

UNSC



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Director's Letter

Dear Delegates,

My name is Jimmy Wang, and I have the distinct pleasure to serve as your Director of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for BCMUN 2023. I will be joined alongside your Chair, Timothy Mai, and your Assistant Director, Sara Di Sabatino Garbati.

UNSC elevates the multifaceted features of MUN to the next level, offering a fresh perspective on diplomacy distinct from the traditional Western notion. For this iteration of BCMUN, UNSC will be tackling the pressing topic of the Myanmar Civil War.

To fully grasp these topics, I encourage everyone to consider the historical, economics, and geopolitical tensions at play, and their relevance to your country's national interests. This understanding will be key in crafting a more inclusive framework for regional stability and development.

Last but not least: it is my firm belief that Model United Nations has always been defined by its participants. Even as Grade-8 me stumbled across my first set of pre-written speeches, I still felt inspired by the passionate delegates and supportive staff team who helped define my MUN experience. As such, I urge you all to also help build this path of diplomacy.

I wish you all the best in your preparation. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at unsc@bcmun.org. On behalf of my dais team, I look forward to meeting you all for a weekend like no other.

All the best,

Jimmy Wang
Director of UNSC | BCMUN 2023

Committee Description:

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. Its primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security.

The establishment of the Security Council came about in the aftermath of World War II to address the failings of the League of Nations. While its inaugural session took place on January 17, 1946, the committee remained largely paralyzed in the following decades by the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States.¹ Nevertheless, it authorized military intervention during conflicts such as the Korean War and the Congo Crisis, in addition to various peacekeeping missions.² Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, UN peacekeeping efforts increased significantly, and the Council authorized major military and peacekeeping missions across the world, including Kuwait, Namibia, Cambodia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.³

The Security Council consists of fifteen members, of which five are permanent (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and ten are elected to serve two-year, nonconsecutive terms.⁴ The permanent five (P5) were the great powers (or their successor states) that emerged victorious from World War II. Each member holds one vote, and P5 holds the special ability to veto any substantive Security Council resolution. All 193 UN Member States are obligated to comply with council decisions.⁵

In accordance with principles outlined in Chapter VI of the UN Charter, the Security Council's primary objective is the peaceful resolution of international disputes through methods of negotiation, arbitration, or other peaceful means.⁶ In instances where these efforts prove ineffective, the Security Council invokes the provision of Chapter VII, granting it the authority to undertake more assertive actions, such as imposing sanctions or authorizing the use of force for the purpose of “maintaining or restoring international peace and security.”⁷

The United Nations' commitment to conflict management is most prominently exemplified by its peacekeeping missions. As of early 2023, the Security Council is overseeing twelve such operations across three continents, involving nearly eighty-eight thousand peacekeeping personnel.⁸

Topic Overview:

In the two years since Myanmar's armed forces, known as the Tatmadav, launched a coup d'état against the civilian government, the country has descended into an abysmal state of armed conflict, insurgency, chaos and anarchy; Myanmar's economy has essentially collapsed, with nearly half of the

¹ <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/what-security-council>.

² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Security-Council>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/current-members>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <https://www.cfr.org/background/un-security-council>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

population now living below the poverty line.⁹ Repeated calls by regional organizations such as ASEAN and by the United Nations to halt the violence, protect human rights, and respect the democratic process have all but failed¹⁰. The military junta has demonstrated no interest in political concessions or negotiation with the resistance movements.

While the military retains tight control of most urban centers and vital natural resources, a significant portion of the country, estimated at 40-50 percent, now operates outside of central government authority.¹¹ This decentralization has emboldened many political opponents - including ethnic armed organizations (EAOs)- to establish a new shadow government and assemble armed forces throughout the nation.¹² Consequently, the military has aggressively targeted areas of the country under rebel control, often indiscriminately and at the expense of civilian casualties.¹³ Its tactics include home raids, the capture of family members, the burning of homes and villages, sexual violence against women, and the targeting of fleeing civilians - many of which constitute crimes against humanity.¹⁴

The UN has reported that at least 1.5 million people have been displaced by the fighting since 2021, with an additional five million children urgently requiring humanitarian aid.¹⁵ However, despite outcry from the international community and human rights groups, displacement of local populations persists; the military has often prevented aid groups from providing food, medical care and other assistance to the displaced.¹⁶

Regrettably, no swift resolution appears on the horizon for Myanmar's civil war. The ongoing power struggle between the Myanmar military and the resistance movements suggests that the conflict will be prolonged for the foreseeable future.¹⁷ The prospects for a return to democratic processes remain bleak, and pro-democracy forces in Myanmar are likely to persist in their fight for independence. Consequently, Myanmar's future appears marred by internal instability and chaos, a larger illicit economy, and deepening dependence on foreign powers.¹⁸ For the people in Myanmar, this spells the continuation of their protracted suffering, with no immediate relief in sight.

Timeline:

January 4, 1948 — Myanmar declares independence from British rule and becomes an independent republic. Sao Shwe Thaik and U Nu serve as the first president and prime minister of Myanmar, respectively.¹⁹

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<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/over-15m-people-displaced-in-myanmar-since-military-coup-2-years-ago/2802447>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ <https://www.csis.org/analysis/myanmars-military-its-last-legs>.

¹² <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/article/myanmar-news-protests-coup.html>.

