

Digital Rights and the State of the Internet in Myanmar (2019–2026)

The philosophy of internet governance in Myanmar has undergone a radical inversion: from a model of a developing digital economy striving for integration into the global information space in the 2010s, to a doctrine of absolute “digital sovereignty” bordering on information autarky. The military junta (State Administration Council) views the internet exclusively through the lens of national security and the threat to regime preservation.⁴⁶ The 2008 Constitution formally declares freedom of expression, but these norms are completely nullified by provisos prohibiting actions that threaten “legality, public peace, or state security,” which de facto legalizes any form of online repression.⁴⁷

The governance strategy is built on three fundamental principles: securitization (equating digital dissent with terrorism), de-anonymization (destroying privacy through mandatory biometric registration of subscribers and escrow of encryption keys), and centralization of infrastructure control. The regime openly implements the Chinese model of network segmentation, seeking to create a controlled intranet (“Great Firewall of Myanmar”), in which external information flows are filtered and internal ones are subjected to total monitoring.⁴⁸

Disclaimer: This document was partially generated using several large language models (LLM). The information presented is based on the analysis and synthesis of data from the specified sources; however, the process of structuring, summarizing, and presenting it was carried out with the help of artificial intelligence technologies. It is recommended to use this text as a starting point for further research and to critically verify critically important data against primary sources.

Digital Rights and the State of the Internet in Myanmar (2019–2026)	1
1. General Information	2
1.1. Population	3
1.2. Gross Domestic Product	4
1.3. Main Economic Characteristics	5
1.4. General Political Situation	5
2. Internet	6
2.1. National Domain	6
2.2. Number of Users	7
2.2.1 Fixed Internet	7

2.2.2. Mobile Internet	9
2.3. Internet Access Speed and Quality of Services Provided	11
2.4. Development of Providers and Autonomous Systems	12
2.5. IPv6 Penetration	14
2.6. Connectivity Index	15
3. Internet Legislation	18
3.1. Principles of Internet Governance	18
3.1.1. Regulation	18
3.1.2. Regulatory Bodies and Responsible Persons	18
3.2. Market Monopolization	19
3.3. Internet Shutdowns on Government Orders	19
3.4. Legislation on “Words on the Internet”	20
3.5. Legislation on Internet Blocking	21
3.5.1. Legislation	21
3.5.2. Blocking Procedures	21
3.5.3. Registries of Blocked Internet Resources	21
3.5.4. Registries of Blocked Resources (Unofficial)	22
3.5.5. Development of Blockings	22
4. Human Rights Violations on the Internet	23
4.1. Internet Shutdowns on Government Orders	23
4.2. Criminalization of Online Speech	24
5. Civil Society in Internet Governance	25
5.1. Organizations	25
5.2. VPN and Circumvention Tools	26
5.2.1. Status of VPN Services	26
5.2.2. Number of VPN Users	26
5.2.3. Cases of Prosecution for VPN Use	27
5.2.4. Monitoring of Blockings	27
6. Conclusions on the Situation in the Country	28
7. Forecast of the Situation Development until the End of 2026	29
Sources	29

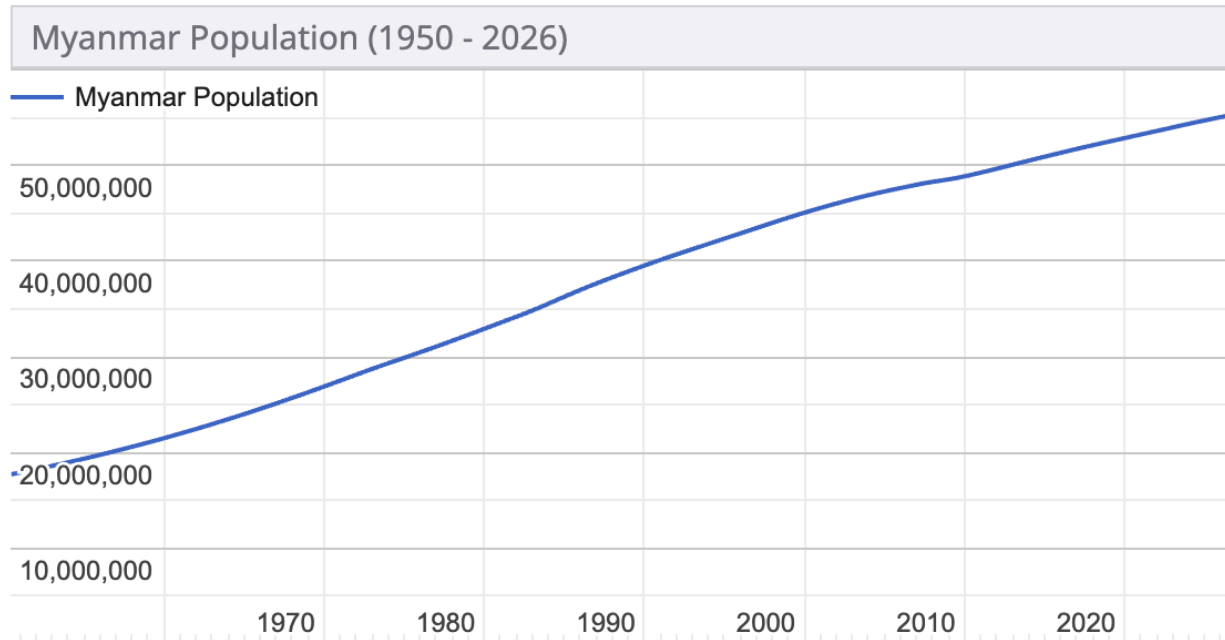
1. General Information

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is a sovereign state in Southeast Asia, occupying a key geographic location similar to that of South and Southeast Asia. Bordered by India and Bangladesh to the west, the People's Republic of China to the north and northeast, and Laos and Thailand to the east, the country's territory has historically served as a land bridge between economic and trade-related macroregions. The Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal border the state's southern and southwestern borders, providing access to key Indian Ocean routes. Myanmar's topography is characterized by a vast central lowland surrounded by rugged mountain ranges on the periphery. Such complex terrain, combined with vast forested areas, objectively hinders the creation of a unified, integrated employment system, which historically predetermined the uneven distribution of communications and, subsequently, trunk fiber-optic communication lines, which isolated many border regions from centralized technological development.

1.1. Population

The demographic structure of Myanmar is characterized by stable but gradually slowing growth, as well as a high degree of ethnic heterogeneity. More than 130 officially recognized ethnic groups live on the territory of the state, among which the Bamar (Burmans) dominate, forming the basis of the population of the central lowland areas. National minorities (Shan, Karen, Rakhine, Kachin, and others) live compactly mainly in the border states. The level of urbanization remains relatively low in the context of Southeast Asia: by 2026, the share of urban population reached only 34.6%, which means the preservation of a predominantly agrarian way of life for the majority of citizens.² The political crisis and armed conflict that erupted after 2021 provoked large-scale internal and external migration processes. Millions of citizens became internally displaced persons (IDPs), deprived of access to basic social benefits, including stable communications, while hundreds of thousands of representatives of minorities, particularly the Rohingya, were forced to seek refuge in neighboring states, mainly in Bangladesh.³

The age structure of the population shows signs of a gradual demographic transition. The median age increased from 29.5 years in 2023 to 30.4 years by 2026, indicating a tendency toward aging of the nation against the background of declining birth rates and the consequences of the humanitarian crisis.² The destruction of the national healthcare system after 2021 had a negative impact on mortality rates and life expectancy. The dynamics of the total population, presented in the table below, is based on estimates of international institutions, since conducting a full national census under the conditions of the ongoing civil conflict is not possible.²

Graph 1: Dynamics of the Population of Myanmar (1950–2026)

Source: worldometers.info

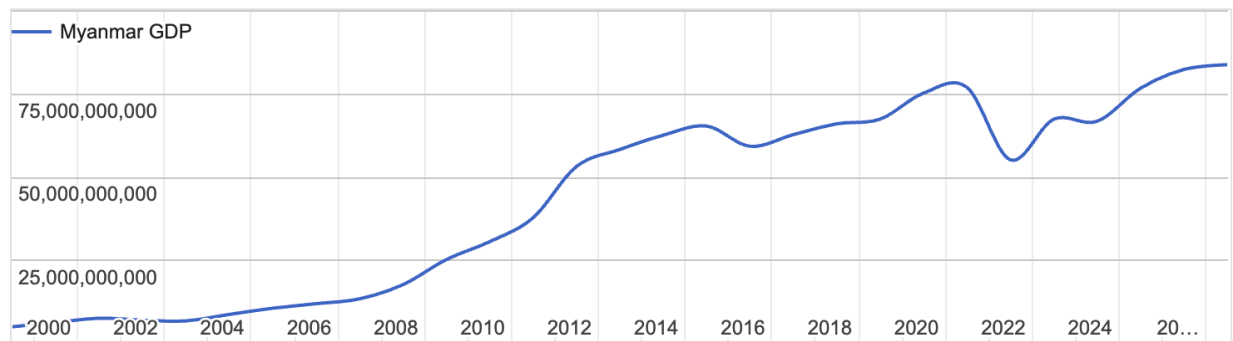
1.2. Gross Domestic Product

The macroeconomic dynamics of Myanmar during the period under review are characterized by extreme volatility and deep structural shocks. Until 2020, the country's economy showed moderate growth, supported by inflows of foreign direct investment and the expansion of export sectors. However, the cumulative effect of the global pandemic and the military coup in February 2021 led to an unprecedented collapse: GDP shrank by 18% in 2021.⁶ Subsequent years have been marked by stagnation and weak attempts at recovery amid harsh international sanctions, the flight of foreign capital, and the destruction of logistics chains. The currency market experienced a collapse: the national currency (Myanmar kyat, MMK) rapidly depreciated. If in 2019 the official rate was about 1,500 MMK per US dollar, by 2026 it stabilized at 2,100 MMK, while on the parallel (shadow) market the rate significantly exceeded official values.⁷

In 2025–2026, Myanmar's economy shows signs of adaptation to isolation conditions, but this growth relies on the depletion of natural resources and the functioning of the shadow sector,

rather than on technological development. According to IMF estimates, GDP per capita in 2026 is only 1,519 US dollars, which secures Myanmar's status as one of the least developed states in the region.⁶ Inflationary pressure, foreign currency shortages, and restrictions on the import of critically important equipment have a direct negative impact on the ability of the technological sector to maintain and modernize digital infrastructure.

