



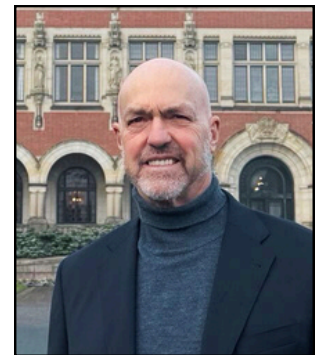
BULLETIN

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MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF THE MECHANISM

This month marks five years since the Myanmar military overthrew the country's elected government. The atrocities committed since the military takeover have been relentless and brutal, and continued during the country's recent junta-managed elections. Evidence collected and analysed by the Mechanism shows that crimes against humanity and war crimes are being committed with impunity. Schools, hospitals and homes have been destroyed by airstrikes, forcing people to live in constant fear of attack. The toll that this violence is taking on children is immense. Thousands of people perceived to be opponents of the regime – including critics of the recent elections – have been arbitrarily detained. Many have endured horrific acts of torture, including sexual violence.



Despite the grim reality inside Myanmar, last month's public hearings in the case of *The Gambia v. Myanmar* at the International Court of Justice marked a significant moment for justice and accountability. The Mechanism shared evidence and analysis with both parties, guided by our conviction that the judges must have access to the strongest possible evidence to determine the facts and to assess if Myanmar failed in its obligation to prevent and punish acts of genocide against the Rohingya.

This case is of profound importance – not only for the Rohingya and the people of Myanmar – but for the international community as a whole. Its outcome is likely to shape how genocide is defined, how it can be proven and how the Genocide Convention is enforced.

In recent weeks, many commentators have referred to Myanmar as a “forgotten conflict”. I would like to stress that what is happening in Myanmar is not forgotten by the Mechanism. Every day, our investigators, lawyers and analysts are focused on collecting, preserving and analysing evidence of serious international crimes committed in the country. We are engaging with a number of authorities interested in our evidence, with a single purpose – to support accountability processes and help ensure justice for victims.

Justice is neither quick nor easy, and financial constraints are limiting some aspects of our investigations. Nonetheless, the Mechanism continues to work with independence and determination to collect evidence, identify perpetrators, and ensure that the experiences of victims and survivors remain at the centre of accountability efforts.

Nicholas Koumjian

INSTITUTIONAL UPDATE



PROGRESS IN 2025

In 2025, the Mechanism made important headway in collecting and analysing evidence of serious international crimes in Myanmar and in identifying those responsible. During the year it added more than 117,000 items of information and over 30 witness statements to its evidence repository. While most investigations point to crimes committed by the Myanmar military, the Mechanism is also examining a growing number of allegations involving opposition armed groups.

The Mechanism advanced its investigations into airstrikes, including analysis of the structures and operation of the Myanmar Air Force. It also made progress in investigating arbitrary arrests and crimes committed in detention, including the identification of perpetrators responsible for sexual violence and other forms of torture.

Crimes in Rakhine State became a major focus of investigations, including air attacks on civilians, hospitals and schools, as well as the obstruction of humanitarian aid. The Mechanism is investigating crimes committed by all perpetrators against Rohingya, Rakhine and other civilian populations.

Investigations into earlier crimes against the Rohingya continued, with teams interviewing witnesses in Bangladesh and other locations. The Mechanism also published a [report](#) analysing the Myanmar military's confiscation of Rohingya land and property – one of nine Mechanism reports relied upon during the public hearings in *The Gambia v. Myanmar* case.

The Mechanism expanded the number of authorities with whom it shares evidence and analysis, responding to requests for information from parties to proceedings before the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, the Federal Prosecutor's Office No. 9 in Argentina, and authorities in the United Kingdom and other jurisdictions. This includes requests related to crimes committed after the 2021 military coup.

While it made significant progress in the past year, the Mechanism's funding is now under severe strain which will inevitably impact its investigations. In the coming months, it will be forced to reduce 20 percent of staff positions funded through the United Nations regular budget, as well as several specialized roles previously supported by Member State donors.