¹⁵

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/over-15m-people-displaced-in-myanmar-since-military-coup-2-years-ago/2802447>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ <https://www.csis.org/analysis/myanmars-military-its-last-legs>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ <https://newint.org/features/2008/04/18/history>.

March 1962 — Army Chief of Staff Ne Win leads a military coup against the electoral government and arrests many members of parliament. A single-party socialist government, under military control and led by the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), rules the country with an iron fist.²⁰

May 1980 — Ne Win offers full amnesty to all political insurgents who surrender to authorities within a 90-day timeframe. Despite this opportunity, many insurgents chose to continue opposing the government, and repeated attempts by government troops to suppress them were met with limited success.²¹

July 1988 — Ne Win resigns as chairman of the BSPP amid violent protests across Myanmar. In his resignation speech, he admitted that the socialist revolution in Myanmar had been a failure.²²

September 18, 1988 — Under the leadership of General Saw Maung, the armed forces seize control of the government. Military units are deployed to quell protests, resulting in the tragic loss of thousands of lives among unarmed demonstrators. Martial law is imposed across the country, and the existing constitutional government is replaced by a newly formed military entity known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).²³

May 27, 1990 — Myanmar holds its first multiparty elections in 30 years. The National League for Democracy (NLD), founded by Aung San Suu Kyi, wins a landslide victory with some four-fifths of the seats. The SLORC, however, refuses to acknowledge the results and continues ruling the country.²⁴

July 23, 1997 — Myanmar is admitted into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a regional organization that aims to enhance economic and political stability while curbing Chinese influence in the region.²⁵

November 2015 — The NLD wins a sweeping victory in Myanmar's first openly held general elections since 1990. Despite the military retaining substantial power under a constitution that also barred Suu Kyi from presidency, a new position of state counselor was created for her to play a leading role in the government.²⁶

2017 — A brutal military crackdown in Rakhine, Myanmar results in the displacement of more than 730,000 Rohingya into Bangladesh. The United Nations characterizes that the campaign of mass killing, rape, and arson was carried out with “genocidal intent,” which Myanmar denies.²⁷

February 1, 2021 — The military seized power in a coup d'état. President Win Myint, Aung San Suu Kyi, and other NLD members are detained. Widespread protests erupt across the country.²⁸

²⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Security-Council>.

²¹ Ibid.

²² <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/ne-win-understanding-the-old-man/>.

²³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Myanmar>.

²⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/key-events-timeline-myanmar-dee0f68fa82b5f7729191d1bf7beec84>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/1/myanmar-military-rule-to-fragile-democracy>.

²⁸ Ibid.

October 16, 2021 — In an unprecedented move, ASEAN excludes Min Aung Hlaing from their annual summit. The action is taken due to the perception that the military leadership has failed to make significant progress on implementing their five-point plan to resolve the crisis.²⁹

December 22, 2022 — The UN Security Council adopts its first resolution on Myanmar. The resolution demanded an immediate end to violence and the release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi. Among the 15 members of the council, 12 voted in favor. China and Russia, who have supported Myanmar's military leaders since the coup, abstain, as does India.³⁰

August 1, 2023 — Myanmar's military postpones an election promised by August this year. In a statement on state television, the military cited ongoing violence as a reason for the election delay. No new electoral dates were specified.³¹

Historical Analysis:

Ethnic Minorities

Strictly speaking, the civil war in Myanmar has been ongoing since the country's independence from Britain in 1948, and the fighting between the Bamar-majority central government and EAOs has never completely ceased.³² Myanmar's civil conflicts stem largely from its diverse ethnic population and shaky colonial history; divisions purposely created under British colonial rule among the more than 135 ethnic groups have fueled lengthy armed conflicts.³³

Myanmar's Ethnic Groups

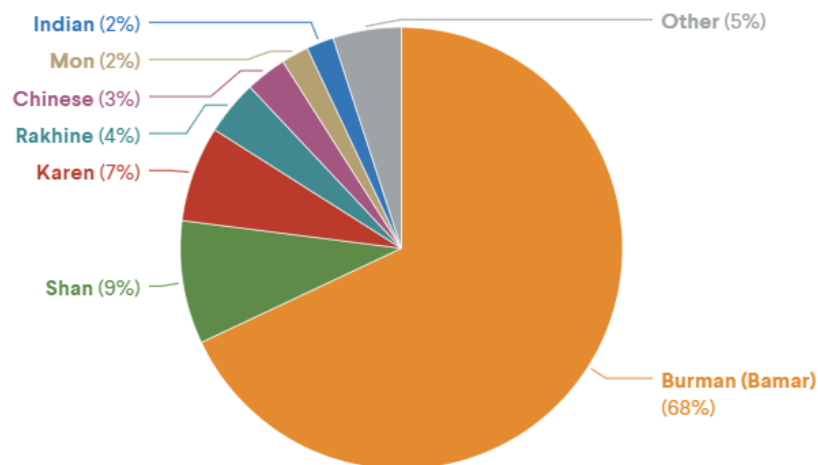


Figure 1. Ethnic Groups in Myanmar.³⁴

Roughly two thirds of the Myanmar population are ethnic Burmans and have enjoyed a privileged position in society, holding a majority of government and military positions.³⁵ On the other hand, many ethnic minority groups have continuously faced systemic discrimination and minimal

²⁹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/1/timeline-two-years-since-the-myanmar-military-coup>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/1/myanmar-military-extends-emergency-postpones-election>.

³² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/4/military-ruled-myanmar-marks-75-years-independent-of-britain>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>.