Graph 2: Dynamics of Nominal GDP of Myanmar (2000–2026)



Source: worldometers.info

1.3. Main Economic Characteristics

Myanmar's economic model has undergone a forced regression, transforming from a developing economy with a growing manufacturing sector into a typical "conflict economy." Until 2021, important growth drivers were the garment industry, tourism, and the information technology sector. In the current reality, these industries are in deep crisis due to sanctions and the departure of international corporations.⁹ The locomotive of the economy has once again become the extractive industries: exports of natural gas, jade, timber, and rare earth metals. A significant part of this export is directed to China, which remains the main trading partner and investor that does not support the Western sanctions regime.⁹

The structural problems of Myanmar's economy are systemic in nature. The fundamental obstacle to development is the acute electricity shortage caused by the cessation of investment in generation and attacks on power lines. Chronic rolling blackouts (load shedding) paralyze industrial production and the operation of telecommunications towers.¹⁰ In addition, the economy suffers from a dual financial system, where the formal banking sector is paralyzed by strict control by the Central Bank, while the shadow economy, including illegal cross-border trade and cybercrime (in particular, fraudulent call centers or "Kyar Phyant"), generates capital

volumes comparable to official GDP.⁹ The outflow of qualified personnel (brain drain) further undermines the potential for recovery of high-tech sectors.

1.4. General Political Situation

Since February 1, 2021, Myanmar's political system has been functioning in a mode of harsh military dictatorship. The military coup carried out by the armed forces (Tatmadaw) interrupted a decade-long period of democratic transition. The democratically elected government of the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi was overthrown, and its leaders were arrested on fabricated charges.¹¹ Power was usurped by the State Administration Council (SAC), chaired by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.¹¹ The military justified their actions with unsubstantiated accusations of large-scale falsifications in the general elections of November 2020, canceled their results, and introduced a state of emergency, the term of which is systematically extended in violation of constitutional norms.¹¹

In response to the forceful seizure of power, pro-democracy forces formed the National Unity Government (NUG), which operates underground and in exile, claiming the status of the legitimate representative of the people of Myanmar. The armed wing of the opposition became the People's Defence Forces (PDF), which entered into tactical alliances with long-existing ethnic armed organizations (EAOs).³ The result was a full-scale civil war. By 2026, the regime had lost control over significant territories of the country, especially in the border states of Rakhine, Karen, Kayah, and Shan, where rebel groups created quasi-state administrative structures.³ The junta retains control mainly over major cities in the central part of the country and military bases, using tactics of massive aerial and artillery strikes on territories controlled by the resistance.⁴

Seeking to consolidate its legitimacy on the international arena and within the country, the State Administration Council initiated multi-stage general elections, the first stage of which took place from December 2025 to January 2026.¹³ This electoral process was subjected to harsh criticism by the UN, human rights organizations, and the National Unity Government as a completely staged spectacle.¹³ The elections were accompanied by intense violence, repression against independent observers, coercion of voters, and total control over the information space.¹³ Only political parties affiliated with the military, primarily the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), participated in the elections.

Administratively, Myanmar is divided into seven administrative regions (taing), where the Bamar historically predominate, and seven national states (pyine), predominantly inhabited by ethnic minorities, as well as several self-administered zones. However, under the conditions of the

ongoing conflict, this division is largely nominal, since actual power on the ground often belongs to various armed groups or local militias, creating a fragmented jurisdictional environment in which the application of uniform laws, including in the digital sphere, becomes impossible.

2. Internet

2.1. National Domain

The national top-level domain (ccTLD) for the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is .mm. This domain was officially delegated in 1997, during the period when the state was widely known internationally as Burma. Initially, technical maintenance and routing of the domain zone were carried out by Eagle Group, managed by two Australian expatriates who were the first to organize commercial internet access on the territory of the country.¹⁵ The domain space is structured hierarchically: direct registration at the second level is not practiced; domains are distributed at the third level under specialized subdomains, such as .com.mm (for commercial organizations), .net.mm (for network structures), .edu.mm (for educational institutions), and .gov.mm (exclusively for government resources).¹⁶

The history of national domain management illustrates the political instability of the state. In February 2002, the domain name servers (DNS) of the provider DigiServe, which serviced the zone, were subjected to a successful cyberattack by foreign pro-democracy activists. As a result of the hack, all traffic addressed to .mm domains, including government resources, was redirected for three days to a page with a political manifesto demanding the release of the famous student leader Min Ko Naing.¹⁶ This incident demonstrated the vulnerability of the infrastructure and forced the military government to reconsider its approaches to cybersecurity.

In early 2005, the state enterprise Myanma Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) completely monopolized control over the .mm name space, transferring management from DigiServe servers to its own computing facilities located in Yangon.¹⁶ Currently, administrative and regulatory functions regarding the domain are carried out by the Ministry of Digital Development and Communications of Myanmar (formerly the Ministry of Transport and Communications).¹⁷ The terms of use of the domain assume strict verification of applicants: registration of a commercial domain requires confirmation of incorporation on the territory of Myanmar, which limits the presence of international organizations in the local domain zone and contributes to a high level of state control over the registry.¹⁸

2.2. Number of Users

Data on the number of internet users in Myanmar are based on statistics of connections to mobile and home internet. However, due to the migration crisis and active use of VPNs, these figures should be understood with caution and carefully analyzed.

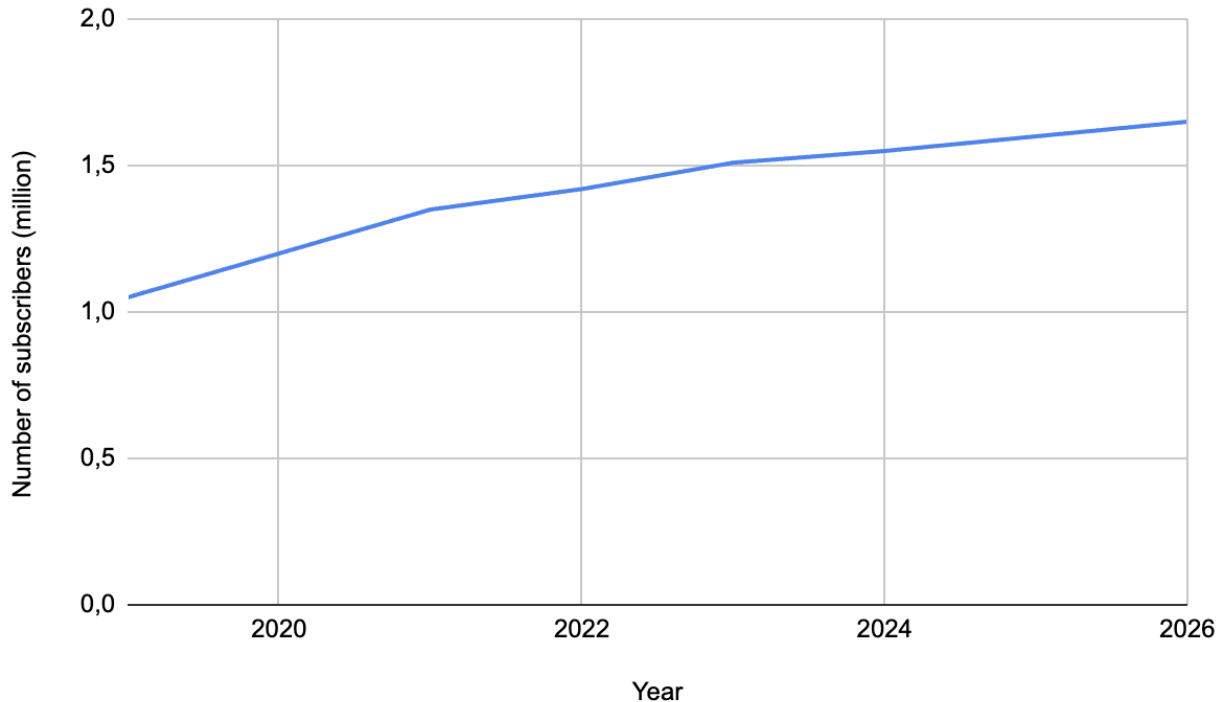
1. DataReportal reports (Digital 2024–2026).¹⁹
2. World Bank database.²²
3. International Telecommunication Union (ITU) data.²³

2.2.1 Fixed Internet

The fixed broadband internet access market in Myanmar is at an early stage of development and is characterized by an extremely low level of penetration. Historically, investments were concentrated in the mobile communications sector, while the laying of fiber-optic lines (FTTH/FTTB) was complicated by mountainous terrain, lack of capital investment, and legal barriers to obtaining permits for earthworks. The main subscriber base of fixed internet is concentrated in the business districts of Yangon, Mandalay, and the capital Naypyidaw, serving mainly the corporate sector, government institutions, and affluent households. The military coup and the subsequent outflow of investment slowed infrastructure deployment, although local providers continue gradual modernization of existing copper lines to fiber in urbanized areas.¹⁰

The dynamics of the number of fixed internet users shows slow growth, stimulated by businesses' need for stable communication channels against the backdrop of degradation of mobile networks. The state mandate to expand backbone fiber-optic networks is being implemented with delays due to sabotage and hostilities.¹⁰

Graph 3: Dynamics of the Number of Fixed Broadband Subscribers in Myanmar (2019–2026)



Largest home internet providers and estimates of their market share:

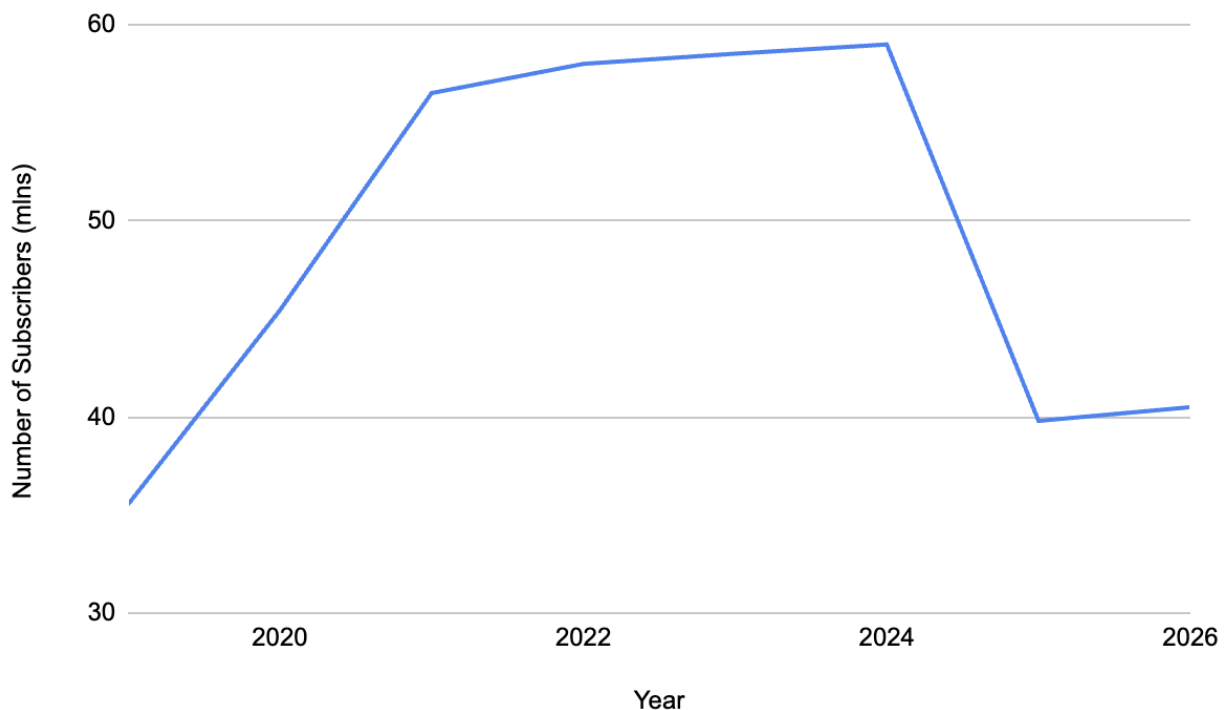
- **MPT Myanmar** (<https://mpt.com.mm/>) — State telecommunications giant with the most extensive backbone network. The company actively promotes the Dome Pyan Fiber Internet service and is transferring subscribers from copper lines to FTTH.¹⁰ Estimated market share: 35–40%.
- **5bb** (<https://5bb.com.mm/>) — One of the leading private internet providers, owned by the Global Technology group. Specializes in fiber-optic connections in major cities.²⁴ Estimated market share: 15–20%.
- **MyanmarNet** (<https://www.myanmarnet.com/>) — Popular provider offering services via fiber and Wi-Fi in Yangon and Mandalay.²⁴ Estimated market share: 10–15%.
- **Yatanarpon Teleport** (<http://www.ytp.com.mm/>) — Former state monopolist (together with MPT), now operating as an independent player focused on business clients.²⁴ Estimated market share: ~10%.

2.2.2. Mobile Internet

Mobile internet is the fundamental basis of Myanmar’s digital economy and the main channel of access to information for the vast majority of the population. The period from 2014 to 2020 was characterized by an unprecedented boom: the entry of foreign operators into the market led to the deployment of 4G networks covering more than 95% of the population and a radical reduction in the cost of services.²⁴ However, after 2021 the sector faced serious challenges: the junta introduced a 15% tax on data usage, obliged operators to raise tariffs, and initiated the forced deactivation of SIM cards not linked to biometric national identification cards.²⁴

The paradox of statistical data, in which the level of mobile communications penetration exceeds 100%, is explained by the widespread practice of subscribers using multiple SIM cards from different operators (multi-SIM ownership) to optimize intra-network call costs and reserve communications in conditions of frequent regional outages. Nevertheless, the total number of active connections shows a tendency toward a slight decline after 2021, which correlates with the economic crisis and harsh regulatory measures.¹⁹

Graph 4: Dynamics of the Number of Mobile Broadband Subscribers in Myanmar (2019–2026)



The sharp drop in the number of mobile broadband subscribers in Myanmar in 2024–2025 is primarily associated with the political and military situation in the country after the 2021 military coup.

Main reasons:

- **Mass internet and mobile communications shutdowns.** The military junta regularly introduces long blackouts in areas where resistance is ongoing (especially in Kachin, Karenni, Rakhine, Chin, Shan states, etc.). In 2024–2025, hundreds of townships remained without communications for months. Under such conditions, people simply stop paying for SIM cards.
- **People are abandoning extra SIM cards.** Previously, many had 2–3 SIMs (to bypass restrictions and avoid surveillance). After increased control and blockings, the number of active connections has sharply decreased.
- **Economic reasons.** The cost of internet has increased, operators have reduced unlimited packages, people have become poorer due to war, inflation, and crisis. Many simply cannot afford mobile internet.
- **Damage to infrastructure.** Conflicts, earthquakes (for example, in 2025), and sabotage lead to physical destruction of towers and communication lines.
- **Migration and fear.** Part of the population has left the country or safer areas, while those remaining often prefer not to use communications to avoid surveillance and arrests.

As a result, official statistics showed a sharp decline — this reflects **the real decrease in active and paying users** due to repression and war.

Largest mobile internet providers and estimates of their market share:

- **MPT** (<https://mpt.com.mm/>) — Historical market leader operating under a joint venture agreement with Japanese corporations KDDI and Sumitomo.³¹ Estimated market share: ~42%.
- **Atom** (<https://www.atom.com.mm/>) — Operator formed after the forced sale of Telenor assets in 2022. The assets were bought by the Lebanese M1 Group in partnership with the local company Shwe Byain Phyu, affiliated with military structures.²⁴ Estimated market share: ~30%.
- **Ooredoo Myanmar** (<https://ooredoo.com.mm/>) — Subsidiary of the Qatari telecommunications group focused on high-speed data transmission.²⁴ Estimated market share: ~15%.

- **Mytel** (<https://mytel.com.mm/>) — A joint venture created by a consortium of local companies (Star High) linked to the Myanmar armed forces and the Vietnamese military corporation Viettel. Despite a public boycott after the coup, the operator retains a significant market share thanks to administrative resources and service provision to the military.²⁴ Estimated market share: ~13%.

2.3. Internet Access Speed and Quality of Services Provided

The technical condition of communications infrastructure in Myanmar has undergone radical degradation in the period from 2021 to 2026, which is directly reflected in the decline in the quality of services provided. Systemic problems are associated not so much with equipment obsolescence as with a complex of external shocks: total electricity shortages (rolling blackouts force base stations to operate on diesel generators, the fuel for which is in short supply), physical destruction of telecommunications towers in areas of active hostilities, and deliberate “traffic throttling” by state bodies.¹⁰ Thus, the earthquake in the Mandalay region in March 2025 caused additional critical damage to backbone optical lines, the restoration of which was delayed due to logistical constraints.³³

Internet speed indicators demonstrate a pronounced dichotomy between the fixed and mobile segments. According to Ookla Speedtest Global Index reports for 2025–2026, fixed broadband access maintains relative stability. The median download speed in fixed networks is 25.83 Mbps²⁰ (reaching 57.24 Mbps in some local nodes in Yangon³⁴), and upload speed is at the level of 14–22 Mbps with a latency (ping) of 71–74 ms.³⁴ This stability is explained by the concentration of fixed networks in urbanized areas with priority power supply, serving business clients and government structures.

The situation in the mobile internet segment is catastrophic. Global analytics data record a collapse in median mobile download speed to 5.09 Mbps, reflecting a 78.2% year-on-year decline (a drop of 18.22 Mbps).²⁰ Such indicators throw the mobile sector of Myanmar back to the level of technologies from a decade ago, making full use of video streaming and cloud services impossible. The sharp drop in the capacity of mobile networks is a direct consequence of the overload of surviving base stations, the authorities’ use of deep packet inspection (DPI) technologies for filtering unwanted content, and restrictions on the import of spare parts for telecommunications equipment due to sanctions.

Studies confirming the technical degradation of networks:

1. **Ookla Speedtest Global Index** reports (regular monitoring of bandwidth by country).³⁴

2. **DataReportal** analytical reviews (Digital 2025/2026: Myanmar), recording a critical drop in mobile speeds.²⁰
3. **Statbase** platform analytics integrating macro data on network quality in developing economies.³⁶

2.4. Development of Providers and Autonomous Systems

The routing structure in Myanmar reflects a tendency toward centralization and strengthening of state control. According to data from the RIPE Stat platform and the regional internet registry APNIC, the dynamics of Autonomous System (AS) allocation maintains a positive vector, but the gap between registered and actually advertised networks in the global routing table indicates hidden crisis phenomena. The freezing of activities of foreign corporations and local startups has led to part of the allocated resources remaining inactive (“dark” ASNs).

