



A Rohingya woman sits by her destroyed house at Ohn Taw Chay refugee camp in Sittwe on May 16, 2023, in the aftermath of Cyclone Mocha's landfall.  
● SAI AUNG MAIN/AFP

# Cyclone Mocha death toll rises to 60 in Myanmar

The death toll in cyclone-hit Myanmar rose to 60 on Tuesday, according to local leaders and junta-backed media, as villagers tried to piece together ruined homes and waited for aid and support.

Packing winds of up to 195 kilometres (120 miles) per hour, Mocha made landfall

on Sunday, downing power pylons and smashing wooden fishing boats to splinters. In Rakhine state, at least 41 people died in the villages of Bu Ma and nearby Khaung Doke Kar, inhabited by the persecuted Rohingya Muslim minority, local leaders told AFP reporters at the scene. Thirteen people were killed

when a monastery collapsed in a village in Rathedaung township north of Rakhine's capital Sittwe, and a woman died when a building collapsed in a neighbouring village, according to Myanmar state broadcaster MRTV. "There will be more deaths, as more than a hundred people are missing," said

Karlo, the head of Bu Ma village near Sittwe. Mocha was the most powerful cyclone to hit the area in over a decade, churning up villages, uprooting trees and knocking out communications across much of Rakhine state. China said it was "willing to provide emergency disaster

relief assistance", according to a statement on the Facebook page of its embassy in Myanmar. The United Nations refugee office said it was investigating reports that Rohingya living in displacement camps had been killed in the storm. It was "working to start rapid needs assessments in

hard-hit areas" of Rakhine state, it added. The Rohingya are denied citizenship and healthcare, and require permission to travel outside of their villages in western Rakhine state. Many others live in camps after being displaced by decades of ethnic conflict in the state.

# Air strikes, artillery fire escalate as factions battle in Sudan capital



A screen grab shows black smoke and fire at Omdurman market in Omdurman, Sudan, on May 15, 2023.

● VIDEO OBTAINED BY REUTERS

Air strikes and artillery fire intensified sharply across Sudan's capital early on Tuesday, residents said, as the army sought to defend key bases from paramilitary rivals it has

been fighting for more than a month. The air strikes, explosions and clashes could be heard in the south of Khartoum, and there was heavy shelling across the River Nile in parts of the adjoining cities of Bahri and Omdurman, witnesses said. The fighting between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has triggered unrest in other areas of Sudan, especially in the western region of Darfur, but is concentrated in Khartoum.

It has caused a humanitarian crisis that threatens to destabilise the region, displacing more than 700,000 people inside Sudan and forcing about 200,000 to flee into neighbouring countries. Those who have remained in the capital are struggling to survive as food supplies dwindle, health services collapse and lawlessness spreads. Officials have recorded 676 deaths and more than 5,500 injuries, but the real toll is expected to be far higher with many reports

of bodies left in the streets and people struggling to bury the dead. "The situation is unbearable. We left our house to go to a neighbour's house in Khartoum, escaping from the war, but the bombardment follows us wherever we go," said Ayman Hassan, a 32-year-old resident. "We don't know what the citizens did to deserve a war in the middle of the houses." Fighting has surged both in Khartoum and in Geneina, capital of West

Darfur, since the two warring parties began talks in Jeddah brokered by Saudi Arabia and the United States more than a week ago. The talks have produced a statement of principles about providing access for aid supplies and protecting civilians, but mechanisms for setting up humanitarian corridors and agreeing to a ceasefire are still being discussed. Both sides had previously announced several ceasefires, none of which stopped the fighting.



REUTERS - The United Arab Emirates has invited Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to the COP28 climate summit it is hosting at the end of the year. The invitation was extended by UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, Syrian state news agency SANA reported after the UAE Embassy in Damascus tweeted the same. "COP28 is committed to an inclusive COP process that produces transformational solutions," a COP28 spokesperson said in a statement emailed to Reuters. "This can only happen if we have everyone in the room." Thousands of world leaders, diplomats and dignitaries are expected to attend the summit in Dubai in December.

