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## Report of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar\*

### *Summary*

The present document is the seventh report submitted by the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar to the Human Rights Council pursuant to Council resolution 39/2 of 27 September 2018. It covers the activities carried out by the Mechanism between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, highlighting progress made on investigations, challenges, and areas for additional support.

Over the past year, the Mechanism continued to uncover evidence of an escalating number of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed across Myanmar by multiple parties. The Mechanism is examining evidence of alleged crimes, regardless of the affiliation or ethnicity of the perpetrators or victims, with new lines of enquiry opened in Rakhine State.

The Mechanism made important progress in its investigations into crimes committed since the February 2021 military coup, including aerial attacks resulting in civilian deaths; killings of civilians and detained combatants; and torture, including sexual violence against persons in detention. The Mechanism has collected evidence of the identity of perpetrators of crimes committed in detention facilities and of individuals in the security forces of Myanmar, affiliated militias and opposition armed groups who have perpetrated summary executions.

Investigations into the 2016 and 2017 clearance operations against the Rohingya advanced significantly in the past year. The Mechanism is now prioritizing witnesses who can provide evidence directly linking crimes to specific perpetrators. It is also focusing its investigations on Rohingya villages where properties were destroyed, community members were forcibly displaced and land was subsequently appropriated by the authorities of Myanmar and replaced with security bases and State infrastructure.

During the reporting period, the Mechanism shared over 37 evidence and analytical packages concerning crimes committed against the Rohingya, comprised of more than 24,000 information items and supporting analysis, with the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and Federal Prosecutor's Office No. 9 in Argentina. The Mechanism is now also sharing evidence with a new jurisdiction – the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – which is investigating crimes against the Rohingya, and crimes committed after the military coup.

\* Agreement was reached to publish the present report after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



Notable progress has been made in the ongoing proceedings during this period. The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court filed a request with the Court for an arrest warrant for Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar military, and the Federal Criminal Court of Argentina ordered the issuance of arrest warrants summoning Min Aung Hlaing and 24 other individuals to appear before the Court. This underscores the importance of the Mechanism's work in collecting and preserving forensically valuable evidence that can be used to hold perpetrators responsible.

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The present report covers the activities carried out by the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025.
2. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 39/2, created the Mechanism and mandated it to carry out two primary functions: to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law committed in Myanmar since 2011; and to prepare files to facilitate and expedite fair and independent criminal proceedings in national, regional or international courts or tribunals that have or may in the future have jurisdiction over these crimes. In its resolution 73/264, the General Assembly welcomed the establishment of the Mechanism. Subsequently, in its resolution 43/26, the Council specifically called upon the Mechanism to engage in close and timely cooperation on any future investigations, including those conducted by the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice.
3. Over the past year, civilians continued to suffer atrocities, as the conflict between the armed forces of Myanmar and various armed organizations showed no signs of abating. The Mechanism collected evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed with increasing frequency and intensity by multiple parties to the ongoing conflicts. In all cases, the Mechanism is working to identify those most responsible, regardless of their political affiliation, beliefs or ethnicity.
4. During the reporting period, the systematic and escalating use of air strikes by the Myanmar military across the country caused widespread death, destruction and displacement, and has terrorized communities. As the military continues to lose territory to opposing groups, it frequently bombs lost territories from the air, causing increased casualties among non-combatants. Women, children and elderly people have been particularly vulnerable to the devastating impact of air strikes. Within days of the deadly earthquake of 28 March 2025, at a time of heightened humanitarian crisis, the Myanmar military unleashed air strikes against civilian villages in Mandalay, Sagaing and other regions.
5. In Rakhine State, ongoing fighting between the military and the Arakan Army has affected thousands of civilians. There are credible reports of widespread malnutrition, particularly among young children of all ethnicities. During the reporting period, the Arakan Army seized control of nearly all townships in Rakhine, leaving only the capital Sittwe and parts of the southern region under military control. The Mechanism is actively investigating reports of killings, torture, rape and the burning of villages. While all ethnic communities in Rakhine State have endured extreme hardship, the remaining Rohingya population finds itself in an especially vulnerable position, caught between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army.
6. In parallel to its increased investigative activities, the Mechanism has shared vast amounts of evidence and analysis to support three ongoing justice processes related to crimes committed against the Rohingya population, which are being conducted by the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and Federal Prosecutor's Office No. 9 in Argentina. In November 2024, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced that he had requested an arrest warrant for Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar military, for the crimes against humanity of deportation and persecution of Rohingya. The Prosecutor stated that he intended to file requests for additional arrest warrants. In February 2025, the Federal Criminal Court of Argentina ordered the issuance of arrest warrants summoning Min Aung Hlaing and 24 other individuals to appear before the Court to provide testimony relevant to the ongoing investigation by Argentinian authorities. These recent developments send a strong message to perpetrators that no one stands above the law.

## **II. Progress on investigations and facilitating proceedings**

7. Over the past year, the Mechanism continued to actively monitor the ongoing situation throughout Myanmar and to collect and analyse evidence of alleged serious international crimes committed by the armed forces of Myanmar as well as various armed groups. Since

it became operational, the Mechanism has maintained two distinct investigative teams: one dedicated to crimes against the Rohingya population (both historical and ongoing crimes) and another focused on examining crimes committed against other groups, including those committed since the military coup in 2021.