Functioning Autonomous Systems are concentrated in the hands of a limited number of dominant telecommunications operators and large internet providers, which are fully subordinate to the directives of the Ministry of Digital Development and Communications. The emergence of new AS in routing in 2025–2026 is associated not with market democratization, but with attempts by the corporate segment (banks, logistics hubs) to create their own backup communication channels to minimize risks during sudden government shutdowns, as well as with the development of local fixed-line providers in major cities.³⁷

Graph 5: Dynamics of Autonomous Systems in Myanmar (2015–2026)

ASN Statistics

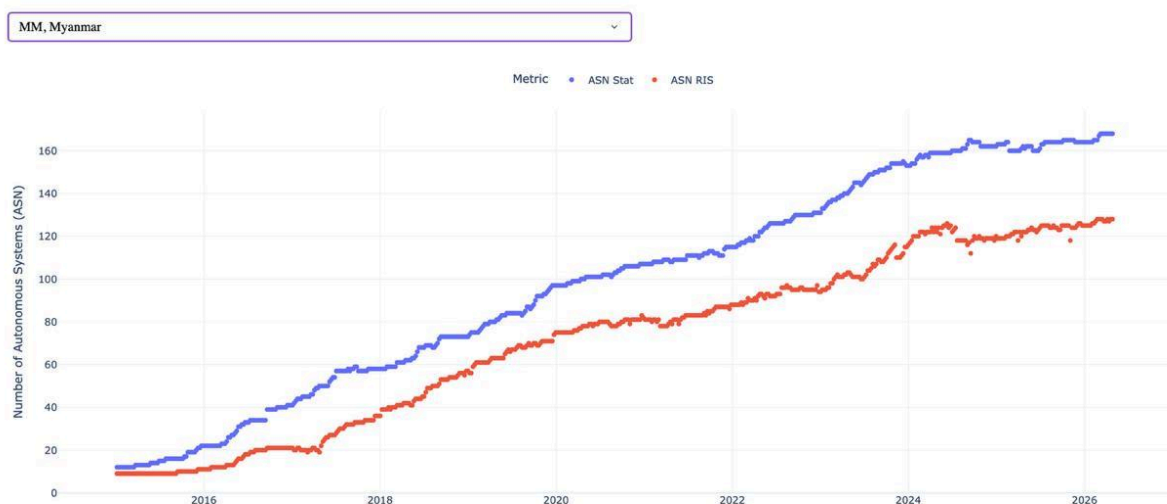


Table 1: Top 10 Largest Autonomous Systems in Myanmar

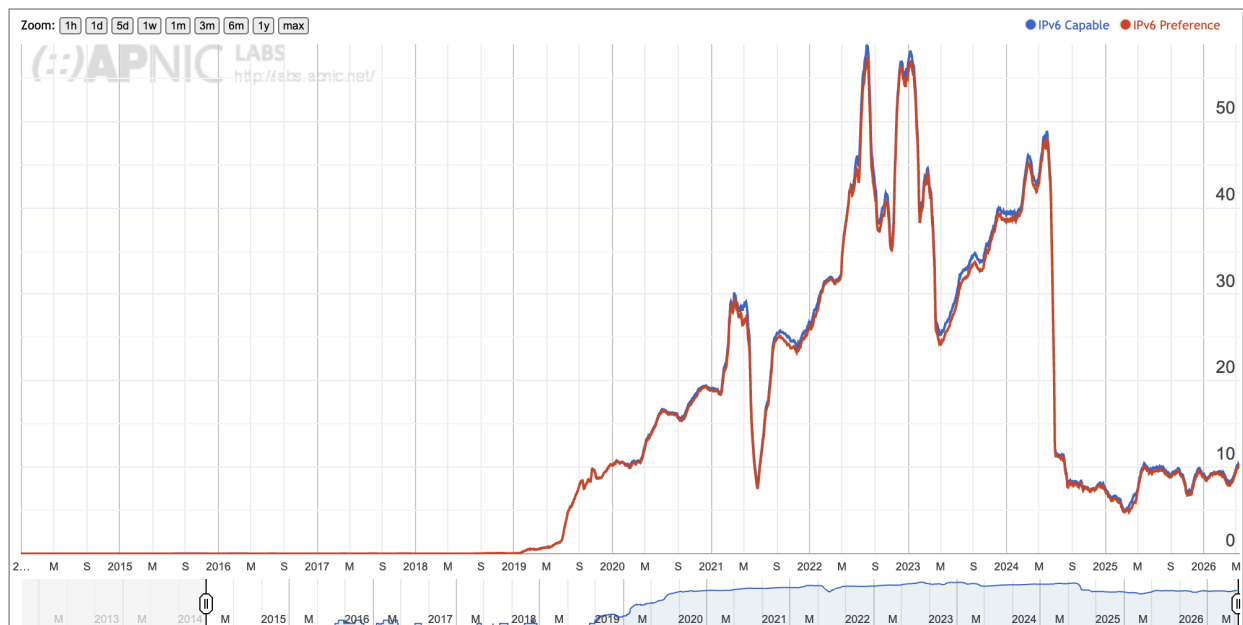
#	Number of AS	Name	Web Site	Foreign neighbour count	Local neighbour count	Total neighbour count	Foreign neighbours share
1	58952	Frontiir Co. Ltd	https://www.frontiir.com/	65	16	80	81%
2	136255	Telecom International Myanmar Co., Ltd	mytel.com.mm	35	38	68	51%
3	45558	MYANMA POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS	myanmaposts.net.mm	30	42	66	45%
4	136168	Campana MYTHIC Co. Ltd.	campanaworks.com	30	30	56	54%
5	133385	Atom Myanmar Limited	atom.com.mm	33	26	52	63%
6	133524	Global Technology Co., Ltd.	globalnet.com.mm	7	38	42	17%
7	132167	Nine Communications Company Limited	https://bgp.he.net/resourceerror	25	18	42	60%
8	135300	Myanmar Broadband Telecom Co., Ltd	http://www.mbt.com.mm	19	9	25	76%
9	136975	Global Technology	http://www.globaltechgroup.com.mm/	18	8	23	78%
10	132148	HORIZON TELECOM INTERNATIONAL COMPANY LIMITED	http://www.hti.com.mm	0	16	16	0%

2.5. IPv6 Penetration

The process of migration to the new-generation IPv6 protocol in Myanmar is inertial in nature. The lack of a clear state strategy for digital transformation and chronic capital expenditure deficits (Capex) on the part of operators forced to spend resources on maintaining basic infrastructure under energy crisis conditions critically slow down the modernization of network cores (Core Networks). The main driver of IPv6 implementation is not innovative development, but the trivial exhaustion of IPv4 address space by the regional registrar APNIC.⁴²

Nevertheless, the largest mobile operators (MPT, ATOM, Ooredoo) continue gradual deployment of dual-stack configurations on subscriber equipment. According to APNIC Labs data (IPv6 Measurement), the indicator of device capability to work via IPv6 (IPv6 Capable) reached 10.2% by mid-2026, while actual preference for the protocol (IPv6 Preferred) is given in 9.9% of sessions.⁴³ This indicator significantly lags behind the global average (more than 43%) and the indicators of neighboring Southeast Asian countries,⁴⁵ indicating stagnation in the technological potential of Myanmar's telecommunications sector.

Graph 6: Dynamics of IPv6 Penetration in Myanmar (2015–2026)



Source: stats.labs.apnic.net

2.6. Connectivity Index

Graph 7: Dynamics of Global Connectivity of Autonomous Systems in Myanmar (2019–2026)

Global Connectivity Statistics



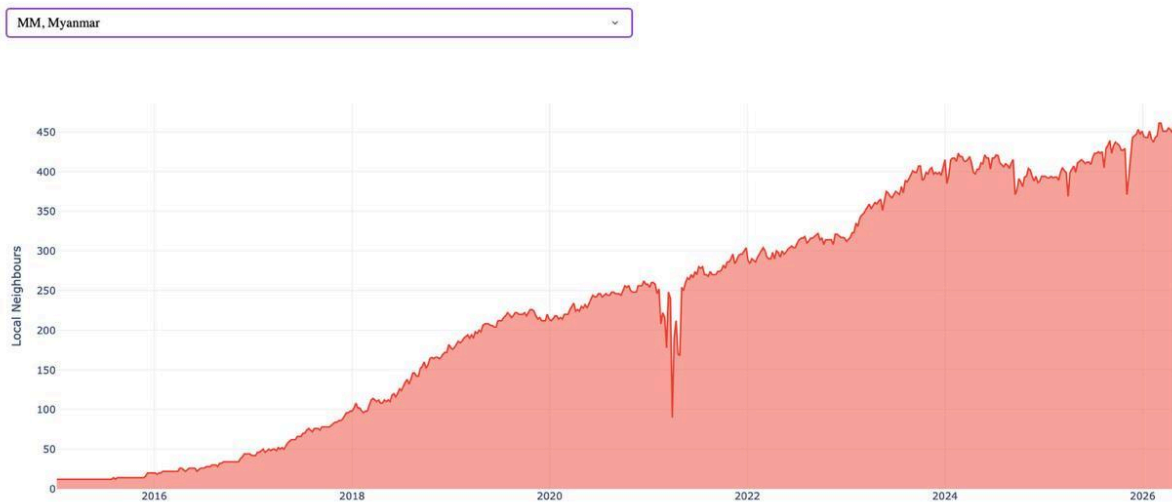
The critically low number of external connections, despite some growth in previous years, reflects the military regime's deliberate policy of controlling cross-border internet traffic. After the 2021 coup, the military authorities consistently limited the number of entry and exit points for international traffic, concentrating them in the hands of controlled operators.

Although the graph shows a noticeable increase in global connectivity from 2019 to 2023 (from less than 50 to peak values above 230 foreign neighbours), after 2024 there is high volatility and a gradual decrease in the indicator. Stabilization at the level of 140–170 connections indicates that further expansion of international connectivity was artificially restrained. The slight growth in previous years is explained mainly by the expansion of capacity of already existing channels, rather than the emergence of new independent exits to the global network.

Such architecture is a key element of the internet governance system in Myanmar. By creating an artificial “bottleneck,” the military regime gains full technical capability for traffic filtering, blocking unwanted resources, and implementing large-scale censorship. Low global connectivity is not a technical limitation, but a conscious state policy aimed at isolating the population from external sources of information and ensuring effective control over the information space.

