

# ONE YEAR AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE IN MYANMAR

## FONDEMOS' VIEW:



KEYSTONE - STRINGER

**One year ago today, Myanmar was struck by a powerful earthquake that left at least 3,600 people dead and more than 5,000 injured.**

Infrastructure and communication networks were severely damaged, and the delivery of vital supplies was seriously disrupted, plunging the affected areas into **a major humanitarian crisis.**

The international humanitarian response was swiftly mobilised, and the post-earthquake addendum to the UN's 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) estimated that **\$275 million in funding**

was required to meet the needs of over a million people.

This earthquake has plunged Myanmar deeper into a **humanitarian crisis that has been unfolding against a backdrop of persistent political instability** since the military coup of February 1st 2021: as early as April 1st, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was warning of a lack of drinking water, shelter and medicines.

Although the military quickly sought international aid, numerous reports and testimonies have highlighted **obstacles to the delivery of this aid and unequal access depending on military interests.** In this context, humanitarian aid has largely been **instrumentalized** by the regime, which has seized upon it to present itself as a **legitimate and indispensable actor.** The limitations of the international response were laid bare.

Whilst a large part of the population remained deprived of assistance, the access and distribution mechanisms controlled or influenced by the military authorities **contributed to strengthening the junta's power.** The junta then

sought to convert this imposed centralisation into **political legitimacy.**

*A year later, the junta continues its quest for legitimacy by holding elections in early 2026. International attention is waning, whilst the Burmese population continues to face the consequences of the earthquake, war and political violence.*

The 2026 HNRP reports 16.2 million people in need and \$890 million required to meet those needs. The decline in needs identified by OCHA reflects **less an improvement in the humanitarian situation than a questionable UN framework and prioritisation choices that underestimate the true scale of the needs.** To date, OCHA's response plan remains one of the most underfunded, whilst **the junta continues to stoke fear.**

**Not forgetting Myanmar also means refusing to allow the junta to turn the disaster into an instrument of power.**