## **A. Investigating post-coup crimes**

8. Since the military coup in February 2021, the Mechanism has collected and analysed substantial evidence of serious international crimes committed across the country. During the reporting period, the number of such crimes escalated significantly. The Mechanism has been collecting new reports of the imprisonment of thousands of individuals without fundamental due process; indiscriminate air strikes; civilian deaths in artillery and drone attacks; the burning or destruction of homes, hospitals, schools and places of worship; and torture and abuse committed against those in detention, including sexual violence. These investigations have resulted in various analytical reports establishing and demonstrating the contextual elements of crimes against humanity and war crimes, which are available for sharing with investigative, prosecutorial and judicial authorities.

### **Crimes related to ongoing armed conflicts**

9. During the reporting period, the Mechanism gathered and examined large quantities of evidence of crimes connected to ongoing armed conflicts across Myanmar, including in Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Rakhine and Shan States and in Sagaing and Magway Regions. Investigations into past and new incidents include: (a) indiscriminate or intentional aerial and artillery attacks against civilians and/or civilian objects; (b) killings of civilians or combatants detained during operations; and (c) sexual and gender-based crimes.

10. More specifically, the Mechanism continued to secure and assess volumes of material regarding the escalating use of air strike attacks in various locations throughout the country. As aerial attacks impacting on civilians and civilian objects continued to escalate, the Mechanism intensified its investigations into those incidents. The Mechanism sought evidence of whether the strikes were targeted at military objectives or were primarily or disproportionately targeted at civilians. Among the incidents that the Mechanism has examined are attacks on internally displaced persons' camps and attacks on schools, religious buildings and health facilities in Kayah State. These incidents have caused large numbers of civilian casualties and significant destruction of civilian infrastructure, without there being any apparent military target in the vicinity of the areas attacked. The Mechanism is analysing the composition of the Myanmar Air Force and its chain of command in order to identify the perpetrators involved in the air strike attacks. In this context, the Mechanism also continues to evaluate information on supply chains for the weapons and equipment used in the air strikes. Moreover, the Mechanism has been examining reports on the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Myanmar military.

11. The Mechanism has received testimony from civilians in conflict-affected areas, many of whom have been displaced several times. They have described the mental terror caused by the sounds of planes, helicopters and drones overhead and the constant fear of being attacked. Children have been particularly traumatized. The Mechanism has gathered credible information on the increased use of drones and paramotors, in addition to jet fighters and helicopter gunships, to deliver deadly munitions during air strikes against civilians.

12. Despite the devastation caused by the earthquake on 28 March 2025, the military continued to conduct air strikes in the aftermath. The air strikes continued even after the military declared a ceasefire to assertedly facilitate rescue and humanitarian relief. The Mechanism is closely tracking reports of humanitarian aid being blocked or confiscated in areas affected by the earthquake. The Mechanism has also assembled credible evidence of other instances of humanitarian assistance being blocked, such as in Sittwe in Rakhine State.

13. During the reporting period, the volume of evidence detailing killings of civilians or combatants detained during operations increased. The Mechanism obtained evidence of such killings perpetrated by the security forces of Myanmar, affiliated militias and opposition armed groups. Credible information indicates that captured soldiers, combatants and civilians

accused of being informers were summarily executed. Several of these incidents were recorded and disseminated online by perpetrators, demonstrating the perpetrators' confidence that they would never be held to account for these crimes. The Mechanism collected evidence on the identity of perpetrators and their superiors and will continue to work to break the impunity of those responsible for such crimes in Myanmar.

14. The Mechanism continued to compile and review credible evidence of sexual and gender-based crimes against civilians of different ages and genders related to the various armed conflicts in Myanmar. This includes evidence of rape (including with objects and gang rape), sexual slavery, sexualized torture, sexual mutilation, sexual assault at military checkpoints and forced nudity. However, the Mechanism faces severe challenges in collecting evidence from primary sources. Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence often lack adequate support services and frequently suffer from severe psychological trauma, and/or cultural and social stigma. Victims' fear of further harm and distrust in authorities and others often results in delayed reporting and/or underreporting. Despite these difficulties, the Mechanism has advanced its investigations in identifying persons within military units and affiliated militias, as well as People's Defence Forces and other non-State armed groups, who are implicated in the commission of sexual and gender-based crimes.

15. During the reporting period, the Mechanism also received reports and collected eyewitness testimony concerning crimes against or affecting children, an area of investigation that the Mechanism prioritizes. This includes evidence of the enlistment, conscription or use in hostilities of children below the age of 15.

#### **Crimes related to unlawful imprisonment since the military coup in 2021**

16. The Mechanism continued to investigate crimes against those who have been detained by the military since the coup and the targeting of those perceived as opponents of the military regime. The Mechanism has collected significant evidence, including first-hand witness testimony, of systematic torture, killing and other serious abuses during interrogations and in detention facilities operated by the security forces of Myanmar. These include beatings, electric shocks, strangulations, and torture by pulling out fingernails with pliers.

17. The Mechanism has made important progress in its analysis of the systematic commission of sexual and gender-based crimes against individuals of different ages and genders in detention settings. Crimes include rape (gang rape and multiple rapes), including through the insertion of objects into anal and genital openings; sexual slavery; burning of sexual body parts with cigarettes or burned objects; sexualized touching or forced full or partial nudity; invasive body searches intended to humiliate; the use of sexualized, misogynistic or homophobic slurs, threats of sexual violence, or violence based on gender or sexual orientation; and reproductive violence, particularly against women and girls, because of inadequate access to menstrual hygiene, to maternal or postnatal healthcare or to nutrition. Moreover, the Mechanism has gathered evidence from eyewitnesses indicating that children – ranging from 2 to 17 years of age – have been detained, often as proxies for their parents. Some of the detained children have been subjected to torture, ill-treatment or sexual and gender-based crimes.

