

“Is This Another Propaganda Campaign? ”: Public Social Media Comments In Response To Humanitarian Aid Following The 28 March Myanmar Earthquake

Tracking Aid Narratives on Social Media

This briefing by Insecurity Insight analyses social media activity from 28 March to 05 July 2025, assessing observed narratives in Myanmar related to the humanitarian response to the March 28 earthquake.

August 2025

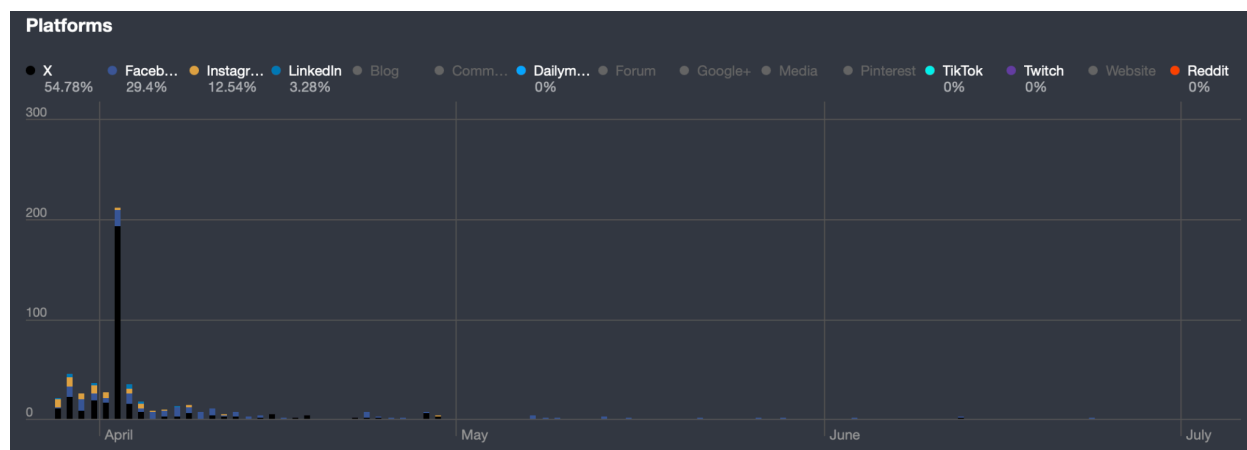


PAST EDITIONS: [We Haven't Received A Single Bottle Of Water](#) (27 March-16 June), [Let The World Know](#) (27 March-30 April)

METHODOLOGY: To assess public sentiment towards the aid sector in the aftermath of the 28 March 2025 earthquake in Myanmar, a sentiment analysis was conducted on high-engagement public social media posts. The analysis focused on reactions to aid efforts, particularly those involving UN agencies and international NGOs operating in the country. An initial search identified 666 relevant public posts published in Myanmar between 28 March and 05 July 2025. These were identified using a keyword query that included major UN agencies, INGOs, and other aid-related terms. From this dataset, the 15 posts with the highest engagement (likes and comments) were selected for in-depth analysis—14 on Facebook and one on Instagram. Together, these posts generated **3,196 public comments** and reached approximately **7.7 million social media users**. The comments were manually categorised as positive, neutral, or negative towards the aid sector based on context, language, and tone.

The selected posts featured content from embassies and EU pages (four), aid agencies (five), media outlets (four), and one individual social media user. The highest volume of activity occurred on 02 April, coinciding with reports of blockades and junta forces firing at a Chinese Red Cross convoy. Mentions of international organisations declined significantly after 31 May, with only a handful of comments appearing in subsequent weeks (see activity graph below). Although this decline was not a selection criterion, it indicates a notable drop in online discourse related to aid, which is explored further in the sentiment analysis below.