## Trump cards of...

The outcomes of these elections have consequential impacts for international relations.

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In the parliamentary elections, a notable development occurred as a formidable coalition supporting Erdogan and the Justice and Development Party secured a substantial majority of seats. This victory demonstrates the enduring popularity and broad social base of the ruling party among Turkish voters. Additionally, the Nationalist Movement Party, in alliance with the ruling party, played a crucial role in garnering significant voter support for Erdogan's presidential campaign. Previously, Erdogan's opposition had announced their intention to transition to a parliamentary system from the current presidential system. However, if Kilicdaroglu emerges victorious in the second round, they would face consid-

erable obstacles in realizing this goal due to unfavorable parliamentary dynamics. The fiercely contested elections, characterized by intense competition between the main presidential contenders, and the high turnout emphasize the urgent need for Turkey to embark on transformative journeys in domestic and foreign policies. This need for change remains even if Erdogan is re-elected.

**In your opinion, which of the two candidates who made it to the run-off has a better chance of being elected?**

The outcome of the run-off election hinges on several factors that influence the candidates' success. Firstly, the strategic deployment of new tactics by each contender and their trump cards significantly impact their appeal to the electorate. Secondly, their ability to effectively engage and resonate with influential social groups plays a pivotal role. Lastly, the lev-

el of turnout in the second round serves as a key determinant. In polarized elections, candidates with a stronger and more cohesive social foundation have a greater chance of success. The Justice and Development Party, over the past two decades, has cultivated a robust cadre, consolidating their social base. Incumbency and familiarity among the public further bolster Erdogan's prospects. Turkish nationalists and traditional Islamists continue to rally behind Erdogan, strengthening his position. On the other hand, Erdogan's opposition finds itself in a favorable position, displaying remarkable unity. Diverse factions, including left-wing and moderate right-wing voices, moderate Islamists, and staunch secularists have vociferously expressed their opposition to Erdogan. The support garnered from the Kurdish community for Kilicdaroglu provides an additional advantage. The awaited declaration of Sinan

Ogan's stance is a consequential factor in the run-off. Ogan, the third candidate, has the power to sway the electoral landscape. If Ogan endorses Kilicdaroglu, Erdogan's position will become considerably more precarious. However, it is important to note that Ogan is recognized as one of Erdogan's adversaries, and when his votes are combined with Kilicdaroglu's, the cumulative tally of Erdogan's opponents slightly surpasses his first-round votes.

**Given Turkey's history of abrupt changes in power dynamics and toppling of governments, often through non-democratic means such as coups, is there a possibility of similar events occurring following the announcement of election results?** Prior to the election, concerns arose about potential unrest and conflicts if the defeated candidate rejected the results, leading to protests. Now a run-off would determine the winner,

this has effectively mitigated the possibility of any post-election unrest. Several factors contribute to a sense of confidence: the initial round of the election saw robust electoral turnout, instilling trust in the adherence to legal frameworks, and this integrity is expected to continue. Turkey's electoral process has showcased a democratic model that eases concerns about its integrity. Additionally, the unity displayed by Erdogan's opposition front has bolstered the overall democratic attitude. The opposition front's intellectual diversity has led to perceptions of potential challenges in establishing a centralized management system like Erdogan's, raising concerns about their effectiveness in navigating the political landscape. However, a new school of thought advocates for political pluralism in Turkey. Critics of Erdogan's authoritarian style view the intellectual diversity within the opposition as a

valuable asset, highlighting the principles of political pluralism and emphasizing democratic tenets.

**Finally, how do you think the victory of either candidate would affect relations between Turkey and Iran?**

The presidential candidates Erdogan and Kilicdaroglu have centered their campaign on Turkey's national interests, with little expected change in the foreign policy trajectory regardless of the election's outcome. While tactics and priorities may differ, Turkey's foreign policy is determined by its own interests and security. As a result, the election should not be seen as an immediate resolution to shared interests and tensions between Iran and Turkey, as bilateral relations between the two nations are deeply rooted. However, the complexity of their relationship may require a redefinition to adapt to changing circumstances.