18. The Mechanism continues to make progress in identifying specific members and units of security forces involved in operations at identified detention facilities, including direct perpetrators of sexual and gender-based crimes as well as high-level commanders.

### **B. Current situation in Rakhine State**

19. Due to the significant deterioration of the situation in Rakhine State, the Mechanism has opened dedicated lines of inquiry into serious international crimes committed since early 2024. This includes crimes targeted at Rakhine, Rohingya and other civilian communities affected by the armed conflict between the opposing parties.

20. The Mechanism is investigating incidents against different civilian communities, related to: (a) detention, torture and forced transfer of civilians from several villages; (b) indiscriminate killing of civilians, including women, children and elderly people;

(c) restrictions on the entry and exit of civilians and blockades of humanitarian aid and essential supplies in Sittwe; and (d) indiscriminate or intentional artillery and aerial attacks against civilians or civilian objects in Arakan Army-controlled villages across Northern and Southern Rakhine. This also includes an alleged massacre of Rakhine civilians and the blocking of humanitarian aid to Rakhine communities affected by the ongoing violence. The Mechanism has collected credible information that these crimes have been committed by the military and/or military-affiliated armed groups.

21. The escalating violence has again forced large numbers of displaced Rohingya to flee Myanmar and seek refuge in Bangladesh. Despite initial logistical challenges in identifying and safely engaging with such individuals, the Mechanism has been able to meet with victims, obtaining critical first-hand evidence of horrific crimes affecting the Rohingya. In this context, the Mechanism has greatly benefited from its close collaboration with national and international civil society and documentation organizations, which supported the coordination and collection of evidence from the recently displaced population.

22. During the reporting period, the Mechanism initiated investigations into crimes allegedly committed by members of the Arakan Army, in military or civilian attire. These included summary executions, torture and beheadings of military soldiers and civilians suspected of being military informants. In addition, the Mechanism continues to collect information on sexual violence, including rape, against Chin women.

### **C. Investigating crimes against the Rohingya**

23. During the reporting period, the Mechanism continued its investigations into crimes associated with the 2016 and 2017 clearance operations, which resulted in mass killings, widespread sexual and gender-based violence, large-scale destruction of Rohingya villages and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya into Bangladesh. Investigations have also continued into the events preceding the clearance operations, including the violence of 2012, the subsequent internal displacement of Rohingya communities around Sittwe, and the series of discriminatory and persecutory measures taken against the Rohingya community before the 2016 and 2017 operations.

24. In its investigations, the Mechanism seeks to identify the individuals who are most responsible for the crimes committed against the Rohingya. This includes those who ordered the crimes, those who failed to punish crimes committed by those under their command, those who facilitated the commission of these crimes through material and financial support, and those who actively promoted the hate campaign which fuelled these crimes.

25. During the reporting period, the Mechanism continued to interview members of the Rohingya population who were impacted by the Myanmar military's clearance operations in 2016 and 2017, and who are currently living in refugee camps and other locations. These interviews typically canvass the entirety of a survivor's experience, including information and evidence relating to crimes committed prior to the 2016 and 2017 clearance operations which includes crimes of persecution, forced labour, sexual and gender-based crimes and crimes related to internal forced displacement. Having gathered a substantial volume of evidence through its field missions and having reached an advanced stage in incident investigations, the Mechanism has adopted a more targeted approach to witness identification and prioritization. Guided by its case prioritization strategy, the Mechanism is focusing on identifying and interviewing Rohingya witnesses who can provide linkage evidence to establish a link between the actions of specific individuals and the crimes committed. This includes evidence regarding locations, structures and operations of the security forces of Myanmar, and also concerning interactions with security officials prior to the clearance operations. In all of its interactions with witnesses, the Mechanism has prioritized the collection of information concerning sexual and gender-based crimes and crimes against and affecting children.

26. The Mechanism continues to strengthen its evidence collection by engaging with civil society groups, local and international non-governmental organizations, media outlets and governments. The Mechanism continues, in particular, to seek witnesses with "inside knowledge" of the key figures and decision makers behind the clearance operations of 2016

and 2017. These witnesses include military defectors who have provided crucial information regarding the structure and operations of the Myanmar military, including chains of command, deployments, coordination between various branches of the security forces, training, weaponry and direct orders.

27. The Mechanism's investigations into the clearance operations include a strong focus on Rohingya villages where properties were destroyed, community members were forcibly displaced and land was subsequently appropriated and replaced with security bases and State infrastructure, creating even more challenges for Rohingya communities to repatriate and rebuild their lives. A crucial aspect of this investigation involves engaging with members of the Rohingya community who have lost their lands and livelihoods and collecting documentary evidence, geospatial imagery and other open source evidence regarding the construction of security bases or other State infrastructure. These materials will form the basis of an analytical product to be shared with investigative, prosecutorial and judicial authorities and could also inform efforts related to reparations for the Rohingya community and restitution.