In terms of geographic focus, the search was filtered by IP location to capture content posted within Myanmar. However, comment-level geographic data is not available, meaning that comments may originate from both domestic and international users. This allows for insight into global engagement with Myanmar-based content. While the posts analysed were in both English and Burmese—reflecting their institutional and media sources—the overwhelming majority of comments were in Burmese, with only 21 written in English. This suggests that local or diaspora audiences primarily drove the conversation.



MAIN FINDINGS: The **majority of comments (56%) expressed appreciation for aid contributions.** However, this sentiment was often accompanied by scepticism over whether assistance would reach affected communities. Direct delivery was consistently emphasised as the only effective method. The most frequently mentioned agencies and donors included: UNICEF, ICRC, WFP, Korean Red Cross, German Red Cross, Christian Aid, OCHA, and contributions from the governments of Vietnam and Australia. While these organisations and donors were positively acknowledged, some—including the ICRC and UNICEF—were also criticised for perceived collaboration with the military or lack of oversight.

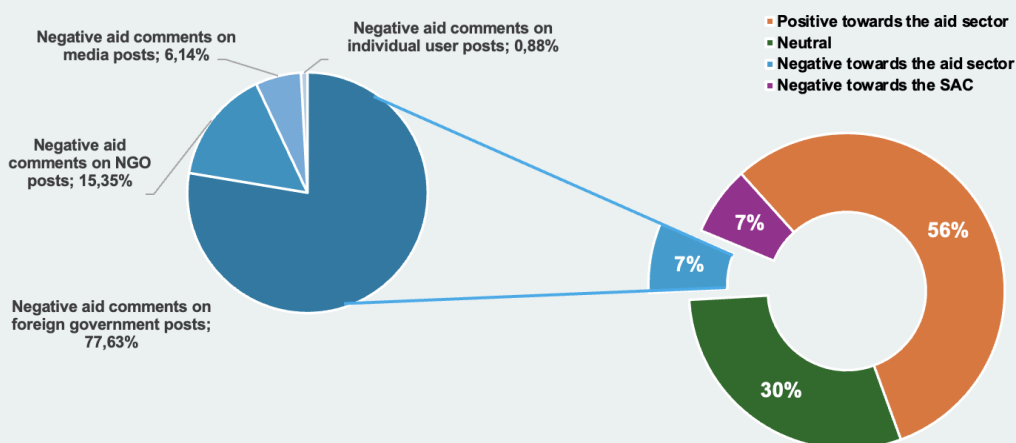
SPOTLIGHT: “Aid for the People” or “Fuel for the Regime”? Public Distrust Dominates Online Discourse

Out of the comments collected, 228 (7%) expressed scepticism or negative sentiment about international aid distribution. Of these, the majority (78%) appeared under posts by foreign government entities such as embassies and the EU, with one EU aid post alone generating over a thousand comments (the post had a Myanmar IP address, the location of the comments is unknown though the large majority were in Burmese).

Many users voiced concerns that donations would not reach those most in need, reflecting a broader distrust in formal aid channels due to past experiences of diversion, corruption, and superficial assistance. As in previous [briefs](#), Cyclone Nargis was frequently cited as a historical example of failed humanitarian delivery.

Social media comment categories

15 posts from donors (four), aid agencies (five), media outlets (four), and one individual social media user, generated **7% or 228 negative comments towards the aid effort** and of these the largest proportion was directed against foreign government donors.



→ Repeated calls for direct aid

The most common demand was for direct distribution of relief items to civilians, with many warning against the use of government-linked or international intermediaries. Commenters expressed concern that such actors would obstruct or divert aid before it reached those in need. This sentiment also appeared consistently in previous briefs on public reactions to aid following the earthquake, reflecting a sustained lack of trust in indirect delivery mechanisms.

“Please donate directly to those truly in need on the ground; otherwise, corrupt officials will steal it. During Cyclone Nargis too, the truly needy on the ground didn’t receive it.”

