



# OSAC Country Security Report

## Burma

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*This report is intended to supplement the U.S. Department of State Burma Travel Advisory and [Burma International Travel Information Page](#).*

### Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

#### U.S. Embassy Rangoon

110 University Avenue, Kamayut Township, Rangoon, Burma

Tel: +(95) 1-753-6-509; After-hours Emergency: +(95) 1-753-6-509.

Hours: Monday-Friday, 0800-1630.

### OSAC Country Chapter(s)

The OSAC Burma Country Chapter meets periodically, though not all members can attend in person. RSO provides country briefings upon request to representatives of U.S. businesses, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and faith-based organizations. For questions, contact OSAC's Asia team.

### Burma Travel Advisory

As of the date of this report, the U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) recommends that travelers should not travel to Burma (Myanmar) due to armed conflict, the potential for civil unrest, arbitrary enforcement of local laws, poor health infrastructure, land mines and unexploded ordnance, crime, and wrongful detentions. For further information on the Consular Travel Advisory, please review OSAC's report, [Understanding the Consular Travel Advisory System](#).

### Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Rangoon as being a **LOW**-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Crime "C" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Burma.

The emergency telephone lines are **191** for the fire department, **192** for ambulance and rescue service, and **199** for police. However, these emergency lines are only operational in the major cities of Rangoon, Nay Pyi Taw, and Mandalay.

## Crime: General Threat

Crime rates involving foreigners in Burma remain lower than in many other countries in the region, and violent crime against U.S. citizens is rare. However, since the February 2021 military coup, economic instability and weakened law enforcement have contributed to higher rates of property crime, particularly in urban centers such as Rangoon. Theft, burglary, pickpocketing, and bag snatching are the most reported crimes affecting expatriates and business travelers. However, reliable crime statistics are difficult to obtain due to the absence of a centralized reporting system and limited transparency from local authorities. Most incidents are documented through paper-based reports, making comprehensive analysis challenging.

Violent crime, including armed robbery, remains uncommon but does occur, especially during periods of political unrest. While attacks against foreigners are rare, there have been incidents involving muggings and assaults, particularly late at night. For example, in August 2025, a foreign diplomat sustained minor injuries after being attacked at knifepoint during a robbery near Kandawgyi Lake in Rangoon. Foreigners are advised to exercise the same level of caution in Rangoon and other major cities as they would in any large U.S. city. Take particular care when using taxis late at night, as there have been reported incidents of assaults by taxi drivers. Consider using ride-share apps and avoid traveling alone after dark. In the event of an armed confrontation, immediately surrender any requested property to avoid escalation or injury. Security risks increase in remote or conflict-affected areas, where law enforcement presence is limited.

U.S. private sector personnel should implement standard security precautions, including supervising residential staff, securing valuables, avoiding the display of large sums of cash, and traveling in groups when possible.

## Crime: Areas of Concern

Financial fraud is a significant and growing concern in Burma, with the country emerging as a regional hub for online scam operations. These scams are often orchestrated by transnational criminal organizations operating from loosely regulated border areas where law enforcement presence is limited. Scam centers frequently target both international and domestic victims through a variety of schemes, including phishing, investment fraud, romance scams, and fraudulent job offers. U.S. private sector personnel and organizations may be targeted directly or indirectly through compromised business partners or local contacts.

While Burma remains a predominantly cash-based society, the use of credit cards and electronic payment systems is gradually expanding in urban centers such as Rangoon and Mandalay. However, this shift has also introduced new avenues for financial fraud, including credit card skimming, point-of-sale fraud, and unauthorized electronic transactions. The lack of robust consumer protection laws and limited regulatory oversight further increase the risk of financial loss.

ATMs are available in larger cities but are often unreliable, with frequent outages and cash shortages, especially on local paydays. There have been reports of ATM tampering and card cloning, and some machines may not be equipped with adequate security features.

Other common financial fraud risks in Burma include:

- **Counterfeit Currency:** Circulation of counterfeit banknotes is a persistent problem, particularly in informal exchange markets.
- **Advance Fee Scams:** Fraudsters may solicit advance payments for goods, services, or business opportunities that do not exist.
- **Invoice and Business Email Compromise:** Criminals may intercept or spoof business communications to redirect payments or solicit sensitive financial information.
- **Unlicensed Money Changers:** Using unofficial channels for currency exchange can result in financial loss or legal complications.

Recommendations:

- Use only reputable banks and licensed money changers for financial transactions.
- Avoid sharing sensitive financial information electronically unless using secure, encrypted channels.
- Monitor bank and credit card statements regularly for unauthorized transactions.
- Be cautious of unsolicited business proposals, investment opportunities, or requests for advance payments.
- Educate staff on common fraud schemes and establish internal protocols for verifying payment instructions and business communications.
- Review OSAC's reports, [All That You Should Leave Behind](#), [Hotels: The Inns and Outs](#), [Considerations for Hotel Security](#), [Taking Credit](#), and [Our Two Cents: Petty Crime Basics and How to Minimize the Risk](#).

## Kidnapping Threat

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Kidnapping "K" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Burma. Review OSAC's reports, [Kidnapping: The Basics](#) and [Active Shooter and Kidnapping Response Tips](#).

The risk of kidnapping in Burma is low. However, since the February 2021 military coup, the risk is higher in areas affected by conflict, instability, and limited regime control. U.S. citizens are not routinely targeted, but incidents involving both locals and foreigners have been reported, especially in border regions and areas with active armed groups or criminal organizations.