³⁵ <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>.

representation in government. These ethnic minority groups have grappled with the pursuit of ethnic and political rights for decades. Successive Burman dictators have often pursued a national policy of “Burmanisation,” which includes efforts to suppress the teaching of ethnic history, language, and culture, as well as military actions against civilian populations.³⁶

Consequently, the historic failure to address the concerns of Myanmar’s diverse ethnic groups lies at the heart of many of the country’s problems. Following the end of formal military rule in 2011, Myanmar has witnessed the rise of a Buddhist nationalist movement, accompanied by a rise in increasingly common attacks against the Rohingya Muslim minority in the Rakhine State.³⁷ This violence has also extended to a number of cities in Myanmar, leading to religious segregation and heightened marginalization of non- Buddhists around the country.

In 2016, the government enacted a series of laws referred to as the “race and religion” laws that have been criticized for directly targeting religious minorities, notably the Rohingya. These laws encompass measures such as the Religious Conversion Bill, Monogamy Bill, Population Control Law, and Interfaith Marriage Law.³⁸

Military Coups

Myanmar’s history has been marked by countless military coups and periods of dictatorship. Initially, the Union of Burma began as a parliamentary democracy. However, in 1962, a coup led by General Ne Win shifted the course of the nation’s governance from civilian government to military rule.³⁹

In 2007, the Saffron Revolution erupted as a response to steep fuel price hikes, leading to widespread anti-government protests.⁴⁰ Facing mounting pressure both domestically and internationally, the military junta began to loosen its grip on political control. In 2011, the junta government officially dissolved, giving way to a civilian parliament, albeit one still heavily influenced by the military.⁴¹ The landmark 2015 multiparty elections saw the NLD party secure a landslide victory.⁴² Htin Kyaw was elected as president, but real executive power was wielded by Aung San Suu Kyi, who assumed the role of state counselor, becoming the de facto head of the civilian government.⁴³ Nevertheless, the Tatmadaw retained control on matters of domestic security and foreign relations.

Aung San Suu Kyi’s victory in the 2015 elections was all the more impressive given the criticisms she faced during her first term in power. Particularly contentious was her defence of the government and military in the Hague when accused of genocide against Rohingya Muslims.⁴⁴ This stance was viewed as a significant shift in her international image, with many in the global community expressing their disappointment in the former Nobel Peace Prize laureate.⁴⁵

³⁶ <https://www.hart-uk.org/a-brief-overview-of-the-ethnic-minorities-of-burma/>

³⁷ <https://minorityrights.org/country/myanmarburma>.

³⁸ <https://minorityrights.org/country/myanmarburma>.

³⁹ <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34805806>.

⁴³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11685977>.

⁴⁴

<https://intellfusion.medium.com/country-profile-the-historical-context-surrounding-myanmars-coup-385a0e33c6f5>.

⁴⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/10/world/asia/aung-san-suu-kyi-myanmar-genocide-hague.html>.

Despite international backlash, Suu Kyi's popularity within Myanmar remained strong, and the NLD secured an overwhelming 86% of the seats in the 2022 general elections.⁴⁶ While opposition parties such as the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) claimed electoral fraud, little evidence for such fraud was provided, and Suu Kyi's popularity seemed genuine.⁴⁷ However, legitimate criticisms of the electoral process did arise; widespread voter disenfranchisement in minority ethnic groups and conflict-affected regions such as Rakhine, Shan, and Kachin State, which may have assisted the NLD with their electoral success.

In February 2021, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and other military leaders orchestrated yet another coup. This coup came in the wake of electoral setbacks for their proxy party, the USDP, during the 2020 elections.⁴⁸ The coup detained Suu Kyi and placed many civilian lawmakers and activists under house arrest.⁴⁹ Protests sparked across the country, and the military's brutal crackdown on dissent received unified condemnation from the international community.

Amidst this turmoil, the National Unity Government, a shadow civilian government composed of former NLD members, and its armed wing, the People's Defence Force (PDF), emerged as a significant challenge to the junta's authority.⁵⁰ They have, at times, cooperated and fought alongside established ethnic armed groups, further complicating the current situation of the civil war.⁵¹

Current Situation:

Since staging a coup on February 1, 2021, Myanmar's military has unleashed a brutal sociopolitical crackdown on the millions of people who oppose its rule. Junta security forces have been responsible for mass killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual violence, and other grievous abuses that amount to crimes against humanity. Additionally, freedom of speech and assembly have been heavily restricted.⁵²

Torture, Political Executions, Deaths in Custody

Following the coup, the junta has arbitrarily arrested more than 24,000 pro-democracy supporters.⁵³ Many individuals who were previously detained have come forward with allegations of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, including incidents of sexual violence during their detention.

Myanmar's military and police forces bear responsibility for numerous deaths that have occurred while people were in custody. As reported by the United Nations Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR), there have been at least 273 recorded deaths of people while in the custody of the police or military since the coup. The military junta has also held trials that are widely regarded as grossly unfair trials within closed courtrooms, resulting in lengthy and often severe sentences. By September 2023, it is estimated that the junta's security force had been responsible for the deaths of approximately 4,100 persons.⁵⁴

⁴⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-54899170>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-civil-war-in-myanmar-no-end-in-sight/>.

⁵¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/6/15/myanmars-nug-negotiates-ethnic-differences-as-crisis-deepens>.

⁵² <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/myanmar>.

