

12 December, 2025

Helen McEntee TD,
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2

Re: Human Rights Situation and Elections in Myanmar

Dear Minister McEntee,

We the undersigned members of the Oireachtas write to express our deep concern regarding the ongoing human rights violations and war crimes being committed by the military regime in Myanmar.

We are particularly alarmed by plans by the military junta in Myanmar to hold elections on 28 December 2025, in a naked attempt to legitimise a violent and anti-democratic regime. We call on the Irish government to strongly condemn these elections, and to work at both EU and UN levels to strengthen sanctions against key regime figures.

Elections

On 18 August 2025, the military junta announced it would end its 'state of emergency,' and then declared plans to hold an election on 28 December 2025. However, there is no valid legal basis for holding such elections. On 1 February 2021, the military carried out a failed coup. Since that time, they have engaged in a concerted campaign of violence and intimidation, including brutal attacks on peaceful protesters, the deaths of political prisoners, and dozens of airstrikes, artillery and mortar shelling, in addition to the torture of those detained in military custody.¹

Genuine democratic elections require an open and competitive environment that would allow Myanmar's people to freely express their will, thereby establishing the foundation for legitimate governance. With opposition parties dismantled, conflict ongoing across much of the country, more than 3.5 million people displaced, and draconian legislation currently being enforced to quash opponents of the junta's election plans,² there is no possibility that an election held in such conditions will be in line with international standards³ on democratic elections or commitments to electoral integrity.

¹ See, Bombs to Ballots: Myanmar Junta's Bloody Race for Recognition, ND-Burma, available [here](#).

² See, Myanmar Junta Crushes Election Criticism With Wave of Arrests, The Irrawaddy, available [here](#).

³ Model Commitments for Advancing Genuine and Credible Elections, available [here](#).

The military junta-controlled Union Election Commission (UEC) declared that only 102 townships out of the country's 330 townships will be included in the elections. This represents only 31% of the total electoral constituencies, signifying both the lack of territorial and administrative control necessary to hold elections in areas which have been liberated, or are currently contested.

In the face of this reality, the junta has engaged in the perverse practice of seeking to violently clear territories with a view to enabling some form of voting. Since the election date was announced, the junta has almost doubled its aerial bombings, killing more than 100 civilians.⁴ Both air and ground offensives to reclaim lost territories and tighten control have since escalated.⁵

The junta's sham election is a deliberate attempt to fabricate a façade of legitimacy and reinforce military tyranny, undermining the democratic aspirations of the Myanmar people and perpetuating cycles of violence.

In that context, we believe it is imperative that the Irish government states publicly and unequivocally that it will not recognise any election conducted by the Myanmar military while it is engaged in aerial attacks and forced displacement of civilian populations; and that Ireland works at EU and UN levels to press this stance.

Sanctions

The military junta is continuing its brutal campaign of violent repression against its own people, while a flagrant disregard for the rules of war has characterised its conflict with the armed resistance. By way of illustration, the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) documented 867 airstrikes and 1,800 aerial bombardments in Chin State alone by early 2024, killing at least 116 civilians and injuring 242 more. Landmines laid by the military have caused additional casualties, with 37 deaths and 68 injuries reported. The destruction extends to civilian infrastructure, with 124 religious buildings, 55 schools, 24 health facilities and over 1,000 homes destroyed, many in airstrikes.⁶

Sanctions remain an effective tool for preventing the military junta from committing such crimes.⁷ They aim to hold those responsible for the coup and human rights violations accountable and to support the restoration of democracy and the rule of law. Sanctions against junta members are also an important demonstration of solidarity with

⁴ Junta Airstrikes Kill Over 100 Civilians Since Election Date Announcement, The Irrawaddy, available [here](#)

⁵ Myanmar Junta's Pre-Poll Military Push Projects Strength at Heavy Civilian Cost, The Irrawaddy, available [here](#)

⁶ For more details see Four Years On: Impact of the Coup on Human Rights and Humanitarian Conditions in Western Myanmar, Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), available [here](#).

⁷ Banking on the Death Trade: How Banks and Governments Enable the Military Junta in Myanmar, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, A/HRC/56/CRP.7, 26 June 2024, available [here](#)

survivors of the junta's war crimes for whom no access to justice exists. It is essential they know that countries like Ireland are still watching and understand their plight.

Despite the well-documented crimes committed in Chin State there have, to date, been no targeted sanctions against the Myanmar military's northwestern command.⁸

We call on the Irish government to work at both EU and UN levels to extend sanctions to other individual members of the junta for their involvement in undermining democracy, the repression of the civilian population and the planning and commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law in Myanmar.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Senator Patricia Stephenson

Seán Ó Fearghaíl TD

Paul Murphy TD

Duncan Smith TD

Senator Alice Mary Higgins

⁸ See, Legal Analysis Related to Sanction Designations on Members of Northwestern Command of the State Administrative Council (SAC) CHRO, available [here](#).