed to advance this legislation but has actively pursued laws that [entrench secrecy](#), [unpredictability](#) and suppress access to information. This closed information environment has direct and damaging implications for civil society.

The regime's opacity is further evidenced by its response to national crises. Following the 28 March 2025 earthquake, which [claimed over 4,500 lives](#), the junta [weaponized digital infrastructure](#)—restricting internet access and censoring media coverage. This deliberate information blackout prevented CSOs from accessing critical data on affected areas, severely impeding rescue and relief operations. Such actions illustrate how the absence of transparency not only obstructs civic engagement but also endangers lives.

International assessments reinforce this bleak picture. In 2024, Transparency International [ranked Myanmar](#) 168th out of 180 countries, assigning it a score of 16/100 on the global corruption index. This ranking reflects entrenched corruption, lack of oversight, and the regime's refusal to engage in open governance.

The lack of legal and institutional safeguards has profound implications for civil society. Without access to timely, reliable, and official information, civil society organisations are unable to monitor government actions, advocate effectively, or respond to crises. The junta's

deliberate suppression of information—especially during emergencies such as natural disasters—further illustrates how the absence of transparency can directly endanger lives and obstruct humanitarian efforts.

4.2 | Participation

Civil society actors in Myanmar are systematically excluded from all forms of public decision-making under the military junta. Since the 2021 coup, the regime has dismantled participatory governance structures and replaced them with a militarised, top-down system that offers no space for civic engagement. CSOs, community groups, and marginalised populations are not consulted, and their input is neither solicited nor considered in policy or operational decisions. Even in rare instances where participation might be possible, CSOs face severe restrictions on their ability to express views freely or influence outcomes without fear of reprisal.

A 2023 civil society [survey](#) on Burma revealed that 80% of respondents identified the targeting of specific groups as a major barrier to civic engagement. This reflects a broader pattern of repression, where the junta not only excludes civil society from governance but actively targets it to further suppress participation. For example, persons with disabilities (PWDs) face compounded exclusion. An expert panel member noted that public information is especially inaccessible to PWDs, and the 2015 Disability Rights Law, which mandates government support for PWDs—including financial and informational access—has been [quietly abandoned](#). This has further marginalised PWDs from civic life and denied them avenues to voice their concerns or participate in public discourse.

The junta's conduct during the 28 March 2025 earthquake further illustrates its hostility toward civil society participation, even in humanitarian contexts. Despite making [a rare international plea for aid](#) and receiving over USD 136 million, the regime withheld support from humanitarian and civil society actors, [blocking access](#) to disaster zones—particularly those under resistance control. Aid groups, both local and international, were subjected to lengthy and arbitrary screening procedures, and were only permitted to operate in areas pre-approved by the junta. In many cases, civilians were forced to conduct rescue operations in secret or at night, as the regime simultaneously launched a conscription campaign, [forcibly recruiting](#) over 100 people in the days following the disaster.

The junta's militarised approach to aid distribution had deadly consequences. It [fired on](#) a Chinese Red Cross convoy that entered disputed territory, and its restrictions on civil society-led relief efforts directly contributed to preventable civilian deaths. Although the regime [announced a ceasefire](#) following the earthquake, it failed to honour it. As of 16 June, the junta [had conducted 982 attacks](#), 842 of which occurred during the so-called ceasefire, resulting in 608 civilian deaths.

These patterns of exclusion, repression, and violence demonstrate that civil society in Myanmar is not only denied participation in governance but is actively obstructed from contributing to humanitarian response and community resilience. The junta's actions align with the lowest threshold of participation, where civic actors are entirely excluded from decision-making, and any attempt at engagement is met with coercion, censorship, or violence.

4.3 | Accountability

Myanmar's military junta has eliminated all meaningful avenues for civil society actors to hold the regime accountable. The relationship between the state and civil society is entirely one-directional, with no mechanisms for feedback, appeal, or oversight. CSOs are denied access

to decision-making processes, and when input is solicited—often superficially—it is ignored without explanation or follow-up. There is no public documentation of consultations, no reporting on outcomes, and no institutional channels through which CSOs can assess the impact of their engagement or challenge government decisions.