28. The Mechanism's financial investigations led to the development of an analytical report focusing on a private commercial entity that provided material support to the security forces of Myanmar at the peak of the 2017 clearance operations. This report draws together witness testimony accounts, audiovisual evidence, and open source and social media posts, as well as evidence of corporate ownership and interests. It particularly highlights the role of corporate actors who facilitated, contributed to or benefited from the clearance operations against the Rohingya population.

#### **D. Sharing evidence and facilitating justice opportunities**

29. The primary aim of the Mechanism's investigations is to enable national and international authorities to end the impunity of perpetrators and deliver justice for victims of serious international crimes committed in Myanmar. For this purpose, the Mechanism shares evidence and analysis with competent investigative, prosecutorial and judicial authorities to support criminal proceedings in national or international courts or tribunals with jurisdiction over the crimes within the Mechanism's mandate. Pursuant to its terms of reference, on a case-by-case basis, the Mechanism may also share information for uses other than criminal proceedings to contribute to the interests of justice and deter further crimes.

30. In accordance with the principles of confidentiality and informed consent, the Mechanism only shares information with authorities when the individuals or entities who provided the information have agreed that their information can be shared with that particular entity. Before sharing, the Mechanism also conducts an assessment to ensure that sharing the information will not compromise the safety or the privacy rights of any persons identified in the material. This requires regular and ongoing engagement with the Mechanism's witnesses and sources. The Mechanism also coordinates closely with the relevant jurisdictions such as the International Criminal Court to facilitate the direct provision of testimony by witnesses and to "deconflict" witnesses to ensure that sensitive and vulnerable individuals are not approached or asked to be interviewed again by multiple justice institutions.

31. During the reporting period, the Mechanism supported four jurisdictions: ongoing proceedings related to crimes committed against the Rohingya in three jurisdictions and an ongoing proceeding in the United Kingdom covering crimes against both the Rohingya and other groups in Myanmar and crimes committed after the coup. In relation to proceedings related to crimes against the Rohingya, the Mechanism continued to share an unprecedentedly high volume of evidence and analysis. Two active investigations are focused on the individual criminal responsibility of perpetrators. These investigations are being conducted by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and by Federal Prosecutor's Office No. 9 in Argentina. The continued efforts of the Mechanism were reflected in arrest warrant applications by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in November 2024 and the Federal Prosecutor of Argentina in February 2025. The third proceeding for which the Mechanism is sharing information is the *Gambia v. Myanmar* case before the International Court of Justice. This case concerns alleged violations by Myanmar



of its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The written submissions phase of this proceeding concluded in late 2024 and the oral hearings on the merits are expected to begin later in 2025. The Mechanism continues to proactively identify information and evidence that could be relevant to these investigations and proceedings and is also responding to targeted requests from these authorities for specific information or analysis.

32. Furthermore, the Mechanism is monitoring complaints regarding post-coup crimes, which have been filed in national courts on the basis of universal jurisdiction, including complaints filed in the Philippines and Türkiye. The Mechanism has taken proactive steps to engage with additional jurisdictions for potential future investigations and justice opportunities. Notably, the Mechanism has engaged with relevant authorities in the United Kingdom to share information related to crimes under the Mechanism's mandate, including with the War Crimes Team – a specialized unit within the Counter Terrorism Command of the Metropolitan Police – which has opened a structural investigation mirroring the situations being investigated by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

33. In order to facilitate future prosecutions, the Mechanism seeks to identify individuals and entities that are responsible for serious international crimes, and additionally to have a nexus to countries outside of Myanmar that may be able and willing to exercise jurisdiction over such crimes. Thus, the Mechanism has two ongoing investigations focusing on the supply and production of weapons and aircraft used in attacks by the Myanmar military on civilians. These investigations combine financial information with crime base evidence collected by the Mechanism. A vital component of these investigations is the engagement with insider witnesses and the use of open source and social media evidence to follow weapons suppliers and other corporate actors who facilitate, contribute to or benefit from ongoing attacks against civilians. The objective of these investigations is to prepare files ready to be shared with investigative, prosecutorial and judicial authorities. Most recently, the Mechanism received and responded to a request from a British authority in relation to post-coup crimes, involving such information.

## **E. Methodology for collecting, analysing and managing evidence**

### **Evidence collection and preservation**

34. Despite the lack of access to crime scenes and difficulties in contacting witnesses, the Mechanism continued to collect large quantities of information and evidence. To date, the Mechanism has collected and processed millions of items of information and evidence from nearly 1,300 sources and information providers, adding hundreds of thousands of items during the reporting period. Throughout these processes, the Mechanism adheres to the principles of confidentiality and informed consent in order to safeguard the integrity of its work and protect all those with whom it interacts.

35. The Mechanism's approach to evidence collection has been to combine traditional investigative techniques with modern investigative technologies. The Mechanism has collected many different types of evidence, ranging from signed statements of witnesses with first-hand knowledge relevant to serious crimes, to the harvesting, verification and analysis of social media, open source and financial information. Evidence is collected through direct interactions with witnesses and sources and with non-governmental organizations, civil society groups, national authorities and other international organizations, as well as business entities. The Mechanism's evidence collection has been substantially strengthened by the integration of sophisticated open source investigation techniques. These techniques include examining public statements and monitoring media and social media, as well as verifying and analysing photographs, videos and geospatial imagery. Given the extensive availability of open source materials, the Mechanism's lack of access to the crime scenes, and security and cooperation challenges, open source evidence is increasingly an essential component of international criminal investigations.