OUR WORK IN NUMBERS

As of 31 December 2025

157

witness interviews conducted
(signed witness statements)

509

witness screenings conducted
(records of meetings with
potential witnesses or
sources)

152

engagements with victims,
survivors, information
providers and civil society
representatives

COOPERATION BETWEEN MECHANISMS

While the Mechanism and the [International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria](#) have distinct mandates and operate in different contexts, both are criminal investigative bodies established to support justice and accountability for serious international crimes. The mechanisms meet regularly to identify synergies, share best practices and enhance efficiency.

There is ongoing dialogue across a range of investigative and operational areas, including legal and judicial cooperation, witness protection and support, witness interviews, information sharing and informed consent, as well as information technology systems and data management. These exchanges allow both entities to draw on lessons learned, develop common approaches and address issues of mutual interest.

The mechanisms also collaborate on administrative and technical matters. This includes joint procurement of information technology systems and data management, and joint trainings for investigators on aspects of international criminal law and investigations. Regular meetings are held to discuss common administrative challenges, including those related to confidential witness-related activities, and to identify operational efficiencies.

Drawing on this experience, the Mechanism will also continue to share its best practices with new accountability mechanisms as appropriate, including the [Independent Investigative Mechanism for Afghanistan](#) established in 2025 by the Human Rights Council.

METHODOLOGY: VERIFYING AND ANALYSING INFORMATION

Ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the information it collects and analyzes is central to the Mechanism's mandate. The Mechanism applies rigorous verification standards that combine traditional investigative methods with advanced technological tools.

The Mechanism collects information from a wide range of sources, including witnesses, Member States, United Nations entities, international and non-governmental organizations and businesses. It then checks information by comparing it with other evidence, including open-source information, financial records and geospatial data. To remain independent and impartial, the Mechanism considers information that both supports and challenges allegations.

A key element of verification is direct engagement with victims and witnesses who have first-hand knowledge of events. The Mechanism conducts its own interviews, almost always in person, which result in detailed, signed witness statements. These interviews are carried out over several days using open-ended, non-leading questions focused on eliciting truthful, accurate and detailed information.

The Mechanism also employs specialized open-source investigation techniques to verify material found online. Together, these measures allow the Mechanism to exclude misinformation and ensure that its evidence meets standards suitable for criminal proceedings.

The Mechanism then conducts factual and legal analysis across the full body of relevant evidence. Each investigation typically relies on hundreds of pieces of information.

Factual analysis assesses the overall strength and coherence of the evidence to build a complete and accurate understanding of events, while identifying any contradictions, inconsistencies or gaps. Legal analysis then applies the established facts to the relevant law to determine whether serious international crimes have been committed and, if so, who may be responsible.

OUTREACH

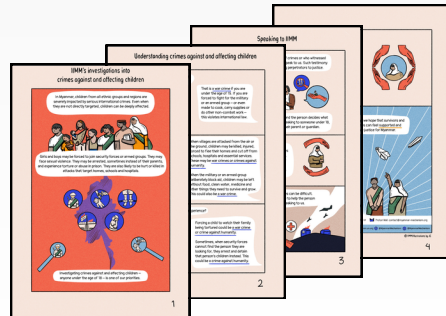
MULTILINGUAL EXPLAINERS

What serious international crimes do children in Myanmar often experience, and how are they affected? How does the Mechanism prioritize the investigation of these crimes, and how does it engage with survivors and witnesses?

A new **graphic novel** explains how the Mechanism investigates crimes against and affecting children. It is part of a series of graphic novels that explains the Mechanism's work in a simple and visual way, available in English and Burmese.

What information can be shared with the Mechanism, and how is it used? What does it mean to be a witness for the Mechanism? Is the Mechanism investigating current crimes committed against the Rohingya? Is it examining the loss of Rohingya land, homes and businesses?

A new series of Rohingya-language **animated videos** answers these questions. The videos are available for download on the Mechanism's website.



