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## Five Years Since the Coup, the Junta Continues to Kill with Impunity in Burma

(London, 1st February 2026) Today marks five years since the Myanmar military seized power on February 1, 2021. In that time, the junta has killed thousands of civilians, detained more than 30,000 political prisoners, and displaced at least 3.6 million people. Its atrocities, which include war crimes and crimes against humanity, have only intensified over the past year. For Myanmar's Muslim communities, the military's violence has been accompanied by systematic attacks on religious life. Since the coup, the junta has destroyed several Islamic religious buildings through airstrikes and arson, sealed mosques, seized historic cemeteries, and permitted ultranationalists to incite hatred with impunity.

"The military stood before the ICJ this month and denied committing genocide while its allies back home [called](#) for Rohingya to be 'shot, killed, dumped, buried,'" said Kyaw Win, Executive Director of the Burma Human Rights Network. "Five years after the coup, the military is still bombing civilians, raiding mosques during prayers, and permitting open calls for Muslims to be exterminated. Not a single general has faced justice. There is still no arms embargo, no global jet fuel ban, no ICC referral. That impunity is why the killing continues. The question is whether the world will do anything about it?"

Even as the International Court of Justice [held](#) public hearings this month in the genocide case filed by The Gambia, ultranationalists aligned with the military seized the moment to incite hatred against Muslims. Nay Myo Wai, a senior figure of the Yangon-based Peace and Diversity Party, a political ally of the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party, told a pro-junta media outlet that he stands by extreme rhetoric targeting Rohingya Muslims, including that Rohingya entering Myanmar waters should be "shot, killed, dumped, buried." Ma Ba Tha, the ultranationalist Buddhist organisation long nurtured by the military to spread intolerance and violence against Muslims, organised rallies in Yangon to support junta delegates at the ICJ.

The junta has targeted Muslims through coercive conscription practices, including raids on mosques during prayers. On August 15, 2025, soldiers and Pyu Saw Htee militants raided a mosque during Friday Jumu'ah prayers in Sagaing Region, and seized 10 Muslim youths. On September 7, junta forces abducted five Muslim youths from the a mosque in Shwebo during sunset prayers.

The military's use of airstrikes has sharply intensified, with 2,165 airstrikes from January to late November 2025 compared to 1,716 during all of 2024. Faced with pressure on jet fuel supplies, the junta has shifted to paramotors and gyrocopters. On October 6, 2025, a [paramotor](#) bombed a candlelight vigil in Sagaing Region, killing at least 24 people including children; hours later, the military struck the same location again. On January 4, 2026, a gyrocopter [attacked](#) a hospital, killing the chief physician and two staff. The following day, a gyrocopter bombed the cemetery where he was to be buried.

The junta staged fraudulent elections in three phases between December 28, 2025, and January 25, 2026, in an attempt to legitimise its illegal rule. Turnout was abysmally low, with at least 7.5 million people [excluded](#), major political parties deregistered, and over 400 people prosecuted under an 'Election Protection Law' carrying penalties including death for criticising the process. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has stated it will not endorse the elections.

Despite critical advances in accountability this month, including ICJ hearings and a Universal Jurisdiction complaint filed in Timor-Leste, significant gaps in sanctions coordination persist. While 222 individuals and entities have been designated by the US, UK, EU, Canada, and Australia, 40 percent have been sanctioned by only one country. India, Japan, and South Korea have imposed zero targeted sanctions since the coup.

"Five years of statements of concern have not stopped a single airstrike," said Kyaw Win. "Governments must impose a comprehensive arms embargo including aviation fuel and dual-use components, close the gaps in sanctions coordination, reject any legitimacy for the junta's sham elections, and support every available avenue for accountability. We have been calling for these measures for years. The solutions are clear. What is missing is the political will. Everyday governments delay, more people die."

China and Russia, the military's primary arms suppliers, both sent election observers and continue to block action at the UN Security Council. The people of Myanmar have made their position clear through mass boycotts, silent strikes, and continued resistance at enormous personal risk. The international community must stand with them, not through rhetoric, but through action.

### **Background on the Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)**

Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN) is based in London and operates across Burma/Myanmar works for human rights, minority rights and religious freedom in Burma. BHRN has played a crucial role advocating for human rights and religious freedom with politicians and world leaders.

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