Most kidnappings are financially motivated and may involve ransom demands. Additionally, large-scale trafficking networks lure foreigners with fraudulent job offers in neighboring

countries like Thailand. Victims are then kidnapped and transported into border regions to work in cyber-scam compounds under coercive and exploitative conditions.

Urban centers such as Rangoon and Mandalay generally present a lower risk of kidnapping. However, the threat may escalate during periods of heightened political unrest or in connection with criminal activity. The risk is significantly higher in remote or conflict-affected areas where non-state armed actors operate with relative impunity.

U.S. private sector personnel should maintain a high level of situational awareness, avoid non-essential travel to high-risk areas, and closely monitor local security developments. It is advisable to vary routines, limit travel after dark, and avoid sharing detailed travel plans. Companies should ensure robust security protocols are in place and maintain regular communication with the U.S. Embassy and local authorities.

## Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Rangoon as a **LOW**-threat location for terrorism directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests. As of January 2026, the Department of State has not included a Terrorism “T” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Burma, reflecting the absence of a significant, organized terrorist threat targeting foreigners, expatriates, or U.S. private sector interests.

### Current Threat Environment

Terrorism in Burma is not a primary concern for foreign businesses or travelers outside the context of ongoing armed conflict. There are no known transnational terrorist organizations, such as al-Qaeda or ISIS, operating in Burma with the intent to target Western interests. The country has not experienced high-profile attacks against foreign nationals, international businesses, or public venues frequented by expatriates.

### Implications for the U.S. Private Sector:

- **Business Operations:** U.S. companies and personnel are not subject to elevated terrorism risk in Burma. Routine security protocols should focus on crime prevention, civil unrest, and emergency preparedness rather than counterterrorism.
- **Travel and Events:** Large gatherings, international conferences, and business events in Rangoon and other major cities do not face heightened terrorism risk, but standard situational awareness and security measures remain advisable.
- **Reputational Risk:** While terrorism is not a significant threat, businesses should remain aware of the broader security environment, including the potential for reputational harm if associated with controversial political or social issues.

### Recommendations:

- Continue to monitor official U.S. government advisories and local news for any changes in the terrorism threat environment.
- Maintain standard security practices, including access control, emergency planning, and staff training.
- Focus risk management efforts on crime, civil unrest, and operational disruption rather than terrorism.
- Remain vigilant in public spaces and report any suspicious activity to local authorities or the U.S. Embassy.

## Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The U.S. Department of State has designated Burma as a **CRITICAL**-threat location for political violence. While most incidents target the military regime and its affiliates, the unpredictable security environment poses indirect risks to foreign nationals, including U.S. private sector personnel. Although official U.S. government interests have not historically been targeted, the potential for collateral harm or operational disruption remains high.

A Civil Unrest “U” Indicator is included on the Travel Advisory for Burma, reflecting the ongoing armed conflict and civil unrest. This includes the potential for demonstrations, protests, and strikes, and the serious risks associated with them. These events can escalate rapidly and without warning, often resulting in road closures, transportation disruptions, and interruptions to essential services such as electricity, internet, and supply chains. Local law enforcement may have limited capacity to respond effectively, particularly during large-scale unrest or in areas where security forces are already stretched thin by ongoing conflict.

The Ministry of Immigration and Population maintains a list of areas off-limits to foreigners and tourists, typically due to ongoing conflict, military operations, or instability. Some regions require “official permission” prior to travel, and these restrictions can change with little notice in response to evolving security conditions. The fluidity of the security environment means that areas previously considered safe may quickly become high-risk.

Additional Concerns for U.S. Private Sector Personnel:

- **Operational Disruption:** Political violence and civil unrest can lead to sudden curfews, government-mandated shutdowns, or the imposition of martial law, all of which can halt business operations, delay projects, and restrict movement. Supply chains may be disrupted, and access to critical infrastructure—including airports, ports, and highways—may be temporarily blocked.
- **Targeted and Indiscriminate Violence:** While foreigners are not typically targeted, there is a risk of being caught in crossfire, bombings, or other violent incidents, especially in urban centers or near government buildings, police stations, or protest sites. The use of

improvised explosive devices (IED) and targeted assassinations have been common tactics since the 2021 coup.

- **Heightened Security Force Presence:** Security forces may establish checkpoints, conduct searches, and enforce movement restrictions, particularly during periods of heightened tension. Foreigners may be subject to increased scrutiny, and any perceived association with political activity can attract unwanted attention.
- **Information Blackouts:** The regime may impose internet or telecommunications blackouts during periods of unrest, severely limiting the ability to communicate, access information, or coordinate emergency responses.
- **Community Tensions:** Civil unrest can exacerbate underlying ethnic, religious, or political tensions, increasing the risk of localized violence or mob activity. Businesses with a high public profile or those perceived as aligned with foreign interests may face reputational risks or become targets of protest.

#### Recommendations:

- Enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program ([STEP](#)) to get important updates and alerts from the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon. Enrolling helps the U.S. Embassy reach you or your designated contact in an emergency.
- Consult the latest travel advisories and government restrictions before planning travel outside major cities.
- Engage local contacts, legal counsel, or security professionals to verify current conditions and obtain necessary permits.
- Avoid travel to restricted or conflict-affected areas unless essential and only with proper authorization.
- Ensure robust communication and emergency plans are in place, including reliable means of contacting your organization and the U.S. Embassy. Maintain a low profile and avoid activities that could be perceived as political or sensitive by local authorities.
- Provide staff with security briefings and contingency plans tailored to the operational environment in Burma.
- Monitor local news, embassy alerts, and social media for real-time updates on unrest or security incidents.
- Prepare for potential disruptions to transportation, utilities, and supply chains, and maintain contingency stocks of essential supplies.
- Carry passport with current visa and other appropriate identification as foreigners may be subject to increased scrutiny.