36. The Mechanism applies a multifaceted approach to evidence collection, focusing on information and evidence related to priority situations and incidents, contextual and overview information relevant to Myanmar, and information concerning specific individuals, groups

and structures suspected of perpetrating crimes. As required by its terms of reference, the Mechanism seeks both inculpatory and exculpatory information from all relevant parties regarding serious international crimes committed in Myanmar. The Mechanism seeks to ensure that a survivor/victim-centred, gender-sensitive and trauma-informed approach underpins its methodologies, processes and systems, particularly in its interactions with witnesses, sources and other information providers.

37. The Mechanism places great importance on the collection of first-hand witness testimony, which is essential to building criminal cases. Thus, in-person interviews and the collection of valuable and probative information through investigative missions are a critical element of the Mechanism's evidence collection. Investigative missions involve direct engagement with victims, witnesses, civil society actors and other stakeholders. Detailed, signed witness statements and other materials are securely collected and transmitted to the Mechanism's electronic information management system using encrypted tools. This ensures the protection and confidentiality of the information and of information providers. To date, the Mechanism has collected over 590 witness statements and screening notes. In addition, the Mechanism has prepared more than 500 investigation notes documenting information collected from various sources and leads.

### **Evidence analysis and sharing**

38. The Mechanism has further strengthened and refined its methodologies for analysis and sharing. Since the establishment of the Mechanism, this has resulted in the preparation of 120 packages comprising more than 1.2 million items of supporting evidence, metadata authentication and analysis that have been shared with national and international authorities. Furthermore, the Mechanism continues to evolve its use of emerging technologies in response to the growing scale of evidentiary material and the changing digital landscape. Advances in automation, artificial intelligence and secure tools and technologies are enabling the Mechanism to strengthen and augment its overall analytical capabilities, by ensuring that the evidence collected is accessible and searchable and that materials are preserved in a manner that will allow their use in future legal proceedings according to the Mechanism's mandate.

39. For example, the Mechanism developed the Case Analysis Platform, an evidence analysis tool that enables the Mechanism to systematically extract, organize and annotate facts from evidentiary material. The Case Analysis Platform facilitates the Mechanism's efforts to build coherent files pertaining to key legal and factual elements required to prove crimes. The Mechanism is also developing a tool that utilizes computer vision technology to detect designated items such as weapons and insignia as well as disturbing or graphic content in photos and videos to minimize investigative teams' exposure to material that may lead to secondary trauma.

40. To optimize the Mechanism's investigations, the Mechanism is also developing a system based on digital identifiers to enable comparisons of potential connections between persons and entities of interest, documented incidents, and digital footprints such as IP addresses, email addresses, call data records, social media identifiers and other metadata derived from open sources. The Mechanism continues to build its capacity to identify transactions and assets linked to incidents by leveraging information obtained through its collection activities and its engagement with sources, as well as through specialized corporate and financial intelligence tools. These efforts have led to an enhanced understanding of command structures and funding sources, supporting analysis across investigative priorities and lines of inquiry.

41. Due to the vast linguistic diversity of Myanmar, where over 100 languages are spoken, the Mechanism continues to face translation challenges. There are also huge challenges in evidence processing and analysis due to language and script complexities. The majority of the materials collected are written in the Myanmar language (Burmese) which has distinct character encoding – a process of assigning numbers to graphical characters of human language – and a variety of file formats. This linguistic complexity requires robust and timely translation and interpretation capabilities for effective analysis. The Mechanism has developed advanced optical character recognition tools that convert scanned or image-based documents into machine-readable texts. To address the absence of readily available tools for

translating languages used in Myanmar into English, the Mechanism is also actively researching and developing artificial intelligence solutions that can facilitate machine translation of the Mechanism's collection of materials in Burmese.

### **III. Progress on cooperation, dialogue and outreach**

#### **A. Cooperation with Member States and other partners**

42. The Mechanism requires the cooperation of numerous entities, including States, international organizations, civil society organizations, business entities and victims, in order to collect information and evidence on the most serious international crimes committed in Myanmar. In an effort to strengthen cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, the Mechanism continued its high-level dialogues and consultations with Member States and other actors in Geneva, New York and capitals. These engagements enabled the Mechanism to promote its work and to advance important cooperation arrangements to carry out evidence collection and witness interviews in the territories of Member States.

43. The Mechanism continued to reach out to, and seek information from, the Myanmar military and armed groups in the country, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly calling upon Myanmar to cooperate and engage meaningfully with the Mechanism. To date, the Mechanism has made over two dozen requests to the authorities of Myanmar for information in its possession and for access to the territory of Myanmar. It also requested information relating to alleged crimes – including regarding investigations or disciplinary measures undertaken – from both the military authorities and various armed groups. While the National Unity Government has responded, and shared detailed information on an investigation it had conducted, the Mechanism has not received any responses to its requests for information from the military or other armed groups.

44. In January 2025, the Head of the Mechanism conducted an official visit to Bangladesh, where he engaged in high-level discussions with government officials in Dhaka and outreach activities with the Rohingya community in Cox's Bazar. The visit focused on the Mechanism's ongoing investigations into crimes committed against the Rohingya population, recent developments in accountability efforts, and the evolving situation across the border in Rakhine State. In the lead-up to the High-Level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar scheduled to take place in September 2025 – an initiative stemming from the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly – the Mechanism has underscored the critical importance of addressing issues of justice and accountability in order to order achieve any long-term peace and stability for communities in Rakhine State and throughout Myanmar. The Head of the Mechanism also conveyed the Mechanism's deep appreciation for the continued support of the Government of Bangladesh in facilitating its investigations and providing access to Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar who have been forcibly displaced from Myanmar. The cooperation of Bangladesh remains crucial in advancing accountability and justice efforts.