Aggressive suppression tactics have further eroded accountability. CSOs face arbitrary arrests, funding restrictions, and strict registration laws, all of which have severely constrained their operational capacity. An activist from an organisation of persons with disabilities noted that public consultation and feedback mechanisms are non-functional, citing the junta's practice of announcing complaint hotlines that are never acted upon. This reflects a broader pattern of performative engagement designed to deflect criticism rather than foster genuine accountability.

The junta's planned 2025 election exemplifies its manipulation of democratic processes to manufacture legitimacy. Widely [condemned as a sham](#), the election has been [described](#) by political analyst Azeem Ibrahim as “an insult to the very idea of democracy.” The regime has silenced political opposition and engineered the electoral landscape to ensure its dominance. Analysis of the parties permitted to contest the election [reveals that](#), excluding the junta's Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), the remaining parties collectively won only 2.8% of seats in the 2020 election. This not only underscores their lack of public support but also highlights the regime's deliberate exclusion of popular political voices from the electoral process.

The implications for civil society are profound. Without access to transparent decision-making, feedback mechanisms, or appeal processes, CSOs are unable to monitor government actions, advocate for policy change, or represent community interests. The absence of accountability mechanisms entrenches impunity, silences dissent and reinforces a governance model that is hostile to civic participation and democratic norms.

Principle 5: Supportive public culture and discourses on civil society

Score: 1.3

In Myanmar, public discourse surrounding civil society is tightly controlled and manipulated by the military junta, leaving no room for independent or critical narratives unless they align with the regime's interests. Civil society actors are routinely vilified in state propaganda, often labelled as “terrorists” or destabilising actors. The junta uses legal instruments and orchestrated events to shift blame onto civil society actors and resistance groups, fostering a hostile public perception that undermines their legitimacy and safety. This deliberate stigmatisation has created a culture of fear and mistrust, where civil society actors are unable to engage openly or safely in public dialogue. However, public sentiment toward civil society varies significantly between junta-controlled areas and those under resistance influence, with the latter often demonstrating stronger support and collaboration with CSOs. The absence of a supportive public culture in junta areas not only isolates civil society but also erodes its capacity to mobilise, advocate, and build trust with communities—further weakening the enabling environment for civic engagement.

5.1 | Public Discourse and Constructive Dialogue on Civil Society

Public discourse on civil society in Myanmar is deeply polarised and hostile under the military junta. Civil society actors are [consistently framed](#) by the regime as threats to national stability and sovereignty. A Thai civil society activist described the situation as a “narrative war”, where CSOs are portrayed as adversaries to state power. This framing is reinforced by state-controlled media and political rhetoric, which depict CSOs as foreign-influenced, untrustworthy, and irrelevant to national priorities. The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) notes that CSOs are [often accused](#) of being backed by Western governments, a narrative the junta exploits to justify its violent repression. Following the 2021 coup, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders [described](#) the junta’s actions as a “brute force terror campaign” against civil society actors. This environment fosters division, misinformation, and fear, leaving no space for constructive dialogue or respect for differing views. Politicians and officials routinely engage in personal attacks and disinformation campaigns, further eroding public trust in civil society.

However, public discourse on civil society varies significantly across territorial lines. In areas under resistance control, expert panellists agreed that public engagement with civil society would merit a score of 4, reflecting a markedly more inclusive and respectful environment. The Karenni Interim Executive Council (IEC), established in 2023, [exemplifies inclusive governance](#). Formed by the Karenni National Consultative Council (KSCC)—[a coalition of CSOs](#), ethnic resistance organisations, elected parliamentarians, and strike committees—the IEC regularly consults with CSOs and civilians, fostering a participatory and respectful civic culture. This contrast has influenced the overall indicator score, which—while anchored at the lowest level due to conditions in junta-controlled regions—has been adjusted slightly upward to reflect the more supportive discourse observed in resistance-held areas. This divergence underscores the critical role of governance context in shaping public narratives and trust in civil society. It also highlights how the junta’s hostile discourse severely undermines civil society’s legitimacy and safety, while resistance-held areas demonstrate the potential for constructive engagement and trust-building.