Graph 8: Dynamics of Local Connectivity of Autonomous Systems in Myanmar (2019–2026)

Local Connectivity Statistics



In contrast to global connectivity, the local connectivity of Autonomous Systems in Myanmar demonstrates steady and significant growth throughout the entire period under review. The number of local connections increased from less than 50 in 2016–2017 to more than 450 by 2026. Even after the 2021 military coup, which caused a short-term sharp decline, local connectivity quickly recovered and continued confident growth.

This dynamic is driven by two main factors. First, operators benefit from developing internal peering to reduce costs on expensive international transit. Second, after the coup, the military regime actively stimulated local traffic localization to reduce dependence on external channels and simplify control over information flows within the country.

However, this growth in local connectivity does not indicate the development of an open and competitive internet ecosystem. It occurs under conditions of a rigid vertical structure, where most operators remain under direct or indirect control of the military authorities. As a result, a topology convenient for centralized monitoring is formed: even with a large number of local connections, key traffic exchange points are under reliable state control.

Thus, the development of local connectivity in Myanmar is of a forced-utilitarian nature. The military regime allows and even encourages the growth of internal connections, as this allows simultaneously reducing operator costs and increasing the efficiency of internal control over the information space, without weakening the overall grip on the internet.

Graph 9: Dynamics of the Ratio of Global and Local Connectivity of Autonomous Systems in Myanmar (2019–2026)

Total Connectivity Share



The graph clearly demonstrates a steady decline in the share of global connections in the overall connectivity structure of Myanmar. If in 2016–2017 the share of foreign neighbours exceeded 50–55%, by 2026 it decreased to 23–27%. This means that local connectivity is growing significantly faster than global connectivity.

This change in structure is not the result of natural development of the domestic market. After the 2021 military coup, the authorities deliberately stimulated the growth of local peering while simultaneously restraining the expansion of international channels. The decline in the share of global connections reflects the authorities' conscious policy of localizing traffic and reducing "windows to the world."

By creating an artificial predominance of internal connections, the military regime forms a network architecture more convenient for control. In such a model, the bulk of traffic remains within the country and is easier to monitor and filter. At the same time, a limited number of carefully controlled international gateways are preserved, through which all external traffic passes.

Thus, the dynamics of the ratio of global and local connectivity in Myanmar reflects not technical progress, but the strategic choice of the authorities. Instead of building a balanced and open internet ecosystem, the military regime is creating an internally closed network with a

minimal number of controlled exits to the global internet. This architecture perfectly corresponds to the tasks of total control over the information space.

3. Internet Legislation

3.1. Principles of Internet Governance

3.1.1. Regulation

In Myanmar, the regulatory environment is currently operating in a state of emergency. The legislative process is completely non-transparent and bypasses parliament. All important norms are adopted in the form of decrees and directives of the State Administration Council (military junta).

Telecommunications companies are deprived of independence. They are obliged to unquestioningly comply with all orders of security structures: block sites, intercept traffic, and transmit users' personal data.

Refusal to cooperate threatens top management of companies with criminal prosecution.⁴⁷

The basic document until recently was the Telecommunications Law of 2013, but in 2025 the Cybersecurity Law (Cybersecurity Law No. 1/2025) came into force, which codified digital repression. The law obliges all digital platforms with an audience of more than 100,000 users to obtain licenses and store user data on the territory of the country for three years, guaranteeing unimpeded access to it by investigative bodies without a court order.⁴⁹

3.1.2. Regulatory Bodies and Responsible Persons

The architecture of internet regulation is based on the Ministry of Digital Development and Communications (formerly the Ministry of Transport and Communications). Direct technical and administrative control over providers is carried out by the relevant division of the ministry — the Posts and Telecommunications Department (PTD).⁵¹

The key officials responsible for implementing internet policy are:

- **Ministry of Transport and Communications** (<https://www.motc.gov.mm/>) — Minister of Digital Development and Communications. A member of the top military leadership, directly coordinating the integration of the telecommunications sector with the national security apparatus.⁵¹
- **Than Htun Aung** (<https://www.iicom.org/profile/than-htun-aung/>) — Director General of PTD. Responsible for licensing operators, control of the radio frequency spectrum, and

transmitting junta directives to providers on shutting down communications and filtering content.⁵²

3.2. Market Monopolization

Despite the formal presence of several independent players on the market, de facto an oligopoly with signs of hidden re-monopolization under the control of a military-political cartel has formed in Myanmar. The liberalization of the sector, which began in 2013 on the basis of the Telecommunications Law, was curtailed. After the 2021 coup, the regime deliberately squeezed international investors who adhered to corporate human rights standards out of the market. The most indicative was the departure of the Norwegian corporation Telenor, whose management directly stated the impossibility of working under conditions of coercion to install surveillance equipment (interceptors).²⁴

The remaining market participants are directly controlled by the state (MPT), affiliated with military structures (Mytel), or belong to conglomerates loyal to the junta (ATOM, bought out by a consortium with the participation of Shwe Byain Phyu).²⁴ Management of these corporations is carried out in close coordination with the State Administration Council. As a result, providers are deprived of commercial independence, do not compete on ensuring user privacy, and function as technological appendages of the repressive apparatus, ensuring the state's monopolization of control over communications infrastructure.²⁴

3.3. Internet Shutdowns on Government Orders

Myanmar's legislation grants the executive branch legitimate but excessively broad powers to shut down communications networks. The legal foundation for the so-called shutdowns (internet shutdowns) is Section 77 of the Telecommunications Law, which allows authorities to temporarily suspend the provision of communications services or intercept any information in "emergency situations" or in the "interests of society."⁴⁶ The vagueness of these formulations allows the regime to classify any anti-government protests as emergency situations.

The shutdown process is not regulated by public acts and lacks appeal mechanisms. In practice, the procedure looks as follows: the State Administration Council or the Ministry of Home Affairs issues a directive to the Ministry of Communications, which, through PTD, sends telecommunications operators a confidential order (often in oral form or through closed messengers). The operator is obliged to immediately (within minutes) stop routing traffic in the specified geographical area (at the level of specific towers or entire states).⁴⁷ Orders to shut down can be given by senior military officials before the start of military operations (clearance operations) to prevent coordination of resistance and conceal facts of extrajudicial reprisals

against the civilian population.³³ Disclosure of the fact that a provider received an order is punishable by law.

3.4. Legislation on “Words on the Internet”

Myanmar’s legislative framework regarding prosecution for freedom of expression on the internet is characterized by draconian harshness and the instrumentalization of criminal law. After the coup, the main weapon for suppressing dissent became the updated Article 505(A) of the Criminal Code. This norm provides for imprisonment for up to three years for publishing or disseminating information that may “cause fear or anxiety to the public,” “spread false news” (fake news), or directly or indirectly provoke state employees to disobedience (mutiny).⁴⁶

The interpretation of the concept of “spreading fakes” in the junta’s law enforcement practice is extremely subjective. Any publication, Facebook post, comment, or even a like under material that contradicts the official propaganda of the State Administration Council, casts doubt on the legitimacy of the coup, or describes losses of army units is automatically classified as a fake or an act of terrorism.¹⁴ Court proceedings in these cases take place in closed mode, often on the territory of military bases, and the accused are deprived of access to lawyers.

Additionally, the regime actively uses Article 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law, which criminalizes defamation using communications networks.⁵⁸ Military personnel and officials massively file lawsuits against journalists and activists, while suspects can spend years in pre-trial detention without the right to bail.

Seeking to finally clear the information space, the junta adopted the Cybersecurity Law No. 1/2025. This act imposed direct obligations on platforms and providers to remove any content that “damages social status,” “incites hatred, destroys unity and peace,” or “does not correspond to Burmese culture.”⁴⁶ Refusal of platforms to pre-moderate such content leads to their immediate blocking.

An unprecedented feature of the 2025 Cybersecurity Law was the introduction of the principle of extraterritoriality. Myanmar authorities gained the right to prosecute Myanmar citizens located abroad in absentia for “spreading fakes” on the internet.⁴⁹ This allows the junta to confiscate the property of political emigrants at home, terrorize their remaining relatives, and cancel their passports, turning legislation on “words on the internet” into an instrument of transnational repression.

3.5. Legislation on Internet Blocking

The creation of its own closed internet (sovereign intranet) is one of the main goals of the military junta's domestic policy.

The junta seeks to completely isolate the residents of Myanmar from the global internet and build its own “Great Firewall of Myanmar.” To do this, the authorities adopted harsh laws that oblige internet providers to invest money in systems of deep traffic filtering and strict control over everything users do on the network.⁴⁸

3.5.1. Legislation

Legislation on blocking is based on a symbiosis of the Telecommunications Law and the new Cybersecurity Law of 2025.⁴⁶ The documents directly instruct providers to carry out control and blocking of electronic resources at the request of authorized ministries for the purpose of ensuring “national security.” A radical innovation of 2024–2025 was the total criminalization of circumvention technologies. The Cybersecurity Law gave a clear definition of Virtual Private Networks (VPN) and qualified their setup, provision, or use without special permission from the relevant ministry as a criminal offense. Violators, including ordinary citizens using VPN to access Facebook, face imprisonment from 1 to 6 months and a fine from 1 to 10 million MMK.⁴⁹

3.5.2. Blocking Procedures

The mechanics of blocking represents a multi-level technological process. PTD forms directives (blacklists) and transmits them to communications operators (MPT, ATOM, Ooredoo, Mytel, 5BB, etc.). Initially, blockings were carried out in the most primitive way — through substitution of DNS responses (DNS-hijacking), when attempting to request the IP address of a blocked resource, the provider's server returned the address of a government stub page.⁶³ However, as the digital literacy of the population grew, the authorities moved to blocking by IP addresses (TCP/IP level interference) and “man-in-the-middle” attacks (TLS MITM).⁶³ In 2025–2026, operators were obliged to implement deep packet inspection (DPI) systems capable of identifying and dropping connections (RST packets) using specific VPN protocols (for example, OpenVPN, WireGuard), which made the vast majority of circumvention tools technically inoperable.⁶³

3.5.3. Registries of Blocked Internet Resources

There is no single official, open, and publicly available registry of blocked sites in Myanmar. The censorship process is completely secret in nature.⁴⁷ Lists of prohibited IP addresses and URL domains are formed in the State Administration Council and classified as state secrets.

