VPN Safety Guard Crowdsource Data Report

Date: 27 May 2026
Cover Period: 20 April – 20 May 2026
Title: What the VPN Reports Are Telling Us — Field Notes from Myanmar (Round 1)
Source: https://vpnsafetyguard.org.

Introduction

- VPN Safety Guard (VSG) is a community platform for checking whether a VPN is connecting safely on a user's network and for sharing observations across regions and ISPs.
    - Joint initiative of EngageMedia, Spring Revolution Security, and Cakka Security.
    - Seed funding: Tifa Foundation and Civicus Alliance under the Digital Democracy Initiative.
- Round 1 covers the platform's first reporting cycle, closing 20 May 2026, and reads what the community submissions are telling us about how access, censorship, and user behaviour interact in Myanmar.

Methodology

- Data captured on https://vpnsafetyguard.org through two channels:
    - Community reports submitted via the public form.
    - Browser-side analyzer telemetry, with no PII stored.
- Each report records the operator, VPN name, device type, region / township, and current connection status.
- Status taxonomy (as displayed on the dashboard): Working, Unstable, Blocked.
- VPN-name variants are normalised where possible (e.g. "Express VPN" ↔ "ExpressVPN"); some near-duplicates remain visible in the long tail of the rankings and are noted where relevant.
- Screening and security cross-check:
    - Each submission is reviewed before display; anomalous or test entries are flagged "No showing on dashboard" and do not appear in per-VPN status displays on the dashboard. Headline counts in this report (160 total submissions) match the public analytics page and include all submissions in the dataset.
    - Every reported VPN is cross-checked against the project's central VPN information database, which is maintained from public sources, vendor disclosures, audit reports, and known security incidents.

    - A VPN is treated as unsafe in the database when one or more of the following is documented: connection-metadata or activity logging, device-linked tracking, opaque or unverifiable ownership, history of malware bundling or unauthorised data collection, or a known association with surveillance / threat actors.
    - When a submission references a VPN already flagged in this database (e.g. Now VPN, Jump Jump, SuperVPN-class apps), the entry is surfaced with a safety warning on the dashboard rather than read as a simple working-status data point. This separates "is the connection up?" from "is the tool safe to use?".

At a glance (dashboard analytics, end of Round 1)

- 160 community reports received.
- 13 of 15 regions represented; Kachin and Chin produced no reports.
- More than 40 distinct VPNs reported across the dataset (58 unique VPN-name strings before normalising spelling variants and multi-VPN submissions).

What the Data Is Telling Us

Three VPNs are carrying most of the load

Volume of reports does not equal working performance. Psiphon is the second-most-reported VPN in the dataset (21 reports) but only 4 of those are Working — covered in the VPN-by-VPN section. The three VPNs actually doing the work for users in Round 1 are:

- **Outline** — biggest footprint in the dataset (27 reports, 59 % Working). Strongest on mobile (75 % Working across 20 mobile reports — MyTel 100 %, MPT 75 %, Atom 71 %, U9 67 %). Fragile on fixed-line / Wifi (see next section).
- **ExpressVPN** — the most consistently working VPN in the dataset (13 reports, 85 % Working). Cost is the real barrier to wider adoption.
- **Jump Jump** — strong community footprint (11 reports, 64 % Working), concentrated in Yangon (6 of 11) and visible across Atom (4), MPT (3), and U9 (2) mobile, with smaller presence in Ayeyarwady, Shan, Magway, and Tanintharyi. Reflects distribution and ease of use through community channels rather than technical or security superiority — and operator transparency is unknown. (see VPN-by-VPN observations section for more information)

Wifi behaves differently than mobile

- The dataset includes 16 fixed-line / Wifi submissions across five providers (MBT Broadband, MyanmarNet Broadband, Ananda Wireless, 5BB Broadband, Starlink).
- Outline shows a clear network-level split. On mobile, it is one of the most reliable VPNs in the dataset — 75 % Working across 20 mobile reports (MyTel 100 %, MPT 75 %, Atom 71 %, U9 67 %). On fixed-line, every Outline submission is either Unstable or

