



MYANMAR COUNTRY REPORT

THE STATE OF THE
HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM 2026

ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-based organisation
CSO	Civil society organisation
EAO	Ethnic armed organisations
FGD	Focus group discussion
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDP	Humanitarian–development–peace (nexus)
HNRP	Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan
IDP	Internally displaced person
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
KSDF	Karenni State Development Fund
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SAC	State Administration Council (Myanmar military junta)
SOHS	The State of the Humanitarian System
ULA/AA	United League of Arakan/Arakan Army
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



Caption: Distribution of
supplies to communities
affected by the
2025 earthquake

Credit: Nyan Corridor researcher

5. CONCLUSION AND LEARNING CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 What the system must recognise

Myanmar's humanitarian crisis is not primarily a problem of insufficient international coordination, funding mechanisms or operational protocols. It is a problem of political authoritarianism, access and recognition. The communities bearing the greatest burden of displacement, violence and deprivation are being served, sometimes exclusively, by local actors who operate outside the international system's line of sight and without its protection. These actors have developed sophisticated humanitarian practices, governance and cross-border financing networks that deserve recognition not as capacity-building initiatives but as the system's real operational core.



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5.2 From system performance to system reality

Formally, Myanmar has a humanitarian architecture with OCHA-led coordination: a cluster system in transition to area-based models, UN agencies present in Yangon and border hubs, and a HNRP setting targets for the people in need. In practice, the system reaches a fraction of that number, is structurally absent from most territories affected by conflict, and in 2025 was further weakened by the largest funding shock in the global humanitarian system's recent history. The USAID cuts eliminated the primary funding channel for many of the most capable local organisations, precisely at the moment when the international system most depends on these actors.



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ecosystem – diaspora networks, faith-based institutions, resistance-aligned civil society and emergent local governance bodies – that is more geographically extensive, more trusted and more agile than the formal system it supplements. Its weaknesses are real but can be addressed. The international system's current approach, passively channelling support through INGO intermediaries while maintaining compliance frameworks designed for a different context, does not address them.

5.3 Recommendations

Table 3: Recommendations by stakeholder

For whom	Recommendation
International donors	Fund local and resistance-aligned governance structures directly where they demonstrate accountability, civilian orientation and community legitimacy. Create flexible funding pathways for all eligible actors, even those operating in contested areas. Ensure that withdrawing from high-risk areas without commensurate risk-sharing is accompanied by protection guarantees and adequate resource transfer to local partners who are absorbing the burden.
UN agencies and OCHA	Acknowledge formally that the humanitarian coordination architecture currently governs only a fraction of the humanitarian response landscape. Strengthen the area-based model by granting local coordination bodies substantive decision-making roles, beyond consultation. Ensure compliance and due-diligence requirements are inclusive of the most active local actors. Develop a Myanmar-specific framework for principled engagement with non-state armed actors to enable access negotiations without triggering sanctions.
INGOs	Transition from an intermediary model to genuine partnership: share decision-making authority and overhead resources with local partners, not just sub-grant execution. Advocate with donors for direct funding to local actors, even where this reduces INGO programme budgets. Invest in localisation of risk management, supporting local actors to develop their own security protocols rather than requiring conformity with internationally designed frameworks that do not fit the context.

For whom	Recommendation
Humanitarian community (collective)	Grant formal legitimacy to the Inclusive Humanitarian Forum (IHF) and comparable locally initiated coordination mechanisms as recognised platforms for cross-frontline dialogue. Support the establishment of clear, time-bound humanitarian corridors with multi-party monitoring, including engagement with relevant countries. Introduce explicit ceasefire and access monitoring expectations in humanitarian planning documents, with actionable consequences for violations.
Research and advocacy	Document and disseminate evidence on resistance humanitarianism as a principled practice to build the normative case for adapting international humanitarian law and donor policy to protracted conflict contexts. Develop participatory monitoring frameworks that capture the reach and quality of local humanitarian networks, making visible what current reporting systems cannot see.