## Elections/Political Stability

On February 1, 2021, Burma's military overthrew the democratically elected civilian government in a coup d'état, declared a state of emergency, and transferred all executive,

legislative, and judicial authority to the State Administration Council (SAC), led by Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. The coup dissolved all national and sub-national legislatures, forcing many elected officials to flee or face arrest. The regime justified its actions with unproven claims of widespread election fraud, asserting the coup was a legal transfer of power under the 2008 constitution's emergency provisions. The military also targeted labor unions, arresting leaders and members, and declared 16 unions illegal.

In response, members of the deposed parliament formed the Committee Representing the Union Parliament (CRPH) and, later, the self-proclaimed National Unity Government (NUG), both of which reject the legitimacy of the military regime and have called for the restoration of democracy.

The military regime rescinded the nationwide state of emergency on July 31, 2025, dissolving the SAC, but it simultaneously declared a state of emergency and martial law in 63 of Burma's 330 townships across nine states and regions. On October 31, 2025, the regime announced a further 90-day extension of these measures in the affected areas. The regime subsequently conducted multi-phase elections in parts of the country under its control between December 28, 2025, and January 25, 2026. The military-affiliated Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) won 231 of 263 contested seats in the Lower House of parliament, and many in and outside Burma viewed the election as failing to meet standards of free and fair.

### **Security and Operational Environment**

Prior to the 2021 coup, fighting between the military and various ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) and militia forces persisted in several regions, including Kachin, Shan, Rakhine, and Chin States. The coup triggered a nationwide pro-democracy movement, known as the "Spring Revolution," and a civil disobedience movement (CDM) that disrupted government institutions. The regime responded with mass arrests and violent crackdowns, escalating conflict with EAOs and the emergence of People's Defense Force (PDF) groups, some of which are aligned with the NUG and have received training from EAOs.

PDF groups and other anti-regime armed elements have conducted targeted attacks and employed improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in urban areas, including Rangoon, though this activity has declined since late 2025. While civilians, including foreigners, are not directly targeted and efforts are often made to avoid civilian casualties, collateral risks exist for those in proximity to attacks.

Fighting among the regime security forces, EAOs, and militia groups continues in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Shan, Rakhine, Mon, and Chin States, as well as in Mandalay, Sagaing, Magway, Bago, Ayeyarwady, and Tanintharyi Regions. Local PDF groups are active throughout the country, and conflict is not limited to clashes between regime and pro-democracy groups. Travelers and business operations may face isolating events, such as restricted access to highways and airports, imposed by the regime. Travel in border areas with a history of armed conflict is particularly dangerous and should be avoided. While PDFs and EAOs have not demonstrated intent to target U.S. interests, civilians may be caught in crossfire, and some groups have issued

public warnings ahead of planned attacks. Regime security forces may respond to security incidents with escalating retaliatory actions.

Intercommunal conflicts, public demonstrations, and outbreaks of violence continue to pose challenges for U.S. private-sector organizations and could jeopardize U.S. investments and operations, even if not directly targeted. The regime's military and security forces continue to use lethal force against civilians, including artillery and air strikes, establish flash checkpoints leading to arbitrary arrests, detain journalists, and conduct nightly raids against alleged pro-democracy actors.

### **Ethnic and Religious Tensions**

Intercommunal tension remains high in Rakhine State, particularly between the ethnic Rakhine and the Rohingya, a group not officially recognized by the regime and often labeled as illegal immigrants. The Rohingya face institutionalized discrimination, restrictions on movement, and limited access to education, livelihoods, and basic services. Many have fled to neighboring countries. The situation in Rakhine has become more complex due to ongoing conflict between the military and the Arakha Army, with fighting spreading throughout all of Rakhine State and in southern Chin State.

Implications for the U.S. Private Sector:

- **Political Instability:** The ongoing power struggle between the military regime and opposition groups, combined with widespread civil unrest and armed resistance, creates a highly volatile political environment. The risk of sudden policy changes, imposition of martial law, or further states of emergency remains high, particularly in conflict-affected regions.
- **Regulatory Uncertainty:** The absence of a legitimate, functioning civilian government and the regime's approach to governance have resulted in a lack of regulatory clarity. Laws and regulations may change with little notice, and enforcement is often inconsistent or politically motivated.
- **Operational Disruption:** Political violence, protests, and armed conflict can disrupt business operations, supply chains, and transportation networks. The imposition of curfews, movement restrictions, or communication blackouts is possible, especially during periods of heightened tension.
- **Reputational and Compliance Risks:** The regime's ongoing undermining of democratic processes, widespread corruption, and involvement in serious human rights abuses have significantly increased reputational and compliance risks for foreign businesses. U.S. companies operating or partnering in Burma may face heightened scrutiny from regulators, investors, and advocacy groups regarding their activities in the country.
- **Sanctions and Financial Restrictions:** The U.S. and other governments have imposed targeted sanctions on Burmese individuals and entities associated with the regime. U.S. businesses must conduct enhanced due diligence to ensure compliance with all applicable sanctions and avoid inadvertent dealings with restricted parties.

- **Security Environment:** The contested political environment has led to increased security risks, including targeted attacks, arbitrary detention, and harassment of foreigners, particularly those perceived as supporting opposition groups.

