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Myanmar

Severe human rights abuses and atrocities continue to be committed across Myanmar. As the Arakan Army (AA) recently took control of the 270km-long border with Bangladesh, [brutal fighting at Border Guard Police barracks in Rakhine State](#) involved the use of land mines and spike-filled ditches, while the junta continued its barrage of air raids. War crimes are likely to have been committed including the destruction of civilian infrastructure.

Displacement of whole villages and other crimes against humanity disproportionately affect the [Rohingya minority](#), already vulnerable and pulled into fighting on both sides. There are reports of Rohingyas, including boys under the age of 18, being kidnapped from refugee camps for [forced recruitment](#) to the Myanmar military and used as human shields. There is a risk of further ethnic cleansing of Rohingyas from Rakhine State under AA control. Refugees crossing into Bangladesh have been pushed back into Rakhine and increasing numbers have been risking dangerous seas to [seek safe haven](#) elsewhere, such as in Indonesia. UNDP has warned of an [“unprecedented disaster”](#) in Rakhine, where a combination of factors could result in imminent famine.

There are continued reports of indiscriminate or deliberate attacks on civilians that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In recent months the military has launched [some of the heaviest](#) aerial bombardments since the coup, targeting camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and [villages](#) that do not appear to be connected to resistance groups. In October in Budalin, the junta reportedly [massacred](#) and mutilated 25 civilians in revenge for an insurgent attack that killed 30 soldiers and captured 40. [650 children](#) have been killed or maimed in Myanmar in 2024, with landmines and the junta's bombing of schools and churches to blame. [Sexual and gender-based](#) violence continues to be perpetrated by both the junta and opposition forces, including rape of women in front of family members, and violence against nuns.

Myanmar's forced conscription law has continued to be implemented with more than 21,000 recruits, and others taken from Thai immigration detention centres. [Poor treatment](#) of forced conscripts has been reported. The massive losses of personnel and territory by the junta pose a risk to military leader, Min Aung Hlaing's [leadership](#), that could result in further instability and violence. At the international level, the ICC Prosecutor has applied for an [arrest warrant](#) for Min Aung Hlaing for crimes against humanity in relation to the persecution and forced deportation of the Rohingya during 2017.

[Atrocities](#) documented include the systematic killing of 10,000 Rohingya civilians, ethnic cleansing, and a pattern of sexual and gender-based violence.

However, the warrant does not apply to any post-coup atrocities within Myanmar (which is

40%
of 3.4 million people displaced
in Myanmar are children

10
sorcery accusation-related
fatalities in 2024 in Papua New
Guinea

not a party to the ICC) and has been [criticised](#) as largely symbolic and overdue.

The [dry season](#) may provide opportunities for the junta to more easily transport weapons and conduct airstrikes around the country. International sanctions are being evaded by black market weapons trade, fuel supplies and trafficking, and [China](#) is actively increasing its support for the military regime, with likely internal and regional ramifications. The existing risks may further escalate in 2025 with a planned election. Holding an election amid a multi-front civil war would not only be viewed as illegitimate but would also be likely to [intensify instability](#), and constitute an extremely high risk for the commission of atrocities. The proposed election is reportedly on the agenda for upcoming [ASEAN talks](#) hosted by Thailand with Laos, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands is a [post-conflict country](#) with a history of outbreaks of violence and [riots](#), most recently in 2021. In the past, political instability, coups, and votes of [no confidence](#) have been triggers of violence, while longstanding ethnic tensions remain unresolved, making the country susceptible to flare ups.

A vote of no confidence has been proposed against Solomon Islands Prime Minister Jeremiah Manele, who took over the Prime Ministership seven months ago.

The vote reflects dissatisfaction about large tax exemptions for foreign investors while locals face obstacles in accessing financial support. Given the history of ethnic conflict and riots in the Solomon Islands, resentment between locals and other communities could result in an eruption of violence. [Police](#) have sought additional back up to maintain law and order. The vote means that the country may head to another [election](#), a flashpoint for potential riots and a risk factor for ethnic clashes and escalatory attacks.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The deployment of North Korean troops to Russia's war on Ukraine further consolidates evidence in OHCHR's July 2024 report on institutionalised [forced labour](#) in the DPRK, and may constitute crimes against humanity including slavery.

Intelligence reports suggest some DPRK soldiers have already been sent to battle and [hundreds](#) may have been killed. A lack of experience in combat, malnutrition and language barriers may pose challenges to the deployed soldiers, who are potentially also being exploited for their labour but also made complicit in war crimes.