Providers are categorically prohibited from publishing lists of resources they are required to filter, as well as notifying users of the reasons for access restrictions. According to expert estimates, the hidden government registry by 2026 includes more than 2,000 entries, covering all global social media (Facebook, X, Instagram), secure messengers (WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram), independent media, and human rights portals.¹⁴ The absence of a public registry deprives site owners of the right to challenge the blocking in court.

3.5.4. Registries of Blocked Resources (Unofficial)

Due to the opacity of state procedures, documentation of censorship is carried out by international and local civil initiatives, which effectively perform the function of shadow open registries:

- [Open Observatory of Network Interference \(OONI\)](#) — A global decentralized network collecting data on internet censorship. Through the OONI Probe application, volunteers inside Myanmar run network tests, the results of which are published in open access on OONI Explorer. The OONI registry for Myanmar allows technically proving facts of traffic interference (TCP/IP anomalies, DNS substitution).⁶⁴
- [Freedom of Expression Activist Organization](#) — A Myanmar human rights organization maintaining an aggregated dashboard. Their registry records not only blocked sites but also maintains a detailed chronology of internet shutdowns tied to specific administrative districts of the country, documenting the correlation between shutdowns and the junta's war crimes.⁶⁸
- [Free Expression Myanmar \(FEM\)](#) — A monitoring group specializing in legal analysis. Their registries include lists of citizens and activists subjected to criminal prosecution under Articles 505(A) of the Criminal Code and 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law, de facto documenting the “human cost” of digital censorship.⁷¹
- [Myanmar Internet Project](#) — An initiative publishing quarterly reports (“Digital Coup Quarterly”) aggregating data on new blocking methods, blocked IP addresses, provider outages, and the use of mass surveillance systems (PSMS).¹⁴

These registries operate through volunteer data collection and routing analysis from abroad, providing the international community with an objective picture of Myanmar's information blockade.

3.5.5. Development of Blockings

The evolution of blockings in Myanmar illustrates the transition from reactive censorship to proactive technological dictatorship. Analysis of a series of country reports from the OONI project (iMAP State of Internet Censorship Report) for the period 2021–2026 demonstrates

clear phases of escalation.⁶³ In February 2021, censorship began with a crude blocking of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram domains through DNS manipulation.⁶³ During 2022, OONI recorded the transfer of blockings to the IP address level and the spread of censorship to information portals and online encyclopedias (blocking of all language versions of Wikipedia).⁶³

In 2024–2025, reports note a qualitative leap: the junta began deliberately blocking encrypted messengers (in particular, Signal) and corporate websites of VPN service providers (ProtonVPN, TunnelBear).³³ Measurements show massive use of TCP resets when attempting to establish tunnel connections, indicating the successful deployment of DPI equipment.⁶³ The only steadily working circumvention tool in 2025 remained protocols with obfuscation, such as Psiphon, while standard commercial VPNs were suppressed.⁶⁵

Conclusion: The development of blocking infrastructure in Myanmar has reached a stage where the state is able not only to cut citizens off from global platforms but also to effectively paralyze circumvention tools. The “Great Firewall of Myanmar” has become a reality, transforming the national internet into an isolated, monitored, and subject to harsh censorship militarized environment.

4. Human Rights Violations on the Internet

The situation with human rights in the digital environment of Myanmar is assessed by international human rights structures as catastrophic. In the annual reports of Freedom House (Freedom on the Net rating), the country consistently occupies places at the very bottom of the list, classified as absolutely “Not Free,” with unprecedentedly low scores (around 9 out of 100 for internet freedoms).⁴⁷ The depth of violations goes far beyond classical censorship: the military regime uses the internet not only as an object of control but also as a vector for identifying and physically destroying political opponents.⁴⁷

The atmosphere of total terror is maintained by the daily practice of street device checks. Police and military patrols massively stop citizens, demanding to unlock smartphones. The discovery of prohibited applications (Facebook, Telegram), VPN clients, or photos related to the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) leads to immediate arrest, beatings, extortion, and sending to military pre-trial detention centers known for the use of torture.⁴⁷ State terrorism online is supplemented by disinformation campaigns, incitement to interethnic hatred, and doxing, which are coordinated by bot networks loyal to the junta (primarily in Telegram).⁴⁷

4.1. Internet Shutdowns on Government Orders

The use of internet shutdowns (blackouts) as a tool of collective punishment and tactical cover for military operations has become the junta's signature style. According to the human rights group Athan, by mid-2025, about 138 administrative districts (townships) had been subjected to complete or partial communications shutdowns.⁶⁵ The organization Access Now in its global reports highlights Myanmar as one of the world leaders in the number of targeted blackouts.¹⁴

The most severe consequences of shutdowns occur in areas of active hostilities. In the Sagaing, Magway regions and Kayah and Rakhine states, the military preemptively shuts down mobile communications and the internet before conducting punitive operations (the so-called “clearance operations”), depriving the civilian population of the opportunity to receive alerts about air strikes and coordinate evacuation.³ For example:

- In January 2024, the Myanmar Air Force carried out an airstrike on the village of Kanan in the Sagaing region during a Sunday church service, killing 17 civilians, including 9 children.⁴ The lack of communications did not allow residents to take cover in time.
- A similar situation occurred in February 2024 in the village of Daw Se Ei in Kayah state, where the bombing of a school led to the death of children against the background of a suppressed signal.⁴ As humanitarian workers note, in Myanmar the loss of network signal has become a sure sign for the population of an imminent artillery or air strike.⁵⁶

[Link to Access Now report](#)

4.2. Criminalization of Online Speech

The criminalization of freedom of speech on the internet has reached the level of absurdity: for posts criticizing the regime, citizens are subjected to extrajudicial reprisals, long prison terms, and even the death penalty. Military courts issue verdicts in an accelerated mode, ignoring basic procedural norms.⁴⁷

Key violation cases:

- **Execution of Kyaw Min Yu (Jimmy) and Phyo Zeya Thaw:** In July 2022, the junta carried out the first death sentences in decades. The famous 88 Generation activist and writer Kyaw Min Yu was executed, as well as the rapper and former NLD MP Phyo Zeya Thaw. Both had a huge audience on the network. The essence of the charge: Kyaw Min Yu was initially arrested for threatening “public peace,” expressed in a series of social media posts with harsh criticism of the military coup. Subsequently, the charges were reclassified as terrorism.⁴⁷ [Link to Freedom House report](#)

- **Sentence of a resident of Taunggyi:** In September 2024, a 36-year-old man from the city of Taunggyi in Shan State was sentenced to seven years in prison. The essence of the charge: The citizen was convicted under Article 23(a) of the Elections Protection Law for posting on his social media page a post criticizing and mocking the military junta's plan to hold elections. The court regarded this as "inciting discord in order to disrupt the electoral process."⁵⁷
- **Repression against journalists (Thet Aung and Than Htike Myint case):** The junta is deliberately destroying independent journalism. In June 2024 and April 2025, reporters from independent online publications Thet Aung and Than Htike Myint received 10 and 5 years in prison, respectively. The essence of the charge: The journalists were convicted under articles of the Criminal Code and the Electronic Transactions Law for "undermining state security" and "spreading fakes." Their crime consisted of documenting and publishing video materials on the internet about protests and military brutality.⁷⁶ [Link to Freedom House report](#)

5. Civil Society in Internet Governance

Civil society in Myanmar, which for many years built democratic institutions and engaged in the protection of digital rights, has been almost completely crushed inside the country. Fearing arrests, torture, and extrajudicial executions, most human rights defenders, lawyers, and IT experts were forced to go deep underground or choose the path of forced emigration, relocating their headquarters to neighboring Thailand or Western countries. Nevertheless, activists continue to play a key role in breaking through the information blockade, training the remaining population in basic methods of digital security, and methodically documenting the regime's war crimes for future international tribunals.

The architecture of digital resistance is strictly decentralized in nature. Independent developers daily create mirrors of blocked news sites, set up private, hidden VPN networks for activists, and establish complex channels for smuggling satellite communication terminals (primarily Starlink) through permeable borders. This ensures vitally necessary, independent of the junta access to the global network for guerrilla units, field hospitals, and underground independent media operating in the jungle.

5.1. Organizations

Among the key organizations continuing selfless work to protect citizens' rights on the internet, the following stand out:

- **Myanmar ICT for Development Organization (MIDO)** (myanmarido.org) — An authoritative non-governmental organization originally engaged in peaceful ICT development in rural areas and increasing digital literacy among peasants. Today, MIDO has completely re-profiled and is focused on technical support for persecuted human rights defenders, monitoring internet shutdowns, and countering toxic hate speech and disinformation that military intelligence troll factories massively spread on the network.
- **Free Expression Myanmar (FEM)** (dev.digitalrightsmm.org) — A leading human rights research group conducting powerful international campaigns against the junta's repressive legislation (including a detailed analysis of the Cybersecurity Law). FEM regularly publishes in-depth legal analyses, tracks illegal arrests of independent journalists and ordinary bloggers, and actively lobbies the interests of Myanmar civil society on the global arena, directly cooperating with technology giants (Meta, Google), demanding that they not comply with junta orders.

5.2. VPN and Circumvention Tools

Virtual private networks (VPN) and specialized circumvention tools have ceased to be the domain of narrow IT specialists and have become a tool of first necessity for survival in Myanmar's shrinking digital space. Since the junta has tightly blocked Facebook — the platform that for millions of ordinary Burmese de facto was synonymous with the word “internet” (used for family communication, running small businesses, and receiving independent news) — VPN clients have massively, despite enormous risks, entered the daily life of every smartphone owner.