5.2 | Perception of Civil Society and Civic Engagement

Civic engagement in Myanmar has been severely undermined by the military junta’s repressive governance and the fragmentation of civil society following the 2021 coup. According to the ICNL, the [coup created a deep rift](#) within civil society—between those who chose to engage with the de facto authorities to sustain operations, and those who refused any cooperation. This division has eroded public trust, with CSOs perceived by some as “pro-military,” further weakening the sector’s legitimacy and unity.

Citizens, particularly internally displaced persons (IDPs), often feel disillusioned and powerless. Due to funding cuts and operational constraints, CSOs are frequently unable to meet urgent needs, leaving communities without reliable access to food, water, or shelter. This unmet expectation contributes to public frustration and a diminished belief in civil society’s capacity to effect change.

Civic education is nearly absent, and awareness of rights and responsibilities remains low—especially among marginalised groups. Persons with disabilities (PWDs), who make up an [estimated 13%](#) of the population as of December 2024, are consistently excluded from civic processes under both junta and resistance authorities. Organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) continue to advocate for visibility and inclusion, but face systemic neglect.

The junta has also [escalated its persecution of LGBTQ+](#) individuals and allies. Reports of targeted torture—particularly of gay and trans men in interrogation centres—and [crackdowns on LGBTQ+ literature](#) and art have further silenced civic expression and reinforced fear.

These conditions have created an environment where civic participation is not only discouraged but dangerous. Citizens lack safe, meaningful avenues to engage in political life, reinforcing a culture of apathy, fear, and disempowerment.

5.3 | Civic Equality and Inclusion

Civic participation in Myanmar is deeply unequal, shaped by decades of systemic discrimination and exclusion. The Rohingya community remains one of the most marginalised groups, denied citizenship under the [1982 Citizenship Law](#) and rendered stateless. This legal exclusion has barred them from holding public office, registering CSOs, or participating in civic life—even prior to the junta’s repressive CSO law. As Rohingya activist Yasmin Ullah has noted, this exclusion has [forced many into poverty](#) and denied them access to basic rights such as education, shelter, and food—further limiting their ability to [organize or engage](#) in civil society.

Beyond the Rohingya, other ethnic minorities [not recognized](#) among Myanmar’s 135 official ethnic groups face similar barriers to civic inclusion. Discriminatory laws, hate speech, and state-sponsored violence have led to mass displacement and death, stripping these communities of their rights to association, expression, and assembly.

Gender and sexual minorities also face entrenched exclusion. While the Karenni Interim Executive Council (IEC) has [implemented a 30%](#) gender quota across governance structures and [actively engages](#) feminist CSOs, such inclusive practices are not widespread. Other resistance groups, including the National Unity Government (NUG), have been [criticized](#) for insufficient commitment to gender equality. Women and feminist CSOs often face marginalisation, and LGBTQ+ individuals are subjected to targeted violence, including torture in detention and censorship of LGBTQ+ literature and art.

An expert panellist working along the Thai-Burma border noted that even among resistance forces, perceptions of civil society vary, creating inconsistent opportunities for inclusion. These legal, social, and political barriers have entrenched civic inequality, leaving marginalised groups with minimal representation and reinforcing a culture of distrust, exclusion, and systemic discrimination.

Principle 6: Access to a secure digital environment

Score: 1.7

In Myanmar, access to a secure digital environment is virtually non-existent under the military junta. Ranked [worst globally](#) for internet freedom in 2024, alongside China, the country has seen a steady decline in digital rights for 14 consecutive years. Since the 2021 coup, the junta has weaponised the internet—[banning independent media](#), enforcing surveillance, and criminalising online dissent. Far from being a space for civic engagement, the digital sphere has become a tool of repression, silencing civil society and isolating communities. This hostile environment severely undermines freedom of expression, association, and access to information, eroding the foundations of a democratic civic space.

6.1 | Digital Rights and Freedoms

The Myanmar’s digital landscape is one of the most repressive in the world, with the military junta [systematically weaponizing](#) online spaces to silence dissent and obstruct civil society.

Authorities [frequently impose](#) internet and media blackouts, including during crises such as the 28 March 2025 earthquake, severely hampering coordination of humanitarian aid by CSOs, journalists, and local responders. The [sentencing](#) of journalist Sai Zaw Theik to 20 years for reporting on Cyclone Mocha in 2023 exemplifies the regime's brutal crackdown on digital expression.