⁵³ <https://aappb.org/>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

The junta has leveled multiple charges against Aung San Suu Kyi, including allegations of corruption, incitement, and breaches of the Official Secrets Act. In December 2022, she received an additional prison sentence of 7 years, bringing her total sentence to 33 years.⁵⁵ While the junta asserts that these charges are not politically motivated, it is well-known that the military has long considered her a threat to their rule and has sought to minimize her influence within Myanmar.⁵⁶

Additionally, in July 2022, the junta executed individuals, marking the first implementation of death in the country in more than 30 years. These individuals included former opposition lawyer Phyo Zeya Thaw, prominent activist Kyaw Min Yu, Hla Myo Aung, and Aung Thura Zaw. They were all convicted after closed trials, which many experts have criticized for falling short of international standards.⁵⁷

War Crimes and Other Atrocities

The military's indiscriminate deployment of artillery and airstrikes has led to the loss of numerous civilian lives and inflicted injuries on many others. These actions have also resulted in extensive damage to villages, including schools, forcing thousands to flee their homes.⁵⁸ Ongoing restrictions on mobile internet data and networks are also prevalent in areas where anti-junta opposition has triggered clashes between Myanmar and pro-democracy or ethnic armed groups.⁵⁹

According to the OHCHR, military operations have caused the destruction of approximately 30,000 civilian structures, including schools in Magway and Sagaing Regions, as well as in Kachin, Shan, Karen, and Karenni States. The OHCHR further reported that, since the coup, there have been at least 382 recorded child fatalities, along with 266 other documented deaths resulting from raids and arrests in villages. Additionally, there were 111 reported cases where victims were either burned alive or subjected to extrajudicial killings, seemingly in attempts to destroy evidence of these crimes.⁶⁰

In July 2022, Amnesty International issued a report asserting that the military's use of internationally prohibited landmines in Karenni State constitutes war crimes.⁶¹ The human rights organization Fortify Rights also documented incidents of attacks on civilians in Karenni State that meet the criteria for war crimes.⁶²

Displaced Populations and Aid

The ongoing conflicts in Myanmar have led to the internal displacement of nearly 1.3 million individuals since the coup, with an additional 70,000 seeking refuge in neighboring countries.⁶³ Regrettably, the junta has obstructed the delivery of critically needed humanitarian aid to millions of

⁵⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/29/world/asia/myanmar-aung-san-suu-kyi-trial.html?smid=url-share>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/07/25/myanmar-junta-executes-four>.

⁵⁸

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2022/09/oral-update-human-rights-situation-myanmar-human-rights-council>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2022/09/oral-update-human-rights-situation-myanmar-human-rights-council>.

⁶¹

<https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-militarys-use-banned-landmines-kayah-state-amounts-war-crime>.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-emergency-update-6-september-2022>.

displaced people and others facing dire circumstances. In areas marred by armed conflict, including regions in the southeast and northwest, the junta's interference with humanitarian assistance constitutes a breach of international humanitarian law.⁶⁴

The disruption of supply chains, rising prices, scarcity of essential goods, and loss of access to agricultural livelihoods have compounded the issue of economic downturn across the nation. As the value of the Myanmar kyat continues to depreciate, food crises have ravaged through the nation. An alarming estimate suggests that approximately 11 million people are grappling with acute food insecurity, and current regulations imposed by the junta create substantial obstacles for these vulnerable populations to receive the necessary assistance.⁶⁵

Persecution of Rohingya

Approximately 600,000 Rohingya individuals find themselves effectively confined to Rakhine State, where they are subjected to a systemic pattern of abuses including apartheid, persecution, and deprivation of civil liberties that amount to crimes against humanity.⁶⁶ The junta has also introduced new restrictions on movement and humanitarian aid to Rohingya camps and villages. This includes a ban, imposed in September of 2022, on deliveries from UN and international non governmental organizations, resulting in increased scarcities, food shortages, the spread of diseases and malnutrition.⁶⁷

Around 135,000 Rohingya and Kaman Muslims have been arbitrarily and indefinitely detained in camps for over 10 years.⁶⁸ The junta has continued with its "camp closure" process, involving the replacement of temporary housing with permanent structures, thereby further reinforcing, segregating and denying the Rohingya the right to return to their homes as they existed before 2012.⁶⁹ Overall, the breakdown of informal ceasefires and the presence of local EAOs have placed Rohingya and Rakhine civilians at significant risks of harm, arrest, and displacement.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/wfp-myanmar-situation-report-august-2022>.

⁶⁶

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/10/08/open-prison-without-end/myanmars-mass-detention-rohingya-rakhine-state>.

⁶⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/content/382193>.