#### Recommendations:

- Closely monitor political developments and government announcements, especially regarding elections, states of emergency, curfews, and martial law.
- Engage local legal counsel and security professionals to assess risks and ensure compliance with evolving regulations and sanctions.
- Develop robust contingency plans for operational disruption, including evacuation procedures and alternative supply chain routes.
- Maintain a low profile and avoid public commentary on political issues.
- Provide staff with regular security briefings and updates on the political situation.
- Conduct enhanced due diligence on all business partners and transactions in Burma.
- Avoid large crowds, demonstrations, and political activity, and maintain a high level of situational awareness.
- Review OSAC's report: [Burma's Deteriorating Security Environment](#).

## Protests & Demonstrations

Since the February 2021 military coup d'état, Burma has experienced ongoing and evolving protest activity. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, mass demonstrations disrupted daily life and halted traffic in Rangoon and other major cities. During this period, both pro-democracy groups and the military regime primarily focused their actions on each other, and direct threats to U.S. interests and personnel remained limited.

The regime responded to these demonstrations with a violent crackdown, targeting pro-democracy activists, ethnic groups, and civil society with relative impunity. The formation of the NUG composed of deposed lawmakers and parliamentarians, provided a focal point for the opposition. Early resistance efforts centered on peaceful mass walkouts and civil disobedience, but the military's use of deadly force against unarmed demonstrators led to the emergence of PDF groups by mid-2021. These groups, initially decentralized and lacking unified command, sometimes conducted attacks on non-regime affiliated targets, including public spaces such as shopping malls, bus stops, and gas stations. Over time, many PDF groups have refined their operational guidelines to focus more directly on regime and regime-affiliated targets, such as security forces, ward administrators, informants, and in Rangoon enterprises perceived as supporting the military.

Due to the regime's history of brutal repression, including the use of live ammunition, arbitrary detention, and harsh penalties for unauthorized assembly, the frequency of large-scale protests has declined. However, pro-democracy groups continue to organize small flash-style

demonstrations, which are designed to disperse quickly and minimize the risk of arrest or violence. These events can occur with little warning and may still disrupt local transportation, business operations, and public safety.

Regime security forces routinely arrest demonstrators for protesting without permits, an offense punishable by imprisonment or fines under the Peaceful Assembly Act. The regime has also targeted journalists, bystanders, and anyone suspected of supporting protest activity. On May 26, 2024, for example, security forces in Rangoon fired live rounds at a group of anti-regime protesters who had hung a banner from a railway bridge and burned a copy of the 2008 constitution. The protesters escaped without injury or arrest, but the incident underscored the risks associated with even small-scale demonstrations. In December 2025, regime security forces detained a prominent student protest leader after he and others organized an anti-regime protest in Mandalay

Implications for the U.S. Private Sector:

- **Operational Disruption:** Protests and regime responses can cause sudden road closures, transportation delays, and interruptions to business operations, especially in urban centers.
- **Security Risks:** While U.S. citizens and businesses are not typically targeted, there is a risk of being caught in crossfire, swept up in mass arrests, or affected by collateral violence during protest events.
- **Reputational Risk:** Association—real or perceived—with either side of the conflict can expose businesses to reputational harm, regulatory scrutiny, or targeted actions by regime authorities or opposition groups.
- **Legal Exposure:** Employees participating in or inadvertently present at protest events may face legal consequences, including arrest and detention.
- **Information Blackouts:** The regime may impose internet or telecommunications blackouts during periods of unrest, complicating communication and emergency response.

Recommendations:

- Avoid large crowds, demonstrations, and areas where protest activity is occurring or anticipated.
- Maintain a high level of situational awareness and monitor local news, embassy alerts, and social media for updates on protest activity.
- Instruct staff to avoid participation in political activity and to leave the area immediately if a demonstration begins nearby.
- Develop contingency plans for operational disruption, including alternative transportation routes and communication protocols.

- Provide regular security briefings to staff and ensure all personnel are aware of the risks associated with protests and demonstrations in Burma.
- Review OSAC's report, [Surviving a Protest](#).

## Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

Anti-U.S. and anti-Western sentiment in Burma is a persistent, though often localized challenge for U.S. private sector organizations. Western advocacy on Rohingya and broader human rights issues has fueled perceptions among some segments of the population—and especially among pro-regime actors—of Western bias or interference in Burma's internal affairs. These perceptions are particularly pronounced among groups aligned with the military regime, which often frames Western criticism as an attack on national sovereignty.

A degree of anti-U.S. sentiment is especially evident in the context of U.S.-sanctioned business entities, which are typically controlled by or affiliated with the military regime. These entities may view U.S. companies and their local partners with suspicion, and U.S. business interests may be subject to additional scrutiny, bureaucratic obstacles, or targeted regulatory actions as a result.

Pro-regime groups and individuals actively use social media platforms to disseminate propaganda and disinformation, frequently critical of the United States and other Western countries. These campaigns can amplify negative perceptions, incite hostility toward Western-affiliated organizations or individuals, and occasionally result in online harassment or calls for boycotts. While much of this activity is orchestrated, it can influence public opinion and create reputational risks for U.S. companies.

Editorials and commentary from pro-regime media outlets regularly feature anti-Western messaging, often accusing the U.S. and its allies of supporting opposition groups or undermining Burma's stability. However, these outlets are often even more vocal in their criticism of perceived Chinese interference in Burma's internal affairs, reflecting the regime's complex relationship with both Western and regional powers.

Additional Considerations for U.S. Private Sector Personnel:

- **Reputational Risk:** U.S. companies may be subject to negative publicity, social media campaigns, or public criticism, particularly if their activities are perceived as aligned with U.S. government policy or as supporting opposition groups.
- **Operational Risk:** In areas with strong regime control, U.S. business interests may face increased scrutiny, bureaucratic delays, or targeted enforcement actions.
- **Workplace Environment:** Local staff may be exposed to anti-Western narratives, which could affect morale or create challenges in maintaining a positive work environment.
- **Security Considerations:** While direct threats to U.S. personnel are rare, heightened anti-U.S. sentiment can increase the risk of harassment, protest activity, or vandalism,

especially during periods of political tension or following high-profile U.S. policy announcements.