CONNECT WITH US

The Mechanism is now on **LinkedIn**. Join our 1,000+ followers to receive updates on our work to advance justice and accountability for the people of Myanmar, including statements, reports, developments in legal proceedings and job vacancies.

in 1,000+ followers!



EVENT

Nicholas Koumjian, Head of the Mechanism, took part in the European Parliament roundtable "Myanmar Five Years On: Impunity, Justice, and the Risk of Normalization" in Brussels, Belgium, on 4 February 2026. He emphasized the importance of solidarity among Myanmar's communities in ending impunity and advancing justice.



THE GAMBIA V. MYANMAR CASE AT THE ICJ

THE CASE

The **public hearings** in the case brought by The Gambia against Myanmar before the International Court of Justice concluded on 29 January 2026. The case concerns whether Myanmar failed in its obligations under the Genocide Convention to prevent and punish acts of genocide against the Rohingya in 2016 and 2017. The proceedings focused on the Government of Myanmar's responsibility under international law, not the criminal liability of individuals.

The judges have now begun their deliberations, and it is likely to take at least several months before a judgement is issued.

THE HEARINGS

The Court heard extensive legal arguments, expert evidence and witness testimony. The hearings examined alleged attacks by the Myanmar military in multiple locations in northern Rakhine State, including Min Gyi, Chut Pyin and Maung Nu, as well as broader evidence concerning patterns of attacks across the region affecting the Rohingya people.

THE LEGAL ARGUMENTS

The Gambia argued that patterns of conduct across northern Rakhine State, supported by multiple sources of evidence, demonstrate acts prohibited under the Genocide Convention and support a finding of genocidal intent. Myanmar maintained that its military operations constituted legitimate counter-terrorism responses to attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army and argued that the evidence presented does not meet the heightened legal threshold required to establish genocide.

THE MECHANISM'S SUPPORT

The Mechanism **shared evidence and analytical material** with both parties to the proceedings to support the accurate and reliable examination of the case by the Court. Both parties relied extensively on these materials in their submissions.

The proceedings highlighted how seriously the Mechanism approaches witness protection. It only shared information when it obtained the informed consent of those who provided it and when it assessed that sharing would not put anyone at risk. As an additional security precaution, redactions were made to conceal identifying information of certain individuals who were assessed as being at heightened risk.

The Mechanism provided both parties with nine analytical reports, 40 witness statements, two screening notes with military defectors and one affidavit by the Head of the Mechanism.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MECHANISM'S CONTRIBUTION

The proceedings highlighted the importance of independent and specialized investigative capacity to support judicial consideration of complex factual and legal issues, particularly in contexts where access to territory is restricted and standards of proof are high.

The Mechanism shared materials from a wide range of evidentiary sources, including witness testimony, documentary evidence, satellite imagery and other geospatial data, to support the consideration of alleged conduct across multiple locations and over extended time periods. The extensive reference to the Mechanism's materials reflected the value of specialized investigative expertise, including trained investigators with an understanding of the evidentiary thresholds applicable in international judicial proceedings, as well as specialized technical capabilities in open-source and geospatial analysis.

INTERVIEW: GET TO KNOW THE OPEN-SOURCE TEAM

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION DOES YOUR TEAM COLLECT AND ANALYSE, AND HOW DO YOU ENSURE IT IS VERIFIED AND RELIABLE?

The open-source team collects and analyses publicly available information relevant to criminal investigations, including social media, news reporting, civil society documentation and geospatial data. This analysis supports incident reconstruction, perpetrator identification, and background research about individuals, armed groups and related structures.

We verify information by comparing multiple independent sources, identifying where and when images or videos were taken, and assessing the origin and credibility of the material. We authenticate material by assessing whether content has been altered, manipulated or staged. We also preserve materials to forensic standards, including a secure chain of custody, to ensure that information can be used in criminal proceedings.

WHY IS OPEN-SOURCE ANALYSIS IMPORTANT FOR THE MECHANISM'S INVESTIGATIONS?

