

**English translation of open letter to the Members of the 21st German Federal Parliament
and the Federal Government of Germany**

Devastating earthquake in Myanmar

17 April 2025

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

On March 28th Myanmar was struck by the strongest earthquake this country experienced in more than 100 years. Already suffering from a dramatic polycrisis with over 19 million people in need of (largely unavailable) humanitarian assistance due to the 2021 military coup and the inhumane actions of the military junta in the ensuing revolutionary war, Myanmar now faces even greater challenges to prevent further mass death and suffering caused by the long-term consequences of this combined natural and man-made disaster.

The greatest of these challenges is the military junta itself. As reported in numerous media outlets, the military has continued its well-known and decades-old strategy of withholding and restricting aid delivery and blocking essential access to life-saving information as well as the free movement of people and goods needed for disaster relief, thereby increasing and perpetuating the damage to the population rather than assisting them. As has been widely documented and criticized in the wake of earlier major natural disasters in Myanmar like Cyclone Nargis in 2008, Cyclone Mocha in 2023, and the flooding caused by Typhoon Yagi in 2024, the military of this country is not only absent from rescue, recovery and relief work, but its generals and their soldiers and militias are also diverting humanitarian aid to themselves and deliberately blocking deliveries to areas controlled by the resistance - no matter how badly these areas and their civilian populations are affected. Imprisoned opposition doctors are not released despite the extreme shortage of healthcare professionals and the great value they would have if allowed treating the many thousands of earthquake victims who have been displaced, seriously injured, and psychologically traumatized.

To make things worse, the Myanmar military has been continuing and escalating air, artillery and arson attacks throughout this still continuing earthquake series, including in Sagaing Region, the zone of the epicentre of the March 28th earthquake - and this although several resistance groups had been quick to unilaterally declare pauses to any offensives. The recent “ceasefire” from 2 to 20 April announced by the military junta under international pressure and ahead of the coup leader’s attendance of the BIMSTEC summit in Thailand, has been breached by that same military in the very first night. Since then the military junta has escalated its war against the population across the country using its army, navy and air force, very commonly targeted at civilian infrastructure like hospitals, schools, places of worship, and villages, in areas where there is no armed conflict on the ground.

In this scenario, due to the actions of the Myanmar military junta, life-saving humanitarian aid reaches only a small fraction of the population in need. While a certain level of coordination with junta administrators may be unavoidable since parts of the earthquake-affected areas are under their control, neither Germany nor the EU can, in the face of earlier experiences and the facts on the ground, claim to be naive regarding the Myanmar junta's practices. If Germany and the EU really want to help in a meaningful way, they must now finally act boldly and add clear demands to the junta to offers of humanitarian and medical assistance. Even more importantly, to avoid discrimination by the assistance given, a truly parallel system of aid delivery must urgently be created to ensure fair and equitable delivery of humanitarian and medical assistance to the population in different areas of Myanmar based on need, and not based on junta orders and ease of access. Supporting such alternative pathways of aid delivery to areas not controlled by the military junta must involve the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and the Ministry of Health of the civilian National Unity Government (NUG) of Myanmar, ethnic healthcare providers, and local civil society organizations who all have decades of experience with effective humanitarian aid delivery in Myanmar.

Specifically, we suggest the following approach, also referring to similar demands explained in an open letter signed by over 260 organizations working in or on Myanmar, and to statements released on 8 April and 16 April 2025 by the NUG and more than seven ethnic and civil society organizations in Myanmar:

Germany and the EU demand the following when coordinating aid deliveries with junta authorities:

- Immediate announcement and observance of a one-month ceasefire, with implementation of ceasefire monitoring through an impartial international mechanism
- Complete end to the communications blockade (lift all telephone, internet and VPN blockades, allow all domestic and foreign media and their representatives to enter the country and operate unhindered)
- Release of "opposition" doctors from the country's prisons since they can provide life-saving treatment
- Unhindered access for humanitarian and medical assistance, including humanitarian aid and health workers, to areas controlled by resistance groups. Humanitarian and medical assistance must not be weaponized, but must be non-discriminatory and impartial and reach all affected areas of Myanmar without restriction.
- Suspension of the forced recruitment that the Myanmar military has continued during and after the earthquake
- Unrestricted humanitarian and medical access to prisons, many of which are collapsing or at risk of collapse - the lives of the numerous political prisoners in Myanmar in particular are in acute danger

- Unhindered issuing of “visas on arrival” for all representatives of foreign aid organizations and media immediately upon arrival, not only at international airports, but at all border crossings of the country

In addition, the following alternative aid delivery routes must be implemented:

- No direct deliveries to Myanmar military controlled authorities or entities
- Collaborate with local and international civil society and non-governmental organizations operating also or exclusively in areas of Myanmar that are not controlled by the military junta
- Deploy humanitarian and medical aid in collaboration with the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management and the Ministry of Health of the NUG and ethnic healthcare providers
- Engage with Bangladesh, India and Thailand to allow humanitarian corridors to Myanmar and other types of cross-border or border-based humanitarian and medical assistance into Myanmar
- Support the relief activities of existing organizations working in the border regions of Myanmar

Every minute counts for the people in Myanmar. Additional disasters like epidemics (e.g., cholera, drug-resistant malaria, zoonoses with pandemic potential, etc.) are imminent due to lack of clean drinking water, food, medicines, vaccines, and healthcare in general, because of collapsed infrastructure and supply chains, and the escalation of violence by the terrorist military junta which is allied with and supported by Putin's Russia. Both the current, acting and the next Federal Government of Germany as well as the EU must ensure that aid deliveries reach the people in need in all regions of Myanmar in an adequate and non-discriminatory manner.

It is high time to take bold political and financial action to finally provide the peoples of Myanmar with the assistance they need and deserve in their darkest hour.

Sincerely,
German Solidarity Myanmar e.V.

The following organizations are also signing this letter:

Aktion Myanmar - Hilfe für Entwicklungsländer e.V. (<https://www.aktionmyanmar.org/>)

Chin Community Germany e.V. (<https://www.ccgev.de/>)

Dental International Aid Networking Organisation – DIANO e.V.

Free Rohingya Coalition (<https://freerohingyacoalition.org/en/>)

Myanmar Institut e.V. (<https://myanmar-institut.org>)

Stiftung Asienhaus (<https://www.asienhaus.de>)

Weltfriedensdienst e.V. – WfD (<https://wfd.de>)

Aktion
Myanmar



Stiftung
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