- **Community Relations:** Building trust with local partners and communities may require additional effort to demonstrate commitment to responsible business practices and respect for local customs and sensitivities.

Recommendations:

- Monitor local media and social media for shifts in sentiment and emerging narratives.
- Maintain a low profile and avoid public commentary on sensitive political issues.
- Provide staff with guidance on responding to anti-U.S. rhetoric and ensure robust communication protocols are in place.
- Engage with local partners and stakeholders to build trust and demonstrate a commitment to ethical and responsible business conduct.
- Prepare contingency plans for reputational or operational challenges arising from anti-U.S. sentiment.

## Law Enforcement

The Myanmar Police Force (MPF) is the primary agency responsible for internal security and operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is led by a military general. The Border Guard Police, a specialized branch of the MPF, is deployed in land-border areas and at checkpoints in regions identified as high-risk for insurgency. The armed forces, under the Ministry of Defense, are responsible for national security, but their focus remains largely internal, targeting pro-democracy groups and ethnic armed organizations. Members of the regime's security forces have been widely reported to commit human rights abuses and other violations across the country.

For the U.S. private sector, several law enforcement-related concerns are notable:

- **Corruption and Bribery:** Enforcement of traffic regulations by MPF Traffic Police is inconsistent and often used as an opportunity to solicit bribes (“tea money”) due to low pay and morale. U.S. personnel should not pay bribes or on-the-spot fines, nor comply with requests for gifts. If pressured, politely request to speak with a supervisor.
- **Interactions with Police:** If detained or questioned by police, U.S. citizens should immediately identify themselves as such and attempt to record the name and badge number of the ranking officer. While police are required to notify the U.S. Embassy when a U.S. citizen is arrested or detained, delays in notification are common.
- **Embassy Assistance:** If arrested or detained, assert your right to consular notification and request to speak with a representative from the U.S. Embassy by calling (95)-1-753-

6-509. The Embassy can liaise with local law enforcement and provide assistance in emergencies.

- Security Force Conduct: The risk of arbitrary enforcement, extortion, and abuse by security forces is elevated, particularly in areas of heightened conflict or during periods of political unrest.

#### Recommendations:

- Avoid offering bribes or gifts to law enforcement officials.
- Remain calm and respectful during all interactions with police or security forces.
- Carry proper identification and, if possible, contact information for the U.S. Embassy at all times.
- Report any incidents of harassment or extortion to your organization's security team and the U.S. Embassy.

## Police Response

Police response in Burma may not meet the expectations of U.S. private sector personnel. Few police officers speak English, and overall police capability, responsiveness, and professionalism are inconsistent with U.S. standards. Police units are frequently underfunded, under-staffed, poorly equipped, and inadequately trained. Corruption is widespread, and many crimes go unreported or uninvestigated.

Since the February 2021 coup, police and regime-affiliated personnel and facilities have become frequent targets of attacks by PDF groups and other pro-democracy actors. In response, regime security forces have installed reinforced barriers around police stations and government buildings to mitigate the threat of explosives and armed assaults. Local government administrators have also been consistently targeted in assassination attempts. There have been multiple reports of MPF officers being ambushed by PDF groups while responding to incidents, resulting in casualties on both sides.

#### Implications for U.S. Private Sector:

- Police response times may be slow, and investigations into crimes affecting foreigners may be limited or inconclusive.
- Security at police stations and government buildings is heightened, and these locations may be at increased risk of attack.
- U.S. personnel should avoid police and government facilities during periods of unrest and remain aware of the potential for violence in the vicinity of such sites.

- Reliance on private security measures and robust internal protocols is strongly recommended.

## Transportation Security

### Road Safety

Road conditions in Burma present significant challenges for drivers, particularly outside major cities. While major routes like the Rangoon-Mandalay Expressway have seen improvements, most roads remain undermaintained, poorly lit, and may be impassable after heavy rains. Outside Rangoon, roads are typically narrow, lack proper paving and grading, and often do not have shoulders or lighting. Driving under these conditions, especially at night, increases the risk of serious accidents and isolation in the event of a breakdown.

The rainy season (May–October) exacerbates these risks, with mud, deep potholes, flooding, and poor visibility frequently hampering safe travel. Drivers should use high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicles, plan routes carefully, and avoid travel after dark. When traveling to remote areas, redundant transportation options and vehicle recovery equipment are recommended.

Rangoon's streets have become increasingly congested. Inadequate infrastructure, narrow roads, and a high number of inexperienced drivers contribute to frequent traffic jams and erratic driving behavior. Common hazards include drivers ignoring right-of-way, making sudden lane changes, and overtaking into oncoming traffic. Pedestrians, animals, and street vendors often share the road, further increasing risks.

U.S. driver's licenses are not recognized in Burma; an international driver's license is valid for only one year. By law, there is zero tolerance for alcohol while driving, but drunk and drug-impaired driving—especially among commercial drivers—remains a significant concern, particularly at night and during festivals.

Pedestrian safety is a significant concern in Burma. Many pedestrians walk in the roadway, often wearing dark clothing, making them difficult to see—especially at night. Local drivers frequently use high beams or, conversely, drive without headlights, further reducing visibility. These factors, combined with erratic driving behaviors, create hazardous conditions for pedestrians. U.S. citizens have been seriously injured or killed as pedestrians hit by vehicles, often after dark or when drivers violated traffic laws. Pedestrians should exercise extreme caution, maintain a high level of situational awareness, and never assume vehicles will yield the right of way.

