

Snapshot: Information environment in post-earthquake Myanmar

August 2025

In March 2025, a [7.7 magnitude earthquake](#) hit Myanmar and Thailand. Communities affected by the earthquake in Myanmar were already grappling with armed conflict, displacement and digital repression, leading to a deteriorating information environment.

Many communities urgently need trusted information to access humanitarian aid, but remain cut off. In this fertile ground for harmful narratives, misinformation, disinformation and hate speech are spreading fear, distrust and violence across social media platforms. An under-resourced local media struggles to bridge these gaps amid dwindling financial support.

This snapshot outlines the current state of the information environment in Myanmar for humanitarians, from interviews with local Myanmar organisations, journalists and in consultation with [CDAC Network's](#) Myanmar harmful information Community of Practice. It outlines recommendations for strengthening information gaps, as well as improving trust and humanitarian response.

Key takeaways

- ➔ **Information gaps:** People are uncertain about who is eligible, where aid is distributed, and by whom.
- ➔ **Eroding trust:** International agencies seen as opaque; locals more trusted but fragile.
- ➔ **Harmful narratives:** Rumours about aid, ethnicity and political alignment fuel fear.
- ➔ **Weak coordination:** No safe mechanisms for media-humanitarian collaboration.
- ➔ **Fragile solutions:** Community radio, rumour tracking and offline tools work, but lack support.

Status of information access and barriers

- ➔ **Connectivity is fragmented:** Some areas use Starlink hubs or informal networks, but access can be costly. Many face deliberate shutdowns by military or resistance.
 - ‘2,000 kyat for one hour of Starlink.’ – Myanmar Now
- ➔ **Analogue lifelines:** Shortwave radio and satellite TV matter but remain underfunded.
- ➔ **Barriers:** Language gaps (few minority-language broadcasts), displacement into hard-to-reach areas and security risks at checkpoints.
- ➔ **Adaptation under pressure:** VPNs, encrypted apps, citizen journalism. But repression evolves
 - ‘Pro-military Telegram channels are doxing activists.’ – DVB

Harmful information trends

→ What narratives are we seeing?

- Disaster rumours (aftershock fears).
- Aid rumours (e.g., claims that World Food Programme (WFP) biscuits are unsafe).
- Pro-military propaganda (regime as stabiliser).
- Distrust of aid as politicised or captured.

→ Platforms spread harmful narratives: Telegram is a major hub—fake pages gain thousands of followers in hours. Content is cross-posted to Facebook, TikTok, YouTube.

→ Humanitarian impacts:

- Panic, misinformation-driven displacement, rejection of lifesaving aid.
- Humanitarians exposed in pro- and anti-regime narratives.
- Legitimacy crisis: ‘People believe the opposite of state media—it’s almost satire.’ – Civil society actor

Community needs and trust

→ Information gaps: People want clarity on how and why aid is targeted. International NGO press releases seen as vague, sanitised.

- ‘We want more than stats—we want voices of the people.’ – Independent media

→ Trust crisis: NGOs/UN seen as distant and opaque. Local media and community-based organisations viewed as responsive but lack resources.

- ‘Locals don’t trust the big agencies. How can they provide for people they’ve never spoken to?’ – Journalist

→ Risk and safety: Convoys targeted after online disclosures. Silence can breed suspicion.

- ‘If everyone wants 100% safety, nothing gets done. People are dying.’ – Exile media

Coordination gaps

→ Parallel systems: Media and humanitarian actors operate separately, fuelling perceptions of selective aid.

- ‘It only reaches people recommended by SAC or NUG.’ – Exile media member

→ Feedback breakdowns: Mechanisms exist but are underfunded and fragmented.

- ‘We’re collecting all this feedback—but where does it go? Who hears it?’ – UN staffer

→ Operational risk: Lack of visibility fuels rumours and mistrust.

- ‘If humanitarian actors don’t tell us what’s happening, how can we counter the lies?’ – Media respondent

Recommendations

1. Media-humanitarian collaboration

- Establish secure channels (e.g., Signal groups, joint working spaces).
- Embed info officers in media hubs during crises.
- Plan joint rumour responses.

2. Strengthen local verification and media literacy

- Fund ethnic and regional media to lead fact-checking.
- Expand youth/women's fact-checking networks.
- Integrate rumour-detection into community journalism training

3. Reinvest in offline communication

- Expand shortwave radio and multilingual daily broadcasts.
- Distribute hand-crank/solar radios.
- Use storytelling formats (dramas, interviews) for health/protection.

4. Protect crisis documentation

- Train volunteers in safe documentation, safeguarding and first aid.
- Share data privately with trusted actors.
- Strengthen anonymisation protocols.

What needs to change?

Myanmar's information environment is collapsing under conflict, repression and resource cuts. Communities urgently need trusted, accessible information to make safe decisions. Local actors are already providing solutions—fragile, invisible and at risk of disappearing. Without immediate investment in information as aid, humanitarians risk losing legitimacy, access and the trust of the very people they aim to serve.

- Treat communication as aid—invest in localised, trusted channels.
- Resource local verification networks—media, youth, volunteers.
- Foster safe collaboration between humanitarian and media actors.