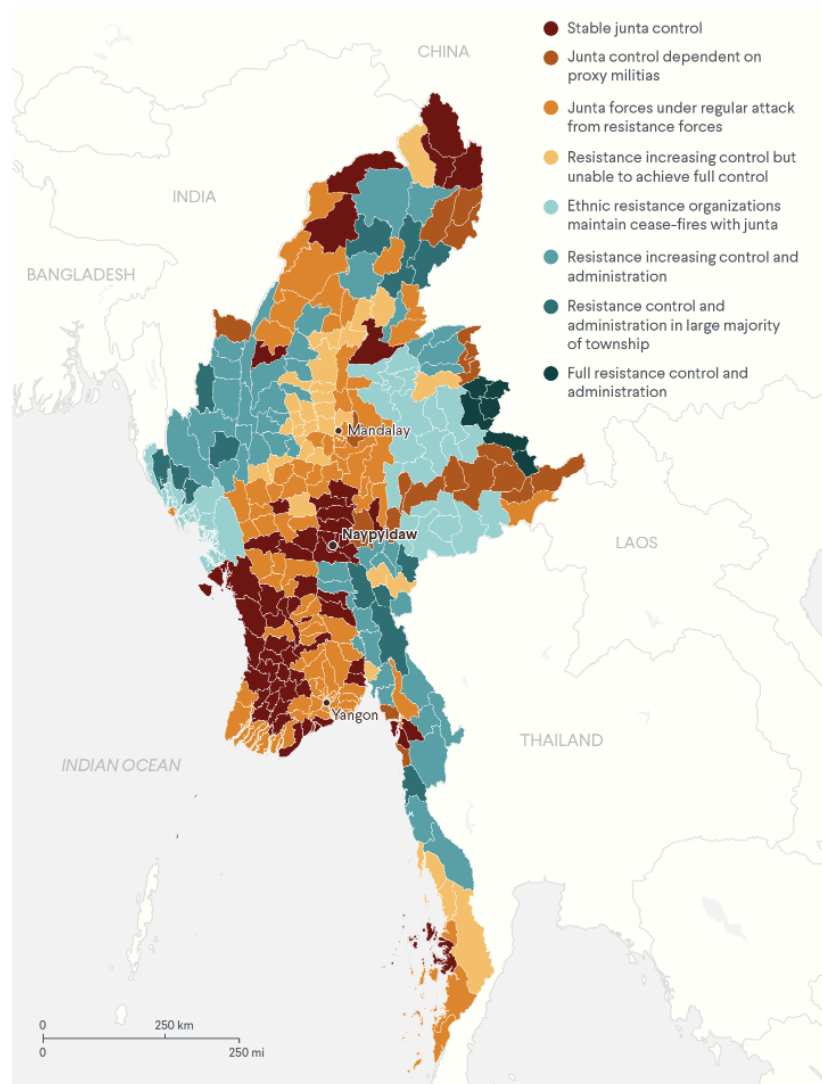
⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/10/08/open-prison-without-end/myanmars-mass-detention-rohingya-rakhine-state>.

Much of Myanmar Is Outside the Junta's Control

Estimated control by township during the first half of 2022



Note: Map data is from the first half of 2022. Since then, news reports indicate that the junta has lost additional territory and some cease-fire agreements have ended.

Source: Special Advisory Council for Myanmar.

COUNCIL on
FOREIGN
RELATIONS

Figure 2. Territorial Control of Myanmar, 2022.⁷⁰

Past Involvement:

ASEAN Five-Point Consensus on Myanmar

Shortly after the 2021 Myanmar coup d'état, the nine ASEAN leaders engaged with Myanmar's junta chief, Min Aung Hlaing, leading to the establishment of five points of consensus for addressing the crisis. These points included an immediate halt of violence within Myanmar; the initiation of constructive dialogue among all relevant parties; the provision of humanitarian aid by ASEAN; the

⁷⁰ <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/war-torn-myanmar-plans-hold-elections-will-they-matter>.

selection of a special envoy and the special envoy's planned visit to Myanmar to meet with all governing factions.⁷¹

Two days after this consensus was reached, however, the junta backtracked on its endorsement, declaring it would only entertain the "suggestions made by ASEAN leaders" once the situation in the country had returned to a reasonable state of stability.⁷² This shift was followed by a surge in violence by the military, involving intensified abusive operations against ethnic minorities and launched indiscriminate attacks on civilians that constituted severe violations of human rights and crimes against humanity.⁷³

Meanwhile, limited economic prospects in Myanmar and a loss of faith in the nation's democratic leadership has hindered international support for the country. The five-point consensus has continued to be used by Western governments, such as the United Kingdom, United States, and European Union, as a pretext for delaying real action while awaiting ASEAN leadership. The Myanmar military has exploited the lack of consensus by the international community, and ASEAN's inability to take decisive action has allowed the further consolidation of power by the military regime in Myanmar.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2669

On December 21, 2021, members of the UNSC adopted Resolution 2699, marking a significant milestone as the first Security Council resolution on Myanmar since the country's founding in 1948.⁷⁴

The historic Resolution 2699 issued several demands. Firstly, it called for an immediate halt to all forms of violence in Myanmar, with a strong emphasis on the necessity for restraint and de-escalation of tensions. The UNSC further urged the Myanmar military to swiftly release all individuals who had been arbitrarily detained, including President Win Myint and State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi.⁷⁵

In addition to these demands, the resolution highlighted the importance of upholding democratic institutions and promoting constructive dialogue within Myanmar. It recognized ASEAN's pivotal role in seeking a peaceful resolution to the crisis and encouraged international support for ASEAN-led mechanisms and processes. The UNSC also stressed the urgency of taking concrete and immediate actions to effectively implement ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus.⁷⁶

While the UNSC had previously issued condemnatory statements regarding Myanmar and received briefings from UN experts and the Secretary-General, Resolution 2699 represents a significant escalation in the Council's involvement with the Myanmar situation.⁷⁷ It established a foundation for continuous and thorough monitoring of developments within the country.

However, despite being a commendable first step in denouncing the ongoing crisis, many experts argue that the resolution does not go far enough in terms of implementation. Critics contend that it

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<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/Chairmans-Statement-on-ALM-Five-Point-Consensus-24-April-2021-FIN-AL-a-1.pdf>.