45. The Mechanism continues to call on all Member States seeking to end the spiralling violence and rampant atrocities in Myanmar to cooperate with its efforts to pursue justice for these crimes. Calls for the violence to end have little effect if perpetrators of the most serious crimes feel assured that they will never be held responsible. The Mechanism continues to seek the cooperation of relevant States so that investigative teams can interview witnesses on their territory. Expanding such cooperation continues to be a high priority for the Mechanism, especially with Member States in the Asia-Pacific region where much of the evidence and many of the witnesses are located. The Mechanism welcomes progress on the negotiation of cooperation arrangements with some States, which is expected to further enable the Mechanism's investigative activities.

46. The Mechanism's efforts to establish cooperation arrangements with Member States for the purpose of facilitating the collection of testimonial and documentary evidence in their territory have also been informed by lessons learned and best practices identified through an internal evaluation carried out in 2024. The findings of the evaluation affirmed the

importance of regular consultations with national authorities and of pragmatic and flexible approaches in advancing the more than a dozen cooperation arrangements to date with a diverse group of Member States. Through this evaluation, the Mechanism also identified areas for improving efficiencies, including by proactively exploring opportunities for two-way cooperation, adopting alternative or mitigating measures where lack of cooperation is likely to persist, and improving processes for the submission of requests for assistance to States.

47. During the reporting period, the Mechanism also continued to rely on the support and cooperation of United Nations entities that might have information relevant to the Mechanism's mandate or that could provide support in other areas of its operations. In line with relevant Human Rights Council resolutions and with its terms of reference, the Mechanism cooperates closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to enhance the complementarity of the respective mandates: for the Mechanism, conducting criminal investigations into serious international crimes in Myanmar consistent with international law standards, and for OHCHR, carrying out fact-finding, monitoring, documentation, advocacy, and engagement with stakeholders in relation to human rights violations in Myanmar. The exchange of information and associated cooperation is based on a memorandum of understanding between the Mechanism and OHCHR. Fully cognizant of the challenging operational environment that the United Nations system is currently facing in Myanmar, the Mechanism highly values the continued cooperation and support of many other United Nations actors.

## **B. Dialogue with civil society and public outreach**

48. The Mechanism believes that it is critically important to inform key audiences of its efforts to collect evidence and end impunity for serious crimes in Myanmar. It is essential that victims are aware that efforts are being made to document their experiences and bring some measure of justice for those who have suffered these crimes. It is equally critical that potential perpetrators know that evidence is being collected and efforts are being made to ensure that those responsible will one day be held to account. Consequently, the Mechanism undertakes significant efforts to actively engage with individuals and organizations through diverse channels, ensuring that stakeholders have a clear understanding of its complex mandate, its operational methods and the scope of its capabilities and limitations. By fostering outreach and dialogue, the Mechanism aims to strengthen trust in its role as an independent and impartial entity while encouraging greater support and cooperation for its investigations. During the reporting period, the Mechanism prioritized several key initiatives, including the launch of its new website and the production of outreach materials in several languages of Myanmar.

49. Civil society organizations play a vital role in supporting the Mechanism, offering valuable information, documentation, witness access and investigative leads. By engaging with these organizations, the Mechanism not only communicates its mandate and operational methods, but also gains valuable insights into the realities and challenges encountered by those working on the ground.

50. During the reporting period, the Mechanism held its third Myanmar Civil Society Dialogue, which provided another valuable opportunity for Mechanism personnel to directly engage with representatives of 20 civil society organizations from diverse communities, all working towards accountability and justice for the people of Myanmar. This annual meeting serves as an important in-person platform for fostering mutual understanding and trust and responding to feedback on the Mechanism's work. Many civil society participants shared the challenges they face because of funding shortfalls, widespread trauma and increased security risks, and made valuable suggestions on how the Mechanism could adapt its engagement with civil society organizations to make it more effective. Before the event, 20 per cent of civil society participants indicated that they had a clear understanding of the Mechanism's mandate. This increased to more than 80 per cent after the event, with all participants indicating a willingness to cooperate with the Mechanism in the future. For many participants, the Myanmar Civil Society Dialogue was a unique opportunity to engage with

representatives from different ethnic groups, which resulted in increased trust and cooperation between the organizations that attended.

51. Furthermore, the Mechanism engaged in multiple opportunities for meaningful two-way communications with relevant organizations through 33 virtual and in-person events and meetings. During his official visit to Bangladesh in January 2025, the Head of the Mechanism engaged with more than 100 Rohingya activists and representatives of community organizations from refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. In these briefings, he updated stakeholders on the Mechanism's investigative progress and on recent developments in accountability processes and addressed key questions regarding accountability for ongoing crimes in Rakhine State, along with concerns about prospects for justice. The Mechanism also held in-person briefings with Myanmar diaspora communities in North America and numerous meetings with different audiences focused on specific thematic issues, such as sexual and gender-based crimes.