“We are hoping our people in the affected areas will receive the donations directly. These victims lost so many things... lives, homes, businesses, cars, relatives, friends, neighbours. They need strong support mentally and

¹“မြေပြင်မှာတကယ်လိုအပ်သောသူများကိုခံစားရုံသာမက လူနာများကိုလည်း အသေအဘေးမှ ကယ်ဆယ်ပေးရန် လိုအပ်သည်ကို တွေ့ရှိရပါသည်။”

physically. We are sincerely grateful for your generosity and emergency expertise. God bless”

“If you’re giving it to SAC, you might as well hand-deliver it to their homes”²

→ Some expressions of distrust towards the ICRC and the Myanmar Red Cross

The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) is seen as untrustworthy or controlled by the regime. Social media users present the MRCS as a channel through which aid is diverted away from civilians. National societies supporting the MRCS and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) could be seen complicit when distributing aid through the MRCS.

“The items came from the German Red Cross and will reach Myanmar RedCross. The Myanmar Red Cross is currently under the control of the Fascist Regime SAC. These items will end up in the hands of the Fascist Regime SAC.”

“ICRC just hands it over to the Myanmar Red Cross group. It’s not effective”³

“Paying to the ICRC is the same as paying to the military government. The ICRC relies on the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS). The MRCS is an organization under the military. The organization is led by military relatives and uses military doctors.”⁴

“Helped the people directly. If you give it to the ICRC, it will end up in the hands of the military government.”⁵

→ Criticism of USAID and Western donors

A number of comments expressed frustration with Western aid agencies, including direct references to the suspension of USAID. Unlike in other contexts where international aid is sometimes viewed as a form of neocolonialism, and the withdrawal of agencies like USAID may even be welcomed, a common sentiment in the comments was one of abandonment, with many users expressing deep disappointment at what they perceived as the international community turning its back on the country.

“AND NO USAID IS AVAILABLE!!and Marco Rubio has said the U.S. won’t be helping out with disasters around the world, LIKE WE’VE ALWAYS DONE, anymore 🤔🤔🤔...What a shitshow 🤔🤔🤔” - comment posted in english by a non-burmese user

“Trump fired all USAID EMPLOYEES IN MYANMAR”

“Australian Embassy Paid \$2 Million to post such things”⁶ - in reference to earthquake aid announcement

→ Institutional fatigue and accusations of complicity

Many comments accused UN agencies of repeating past mistakes. Several users suggested these organisations are ceremonial in nature, silent when corrupt military officials misappropriated aid, and disconnected from real relief work.

“Many UN-affiliated organisations have become just ceremonial bodies”⁷

“During Nargis, aid packages ended up at elite homes. Even with UNICEF labels, soldiers took it. UNICEF was

² “စကစလက်ထဲပေးလိုက်တော့ သူတို့ကိုအိမ်ကိုပဲ အိမ်တိုင်ရာရောက်ပေးလိုက်ပါ”

³ “ICRC ကလည်း ကြက်ခြေနီအဖွဲ့ချုပ် လက်ထဲ လွှဲပြောင်းပေးတာပဲ . မထိရောက်ဘူး . . .”

⁴ ICRC ကိုပေးတာ စစ်အစိုးရကို ပေးတာနဲ့ တူတူပါပဲ။ ICRC ဆိုတာ စစ်တပ်လက်အောက်က MRCS မြန်မာ့ကြက်ခြေနီကိုပဲ အားပြုရတာ။ MRCS ဆိုတာ စစ်အုပ်ချုပ်ရေးအောက်က အဖွဲ့အစည်းပါပဲ။ စစ်တပ်အမျိုးအဆွေတွေ ခေါင်းဆောင်လုပ်၊ စစ်ဆရာဝန်တွေ အသုံးပြုတဲ့အဖွဲ့အစည်း။”

⁵ “ပြည်သူ့ဆီတိုက်ရိုက်ရောက်အောင်ဆောင်ရွက်ပေးပါ ICRC ကိုပေးလည်း စစ်အစိုးရ လက်ထဲဘဲရောက်သွားမှာပါ”

