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Myanmar

As 2025 began, there were continued reports of attacks on civilians both by the military junta and the Arakan Army, that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. In January, [the military launched an airstrike on Kyauk Ni Maw village and bombed other towns in Rakhine State](#). The attack killed at least 41 civilians, including women and children, with more than 52 injured.

Meanwhile, [the Arakan Army admitted that its members beheaded two junta soldiers](#) during an offensive on Kyauktaw township in Rakhine, as video evidence came to light. Despite an AA spokesman claiming the perpetrators were punished, AA's internal processes for accountability are unclear. The wilful killing of prisoners of war is a breach of the Geneva Conventions.

The military strengthened its internet and communications blackout, enacting a [Cybersecurity Law](#) that criminalises the use of virtual private networks (VPNs). This will likely further restrict the flow of information out of Myanmar including any documentary evidence of human rights violations and atrocities.

The law will further prevent independent international monitoring groups from accessing timely and accurate information and reduce the ability for civilians in Myanmar to access humanitarian aid

The junta published the [preliminary results](#) of its controversial census in January 2025, which it plans to use in preparation for its proposed national election in 2025. According to the authorities, the census found a population of 51.3 million people but noted there were areas that were inaccessible and that the population data for those areas was “estimated using census data, remote sensing technology, international expert estimates, and departmental records”. The census covered only [145 out of 330 townships](#), an indicator of the likely voting access if an election were held during armed conflict with various regions controlled by different groups. Violent [attacks](#) also occurred during the census process. An election widely perceived as illegitimate is also likely to spur violence.

Myanmar's humanitarian crisis continues to escalate. A [joint statement](#) issued by nine governments in February 2025 raised concerns about airstrikes against civilians, sexual and gender-based violence, and a lack of access to aid, noting that almost 20 million people in Myanmar are now in need of humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs.

41 civilians killed by airstrikes in Rakhine State

UN finds up to 1,400 people killed in Bangladesh unrest

9 killed in PNG tribal violence incidents

Despite likely famine conditions, the junta has [actively suppressed](#) information about food insecurity.

[Transnational crime](#) continues to play a role in the situation in Myanmar. This includes the smuggling of fuel, drugs, and military supplies, as well as internet scam centres along the Myanmar borders with China and Thailand. There are reports of human trafficking and torture, as well as [forced labour](#). In February, more than 250 people from 20 different nationalities were released from captivity in a telecom [fraud centre](#) run by ethnic armed organisations on Thailand's border.

Bangladesh

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights released a [report](#) in February 2025 on the political and civil unrest that occurred in Bangladesh in mid-2024. Its fact finding report found that the former government, led by now deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, committed systematic attacks against student protesters, that could amount to crimes against humanity. Human rights violations by the government and its security forces and supporters included extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, and torture.

The [report](#) also confirmed attacks by non-state actors against ethnic and religious minorities during the unrest, especially against members

of the Hindu community, Ahmadiyya Muslims and indigenous groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Attacks included killings, burning of houses and religious sites, looting of stores, and related displacement of communities. Attacks appear to have been exacerbated by “systemic impunity and potential political motives”.

Unrest and [political instability](#) in Bangladesh has also had an impact on the Rohingya population both in refugee camps and those attempting to flee from Rakhine amid increased fighting. Rohingya men and boys continue to be [forcibly recruited](#) into the military junta, while civilians have been [turned back](#) by Bangladesh's border guards.

Indonesia

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto is considering [granting amnesty](#) to a number of West Papuan pro-independence political prisoners (limited to those not involved in armed action), with a view to encouraging a peaceful solution to the ongoing conflict in the region. This has been met with caution from civil society and human rights actors, partly because a similar initiative under President Jokowi was not followed up with substantive peace efforts.

There are also concerns that the amnesty may be accompanied by encouragement of transmigration of non-Papuan Indonesians to West Papua, reverting to [a policy](#) from the Suharto era. This could displace Indigenous groups under the guise of economic reform that, simultaneously, encourages the development of palm oil plantations and other industries that have adverse effects on the natural environment. While the granting of amnesty might improve government relations with Papuans, a policy of transmigration will likely heighten intercommunal and ethnic tensions, which are deeply entrenched in the Indonesia-West Papua relationship.