Motorbikes are officially banned in Rangoon; however, enforcement is less strict in outlying townships than in the city center, and some motorbikes are still present throughout the city. Electric bikes, many lacking proper lighting or safety features, are also common in these areas.

Bicycling is hazardous due to poor road conditions and unpredictable traffic patterns. Always give motorbikes and cyclists ample space and remain alert to their presence.

Fuel stations and police assistance are limited outside major towns and cities. Motorists should plan accordingly, ensuring vehicles are roadworthy and carrying sufficient fuel and emergency supplies. Roadside assistance is generally unavailable.

Vehicles drive on the right side of the road, as in the United States. However, many vehicles have the steering wheel positioned on the right side (imported from Thailand or Japan). The “right of way” concept is generally respected, but military convoys and motorcades always have precedence. Many vehicles lack functioning seat belts. Child car seats are not widely available.

Most accidents are resolved on-site, with the party at fault expected to pay damages. In accidents involving pedestrians, the driver is typically considered at fault and may face fines or arrest, regardless of circumstances.

#### Recommendations:

- Avoid driving outside major cities after dark.
- Use only roadworthy, well-maintained vehicles and consider hiring experienced local drivers.
- Always wear seat belts and ensure vehicles are equipped with safety features.
- Remain alert for erratic drivers, pedestrians, and animals on the road.
- Do not hitchhike or pick up hitchhikers.
- Park in secure, well-lit areas and keep windows up and doors locked.
- Carry proper documentation, emergency supplies, and contact information for assistance.
- Review OSAC’s reports, [Road Safety Abroad](#), [Driving Overseas: Best Practices](#), and [Evasive Driving Techniques](#); and read the U.S. Department of State’s [webpage on driving and road safety abroad](#).

## Public Transportation Safety

Public transportation—including taxis, buses, and trains—is widely available in Rangoon and some other parts of Burma. However, most buses and trains are overcrowded, aging, and often poorly maintained, which can present safety and reliability concerns.

In Rangoon, taxis and ride-sharing apps such as Grab are generally considered the most reliable forms of public transportation. While taxis are typically safe, many vehicles are in poor condition and may lack seatbelts. Exercise caution when using taxis late at night. To avoid

disputes or overcharging, always negotiate the fare with the driver before departure. Assess the driver's condition; if the driver appears impaired by alcohol or drugs, seek another taxi.

If a curfew is in effect, taxis become increasingly scarce as curfew approaches. It is advisable to return to your residence one to two hours before curfew, as curfew times may change with little notice.

U.S. private sector personnel should avoid using overcrowded or poorly maintained public transportation whenever possible and prioritize safety and situational awareness when traveling.

## Aviation Concerns

There is no direct commercial air service between the United States and Burma, and no Burmese-registered carriers operate flights to the U.S. Consequently, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not assessed the Government of Burma's Civil Aviation Authority for compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards. The safety oversight of civil aviation in Burma remains unverified by U.S. authorities.

U.S. private sector personnel should exercise caution when selecting local or regional carriers. It is advisable to review the [FAA safety assessment page](#) for the most current information, consult OSAC's report [Security in Transit: Airplanes, Public Transport, and Overnights](#) and consider the [European Union Air Safety List](#) when planning air travel in Burma.

## Maritime Security

Mariners planning travel to Burma should check for U.S. maritime advisories and alerts at [MARAD](#). Information may also be posted to the [U.S. Coast Guard homeport website](#), and the [NGA broadcast warnings](#).

## Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in Burma, review the local laws and circumstances on the Department of State's Country Information Page.

- [Women Travelers](#)
- [Gay and Lesbian Travelers](#)
- [Accessibility Needs](#)
- [Studying Abroad](#)
- [Faith-Based Travel](#)

## Rule of Law, Arbitrary Detention, Official Harassment, Corruption, & Transparency

The U.S. Department of State has assigned a Risk of Wrongful Detention “D” Indicator to its Travel Advisory for Burma, reflecting the ongoing risk that U.S. nationals may be wrongfully detained by Burmese authorities.

Despite international monitoring of atrocities committed by all sides in the conflict, there is near-total impunity for past and ongoing abuses by the regime. There is no credible evidence that the regime has prosecuted or punished officials responsible for human rights violations, except in cases involving politically motivated charges against pro-democracy or opposition supporters. The military regime faces credible allegations of serious human rights abuses against multiple minority groups, particularly in Chin, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Shan, and Rakhine States.

There are also credible reports that some EAOs and PDF groups have committed human rights abuses, including killings, disappearances, physical abuse, degrading treatment, and failure to protect local populations in conflict zones. Such abuses rarely result in investigations or prosecutions.

Corruption is pervasive at all levels of government and remains a significant barrier to commerce and investment. Petty extortion by police is common, while more serious graft—including demands for bribes to initiate or pursue criminal investigations—occurs at higher levels. The judicial system is particularly susceptible to corruption, with decisions often influenced by personal relationships or bribes rather than the rule of law.

U.S. businesses should conduct enhanced due diligence, especially in light of U.S. and international sanctions, before entering into contracts or business arrangements with Burma-based firms or individuals. Refer to the [Supplemental Business Advisory Highlighting Continued Risks](#) involved in conducting business in Burma for further guidance.