⁶ “ဒေါ်လာ ၂သန်းပေးပြီးဖျင်ယား post တင်တဲ့ သြဇီသံရုံး”

⁷ “ကုလနဲ့ ပါတီသက်တဲ့ အဖွဲ့တော်တော်များများက ချီးထုပ်အဖွဲ့တွေ ဖြစ်နေပါပြီ”

silent”⁸

“UNICEF got a big feast. 6 out of 10 millions will become overhead. 3 millions will reach people. The rest will go to military leaders”⁹

“We want more action than printed words. Please ensure the aid is effective on the ground—not just in reports. The proverb says: “The mouth praises the Buddha, but the hands lift a club.” We need real effort from humanitarian groups”¹⁰

→ Community-led aid seen by many as the only effective relief

Several comments acknowledged that civilian solidarity, not institutional intervention, was the only real source of support. Mutual aid and neighbour-to-neighbour relief were praised as the only reason many victims survived.

“On the ground, it’s only citizens helping each other. Where did the direct aid go? Did it end up in the army’s warehouses? Bottled water, tarpaulins, dried foods, clothes—all there, but why are they not given to the people?”¹¹

“If we wait for their help, people might die of starvation first. Only mutual help among citizens is saving lives”¹²

What this tells us:

- Public narratives strongly reflect the belief that aid will not reach victims unless there is consistent, visible follow-through beyond initial announcements. Simply stating that aid has arrived or been donated is seen as insufficient—**social media users demand ongoing updates showing how, where, and when aid is being distributed**. There is a clear call for transparency throughout the process, which would help rebuild trust and counter fears of diversion or misuse.

→ Therefore, ending social media engagement just a few weeks after the earthquake can be viewed as ineffective and damaging to credibility.

- The MRCS is distrusted, perceived as operating under the influence or control of the military junta. Organisations supporting the MRCS are seen as complicit. UN agencies face growing scepticism and are often grouped with governments viewed as inactive or complicit.
- Cyclone Nargis remains a potent historical reference, frequently cited to express fears of aid theft, corruption, and elite capture.

Key Takeaways

Positive Sentiment Dominates The Social Media Discourse

Among the comments collected, 56% expressed gratitude for aid and the aid sector. Many comments included blessings and prayers, highlighting both cultural and spiritual gratitude. While appreciation was widespread, caution frequently accompanied the praise. As in the neutral and

⁸ “နာဂစ်အကူအညီပေးတဲ့တာလုပ်တတ်မိုးကအကောင်းစားတွေUNICEFစာတန်းနဲ့စစ်ဘောမဖွတ်တစ်ကောင်အိမ်ကိုရောက်နေတာလက်တွေ့UNICEFလဲစစ်တပ်ကသေနတ်ထောက်လှယ်ရင်ဘာမှပြောရမှာမဟုတ်”

⁹ “UNICEF တော့ခိုင်ပြန်ပြီး 10သန်းဆိုတောင် overhead က် 6သန်း ပဲ၊ လုပ်ကြပါ”

¹⁰ “စာတွေ သိအဲ့ဒီထဲကမြေပြင်မှာထိရောက်မှုရှိစေချင်ပါတယ်။ စာတွေထုပ်ပြီးမြေပြင်မှာထိရောက်မှုရှိစေချင်တဲ့စေတနာကိုပြောပြတာပါ။ စကားပုံအရပြောရရင်ပါးစပ်ကတော့ဘုရားဘုရားလက်ကတော့ကိုးယ့်ကားယားမဖြစ်ချင်လို့ပါ။လူသားချင်းစာနာကူညီရေးအဖွဲ့တွေကစကားလုံးထက်လုပ်ဆောင်မှုကအဓိကပါ။လုပ်ဆောင်မှုကောင်းရင်သတင်းကောင်းတွေတက်လာမှာပါ။”