Alongside the situation in West Papua, recent social unrest in Indonesia is a cause for concern. Severe budget cuts to public services like education and health by the Indonesian government have prompted [student protests](#) around the country, with clashes between students and police in some locations. There is a risk that authorities may resort to more repressive or violent tactics as the protest movement, known as "Dark Indonesia", spreads on social media and says it will continue to demonstrate against the government.

Papua New Guinea

PNG has one of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world, highlighted in several recent cases, including an alleged [brutal intimate partner homicide](#) in a PNG army barracks, with a video of the attack uploaded to the victim's social media. Another woman was abducted, [raped and murdered](#) when a group of 30 men stormed a settlement in Port Moresby. While these were separate incidents, they are indicative of a culture of violence against women that poses a risk for atrocity crimes, including gender-based atrocities. This can be seen in the frequent targeting of women and children during incidents of deadly tribal violence, and the gendered nature of sorcery accusation-related violence.

Over the Christmas period, nine people were allegedly murdered in [tribal violence](#) incidents. Tribal violence often occurs in remote locations, limiting police capacity to respond. Notification of one recent case in an area inaccessible by road and lacking any police presence, took weeks to be received by authorities. Retaliatory attacks contribute to the cycle of intercommunal violence. In Morobe province, a [retaliatory attack](#) saw 25 houses burned down and 200 people displaced. In [another case](#), in January, the Papua New Guinea Defence Force Engineering Battalion used violence over two days, including attacks on civilian infrastructure, in response to local young people accused of stoning a soldier's vehicle. Human rights defenders have also reported ongoing violence around the volatile Porgera Mine. The President of [PNG's Law Society](#) has urged better law enforcement and accountability for perpetrators, to send a signal that violence will not be accepted. However, a lack of funding and personnel continues to limit the capacity of law enforcement. Further, the deeply-entrenched and systemic nature of the violence means broad, long-term strategies are needed for cultural and societal change.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

North Korea has sent another [group of soldiers](#) to fight with Russia in its war against Ukraine. Of the more than 11,000 troops sent to the Kursk region in late 2024, it is thought that at least **1,000** have been killed, leading to suggestions they are being used as "[cannon fodder](#)". Other analysts however, have suggested the soldiers are disciplined and [motivated fighters](#), and it is intended that those who do survive will return to North Korea with valuable [combat experience](#). In addition, North Korea is sending large amounts of [ammunition](#) and missiles to Russia, while at home it is experiencing a [severe economic crisis](#) and famine conditions. The government is responding to this by strengthening control over grain sales, prices, and food distribution, likely worsening the situation.

The UN Security Council's inability to order further [sanctions](#) or fact finding missions in North Korea, due to Russian and Chinese vetoes, means that the international community can do little to enforce action on North Korea, and its now completely [closed borders](#) allow virtually no access to humanitarian aid for its population. In this context, there is a risk of DPRK complicity in war crimes in the Russia-Ukraine war, and Pyongyang continues to implement domestic policies that the UN has recognised as crimes against humanity.

China

Although the Chinese government has recently eased some travel restrictions, Uyghurs in Xinjiang continue to face [severe limits and controls](#) on their ability to travel abroad and communicate or meet with family and other community members overseas. Uyghurs who live abroad and wish to visit Xinjiang must undergo an intense vetting process, and may be directed to join government-led tours and participate in propaganda activities in order to access Xinjiang, where they are closely monitored and need official permission to visit their families. They may be required to book government hotels and restricted from staying at family residences.

Recent alarms have been raised about China's intense pressure campaign on other governments to extradite Uyghurs who have fled China. In late January, a group of UN experts [called on Thailand](#) to halt the deportation of 48 Uyghur men, warning that they are at risk of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in China. The men have been in detention in Thailand since 2014.

China's restrictions on Uyghurs in Xinjiang and the government's transnational repression of Uyghurs abroad is part of a broader pattern of identity-based persecution of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang that may constitute crimes against humanity or genocide. Uyghur activists have raised concerns that China's newly released DeepSeek Artificial Intelligence chatbot will be used to [spread disinformation](#) about China's persecution of Uyghurs.