⁷² <https://www.burmalibrary.org/sites/burmalibrary.org/files/obl/GNLM2021-04-27-red.pdf>.

⁷³ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/22/myanmar-aseans-failed-5-point-consensus-year>.

⁷⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/21/un-security-council-historic-censure-myanmar-junta>.

⁷⁵ <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc15159.doc.htm>

⁷⁶ <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc15159.doc.htm>

⁷⁷ Ibid.

fails to address several key issues such as the ongoing sale and transfer of arms to Myanmar, the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, and the need for robust accountability mechanisms.⁷⁸

As such, the adoption of Resolution 2699 should be followed by rigorous monitoring by the international community and continuous reporting on the Tatmadaw's compliance with its provisions. It is clear that further resolutions and policies by the UNSC will be necessary to effectively address the shortcomings of Resolutions 2699.

Myanmar Peace Talks

In early June 2023, China sponsored a discussion in Myanmar that brought together the junta and three ethnic armies collectively known as the Brotherhood Alliance.⁷⁹ This alliance comprises the Arakan Army, Ta'ang National Liberation Army, and Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army. The primary aim of these talks was to persuade these ethnic armies to support the junta's election plan. Although there has been no official cease-fire or peace deal, the talks marked a first in Myanmar's attempt to de-escalate tensions and violence.

China's role in initiating these talks has raised questions about its hidden objectives and motivations. Than Soe Naing, a China-Myanmar specialist and former member of the Communist Party of Burma, has proposed that the junta viewed these negotiations as a means to discourage ethnic minority groups from affiliating themselves with the anti-coup resistance movement.⁸⁰ Simultaneously, the junta sought to garner support for its forthcoming elections, aligning with China's agenda of preventing these armed groups from supporting the NUG and PDF.

Overall, this diplomatic engagement underscores China's rising influence and interests in Myanmar's political landscape. While Beijing has positioned itself as a peaceful mediator, the broader contexts of these talks raise important questions about the power dynamics at play and the extent to which foreign powers could (or should) influence the trajectory of the ongoing crisis in Myanmar.

Potential Solutions:

Decentralized System of Governance

A potential solution to resolve the increasingly complex political turmoil is the implementation of a decentralized system of governance.⁸¹ The decentralization of a political state involves the transfer of authority and responsibility to the central national government, to smaller local and regional governmental bodies, and the political autonomy these governments would have; directly combatting what is believed to be the root cause of the crisis, offering ethnic minority groups dramatically increased control over their own affairs.⁸² Although decentralization seems to be a quick, simplistic solution, successful implementation requires careful planning, design, and capacity building to ensure it creates positivity and peace across the nation of Myanmar.

Given Myanmar's deep divide along ethnic lines and a checkered history of centralized control, several important factors must be taken into consideration for the establishment of a successful

⁷⁸ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/03/13/myanmar-concrete-un-security-council-action-needed>.

⁷⁹ <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2023/06/28/can-china-help-bring-peace-to-myanmar/>.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ <https://www.theigc.org/blogs/government-decentralisation-and-reform-myanmars-roads-sector>.

⁸² Ibid.

decentralized system. Given the unstable conditions of Myanmar's current government, coherence must be at the forefront of this new decentralized system; it should discreetly define the powers and responsibilities of each level of government and outline the methods for coordination between each level. Within Myanmar's composition of 14 distinct administrative divisions each with its own unique ethnic population and needs, the policy must take into consideration all stakeholders through a widespread consultative process.⁸³ Additionally, significant legal and constitutional reforms must be made to the current 2008 constitution that Myanmar abides by, allocating immense power to the central government, notably a guaranteed 25% of seats in parliament for the military.⁸⁴ For a decentralized system to be effective, reforms could involve amending the current constitution to allow for greater autonomy for regional governments, and the ability to pass laws that define the powers and responsibilities of local or regional governments.

Moreover, fiscal decentralization is a key component of any decentralization policy. In this context, it could involve giving local or regional governments the autonomy to raise their own taxes or a new system that would allocate a separate, greater share of national revenue to them. In present condition, the collection of Myanmar's 14 regions and states only generates around 5% of their own revenue, with the remainder all being sourced from the central government.⁸⁵ Local or regional governments will also need support to manage their new responsibilities effectively. Training officials would be required in areas like public administration, financial management, and policy-making. However, Myanmar's public sector has been ranked 157 out of 180 countries in terms of corruption by Transparency International, so it would be very difficult, and a massive shift towards promoting integrity and combating corruption for the nation.⁸⁶ Although the rhetorical side of this solution is filled with pleasing promises for all parties, successful execution requires heavy resources, dramatic policy changes, and overwhelming support that can not be readily counted on.

Providing Humanitarian Aid

With over a million people in need of assistance and hundreds of thousands displaced from their homes, the role of humanitarian aid has become a necessity in the ongoing Myanmar civil war.⁸⁷ Although humanitarian aid is crucial for the remediating of the ongoing struggles, the collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities is crucial to guarantee a working, successful system.

But first, in any humanitarian response sufficient data on the crisis must be gathered; this includes information about the affected population, their demographics, locations, and any specific needs that they have, helping identify the scale and the most vulnerable groups and regions that need aid the most. This can look like a sectoral assessment of the Myanmar mainland, including food security, healthcare as well as sanitation, education, and protection. But foremost, for a strong, multilateral humanitarian response effort, a well-established coordination mechanism between multiple different parties must be solidified. Common practice in humanitarian aid campaigns, the United Nations often uses a "cluster approach" in humanitarian response, where the broader campaign is split into specific

⁸³ <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/Myanmar-administrative-map.htm>.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵

https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Fiscal-Decentralization-in-Myanmar_Policy-Brief_ENG.pdf.