¹¹ “တကယ်မြေပြင်မှာ ပြည်သူအချင်းချင်းဘဲ ကူနေတာတွေရတယ် အဲ့ဒီဆက်တိုက်ရောက်ရှိလာတဲ့အကူအညီတွေ ဘယ်ရောက်သွားတာလဲ စစ်တပ်ဂိုထောင်ထိရောက်သွားတာလား ရေဘူးတွေ မားမားပါကင်တွေ အခြောက်အခြမ်း စားစရာအဝတ်အထည်တွေပါမှာဘဲ ဘာလို့ လူတွေကိုလာမပေးတာလဲ”

¹² “သူတို့ကယခုလောက ကူကူ မွေးနုနုနုနုနု ငတုသေဖို့ပဲရှိတယ ချပည့်အခင်းခင်း ကူညီခံဖက်လိုသာ ok နေတာ”

negative comments, a significant number of positive comments also urged that aid be delivered directly to those affected.

“We’re lucky it’s coming via NGO—if it were SAC, it’d become military supplies”¹³

“Let it reach the real earthquake victims’ hands. Don’t let it fall into the hands of irrelevant middlemen—it’s crucial”¹⁴

“Please come help quickly—we need bulldozers to clear rubble, especially collapsed buildings”¹⁵

What This Tells Us

- Expressions of gratitude dominate the discourse, with many users offering emotional, spiritual, and cultural thanks to international donors.
- The public draws a clear distinction between donor intention and delivery mechanism. While donors are thanked, there is a consistent call to avoid military channels and deliver aid directly to civilians.
- The volume of supportive comments indicates that international solidarity still matters deeply to social media users but so does visibility and transparency.

Neutral Comments: Neither Praise Nor Protest

In the dataset 30% of comments are classified as “neutral”. However, they do not express indifference or disinterest towards aid, these comments often express practical concern. The neutrality lies not in tone or engagement level, but in the absence of overt praise or condemnation for the aid sector. They are neither celebratory nor critical — instead, they represent a watchful, morally invested audience.

Many comments repeatedly invoke the phrase “May it reach the people” or close variations, reflecting a deep concern and a collective hope for effective humanitarian delivery. These are not passive observations—they are aspirational statements, expressing cautious optimism tempered by past experiences and prevailing perceptions of aid failure. They underscore the urgency of ensuring aid reaches those most in need. Among these comments are questions and doubts reflecting historical distrust of aid distribution systems:

“Will it really reach the people?”¹⁶

“Where is the aid going?”¹⁷

Others ask for proof of delivery or public visibility:

“Where did the first flight deliver to? The second flight—hope we can see the supplies”¹⁸

¹³ “မထင်.....🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄စစ်တပ်အတွက်ထောက်ပံ့ပစ္စည်းဖြစ်သွားမှာပါ🙄🙄”

¹⁴ “အမှန်အကန်ငါ့လျင်ဒါထဲခံရသူများလက်ထဲရောက်ရှိပါစေ...မဆိုင်သူကြားကြောင်များလက်ထဲမရောက်ဖို့အရေးကြီးပါသည်...”

¹⁵ “မြန်မြန်လာကူညီစေချင်တယ်အဓိကကတော့ပြိုကျပျက်စီးနေတဲ့တိုက်တာအဆောက်အဦတွေကိုရှင်းရာမှာဘူဒိုဇာတွေနဲ့ရှင်းပေးစေချင်ပါတယ်မနားတလေးမှာဘူဒိုဇာတစ်ခုကိုငါးသိန်းနဲ့ပေးလုပ်နေရတယ်”

¹⁶ “ပြည်သူဆီရောက်ပါ့မလား”

¹⁷ “ဘယ်နေရာတွေမှာကူညီနေကြလိမ့်”

¹⁸ “ပထမ လေယာဉ်နဲ့ ဘယ်ကိုပို့လိုက်တာလဲဗျာ။ ဒုတိယလေယာဉ်က ပစ္စည်းတွေတော့ မြင်ရကောင်းပါရဲ့။”

“Where did you do Please show the place of your aid plan. Then local people will participate with you all. At Sagain city or Mandalay or other place where totally damaged.”