52. The Mechanism expanded its efforts to engage a broader audience by developing and distributing materials with visually engaging, memorable and shareable messaging. During the reporting period, it redesigned its website to feature more accessible content in both English and Burmese, along with an improved user experience. Through its triannual newsletter, the Mechanism strives to maintain transparency and keep stakeholders informed, by providing substantive content and detailed updates on its progress. It has also produced and disseminated videos, fact sheets, infographics and other outreach materials in Burmese, Rohingya and other languages used in Myanmar. These resources offer clear explanations of various aspects of the Mechanism's work and of recent developments in judicial processes. In the next reporting period, additional outreach materials will be created in more languages of Myanmar, with a particular emphasis on the Mechanism's approach to investigating crimes against and affecting children as well as on sexual and gender-based crimes.

53. The Mechanism continued to reach out to diverse audiences through press releases, statements, media briefings and interviews, resulting in consistent media and social media coverage of its work in various languages of Myanmar and through global and regional outlets. Despite increasing efforts by the Myanmar military to restrict Internet and social media access, the Mechanism's Facebook audience continued to grow steadily throughout the reporting period. The number of followers, located primarily in the Asia region, surpassed 75,500. This growth was largely driven by the Mechanism's timely responses to events in Myanmar and to key developments at the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court and in Argentina. Looking ahead, the Mechanism plans to further expand its social media presence by launching a LinkedIn page in the next reporting period to engage a wider audience.

## **IV. Progress on other areas of the Mechanism**

### **A. Witness protection and support**

54. The Mechanism places high priority on ensuring the security and well-being of witnesses and those who provide information, and seeks to facilitate access to psychological support for those who will benefit from such services. Despite significantly reduced resources during the reporting period, the Mechanism has remained steadfast in its witness protection and support efforts. It continues to enhance its procedures and working methods, aligning them with international best practices to ensure the effective safeguarding of witnesses.

55. Investigating serious international crimes presents considerable security, safety and psychosocial risks for witnesses, victims and other sources of information. These risks are particularly pronounced for individuals who have been detained and/or tortured, for survivors of systemic violence, including sexual and gender-based violence and mass killings, and for insider witnesses. The security situation of potential witnesses has become increasingly complex with the deteriorating security situation in Myanmar as well as in other locations hosting refugees. Many of the Mechanism's witnesses and sources face serious risks both inside and outside Myanmar. Many have been forced to flee Myanmar and have crossed into neighbouring countries without any legalized immigration status, placing them in vulnerable

situations, which sometimes includes the risk of arrest and deportation to Myanmar, where they may face persecution, detention and even execution. In this context, the Mechanism plays a critical role in mitigating these risks by facilitating secure and confidential investigative interviews, coordinating protection measures for high-risk witnesses and addressing identified mental health and other psychosocial concerns. The Mechanism's ability to address risks related to the safety and well-being of its witnesses also requires the cooperation of Member States.

56. The Mechanism takes all feasible steps to safeguard the safety and well-being of individuals before, during and after their cooperation with the personnel of the Mechanism. These measures are embedded across all aspects of the Mechanism's operations, from information collection to information sharing. Over time, the number of victims and witnesses requiring ongoing protection and support has grown steadily, leading to a yearly rise in individuals requiring such support. During the reporting period, the Mechanism conducted over 220 contact risk assessments, aimed at identifying specific security risks and ensuring that witnesses could engage with the Mechanism in a secure manner. However, the Mechanism is not a security service and does not have the ability to provide physical security or to authorize travel and entry into any country. Rather, it relies on the collaboration and support of Member States to ensure the protection of witnesses.

57. In an effort to improve psychosocial support for witnesses, the Mechanism conducted a significant number of psychosocial risk assessments to identify measures that reduce potential negative effects on their mental health and retraumatization due to their cooperation with the Mechanism. In addition, numerous individuals have been referred to external service providers to receive medical and psychosocial support, as provided for in the Mechanism's term of reference.

## **B. Language support**

58. The diversity of linguistic groups in Myanmar adds a layer of complexity to the Mechanism's activities. Most of the information and evidence that the Mechanism has collected is in the Myanmar language (Burmese), Rohingya, or other languages used in Myanmar, and is written in different scripts and with different file formats. In addition, the majority of victims, witnesses, sources and civil society stakeholders speak Burmese, Rohingya or other languages used in Myanmar. Accordingly, the Mechanism requires timely and accurate language translation and interpretation capabilities to effectively conduct its collection and analytical activities as well as to engage routinely and meaningfully with a wide range of stakeholders.

59. The Mechanism's small Language Support Services Section continues to deliver timely translation, interpretation and language verification services, not only in Burmese but also in the Rakhine, Rohingya, Karen, Mizo Chin, Falam Chin, Jinghpaw and Shan languages. These services play a crucial role across the Mechanism, supporting ongoing investigations, public information and outreach efforts, witness protection and support activities and security coordination functions.

## **C. Security of personnel, assets and information technology**

60. The work of the Mechanism is highly sensitive and its activities require the highest levels of discretion and confidentiality to ensure the integrity of the investigations and the safety and security of its personnel, premises, information assets and operations. The Mechanism continuously monitors the deteriorating security situation in areas that have a direct impact on its work, ensuring effective risk mitigation and adapting to emerging threats when necessary.

61. Since the February 2021 coup in Myanmar, there has been a significant rise in security threats and risks to the Mechanism. This rise is the result of the continued increase in serious international crimes in Myanmar and the accompanying increase in investigative activities in high-risk locations and in engagement with high-risk witnesses. The Mechanism incorporates security considerations before, during and after investigative activities in order to continually

assess and mitigate complex security challenges and ensure the security of its personnel, premises and assets.