Our teams have no access to Myanmar and cannot conduct on-site investigations. At the same time, an unprecedented volume of potentially relevant material is generated and shared online and through other public means.

Open-source analysis enables our investigators to systematically identify, assess and contextualize this material, detect patterns across incidents and link digital evidence with witness testimony and other evidence. It is therefore a core investigative pillar, enabling us to advance investigations despite the absence of physical access to crime scenes.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES THAT THE OPEN-SOURCE TEAM FACES?

Myanmar's digital information environment presents exceptional challenges for open-source analysis. Internet shutdowns, platform restrictions and limitations on the use of VPNs mean information about crimes in Myanmar often emerges slowly, incompletely or after significant delay. At the same time, the volume of online information continues to expand, requiring analysts to identify relevant material and deliver structured analysis without overwhelming investigative teams.

These challenges are compounded by misinformation, misattribution and emerging risks associated with advances in artificial intelligence, such as the creation of manipulated or fabricated images and videos and AI-generated digital personas.

While investigative demands continue to grow, our staffing and access to specialized analytical tools remain under pressure due to resource constraints, leading to delays and difficult prioritization decisions.

WHAT SKILLS OR QUALITIES MAKE A STRONG OPEN-SOURCE ANALYST, AND WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE OPEN-SOURCE TEAM?

Strong open-source analysts combine analytical judgement, curiosity and persistence, and continuously adapt their skills as online platforms and technologies evolve.

An effective open-source team brings together a mix of complementary skills. Technical expertise, investigative experience, tactical and strategic analytical skills, and corporate and financial understanding all contribute to stronger analysis. Legal expertise also helps ensure that material can ultimately be used in criminal proceedings.

Language and regional expertise are also critical. Our team works closely with colleagues who have a deep knowledge of Myanmar and represent different regions and languages, strengthening accurate translation and contextual interpretation of open-source material.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY OF PERSECUTION?

Persecution involves the intentional and severe deprivation of fundamental human rights against a person or group because of their identity, such as their ethnicity, religion, nationality, political opinion or gender. Individuals may be targeted because of their actual or perceived identity or affiliation.

Persecution does not require physical violence. Under customary international law, persecution can be carried out through laws, policies or practices that seriously restrict fundamental rights, including access to citizenship, movement, education, work, healthcare or participation in public life. A series of discriminatory acts may amount to persecution as a crime against humanity when taken together, and where such conduct forms part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population.

Persecution is distinct from genocide, which requires proof of a specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a protected group as such.

The Mechanism is investigating allegations of discriminatory treatment of LGBTQI+ individuals in detention, including sexual and gender-based crimes committed on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and perceived political opposition, which may amount to persecution.

The Mechanism is also investigating whether ethnic communities have been targeted by armed groups through killings, sexual and gender-based crimes, forced displacement and the destruction of property, including places of worship. Where such acts are carried out with discriminatory intent against the targeted group, they may amount to persecution.

WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES OF DISTINCTION AND PROPORTIONALITY?

Under international humanitarian law, distinction and proportionality are principles that govern how attacks may be carried out during armed conflict.

Distinction means that parties to a conflict must always distinguish between civilians and combatants, and between civilian objects and military objectives. Attacks may only be directed at combatants and military objectives. Civilians and civilian objects, such as homes, schools, hospitals and places of worship, must not be targeted.

Proportionality applies even when a military target is lawful. It recognizes that civilians and civilian objects may be harmed during an attack on a military objective. An attack is not allowed if the expected civilian harm would be too great compared to the concrete military advantage gained. Civilian harm can include death, injury or damage to civilian buildings and infrastructure. Parties to a conflict must make this assessment before an attack, using the information available at the time.

If distinction or proportionality are not respected, an attack may be unlawful and, in serious cases, may amount to a war crime or crime against humanity under international law. When assessing potential violations committed in Myanmar, the Mechanism examines whether attacks respected these principles.