There is a strong sense of conditional trust—users express willingness to support aid efforts, but only if robust systems of verification and transparency are in place. While many of these comments are classified as neutral, they often carry layered emotional tones, combining hope with doubt. For example:

“May it fully reach the truly needy and not land in the pockets of opportunists.”¹⁹

What This Tells Us

- There is an active public demand for transparency and equity in aid delivery which must be shown on social media. These are not disengaged citizens—they are informed observers making moral and logistical appeals grounded in lived experience. Many demonstrate a clear understanding of aid logistics, corruption risks, and the power dynamics surrounding international assistance.
- For the public, the legitimacy of aid is not determined solely by its presence, but by its delivery pathways. Concern extends beyond what is given to how it is delivered, by whom, and to whom. Public support depends heavily on whether aid is perceived as fair, dignified, and accountable in its distribution.

SPOTLIGHT: Western-Account Engagement And Other Account Patterns In The Earthquake Response Conversation

The 15 posts selected originated from Myanmar (IP address), however, the location of the comments cannot be determined. Though almost all comments were in Burmese, at least **21 English-language comments** left under posts by or about Christian Aid and the World Food Programme (WFP) were present. These comments, several from Western-sounding usernames, expressed either outright hostility toward aid efforts or deep cynicism about the legitimacy, effectiveness, or motives of international humanitarian agencies. The language and framing of some of these comments suggest they may reflect broader critiques commonly seen in Western domestic contexts, rather than responses grounded in the specific situation in Myanmar.

Comments ranged from explicit frustration to ideological or religious hostility, often framed within broader critiques of government spending, perceived hypocrisy, or donor fatigue. Several made anti-aid arguments rooted in nationalism or religious bias, while others framed the situation as a geopolitical dead end.

A closer look at the profiles behind these comments reveals a diverse mix of identities and possible motivations, ranging from authentic individuals to anonymous or ideologically driven actors. Some accounts appeared to be genuine, though with limited activity or small follower counts. These included users based in Malaysia and Korea, whose locked profiles and minimal engagement suggest real but low-profile usage. One account belonged to a self-described full-time influencer, while another was a British user expressing far-right, anti-immigration views, posting without a profile picture.

“nope nope nope. No one helps the brits when we have huge floods why should the uk help them”

“If they are Muslims let them die”

Others criticised operational inefficiency or accused aid organisations of corruption or exploitation:

“Billions have been given to charity and they have never solved one problem”

“DO NOT GIVE ANY MONEY TO THIS LOT find out first how much there Directors get out of the money

¹⁹ “အမှန်လိုအပ်တဲ့သူတွေစီအပြည့်အဝရောက်ရှိပါစေအချောင်သမားတွေအိတ်ထဲမရောက်ပါစေနဲ့”

you give them £2 million plus and how much of the income goes to good causes well after rents poll tax paying there staff and back handers in Africa so-called security it ends up less than 25 % of your £1 end up in Africa oh yes which Charity had the prostitution racket ??? i cannot remember do you know”

A small number directly attacked diplomatic presence or implied support for the regime:

“f-ck you leave from Yangon. We don’t want your donation. If your money didn’t want to arrive to government of Myanmar. Then you shouldn’t have embassy in Yangon. Leave from Yangon. Even in disaster, you are so shameful. Even US start talking with SAC to help. You know that most of the disaster are happen in areas SAC controlled. F-ck you”

Accounts potentially linked to propaganda were also present—for example, one using Buddhist imagery, no profile photo, and only 40 facebook friends, with content aligned with pro-military narratives. Another user claimed affiliation with “nationalist youths,” followed the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) a pro-military political organisation, and regularly posted content supportive of the military, possibly indicating ties to public-sector or regime-aligned groups.