Blocked (4 reports across Ananda Wireless, MyanmarNet Broadband, and 5BB Broadband). The split is not explained by region — Ananda Wireless reports are from Magway, MyanmarNet from Yangon — which makes this a network-level pattern, not a city-level one. (see VPN-by-VPN observations section for more information)
- Other top VPNs on fixed-line show the same split: Psiphon on MBT is Unstable in both reports, ExpressVPN on MyanmarNet is Unstable, while X-VPN and Lantern work on the same fixed-line networks. Filtering rules on fixed-line operators appear to be VPN-specific.
- Practical consequence: a "this VPN works in Yangon" claim is not complete without specifying the network type. Mobile and fixed-line operate under different filtering rules in Myanmar, and the user's network is a first-class variable in any VPN guidance.

Regional picture — and the gap that matters

- Reports collected: Yangon 80 · Shan 16 · Mandalay 11 · Kayah 10 · Sagaing 10 · Magway 10 · Tanintharyi 6 · Ayeyarwady 5 · Mon 4 · Naypyidaw 3 · Kayin 2 · Bago 2 · Rakhine 1.
- No reports: Kachin, Chin.
- The gap is not just a recruitment problem. For Kachin and Chin, ongoing conflict and connectivity disruptions shape both usage and reporting capacity — where the underlying connection is unstable or shut down, VPN testing simply does not happen. Internet conditions for these regions are independently documented by the Myanmar Internet Project (myanmarinternet.info).
- Yangon alone accounts for 50 % of all Round 1 reports. The dataset is best read as a Yangon-anchored baseline with reasonable secondary coverage in Shan, Mandalay, Kayah, Sagaing, and Magway — not a national picture.

VPN-by-VPN observations

- **Outline** (27 reports, 59 % Working) — reliable on mobile (75 % Working across 20 mobile reports: MyTel 100 %, MPT 75 %, Atom 71 %, U9 67 %), problematic on every fixed-line network in the dataset (0 Working out of 4: 3 Unstable, 1 Blocked). Outline is a protocol client (Shadowsocks-based) and does not provide out-of-the-box connectivity security in the same way commercial VPNs do — it depends on the server the user is pointed at.
    - **Why it dominates in Myanmar:** the May 2024 nationwide VPN block uses Geedge Networks' DPI stack — the same Chinese tech behind the Great Firewall — to fingerprint and drop standard VPN handshakes (OpenVPN, WireGuard, IKEv2). Outline's Shadowsocks protocol carries no recognisable handshake and has survived this filtering better than most. CSOs, clinics, and projects like the DRAPAC VPN Project lean on it as the workhorse for high-risk users, distributing keys through encrypted messaging bots and rotating servers when one gets blocked.
    - **Where the gap shows up:** Outline has no "central network" — each key points at one server, and when that server goes down the user has no path forward until

someone pushes them a new key. The fixed-line failure pattern visible in the data is part of the same picture: DPI is sharper at the broadband layer, and rotated keys reach mobile users faster than Wifi users.