Social media platforms, particularly Facebook, have been exploited by the junta to disseminate hate speech and incite violence—[especially against](#) the Rohingya community. As activist Yasmin Ullah notes, this digital repression serves a “divide and rule” strategy, isolating minority activists and [shrinking](#) civic space. Pro-government content is amplified, while critical voices are censored or criminalised.

Surveillance is pervasive, and online activity is heavily policed. Since February 2022, over 1,800 individuals [have been detained](#) for digital expressions of dissent, including simply “liking” opposition posts. The regime also engages in collective punishment, detaining family members—including children—of activists to instil fear and suppress civic engagement.

There is no enforcement of protections for internet freedom, and both state and non-state actors manipulate information with impunity. Social media platforms have failed to ensure transparency or accountability in content moderation, further enabling repression.

These practices have transformed Myanmar's digital space into a tool of authoritarian control, eliminating safe avenues for civil society to communicate, organise, or advocate. The implications are severe: digital repression not only silences individual voices but dismantles the infrastructure of civic resistance and democratic participation.

6.2 | Digital Security and Privacy

Myanmar's digital environment is marked by pervasive surveillance, cyber repression, and the complete absence of digital privacy protections. Since the 2021 coup, the junta has escalated its use of spyware, censorship, and intimidation to dismantle civil society's digital presence. Millions of citizens rely on VPNs to access independent news, yet the regime has [criminalized their use](#)—blocking VPN sites, cutting access to platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram, and imprisoning individuals found with VPNs on their devices. In May 2024, these [restrictions intensified](#), and by January 2025, [the junta enacted](#) a sweeping and unconstitutional Cybersecurity Law to [harshly](#) restrict the use of VPNs, increase social media monitoring, further [suppress](#) civil society and [operations of democracy defenders](#) and increase digital repression. The law [compels](#) service providers to retain user data for three years, and grants authorities unchecked powers to monitor, censor, and criminalise online activity.

Digital repression is not limited to surveillance. The junta and its allies use pro-regime social media accounts and bots to spread disinformation, intimidate activists, and manipulate public discourse. Following a 2023 junta airstrike that killed over 160 civilians, pro-junta Telegram channels [doxed over 20 individuals](#) who expressed sympathy for the victims, releasing their names, photos and personal details. Within days, 68 people [were arrested](#), including 11 who had been publicly targeted online.

There are no effective data protection laws or redress mechanisms for victims of digital rights violations. As one digital rights activist noted, even a photo or message on a phone can lead to arrest, torture, or forced conscription. This climate of fear has forced civil society actors to self-censor or withdraw entirely from digital spaces.

The implications are severe: civil society cannot operate safely online, and digital tools—once vital for organising and advocacy—have become instruments of state control. The absence of

digital security and privacy has effectively erased civil society's ability to function in the digital sphere.

6.3 | Digital Accessibility

Digital accessibility in Myanmar is moderate, although severely constrained by incessant blackouts and restrictions that severely limit civil society's ability to operate, communicate, and engage with communities. The repeated shutdowns and VPN blocks make communication virtually impossible. Early in 2025, internet [penetration stood at 61.1%](#) of the population. However, digital exclusion is particularly acute in rural and conflict-affected areas, where CSOs and their target audiences lack reliable connectivity. The junta's repeated internet shutdowns—[76 out of 85 global shutdowns](#) in 2024—have further fragmented access, often coinciding with military airstrikes and human rights abuses. The Access Now found that 31 of the junta's shutdowns [coincided](#) with grave human rights abuses, and at least 17 occurred at the same time as junta airstrikes on civilians. These blackouts prevent CSOs from issuing emergency alerts, coordinating aid, or disseminating critical information, especially during crises.

Even where internet is available, affordability is a major barrier. The junta has imposed steep price hikes and taxes on mobile data, with users now receiving almost half the data for the same cost compared to previous years. As digital repression expert Jean Dinco noted, the cost of mobile data has been driven so high—through price hikes and tax increases in 2021 [ordered](#) by the junta-controlled Ministry of Transport and Communications—that poorer communities are effectively cut off from online access. This disproportionately affects low-income and displaced communities, deepening the digital divide.

Myanmar's has a moderate level of digital literacy. Despite growing mobile penetration, some challenges in basic ICT skills—especially in data literacy, content creation, and communication—persist. This limits civic engagement and the ability to adapt to emerging technologies, including AI.