Several other accounts raised concerns around inauthenticity:

- **Anonymous account with 4.9K followers** but very low engagement, possibly linked to an armed group or automated activity.
→ Comment called for military aid instead of humanitarian assistance to fight the military regime.
- **Profile created in August 2024**, claiming to be a journalist and sharing revolutionary content, but displaying few signs of credibility.
→ Comment expressed thanks for the aid but emphasised it should be delivered through the PDF and ethnic armed groups, not the military.
- **Account with only five followers**, no profile image, and identical comments posted across multiple threads—suggesting likely automation or impersonation.
→ Comment featured exaggerated praise, vague geopolitical references, and a rambling appeal for EU aid to be expanded into broader financial and infrastructural support. It also included unverifiable credentials and contact details for an unverified consulting business.
- **Account using a seemingly fabricated name**, with thousands of followers but no profile picture, raising concerns about authenticity and coordination.
→ Comment urged that aid be sent directly to people via civil society organisations and ethnic armed groups, bypassing the military regime.

What This Tells Us

- These comments reflect the broader erosion of public confidence in humanitarian systems, including among social media users in donor countries.
- Religious and racial bias occasionally surface, particularly in attacks on Muslim recipients. These views likely stem from broader identity-based worldviews rather than situational critique.
- A common thread across both international and Myanmar-based users is suspicion that aid actors are politically compromised—either serving regime interests or acting as Western foreign policy tools.
- Account credibility varies widely. From likely real individuals to suspected fake or manipulated profiles, the spectrum of engagement complicates interpretation. Some voices reflect lived experience and informed critique; others appear driven by propaganda, or disinformation strategies.
- **Limitations in verification persist.** While some accounts clearly display signs of inauthentic behaviour, we do not currently have the technical tools to reliably quantify how many profiles in the dataset are fake, automated, or coordinated. This limits the ability to draw firm conclusions about the scale or intent behind certain patterns of engagement.

Other resources

Violence against health care providers and facilities is a growing concern in Myanmar. **While complete prevention may not be possible, awareness, preparedness, and strategic planning can help mitigate risks.** We encourage health providers to implement key measures for ensuring safety and continuity of care. Drawing from Insecurity Insight's comprehensive Security Risk Management for Health Care Services Handbook (in [Arabic](#), [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#)), this series of regional reports covering [Mandalay](#), [Kayin](#), [Rakhine](#), [Sagaing](#) and [Shan](#) offers concrete measures for health care providers, working to support local health workers in challenging work environments.

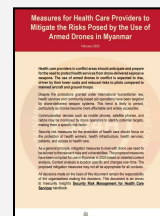


According to the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC), at least 62 incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care were recorded in Myanmar's Rakhine state in 2024, compared to 19 in 2023, 28 in 2022 and three in 2021. This increase is likely due to escalating conflict and changes in the control of territory in Kyaukpyu and Thandwe districts, where most cases were recorded. Health facilities were taken over and used for non-medical purposes by the AA and MAF at least 13 times in Rakhine state between March and November 2024, a sharp increase from two such incidents in 2023. Hospital occupations were mostly recorded in Kyaukpyu and Thandwe districts, and sometimes facilities were used for military operations. Read the full factsheet in [Burmese](#) and [English](#). Download the [data](#)



Health workers in Myanmar face an urgent and growing threat—armed drones targeting hospitals, mobile clinics, and aid operations. These attacks endanger lives and access to critical care. This guidance document - in [Burmese](#) and [English](#) - provides practical measures to help health care providers mitigate these risks. From early warning systems to protective strategies for staff, infrastructure, and mobile teams, this guide is essential for anyone working to safeguard medical services in Myanmar. Available as individual guidance on:

- **Outside** When a Drone is Spotted: [Burmese](#) | [English](#)
- **Inside** a Building During a Drone Attack: [Burmese](#) | [English](#)
- **Response** During a Drone Attack. [Burmese](#) | [English](#)



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