62. The Mechanism is investigating various individuals responsible for serious international crimes in Myanmar, including members of the Myanmar military. In 2024, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the Federal Prosecutor of Argentina requested arrest warrants against some of these individuals. The Myanmar military has shown a pattern of targeting, threatening, intimidating and even killing individuals working against its interests. In this context, Mechanism personnel – especially those with families in Myanmar – face significant pressure and fear and are particularly vulnerable to security threats. If their affiliation with the Mechanism is exposed, there is a very real risk that they may be targeted as a result.

63. To mitigate the risks effectively, the Mechanism integrates robust safety and security measures tailored to specific security requirements and risk assessments across all aspects of its operations, both in Geneva and during missions abroad. These security arrangements include continuous monitoring and in-depth analysis of an increasing number of threat actors and their activities, resulting in the production of detailed and regularly updated country- or area-specific threat and risk assessments. These assessments are conducted in close collaboration with entities of the United Nations security management system, the Department of Safety and Security and key security interlocutors.

64. The Mechanism's security efforts have substantially contributed to ensuring that the Mechanism's investigative missions, its engagement with stakeholders and its information and data are safe and secure. During the reporting period, the Mechanism implemented additional processes and technologies to strengthen its information security by enhancing the control and protection of devices used in investigative activities and inquiries.

65. In addition, the Mechanism operationalized a structured incident response framework and online reporting system that allows the Mechanism to report, track, monitor and effectively identify and implement mitigation or response measures to security incidents involving personnel, witnesses and information assets.

## **D. Technology and infrastructure**

66. As the digital information landscape evolves and the Mechanism's collection activities grow, the continuous advancement and refinement of technologies remains integral to its operations. By integrating advanced solutions, the Mechanism constantly optimizes the intake, preservation and analysis of its electronic information management system, ensuring efficiency and reliability across all aspects of its work.

67. Over the reporting period, the Mechanism identified and adopted new systems and technologies to better organize, secure and manage its non-evidentiary material. As one of its most significant information governance initiatives during this period, the Mechanism successfully completed the migration of data from its previous storage system to a more advanced and better suited system, a process that required specialized information governance expertise from inception to completion. In addition, the Mechanism performed a comprehensive review of its information systems management's policies and procedures and updated these to align with current technology advances. The Mechanism also leveraged virtualization in its infrastructure to support various aspects of its operations, enabling more secure remote work and improving data management through more cost-effective solutions.

68. The Mechanism remains committed to enhancing its automated processes, in order to further improve efficiency within its electronic information management system. During the reporting period, these efforts have resulted in greater quality control and increased accuracy for the information being processed. The automation has been expanded to include translations, open source operations and overall analysis capabilities, strengthening the Mechanism's ability to manage and utilize information securely and effectively.

69. The Mechanism is proactively exploring various lines of enquiry and research into the viability and usability of artificial intelligence for its investigations and analysis. This

research and development is an ongoing effort and is continuously evolving as the available technologies change at an ever-increasing pace.

## **V. Conclusion: challenges and the way forward**

70. As highlighted throughout the present report, the Mechanism continued to face a number of complex challenges, including the lack of direct access to victims and witnesses in Myanmar and other States in the region; threats to the safety and security of personnel, witnesses and interlocutors; cybersecurity threats to communications and limitations in ensuring secure access to information; and the need for adequate capacity and resources to reinforce language and translation capabilities, technological innovations and specialized expertise. These challenges have been compounded by the unprecedented liquidity crisis and austerity measures affecting the United Nations during the reporting period.

71. The liquidity crisis and the recently introduced austerity measures have affected recruitment, essential consultancies, investigative mission travel, training, and the acquisition of information technology equipment and software. Additionally, the Mechanism has only been allocated 73 per cent (\$11 million) of its approved regular budget for 2025, further straining its operational capacity. Compounding these challenges, the UN80 Initiative has introduced additional cost-cutting measures, requiring the Mechanism to reduce by 20 per cent the staff positions funded by the regular budget in 2026. Such a reduction will have a particularly significant impact on the Mechanism due to its small size. These financial pressures threaten the Mechanism's ability to sustain its critical work and to continue supporting international and national justice efforts. The Mechanism will continue to mobilize extrabudgetary funding to sustain its activities in the future and welcomes the support of diverse Member States and partners.

72. To address these multifaceted challenges and chart a path forward, the Mechanism adopted its Strategic Plan for 2025–2027, which sets out a clear vision and strategic direction for the next three years. The Plan outlines targeted goals and objectives designed to: (a) strengthen the Mechanism's operational resilience; (b) enhance its investigative and analytical capacities; and (c) deepen engagement with stakeholders, including Member States, civil society and affected communities. It emphasizes the need to reinforce digital security and invest in technologies to manage and analyse large volumes of evidence. It also prioritizes the expanded use of collected evidence by national and international authorities by identifying possible proceedings under universal and extraterritorial jurisdiction. Protection and support for high-risk witnesses remains central, including by mobilizing Member State and organizational cooperation for their relocation through resettlement or witness protection programmes. Finally, the Strategic Plan underscores the value of inclusive partnerships to ensure sustained cooperation and resourcing. By aligning its priorities with the evolving situation in Myanmar, the Strategic Plan ensures that the Mechanism's work remains grounded in and guided by its mandate, thereby providing a clear framework to navigate current challenges and advance accountability efforts effectively.

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