⁸⁶ <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/myanmar>.

⁸⁷

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/over-15m-people-displaced-in-myanmar-since-military-coup-2-years-ago/2802447>.

clusters (e.g., health, shelter, food education) are established, each led by a designated agency with expertise in that sector, ensuring that each sector is a separate focus, and that aid delivered effectively in each.⁸⁸ “Clustering” the humanitarian allows for resource mobilization through the development of consolidated funding, and is especially adaptable as it can be scaled up or down based on the needs of the affected population and the ever-changing political situation that Myanmar will be going through.⁸⁹

An optimal design of this would be to establish a Humanitarian Country team (HCT) comprising representatives from UN agencies, international organizations, and relevant government ministries.⁹⁰ Partnerships can range from a local NGO in Myanmar partnering with an international health organization to provide mobile healthcare services in remote areas, the World Food Programme (WFP) may lead the Food Security Cluster of the aid, UNICEF may lead the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Cluster (WASH) and so forth.⁹¹ Furthermore, this can be expanded into utilizing the existing connections between partnered NGOs, like academic institutions partnering with humanitarian organizations to conduct research and gather empirical evidence on the needs of conflict-affected regions.

Another component when designing a cohesive humanitarian aid system is ensuring an adequate amount of conflict resolution mechanisms to address disputes, conflicts, and disagreements that will potentially arise among humanitarian actors and stakeholders. Within these mechanisms, it should consolidate the neutrality and impartiality of the conflict resolutions, being perceived as fair and unbiased by all parties involved in the dispute, helping maintain trust amongst partners; documentation of records of conflict resolution processes and outcomes, that are valuable to accountability, reporting, and learning from previous conflicts to prevent future disputes as well. A strong, multilateral system is certainly a double-edged sword, where if one humanitarian actor collapses, the entire system can follow suit.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Program (DDR)

To pave the way for lasting peace and development in Myanmar, it is crucial to establish a comprehensive Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program.⁹² If executed effectively and efficiently, it will provide a pathway for many combatants to transition from a traumatic, conflict-ridden life, to one that is civilian.⁹³ This program contributes not only to disarmament and stability but also to reconciling human suffering and building sustainable development. There are many intricacies of establishing a DDR program in Myanmar, taking into account the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the country’s history of conflict on the basis of a diverse ethnic landscape.

Given the nightmarish web of ethnic tensions, resource disputes, and political turmoil surrounding the region, sufficient knowledge must be considered of the historical context that shaped those conflicts, in an attempt to reconcile that history. Important considerations are that the country’s vast and varied natural resources, like jade, timber, minerals, and gas, have been a source of both wealth and conflict,

⁸⁸ <https://emergency.unhcr.org/coordination-and-communication/cluster-system/cluster-approach-iasc>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ <https://response.reliefweb.int/cameroon/humanitarian-country-team>.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹²

<https://teacircleoxford.com/news-analysis/myanmars-peace-process-disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration-on-borderland-economies-service-delivery-and-other-post-panglong-concerns-part-ii/>.

⁹³ Ibid.

where armed have often vied for control over resource-rich areas, leading to ongoing struggles for territorial dominance; over the years, Myanmar's government has signed ceasefire agreements with various ethnic armed groups, but the agreements have only been characterized by their fragility, disobedience, and failure to resolve comprehensive nationwide peace settlement.⁹⁴ Post-consideration, a distinct DDR authority being established would then be pivotal in initiating and managing the center responsible for planning, implementing, and overseeing the entire DDR process.⁹⁵ It should then, via the same principles as a decentralized governmental system mentioned earlier, prioritize an inclusive process involving various stakeholders, representatives from ethnic armed groups, civil society organizations, as well as local experts with relevant experience.

The establishment of a DDR program is also highly contingent on the Political Will and Peace Agreements.⁹⁶ The initiation of a DDR program in Myanmar is a radical step, one that requires a strong commitment from the government, both at the national and regional levels, as the political leaders must view the DDR as a priority and be willing to allocate resources and engage in negotiations with armed groups; moreover, the support of international mediators or facilitators play a big role in brokering peace agreements, and if international actors are able to facilitate dialogue and support dialogue between parties it can serve as a catalyst for DDR efforts.⁹⁷ The efforts can potentially include: ceasefire arrangements, detailing initial steps towards disarmament and demobilization, outlining the types of support and resources that will be provided to reintegrate combatants into civilians, as well as addressing amnesty and transitional justice for many combatants, taking into account human right's violations and war crimes.

Creating a DDR for armed groups will certainly pave the way for peace, but the logistical complications are akin to the decentralized system, where the set process requires massive support, resource input, and international support that very well may not exist.