Beyond the security environment, U.S. firms cite the lack of clarity in the regime’s commercial laws and regulations, inadequate infrastructure (notably unreliable electricity), and a non-transparent, protectionist import permit system as major impediments to doing business. The legal system is antiquated, with vague and outdated legislation that is frequently subject to manipulation.

The limitations of rule of law and lack of transparency present significant challenges for U.S. private sector organizations operating in Burma.

## Health Concerns

In the event of a medical emergency in Burma, dial **192**. Most medical facilities in the country do not meet Western standards and are generally inadequate for routine or emergency care. Even in major cities, quality medical services are limited, and advanced diagnostic and treatment options are often unavailable. In Rangoon, a few private hospitals—such as International SOS Clinic, Ar Yu International Hospital, and Grand Hantha International Hospital—offer modern equipment and locally trained physicians, but trauma care and specialized services remain extremely limited. In rural areas, healthcare workers often lack sufficient professional training, and there are frequent reports of misdiagnosis, improper treatment, and the use of inappropriate medications.

Burma remains predominantly a cash-based society. While some private facilities in Rangoon accept credit cards, most healthcare providers require payment in cash before delivering services. Foreigners may be charged higher rates than residents for most treatments.

Ambulance services are generally unreliable or unavailable. Most ambulances lack modern equipment and trained paramedics. In serious emergencies, it is often safer and faster to use a taxi or private vehicle to reach the nearest major hospital rather than wait for an ambulance.

Patients admitted to public hospitals usually need a family member or friend to assist with their care, including providing food and purchasing medical supplies. Few medical personnel have training that meets U.S. standards.

There is no dedicated medical air ambulance or helicopter service in Burma. Medical evacuations (medevac) can be delayed due to the need for diplomatic approval, and most flights originate from Bangkok or Singapore, using only major international airports. Medevac costs can be substantial, so travelers should purchase comprehensive medevac insurance before arrival and ensure their policy provides adequate coverage. Group travelers should ensure others know how to access their insurance information in case of incapacity.

Infrastructure in much of Chin State, as well as parts of Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Rakhine, Shan, and Tanintharyi States, is poor and limited. Travelers experiencing a medical emergency in these areas will face significant challenges in obtaining adequate treatment and arranging timely evacuation.

You can find contact information for available medical services and air ambulance providers on the U.S. Embassy [website](#). The U.S. Department of State strongly recommends purchasing international health insurance before traveling abroad. Please review the Department's [webpage](#) on health insurance overseas for guidance and resources.

The U.S. Department of State has assigned a Health “H” Indicator to the Travel Advisory for Burma, signaling the presence of health risks such as disease outbreaks or disruptions to the country's medical infrastructure. Travelers should review the U.S. Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention (CDC) country-specific [Travel Health Notices](#) for up-to-date information on health issues affecting travelers, including disease outbreaks, special events, and natural disasters.

See OSAC's [Guide to U.S. Government-Assisted Evacuations](#); review OSAC's reports, [The Healthy Way, Shaken: The Don'ts of Alcohol Abroad](#), [Health 101: How to Prepare for Travel](#), and [Fire Safety Abroad](#); and visit the U.S. Department of State's webpage on [Your Health Abroad](#) for more information.

## Vaccinations

Travelers should consult a physician prior to departure to ensure they have all recommended vaccines, immunizations, and necessary health precautions for Burma. Recommended vaccinations include cholera, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, rabies, typhoid, yellow fever, and COVID-19. Malaria is present in border and rural areas, so appropriate prophylaxis and preventive measures should be considered.

Review the CDC [Travelers' Health](#) site for country-specific vaccine recommendations.

## Issues Traveling with Medications

Visitors should bring an adequate supply of all necessary medications, as the quality and availability of pharmaceuticals in Burma are inconsistent. Counterfeit drugs remain a significant problem, and while a few reputable pharmacies exist, name-brand prescription medications are rare and often in short supply. There is a substantial risk of encountering products of questionable quality. Travelers are strongly advised to bring all required medications for the duration of their stay.

If traveling with prescription medication, check with the official [guidance](#) to ensure that the medication is legal in Burma. Always carry your prescription medication in original packaging with your doctor's prescription.

Review OSAC's report, [Traveling with Medication](#).

## Water Quality

Tap water in Burma is considered unsafe for consumption. Travelers are at high risk for travelers' diarrhea and other waterborne illnesses. To minimize health risks, only drink bottled or properly disinfected water, and avoid using tap water for brushing teeth or making ice. Consume food that is thoroughly cooked and served hot. Safe beverage options include ice made from bottled or disinfected water, carbonated drinks, hot coffee or tea, and pasteurized milk.

Oral rehydration solution is recommended for severe cases of diarrhea and is generally available in local pharmacies. U.S. private sector personnel should ensure access to safe drinking water and follow food and water safety guidelines at all times.

Review OSAC's report, [I'm Drinking What in My Water?](#)

## Natural Disasters

During the rainy season (May–October), street flooding is widespread throughout Burma. Low-lying villages are particularly vulnerable, often experiencing significant floods that can lead to food shortages and increased health risks. Gastrointestinal illnesses and related hospitalizations rise during this period. Rangoon, in particular, lacks adequate drainage and infrastructure to manage storm water runoff, resulting in frequent flash flooding in low-lying areas and along major thoroughfares. Heavy rains can also down power lines, creating electrocution hazards—avoid areas with downed lines.

A prolonged rainy season can exacerbate public health concerns. For example, in 2017, extended rainfall contributed to one of the worst dengue fever outbreaks in recent history.