The DPRK's export of arms and deployment of troops to Russia is in violation of several UNSC resolutions. The Australian Government, along with the EU and other countries, has [condemned](#) DPRK's military support to Russia including deployment of its troops for Russia's war on Ukraine. The statement refers to serious consequences for international security and raises concerns about any support Russia may be providing to the DPRK's illegal weapons programs (including nuclear), which could circumvent sanctions on DPRK implemented by the international community.

Further evidence of grave human rights violations in DPRK that may constitute crimes against humanity continues to emerge despite tight controls on information flow out of the DPRK. [Former](#) survivors of North Korean political prison camps have given testimonies describing being blindfolded, sexually assaulted, having their hair shaved, being referred to by numbers rather than names, and given starvation rations of around 100-200 grams of food per day. Prisoners are required to move the bodies of those who had perished to a cremation area.

In addition to severe human rights violations against its population, food shortages continue to cause mass famine. DPRK authorities refuse access to the country by humanitarian or human rights organisations, while neighbouring countries like China have, in violation of the principle of non-refoulement, returned North Korean escapees to almost certain torture and imprisonment. Despite sanctions, impunity for DPRK's leaders contributes to the high risk of further atrocities being committed.

China

The Chinese government continues repressive policies and actions against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang that may constitute crimes against humanity and possibly genocide.

Patterns of serious violations relate to forced labour; large-scale arbitrary detention; enforced disappearances; family separation; systematic and discriminatory surveillance; restrictions on cultural, religious, and linguistic identity and expression; torture and sexual and gender-based violence, including forced abortion and sterilisation; and the destruction of religious and cultural sites. The November [demolition](#) of a former Uyghur trade centre in Xinjiang is a sign that persecution and erasure of the Uyghur minority continues.

The fall of the Assad regime in Syria poses significant risks for further repression of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in China. A faction of Uyghur fighters linked to the Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP) were among the insurgent forces that ousted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. That same day, on 8 December, TIP released a video [vowing](#) to bring the fight to China to "liberate the Muslims of East Turkistan from the Chinese occupation". China has justified its sweeping repression in Xinjiang as a measure to combat terrorism and violent extremism, and China's [heightened concerns](#) that battle-hardened TIP fighters may be intent on launching attacks in China presents risks of increased persecution of Uyghurs in Xinjiang and abroad. The Chinese government subjects the Uyghur population outside of China to the [world's most aggressive](#) transnational surveillance and repression of a minority group.

The Tibetan population is also at high risk of atrocity crimes and faces similarly repressive '[Sinicization](#)' policies that severely restrict cultural and religious expression to accord with Chinese Communist Party ideology. As in Xinjiang, policies that systematically repress Tibetan cultural expression, such as the separation of over a million Tibetan children from their families to attend state-run boarding schools for [assimilation](#) purposes, places the population at continued and high risk of atrocity crimes.

Papua New Guinea

Tribal violence, massacres, and extreme rates of sexual and gender-based violence contribute to the high risk of atrocities in PNG.

One form of GBV is sorcery accusation-related violence (SARV), which has been the cause of at least [10 fatalities](#) in 2024. Most recently, in November, a family of six was killed in Bougainville. Mainly targeting women, SARV often involves torture and sexual violence in the process of killing, and for survivors, can lead to lifelong stigma.

The risk of future atrocities is exacerbated by a lack of accountability, with inadequate policing and [reporting processes](#), and a lack of support for survivors combined with a culture of impunity for perpetrators. Given the pattern of tribal violence including increased frequency of massacres of civilians, SARV, and the extreme rates of SGBV more broadly, in combination with other risk factors like a history of political (election-related) violence, weak governance and a lack of transparency, under-resourced law enforcement and challenges in providing protection in remote locations, the risk of atrocities remains high in PNG.

Indonesia

The Indonesian Government's plans to re-start the transmigration program triggered large protests in West Papua.

Under the re-launched program, Indonesians could be relocated from mainland cities to areas in Papua, fuelling concerns among Indigenous Papuans of further marginalisation and exploitation of natural resources.

In November, protesters in Jayapura were [violently dispersed](#) by authorities using tear gas and water cannons, adding to anxiety about the future for the Indigenous population of West Papua, where persecution continues and clashes with authorities occur intermittently. The ban on UN agencies, human rights organisations and the media from entering West Papua remains.