- **Psiphon** (21 reports, 19 % Working) — high visibility, mostly Unstable. Despite Psiphon's reputation as a censorship-bypass tool, Round 1 shows users in Myanmar are not getting a reliable experience today — 15 of 21 reports are Unstable and 2 Blocked.
- **ExpressVPN** (13 reports, 85 % Working) — the most consistently working VPN in the dataset; commercial / paid.
- **Jump Jump** (11 reports, 64 % Working) — strong community footprint across Atom (4), MPT (3), and U9 (2) mobile, with Yangon as the main region (6 of 11) but presence across Ayeyarwady, Shan, Magway, and Tanintharyi.
    - **Why it spreads in Myanmar:** Jump Jump is one of the free apps that filled the vacuum after the May 2024 VPN ban. It is a freemium Android app, launched in 2023 by Singapore-registered Soon Bodywerkz, with around 2.5 million downloads as of early 2026 and Myanmar named as one of its growth markets. The profile that wins in Myanmar today is exactly its profile: free, one-tap, no payment friction (international card payments are largely closed off to Myanmar users), and spread through TikTok promotions, Telegram channels, and Facebook groups.
    - **Safety note:** Jump Jump has no independent security audits, proprietary closed-source code, no kill switch, an ad-supported revenue model on the free tier, and unverifiable privacy claims. Outside security reviewers have flagged it as "cheap enough to seem appealing but not transparent enough to trust." Operator, jurisdiction, logging policy, and infrastructure remain not independently verifiable.
    - In Myanmar's current environment — DPI-level network surveillance plus random police phone checks under the 2025 Cybersecurity Law — Jump Jump should not be recommended for activists, journalists, CSO staff, or clinic patients. For a low-risk user accepting that the operator can see their traffic, the calculation sits differently. Its place on the dashboard reflects market reality, not a vetted recommendation.
- **Proton VPN** (9 reports combined Proton + Proton Free, 78 % Working) — audited, privacy-respecting, performing well on Myanmar networks.
- **Now VPN** (7 reports, 29 % Working) — flagged **UNSAFE** in the central VPN information database (connection-metadata logging, 30-day retention, device-linked tracking). Working status is irrelevant here; the safety warning takes precedence.
- **Amnezia VPN** (6 reports, 83 % Working) — censorship-resistant client, strong among censorship-resistant clients with ≥ 6 reports.
- **Mullvad VPN** (6 reports, 17 % Working — 3 of 6 Blocked) — a well-audited, privacy-respecting option that currently struggles on Myanmar networks. This points to a network-level interaction (likely deep-packet inspection of Mullvad's WireGuard / OpenVPN signatures by local carriers) rather than a flaw in the VPN itself.
- **Thunder** (5 reports, 40 % Working) — mid-tier reliability; 2 Blocked reports flag carrier-level issues worth watching.

- **Long tail** — 30+ additional VPN names appear with 1–3 reports each. **SuperVPN-class apps** in particular are surfaced as critical safety warnings regardless of working status.
- **Starlink fallbacks**: Starlink is currently serving as a crucial fallback in cellular blockade zones (such as Pekhon/Falam on the Shan/Kayah border), where users explicitly noted having zero cellular signal.
- **Unsafe VPNs**: Users in peripheral regions (like Sagaing and Tanintharyi) continue to use unsafe VPNs (like Now VPN) because of constant connection drops on major networks.

Myanmar context — cross-cutting reading

- **Network matters as much as VPN.** Per-VPN status on the dashboard varies clearly by ISP and region. National-level VPN recommendations are the wrong unit of analysis; guidance should be paired with the user's specific network and region.
- **Free is winning user behaviour; safety is losing.** Apps flagged as unsafe (Now VPN, SuperVPN-class) or with unknown operator transparency (Jump Jump) sit near the top of community usage, while audited options (ExpressVPN, Proton, Amnezia, Mullvad) appear in smaller numbers. The unsafe label in the analyzer is doing meaningful protective work, but the gap that closes the loop is offering equally accessible safer alternatives.
- **Access is shaped by money and finance, not just censorship.**
    - We observe that users in Myanmar, opting for circumvention solutions to enhance their privacy and freedom online, are subjected to technical and monetary barriers for secure VPN access.
    - We also note that this problem may be compounded by the lack of, or removal of, Myanmar's financial system to conduct payment internationally online through conventional means.
    - This is resulting in the widespread use of VPN solutions that are either non-transparent, perceived as risky, or flagged as insecure — a pattern visible in the Round 1 data, where Now VPN (flagged unsafe), Jump Jump (transparency unknown), and free apps with poor working rates sit alongside the smaller set of audited, working options (ExpressVPN, Amnezia, Proton).
- **The Yangon weight is a finding, not just a limitation.** Yangon is where most users have both the connectivity to test VPNs and the platform reach to find VSG. The 50 % Yangon share is itself a story about where digital agency currently lives in Myanmar.

For further research purposes, raw data is available on request — please contact contact@vpnsafetyguard.org.

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