Cyclones are another significant risk, with peak seasons in May and November. Intense rainfall is common from June to October, often causing severe travel disruptions. Travelers should prepare for cyclone emergencies, monitor local news, and be aware of the Myanmar Department of Meteorology and Hydrology's color-coded storm warning system: red (approaching landfall), orange (moving toward Burma), yellow (developing storms), and brown (current storms). Cyclones and heavy storms can overwhelm already weak infrastructure, leading to widespread disruption.

Burma is also seismically active, with major earthquake fault lines present. On March 28, 2025, a powerful 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck central Burma, causing widespread destruction and significant loss of life. The earthquake resulted in over 3,700 fatalities and extensive damage to infrastructure in affected regions, including collapsed buildings, disrupted transportation, and power outages. Emergency response and recovery efforts were hampered by ongoing instability and limited resources. U.S. private sector personnel should ensure that contingency plans account for the risk of major earthquakes and the potential for prolonged disruptions to essential services and infrastructure.

Review OSAC's report, [Earthquake Preparedness Toolkit](#).

## Cybersecurity

The quality, reliability, and security of telecommunications infrastructure in Burma have been significantly degraded by underinvestment, regime-imposed internet and telecommunication restrictions, as well as ongoing armed conflict. Many conflict-affected areas lack internet or mobile network service entirely, while service in larger cities is generally more reliable but

remains vulnerable to disruption. Secure internet access is limited, heightening cybersecurity and privacy risks for all users, including businesses.

Since 2021, regime authorities have exercised physical and regulatory control over key telecommunications infrastructure, frequently slowing, interrupting, blocking, or otherwise controlling access to the internet and telecommunication services. In May 2024, authorities began blocking certain virtual private networks (VPN) services, which are commonly used to enhance online security and privacy. In 2025, Burma's military regime enacted the country's first Cybersecurity Law. Although the law does not explicitly prohibit the use of VPNs, there have been credible reports of authorities conducting stop-and-search operations to check individuals' phones for VPN applications. These actions are reportedly used to extort money and intimidate the public.

All users should regularly review their privacy and security settings and avoid accessing or sharing politically sensitive content while in country. Posting or transmitting sensitive messages, statements, or images could result in criminal liability under regime laws.

Burma is also a major hub for sophisticated "cyber scam" centers, many of which are operated by transnational criminal organizations and often double as casinos. These centers are typically located in border areas with limited law enforcement presence and are known to target victims globally, including within Burma. Common tactics include online contact followed by financial fraud, trafficking in persons, or narcotics smuggling. Individuals should avoid travel to areas known for scam centers and exercise heightened vigilance against cyber scams, including suspicious emails, text messages, social media contacts, and unsolicited offers of employment, investment, or travel.

In May 2025, the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed sanctions on the Karen National Army (KNA) for its role in facilitating cybercrime against Americans, including laundering proceeds from scams conducted throughout Southeast Asia.

#### Recommendations:

- Use secure, encrypted communications whenever possible.
- Regularly update privacy and security settings on all devices and accounts.
- Avoid accessing or sharing politically sensitive content online.
- Remain vigilant for cyber scams and suspicious online communications.
- Consult with your organization's IT and security teams to ensure robust cybersecurity protocols are in place.
- Review OSAC's reports, [Cybersecurity Basics](#), [Best Practices for Maximizing Security on Public Wi-Fi](#), [Traveling Abroad with Mobile Devices](#), and [Guide for Overseas Satellite Phone Usage](#).

## Counter-intelligence Issues

Government interest in the activities of foreigners in Burma remains high. Visitors engaged in sensitive political or commercial business should assume that authorities may monitor their activities, particularly in public places. The regime controls the country's telephone network and internet providers, enabling interception of calls, emails, and other electronic communications. Depending on the level of government interest, surveillance techniques may be employed.

U.S. private-sector organizations should operate under a "no expectation of privacy" policy. This environment complicates discussions of proprietary or sensitive information. All financial and personal data should be protected, and business or travel plans should not be discussed in open venues. Remain alert to any unusual surveillance or activity near frequently visited locations, and vary routes and times of commute to reduce predictability.

Exercise caution when using social media platforms, avoiding political statements or commentary that could be perceived as critical of the military regime. Minimize your digital footprint, especially regarding political content, as such information could be used against you under local laws.

## Import/Export Restrictions

The ruling military regime's onerous import licensing and foreign currency conversion rules limit companies' ability to import goods, including intermediate goods for local production, or repatriate profits from exports, overseas sales, and asset liquidations. Imports to Burma now require one of a limited number of import licenses, the requirements for which change frequently and present considerable spoilage risk to companies importing products with a limited shelf-life or requiring uninterrupted cold-chain storage.

Importing unmanned aerial systems (drones) into Burma without prior government authorization is strictly prohibited. Flying drones in sensitive areas, including government buildings, tourist sites, and religious structures, can result in criminal penalties, including imprisonment and permanent confiscation of the equipment. The definition of "sensitive areas" is often unclear, making recreational drone use inadvisable. Several foreigners, including a U.S. citizen, have been imprisoned for operating drones in restricted locations. Anyone considering bringing a drone to Burma should seek official permission from the regime in advance.

U.S. private sector personnel should also exercise caution regarding unsolicited business opportunities, especially those that appear unusually lucrative. Be wary of merchants offering gems, gold, or semi-precious stones; purchasing such items can result in significant financial loss and may violate local or international laws. Only purchase gems or minerals from licensed sources.

For a comprehensive list of items and goods prohibited or restricted for export, consult the U.S. International Trade Agency [website](#). Additional information on scams is available from the [Department of State](#) and the [FBI](#).

*Additional resources and reports can be found in the [OSAC Traveler Toolkit](#).*