5.2.1. Status of VPN Services

For a long time, the use of VPN was in a legal “gray” zone, but with the entry into force of the repressive Cybersecurity Law (Cybersecurity Law No. 1/2025) in early 2025, their status was finally criminalized. The law explicitly and unambiguously prohibits the use, sale, advertising, and even creation of any VPN services that have not received prior written approval from the relevant ministry of the junta.

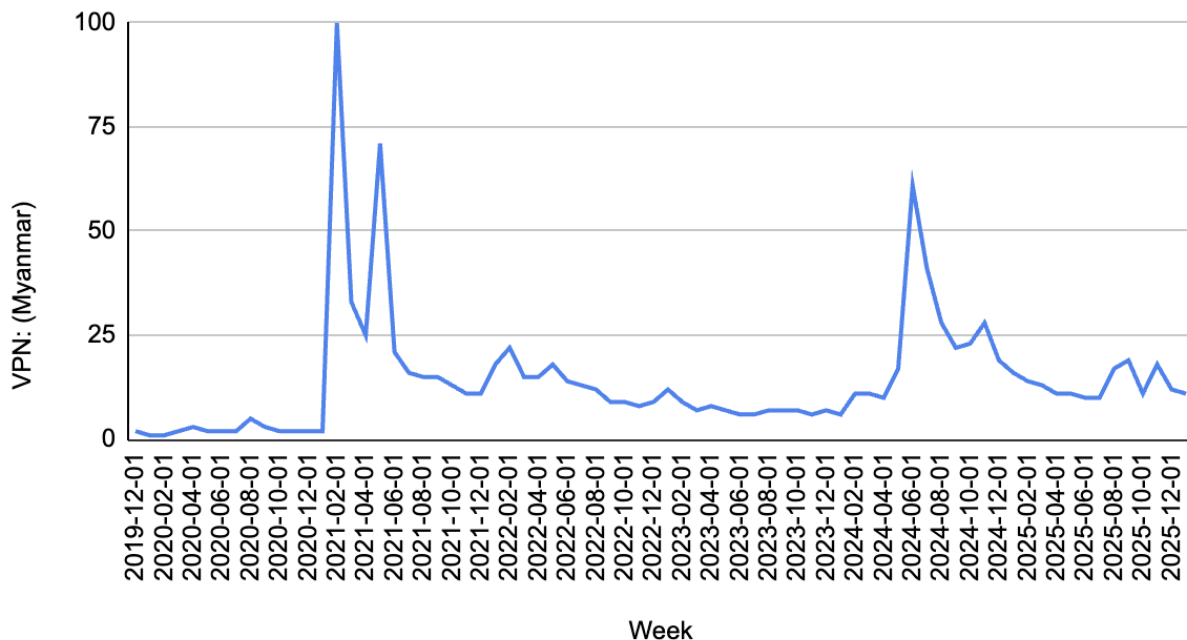
Legislation provides for severe penalties. Ordinary citizens caught by police using an unauthorized VPN are subject to immediate arrest, imprisonment for a term of 1 to 6 months, and payment of a ruinous fine of up to 10 million MMK (about 4,700 USD at the official rate). For technology companies and communication salons providing or assisting in the installation of such services without a junta license, minimum fines also start from 10 million MMK but are accompanied by complete confiscation of all equipment. This provision de jure puts absolutely all popular commercial and free VPN services operating in the interests of users outside the law.

5.2.2. Number of VPN Users

Demand for VPN services in Myanmar experienced a historic, avalanche-like surge on February 4, 2021 (a 7,200% increase in search queries), when the junta first blocked social networks three days after the coup. In subsequent years, the level of VPN penetration in society steadily increased, as this was the only reliable way to stay in touch with the outside world and bypass censorship. In June 2024, the junta initiated a large-scale technical blocking at the transport protocol level of the most popular VPNs, which led to temporary outages across the country. However, users showed remarkable flexibility and adapted, massively switching to more modern, resistant to deep packet inspection (DPI) systems tools for traffic obfuscation, such as V2Ray and Shadowsocks protocols.

Chart 10: Trends in VPN searches in Myanmar (2021–2026)

VPN vs. Time



Source: trends.google.com

5.2.3. Cases of Prosecution for VPN Use

Since May 2024, realizing the technical impossibility of completely blocking obfuscated traffic, the military has intensified overt physical terror against ordinary users of circumvention tools. In Yangon, Mandalay, and other major cities, army patrols, police, and pro-military militias

(Pyusawhti) regularly and without any warrant conduct humiliating selective checks of passers-by's mobile phones right at checkpoints and city streets.

If any VPN application (regardless of whether it is enabled at the moment) or even an application of the blocked social network Facebook is discovered on a smartphone unlocked at gunpoint, the owner is immediately detained. In practice, corrupt police most often use the threat of applying the Cybersecurity Law for brazen extortion of huge bribes on the spot of detention. Nevertheless, independent human rights defenders from FEM report dozens of documented cases of actual arrest of young people, beatings, and imposition of official ruinous fines solely for the presence of an icon of a prohibited VPN client in the smartphone menu.

5.2.4. Monitoring of Blockings

Global and continuous monitoring of technological internet censorship in Myanmar is professionally carried out by the technical coalitions OONI, Access Now, and the Sinar Project initiative (iMAP project). A digest of their analytical messages and technical reports over the past 5 years demonstrates a clear, frightening trajectory of irreversible compression of digital freedoms:

- **2021:** Emergency nighttime blackouts, reactive blocking of Wikipedia, Twitter, Instagram. Primitive DNS traffic interception by providers is recorded.
- **2022:** Political throttling of the internet, massive forced implementation of expensive DPI equipment on the side of all mobile providers. Total blocking of news domains.
- **2023:** First serious attempts to block popular VPNs at the TCP/IP level under the cynical pretext of “fighting online fraud.”
- **2024:** Harsh blocking of the encrypted messenger Signal and major Western VPN providers. Formal transition of the junta to the “whitelisting” concept.
- **2025–2026:** Legislative legalization of total control (Cybersecurity Law). Successful hacking and blocking of advanced circumvention protocols. OONI reports state successful technical attempts by the junta to completely isolate the national internet segment, cutting it off from global communication nodes in the North Korean model.

6. Conclusions on the Situation in the Country

Analysis of the development of the telecommunications sector and the state of digital rights in Myanmar in the period from 2019 to 2026 allows us to state the final formation of the architecture of harsh digital authoritarianism. The 2021 military coup became a bifurcation point, after which the country moved from a model of liberalization of the telecommunications market to total technological subordination to the military apparatus.

Economic decline, degradation of macroeconomic indicators, and physical destruction of infrastructure (as a consequence of electricity shortages and hostilities) set Myanmar back years in terms of communication quality and internet access speed.

The military junta (SAC) has built a multi-level system of repression, including physical control over providers, cartelization of the market with loyal companies, and the creation of the “Great Firewall of Myanmar” based on deep packet inspection (DPI) technologies. The legislative framework (Cybersecurity Law 2025, amended Criminal Code) has turned into a weapon of terror, criminalizing not only freedom of speech but also the use of basic privacy protection tools (VPN), extending repression even to citizens located abroad.

The systematic use of shutdowns to conceal war crimes and mass prison sentences for comments on social networks indicate that digital rights in Myanmar have been completely destroyed. The internet has transformed from a space of freedom and a driver of economic growth into an instrument of surveillance, control, and collective punishment of the population.

7. Forecast of the Situation Development until the End of 2026

Scenario forecasting of the situation development until the end of 2026 indicates the inevitable escalation of digital repression against the background of a deepening political and armed crisis. The junta’s holding of fictitious general elections in early 2026 will require an unprecedented level of information space cleanup to suppress any attempts by the opposition (NUG and PDF) to delegitimize the electoral process. It is expected that PTD will oblige all providers to bring filtering systems (DPI) to a level capable of completely paralyzing not only VPN traffic but also any non-standard encryption protocols, which may provoke secondary failures in the operation of the legal banking and corporate sectors.

In connection with the successes of armed resistance in border regions, the tactics of local blackouts (targeted shutdowns) will acquire a permanent character. The military will continue to use communication deprivation as a weapon, which will lead to the complete destruction of the remnants of telecommunications infrastructure (destruction of base stations and backbones) in Rakhine, Chin, and Karenni states. Economic isolation will force the junta to integrate even deeper with technological suppliers from China, which will accelerate the introduction of mass biometric surveillance and facial recognition video surveillance systems (PSMS).

In response to the absolute blockade on the part of the state, pro-democracy resistance and civil society will be forced to evolve, moving to shadow, decentralized methods of

communication. An increase in demand for smuggled satellite internet terminals (for example, Starlink), the deployment of mesh networks, and the use of deep steganography for information transmission is expected. However, the detection of such devices by security forces will be punishable by maximum prison terms. By the end of 2026, Myanmar's digital space will finally crystallize as one of the most closed, militarized, and dangerous zones of the global internet.