Bloc Positions:

People's Republic of China

China has emerged as one of the most powerful foreign powers in Myanmar's civil war. On paper, Beijing supports the principle of non-intervention, emphasizing the necessity for the international community to "respect the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, and national unity when encouraging parties to narrow their differences."⁹⁸ However, the Chinese state media has also on multiple occasions aggravated the civilian opposition in Burma by claiming that their actions were the same as those of the demonstrators in Hong Kong.⁹⁹ In recent months, China has noticeably ceased its active efforts to press the military regime for a return to democratic transition. Additionally, it has refrained from expressing support for detained leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her NLD Party.¹⁰⁰ Beijing's embracement of the military regime may be signs of what is to come; China is more interested in controlling lucrative geopolitical and economic interests within the region than in

⁹⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Myanmar>.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/the-nationwide-ceasefire-agreement-in-myanmar>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/201407/t20140701_678184.html.

⁹⁹ <https://thechinaproject.com/2023/06/14/chinas-increasing-influence-in-myanmars-civil-war/>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

resolving the current conflict.

Russia

Russia, one of the few nations that backs the junta in Myanmar, described the political unrest as an internal affair that the outside world should stay out of.¹⁰¹ The unified UNSC statement from March that expressed "deep concern" at the brutality against nonviolent protestors was supported by Russia nonetheless.¹⁰² Moving forward, Russia would likely push for broader policies without severe geopolitical implications.

United States of America

The United States has firmly condemned the coup by imposing penalties on military individuals and entities as well as restricting exports.¹⁰³ The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) committed to continue providing humanitarian aid to the people affected by the violence in exchange for redirecting more than \$42 million in funding from projects that benefit the Burmese government.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, an interagency committee was created to make sure that no money was used for projects that benefited the military. The Biden administration has attempted to strengthen an alliance with Southeast Asian nations amid a diplomatic struggle with China, aside from moral and humanitarian objectives.¹⁰⁵

United Kingdom

The military coup that was started by Myanmar has been denounced by the United Kingdom. The UK has intervened in this crisis by imposing sanctions against military authorities, notably those in charge of the coup.¹⁰⁶ The UK, like other Western nations, is an unwavering supporter for promoting democracy and human rights. With the United States and Canada, the United Kingdom imposed new penalties in May against the military and related entities.¹⁰⁷

France

France has denounced Myanmar's military takeover and called for the return of a democratically elected civilian government, joining other Western nations in doing so.¹⁰⁸ France announced financial sanctions on 11 people involved in the coup, including the leader Min Aung Hlaing.¹⁰⁹ France expressed its severe concern over the lack of free speech and violations of human rights, particularly against ethnic minorities. France has given its approval for the imposition of additional sanctions, provided that the population that is most vulnerable is protected. The suspension of payments to the Myanmar army was announced by the French multinational oil corporation Total, which supplies more than half of the junta's gas income.¹¹⁰

¹⁰¹

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/china-russia-express-deep-concern-myanmars-protest-death-toll-mounts.html>.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ <https://usun.usmission.gov/joint-statement-on-myanmar/>.

¹⁰⁴

<https://www.usaid.gov/burma/press-release/usaid-immediately-redirects-42-million-response-military-coup-burma>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/myanmar>.

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/international-coordination-meeting-on-myanmar-sanctions-efforts>.

¹⁰⁸ <https://onu.delegfrance.org/myanmar-the-military-junta-must-cease-violence-against-its-own-people>.

¹⁰⁹ <https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/frances-total-backs-sanctions-on-myanmar-oil-and-gas-revenues/>.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Switzerland

Switzerland has maintained a neutral stance on the topic of this civil conflict. They have continued to maintain contact with both parties in order to identify opportunities to resolve the conflict in a peaceful manner.¹¹¹ Switzerland has provided support through both parties with the aim of reducing violence, promoting communication, and strengthening the respect for human rights.

Observer Nations

This bloc has not taken any decisive action to end the ongoing conflict in the Myanmar Region. Among them are Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, and Malta. Although these nations have condemned the military coup and advocated for democracy, security, and an end of violence in Myanmar, they have not taken any strong actions as they may have other issues that require immediate action. Additionally, countries in this bloc tend to support solutions that allow for quick negotiations and prefer to side with other nations with which they have established connections.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can the international community support efforts to address the historic ethnic division in Myanmar and ensure the protection of minority rights?
2. What strategies should Myanmar employ to engage with neighboring countries, regional organizations, and/or global powers in seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict? How can diplomatic relations be strengthened?
3. How can humanitarian organizations and international actors work together to provide aid to internally displaced refugees, particularly in conflict-affected regions like Rakhin and Kachin State? How will it be ensured that such aid does not end up in the wrong hands?
4. What type of aid should be sent to Myanmar? Should lethal aid be sent to Myanmar's armed resistance groups or military junta, or should the import of arms into Myanmar be restricted?
5. What strategies can be implemented to stabilize Myanmar's economy and create sustainable economic growth, particularly in regions most impacted by the conflict?
6. Who is responsible for the current crimes against humanity being committed in Myanmar? How can Myanmar establish mechanisms for accountability and justice for human rights violations, particularly consider the legal implications of the conflict?
7. How can Myanmar work collaboratively with neighboring countries in Southeast Asia, such as ASEAN, to find a collective solution to the crisis and enhance regional stability?

Further Resources:

Document | ASEAN | [Five-Point Consensus](#)

Document | UNSC | [Resolution 2669 \(Myanmar\)](#)

Think tank | ACLED | [Myanmar Mid-Year Update](#)

Think tank | Brookings | [The civil war in Myanmar](#)

¹¹¹

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/sdc/aktuell/newsuebersicht/2022/03/schweizer-engagement-myanmar.html>

Website | Britannica | [Myanmar](#)

Website | CFR | [Myanmar's Troubled History](#)

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