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In the run-up to the 2015 election, constitutional change and the resolution of ethnic and religious conflicts remain elusive.

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Myanmar (Burma) Today

Following political and economic reforms, sanctions have been dropped and the world is now eager to engage with Myanmar, which for nearly 50 years has borne international isolation. Some changes have been momentous but they cannot mask the toxic problems still plaguing the country, including ethnic and religious conflicts, human rights abuses and a flawed constitution that, if it remains unamended, diminishes the chances of a democratic result in the 2015 general election.

Best in Print

Golden Parasol

(Wendy Law-Yone; 2013) Yone's fascinating memoir provides an insider's view on key events in modern Myanmar's history; her father, Ed Law-Yone, an influential newspaper editor, was exiled from the country in the 1960s.

Burma/Myanmar: What Everyone Needs to Know

(David I Steinberg; 2013) Make sure you get the updated second edition of this essential primer on Myanmar.

Best in Film

Kayan Beauties

(2013; www.kayanbeauties.com) Thriller about four Kayan girls who travel from their village to Taunggyi, where one of them gets kidnapped by human traffickers.

Youth of Yangon

(2013; <http://vimeo.com/ondemand/youthofyangon>) Beautifully shot 12-minute documentary about Yangon's tiny skateboarding community and the struggles they face pursuing their passion.

Yangon Calling

(2013; www.yangoncalling.com) Documentary about Myanmar's punk rock scene directed by Berlin-based filmmakers Alexander Druzak and Carsten Piefke.

Asean Chair 2014

'Now is Myanmar's time in the sun,' went the narration for a promotional film screened in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei's capital, in October 2013, as President Thein Sein accepted his nation's role as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean). When the chance last came around in 2006 to lead the regional power bloc, Myanmar was skipped over amid fears that non-Asean countries would boycott meetings in a nation run by a military junta that brutally suppressed its people.

Thein Sein's reforms since the elections of 2010 blew away such concerns. By-elections in April 2012 saw a landslide victory for National League for Democracy (NLD) candidates including Aung San Suu Kyi, who is now a member of the national parliament and de facto leader of the opposition. The economy is developing rapidly as foreign investors rush to gain a foothold in a market largely cut off from the world for nearly half a century. The easing of censorship has witnessed an explosion in new media, largely unafraid to document the country's multiple failings as well as its successes.

Plight of the Rohingya

Of particular international concern has been treatment of the Rohingya. During 2012 this minority Muslim group living in Rakhine State found themselves under attack from the majority Rakhine Buddhist population. Arson spreads reduced entire Muslim quarters to smoldering ash. Government estimates put deaths on both sides at fewer than 100. But Human Rights Watch uncovered evidence of four mass grave sites in the state and labelled the attacks as 'ethnic cleansing'.

It's reckoned that, following the violence, around 125,000 Rohingya were effectively ousted from cities and pushed into squalid, makeshift camps guarded by