Sources

1. Civil War in Myanmar | Global Conflict Tracker – Council on Foreign Relations, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/rohingya-crisis-myanmar>
2. Myanmar Population (2026) – Worldometer, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/myanmar-population/>
3. Myanmar | International Crisis Group, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia-pacific/south-east-asia/myanmar>
4. World Report 2025: Myanmar | Human Rights Watch, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/myanmar>
5. Myanmar Population 2026, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/myanmar>
6. Myanmar GDP (2026) – Worldometer, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.worldometers.info/gdp/myanmar-gdp/>
7. US Dollar / Myanmar kyat (USD/MMK) – Historical data, historical prices – Twelve Data, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://twelvedata.com/markets/307034/forex/usd-mmk/historical-data>
8. Historical Rates Tables – MMK – Xe, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.xe.com/en-us/currencytables/?from=MMK>
9. The State of Myanmar: ISP–Myanmar's Annual Strategic Review and Foresight 2025–2026, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://ispmyanmar.com/som2026/>
10. Myanmar Telecom MNO Market Size, Share & Outlook, 2031 – Mordor Intelligence, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/myanmar-telecom-market>
11. 2021 Myanmar coup d'état – Wikipedia, last accessed: May 8, 2026, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021_Myanmar_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat
12. Min Aung Hlaing – Wikipedia, last accessed: May 8, 2026, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Min_Aung_Hlaing

13. Myanmar crisis deepens five years after coup, as military ballot entrenches repression, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/01/1166866>
14. Censorship & Shutdowns - Internet in Myanmar, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.internetinmyanmar.com/censorship/>
15. .mm domains | Myanmar - DonDominio, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.dondominio.com/en/products/domains/mm/>
16. net.mm Domain Registration - Facts and figures for .net.mm - Burmese Domains - Nominate.com, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.nominate.com/factsandfigures/net.mm.shtml>
17. .mm - Wikipedia, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/.mm>
18. .mm Domain Registration | Everything you need to know - 101domain, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.101domain.com/mm.htm>
19. Digital 2024: Myanmar — DataReportal — Global Digital Insights, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-myanmar>
20. Digital 2025: Myanmar — DataReportal — Global Digital Insights, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-myanmar>
21. Digital 2026: Myanmar — DataReportal — Global Digital Insights, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2026-myanmar>
22. Individuals using the Internet (% of population) - Myanmar - World Bank Open Data, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?locations=MM>
23. Individuals using the Internet - ITU DataHub, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://datahub.itu.int/data/?e=MMR&i=11624>
24. Myanmar Telecoms Industry Report 2024 - Myanmar Post - GlobeNewswire, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2024/10/15/2962941/0/en/myanmar-telecoms-industry-report-2024-myanmar-post-telecommunications-mpt-atom-myanmar-ooredoo-myanmar-and-mytel-dominate-the-market.html>
25. Myanmar Telecoms Industry Report 2024-2031 - Research and Markets, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/5240413/myanmar-telecoms-industry-report-2024-2031>
26. Myanmar - Fixed Broadband Internet Subscribers (per 100 People) - 2026 Data 2027 Forecast 2000-2023 Historical, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://tradingeconomics.com/myanmar/fixed-broadband-internet-subscribers-per-100-people-wb-data.html>

27. Fixed broadband subscriptions (per 100 people) - Myanmar - World Bank Open Data, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.BBND.P2?locations=MM>
28. MYANMAR Telecommunications Industry Report, 2020-2025 - MarketResearch.com, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.marketresearch.com/Idem-Est-Research-v4206/MYANMAR-Telecommunications-14454170/>
29. Myanmar Telecom Market | 2019 – 2030 - Ken Research, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.kenresearch.com/myanmar-telecom-market>
30. Mobile cellular subscriptions - Myanmar - World Bank Open Data, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS?locations=MM>
31. Myanmar Telecom Operators Intelligence Report 2024: MPT - GlobeNewswire, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2025/02/04/3020202/0/en/myanmar-telecom-operators-intelligence-report-2024-mpt-myanmar-atom-ooredoo-myanmar-mytel-accounted-for-100-of-total-mobile-subscriptions-forecast-to-2029.html>
32. Myanma Posts and Telecommunications - Wikipedia, last accessed: May 8, 2026, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myanma_Posts_and_Telecommunications
33. Myanmar freedom on the net 2025, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://humanrightsmyanmar.org/myanmar-freedom-on-the-net-2025/>
34. Myanmar (Burma)'s Mobile and Broadband Internet Speeds - Speedtest Global Index, last accessed: May 8, 2026, [https://www.speedtest.net/global-index/myanmar-\(burma\)](https://www.speedtest.net/global-index/myanmar-(burma))
35. Speedtest Global Index – Internet Speed around the world, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.speedtest.net/global-index>
36. Mobile Internet speed | Myanmar (2022–2025) – Data, Charts & Analysis - Statbase, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://statbase.org/data/mmr-mobile-internet-speed/>
37. Comparisons - RIPEstat - RIPE NCC, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://stat.ripe.net/docs/user-interface/comparison-pages>
38. RIPEstat — RIPE Network Coordination Centre, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.ripe.net/analyse/internet-measurements/ripestat/>
39. ASNs delegated in Myanmar (MM), last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www-public.telecom-sudparis.eu/~maigron/rir-stats/rir-delegations/delegations/asn/mm-asn-delegations.html>
40. Country ASNs - RIPEstat - RIPE NCC, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://stat.ripe.net/docs/data-api/api-endpoints/country-asns>
41. ASN delegation statistics in RIPE NCC zone by number, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www-public.telecom-sudparis.eu/~maigron/rir-stats/rir-delegations/ripenncc/ripencc-asn-by-number.html>

42. IP addresses through 2025 - APNIC Blog, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://blog.apnic.net/2026/01/20/ip-addresses-through-2025/>
43. IPv6 Measurement Maps - APNIC Labs, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://labs.apnic.net/ipv6-measurement>
44. IPv6 Measurement Maps - APNIC Labs, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://labs.apnic.net/ipv6-measurement/>
45. IPv6 World Map - APNIC Labs Measurements, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://stats.labs.apnic.net/ipv6-zoom>
46. Cybersecurity Law of Myanmar - Wikipedia, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cybersecurity_Law_of_Myanmar
47. Myanmar: Freedom on the Net 2024 Country Report, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://freedomhouse.org/country/myanmar/freedom-net/2024>
48. The Great Firewall of Myanmar, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://humanrightsmyanmar.org/the-great-firewall-of-myanmar/>
49. Myanmar Cybersecurity Law in force 30 July 2025 - Allen & Gledhill, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://www.allenandgledhill.com/mm/publication/articles/31053/cybersecurity-law-in-force-30-july-2025>
50. Myanmar's Cybersecurity Law Comes into Effect: Key implications for international stakeholders - Hogan Lovells, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://www.hoganlovells.com/en/publications/myanmars-cybersecurity-law-comes-into-effect-key-implications-for-international-stakeholders>
51. Union Government List - Ministry Of Information, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://www.moi.gov.mm/moi:eng/union-government-list>
52. User Name - Posts and Telecommunications Department (PTD), Myanmar, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://resource.geospatialworld.net/user/posts-and-telecommunications-department-ptd-myanmar>
53. ပို့ဆောင်ရေးနှင့်ဆက်သွယ်ရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန: Welcome, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://www.motc.gov.mm/>
54. Than Htun Aung - International Institute of Communications, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://www.iicom.org/profile/than-htun-aung/>
55. Restriction on Internet Freedom by the Junta - Athan, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://athanmyanmar.org/restriction-on-internet-freedom-by-the-junta/>
56. When repression meets resistance: internet shutdowns in 2025 - Access Now, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.accessnow.org/internet-shutdowns-2025/>
57. Nine More People Including Children Detained in Myanmar Junta's Pre-Poll Crackdown, last accessed: May 8, 2026,

- <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/nine-more-people-including-children-detained-in-myanmar-juntas-pre-poll-crackdown.html>
58. Raising awareness of human rights online in Myanmar, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.apc.org/en/news/raising-awareness-human-rights-online-myanmar>
59. Myanmar: Scrap Draconian Cybersecurity Bill | Human Rights Watch, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/02/15/myanmar-scrap-draconian-cybersecurity-bill>
60. Myanmar Cybersecurity Law Takes Effect - Tilleke & Gibbins, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.tilleke.com/insights/myanmar-cybersecurity-law-takes-effect/6/>
61. Myanmar Cybersecurity Law Comes into Effect on 1 January 2025 - Connect On Tech, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://connectontech.bakermckenzie.com/myanmar-cybersecurity-law-enacted-on-1-january-2025/>
62. Myanmar Cybersecurity Law Takes Effect - Tilleke & Gibbins, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://www.tilleke.com/insights/myanmar-cybersecurity-law-takes-effect/4/>
63. Myanmar: Data on internet blocks and internet outages following military coup | OONI, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://ooni.org/post/2021-myanmar-internet-blocks-and-outages/>
64. Research reports | OONI - Open Observatory of Network Interference, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://ooni.org/reports/>
65. Consequences of the Telecommunication Blackout - November, 2025 - Athan, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://athanmyanmar.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Only-in-Myanmar-1.pdf>
66. Myanmar: Data on internet blocks and internet outages following military coup • Page 1, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://mmlibrary.uwazi.io/en/entity/hf6zi6orwxn/metadata?page=1&file=1653396339367gsmjwsjhuxb.pdf>
67. Internet Censorship in Myanmar (Burma) - OONI Explorer, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://explorer.ooni.org/country/MM>
68. Freedom of Expression Index in Myanmar - Athan, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://athanmyanmar.org/freedom-of-expression-index-in-myanmar/>
69. Athan – We Make Voice, We Hear Voice, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://athanmyanmar.org/>
70. Category: Internet Shutdown - Athan, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://athanmyanmar.org/category/dashboard/internet-shutdown/>
71. Our work - Human Rights Myanmar -, last accessed: May 8, 2026, <https://humanrightsmyanmar.org/work/>

72. Joint Statement by Digital Rights Organizations and Other Civil Society, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
https://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org/pdf/2020-04-Joint-Statement-Calling-on-the-Government-to-end-Censorship_en.pdf
73. Myanmar Digital Coup Quarterly: May 2025 – July 2025 - EngageMedia, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://engagemedia.org/2025/myanmar-digital-coup-quarterly-may-2025-july-2025/>
74. Research reports and blog posts | OONI, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://ooni.org/post/>
75. Myanmar: Freedom on the Net 2021 Country Report, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://freedomhouse.org/country/myanmar/freedom-net/2021>
76. Myanmar: Freedom on the Net 2025 Country Report, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://freedomhouse.org/country/myanmar/freedom-net/2025>
77. Official exchange rate (LCU per US\$, period average) - Myanmar - World Bank Open Data, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/PA.NUS.FCRF?locations=MM>
78. Why is Myanmar's military blocking the internet? | Censorship News - Al Jazeera, last accessed: May 8, 2026,
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/4/myanmar-internet-blackouts>