The situation worsened in 2025 with the shutdown of key independent media outlets due to U.S. aid cuts. The [closure](#) of Radio Free Asia (RFA) and the dormancy of Voice of America Burmese (VOA) have created vast information voids. Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) [warned](#) that these closures risk turning entire regions into “information black holes” where only junta-controlled, [biased](#) media remain. Together, these conditions have devastating implications for civil society.

C) Recommendations

To the Burmese Military junta

- Immediately cease all violations of international humanitarian law, in particular, acts of violence against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and IDP camps.
- Unconditionally release all political prisoners, including human rights defenders, journalists, and civil society leaders.
- End all forms of digital repression, including internet shutdowns, surveillance, and criminalisation of online expression.
- Repeal the 2021 CSO Law and other legislation that restricts freedom of association, expression, and assembly.

To the National Unity Government (NUG) and Resistance Organisations

- Develop and enforce inclusive legal frameworks that guarantee the rights of CSOs to operate freely, transparently, and independently.
- Ensure meaningful and equal participation of all civilians—regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, or CDM status—in governance and civil society processes.
- Abolish the 1982 Citizenship Law and guarantee full citizenship and equal rights for the Rohingya and other stateless or unrecognised ethnic groups.
- Institutionalise gender equality and LGBTQ+ inclusion in all governance structures, including through quotas and anti-discrimination policies.
- Promote digital security and access by supporting community-based ICT training and secure communication tools for CSOs.

To the International Community

- Refuse to recognise or legitimise the junta's planned elections. Continue to treat the NUG as the legitimate representative of the Burmese people.
- Prioritise direct, flexible, and long-term funding to local CSOs, especially those operating in conflict-affected and cross-border areas.
- Simplify donor reporting requirements and increase core funding to strengthen CSO resilience and sustainability.
- Impose targeted sanctions on junta leadership and military-owned businesses, and enforce a global arms and aviation fuel embargo.
- Support international accountability mechanisms to investigate and prosecute atrocity crimes committed by the junta.

To Civil Society in Myanmar and the Diaspora

- Strengthen coordination and solidarity across ethnic, geographic, and political divides to build a unified civic front.
- Invest in digital literacy, security, and resilience to adapt to the increasingly repressive digital environment.
- Document and share evidence of human rights violations to support international advocacy and accountability efforts.
- Engage in inclusive dialogue and power-sharing with marginalised groups, including women, PWDs, LGBTQ+ communities, and ethnic minorities.
- Build alliances with regional and international civil society networks to amplify voices and secure protection and resources.

Research process

Each principle encompasses various dimensions which are assessed and aggregated to provide quantitative scores per principle. These scores reflect the degree to which the environment within the country enables or disables the work of civil society. Scores are on a five-category scale defined as: fully disabling, disabling, partially enabling, enabling, and fully enabling. To complement the scores, this report provides a narrative analysis of the enabling or disabling environment for civil society, identifying strengths and weaknesses as well as offering recommendations. The process of drafting the analysis is led by Network Members; the consortium provides quality control and editorial oversight before publication.

For Principle 1 - which evaluates respect for and protection of freedom of association and peaceful assembly - the score integrates data from the [CIVICUS Monitor](#). However, for Principles 2–6, the availability of yearly updated external quantitative indicators for the 86 countries part of the EUSEE programme are either limited or non-existent. To address this, Network Members convene a panel of representatives of civil society and experts once a year. This panel uses a set of guiding questions to assess the status of each principle and its dimensions within the country. The discussions are supported by secondary sources, such as [V-Dem](#), the [Bertelsmann Stiftung Governance Index](#), the [RTI Rating from the Centre for Law and Democracy](#), and other trusted resources. These sources provide benchmarks for measuring similar dimensions and are complemented by primary data collection and other secondary sources of information available for the country. Guided by these deliberations, the panel assigns scores for each dimension, which the Network Members submit to the Consortium, accompanied by detailed justifications that reflect the country's specific context. To determine a single score per principle, the scores assigned to each dimension are aggregated using a weighted average, reflecting the relative importance of each dimension within the principle. This approach balances diverse perspectives while maintaining a structured and objective evaluation framework.

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