

TBSRJMUN XXI

Security
Council



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LETTER TO DELEGATES

Dear Delegates,

We are delighted to have you participating in the 22nd edition of TBSRJMUN as delegates of the Security Council, a conference that presents a unique opportunity for us to collectively address some of the most intricate and consequential issues of our current era.

The UN Security Council is an esteemed forum where crucial global issues are discussed and acted upon. It holds a position of significant importance within the United Nations, as it is the only council with the authority to create binding resolutions, propose or suggest sanctions, and authorise military interventions when necessary. However, it is essential to remember that despite its power, the Security Council operates under the principle of respect for sovereignty.

During the conference, we expect all delegates to engage in respectful, open, and constructive discussions, keeping in mind the gravity of the topics at hand. As you delve into the discussions, remember that the ultimate goal is to achieve peaceful and fruitful resolutions to the challenges before us.

While we have composed this study guide to aid you in your preparations, we want to emphasise that it should not serve as your sole source of information. We encourage you to conduct extensive research, submerge yourselves into different perspectives, and seek out reliable and up-to-date information to enrich your understanding of the matters to be debated in our committee.

Throughout the conference, we expect all delegates to respect the rules of procedure and maintain professionalism. Please, remember that your participation here is not only a representation of your nation but also an opportunity to engage in constructive diplomacy and contribute to global problem-solving.

We hope this conference fosters a spirit of collaboration, understanding, and compromise among all delegates. Let us work together to find innovative and lasting solutions to the challenges we face, and may this conference be a stepping stone towards a safer and more harmonious world.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact either of us.

Sincerely,

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Committee Description



United Nations Security Council Headquarters

Established on October 24, 1945, through the UN Charter, the United Nations Security Council is one of the six main bodies that compose the United Nations.

When the United Nations was founded, substituting its failed predecessor, the League of Nations, it was believed that the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of France, and the Russian Federation were the ones capable of maintaining global peace due to their contributions to the Allied side in World War II. Hence, they were given the status of "permanent members".

The P5, as they are usually referred to, are, considerably, the world's strongest nations, and each of these states holds veto powers. Veto powers allow the P5 nations to stop a resolution from passing by voting against it. Nonetheless, this can be overruled by the Dais if they see the delegation's reasons to veto a resolution unfit. Furthermore, It is vital to be aware that each P5 nation can only veto one resolution throughout the entire conference.

In addition to the aforementioned permanent members, ten members are elected every two years by the General Assembly, hence forming the UN Security Council. A non-permanent member cannot be immediately re-elected, ensuring diversity within the council. Additionally, the non-permanent seats of the Security Council are reserved for each global region, these being: three seats for Africa, two

for Asia-Pacific, one for Eastern Europe, two for Latin America and the Caribbean, and two for Western Europe and others.

One must also be aware that the documents produced by the Security Council are binding, different from the General Assembly ones, which are non-binding. This means that, as stated by Article 25 of the UN Charter, “*The Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter*”, if the UN Security Council has made a decision, for example, imposing sanctions on a nation, it must be followed accordingly.



Image of a fighter from the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, a rebel movement
<https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/11/asia/myanmar-shan-rebels-civil-war/index.html>

Topic A:

Mitigating the Political Crisis in Myanmar

Background Information

In 1852 Britain annexed lower Myanmar, following the second Anglo-Burmese war and in 1885-86 Myanmar became a province of British India following the successful conquest of Mandalay. In 1937 Britain separated Myanmar from India and made it a crown colony (a British colony whose legislation and administration is controlled by the crown and is represented by a governor).

With British colonialism various changes took place. Two of the most significant being the end of monarchy and of monkhood. The two pillars of Burmese culture at the time were these two aspects and the detachment of the government from religious affairs along with the loss of independence deeply affected the way the country functioned and the general well being of the Burmese people. Before the annexation of Myanmar from Britain the Burmese economy consisted of having the people as the main beneficiaries of the trading and self-sufficiency. After the takeover from Britain however, Myanmar's economy became part of the export-driven economy of western colonialism. This proved catastrophic however as the traditional burmese system collapsed.

In 1942 the Japanese invaded and occupied Myanmar with the help of a Japanese-trained Burmese independence army which later proceeded to become the Anti Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL). An interesting aspect that must be pointed out is that the AFPFL later turned against Japan and in 1945, aided by the AFPFL, Britain liberated Myanmar from Japan, this movement was led by Aung Sun.

In 1947, Aung Sun and 6 members of his temporary government were assassinated by political adversaries led by U Saw. U Nu, foreign minister during the Japanese occupation of Myanmar, was asked to lead the AFPFL and become the Prime Minister of Myanmar. In 1948 the operation was finalised and Myanmar became officially independent with U Nu as Prime Minister.

Mid 1950s-1960, U Nu, in cooperation with the Indian Prime Minister, the Indonesian President, the Yugoslav President, and Egyptian President co-founded the Movement of Non-Aligned States (A movement dedicated to representing the needs and interests of developing countries). In 1960 U Nu's party emerged victorious in elections however they promoted Buddhism and showed tolerance towards separatism, which left the military unsatisfied. It is important to note that the main religion in Myanmar is in fact Buddhism, however one of the cores of the Buddhist ideology is pacifism and is usually against aggressive approaches to conflict resolution.

In the year of 1962 Ge Ne Win led a military coup and took over the government, abolishing the federal system. He inaugurated the “Burmese way to socialism,” nationalised the economy, banned independent newspapers and had the Socialist Programme Party as the only option in a single-party state. The conversion of Myanmar into a socialist country is an event that is believed to have influence from Communist China. Ge Ne Win isolated the country more and more from the western world and the relationship between Myanmar and China kept improving. In 1960, as a matter of fact Myanmar became the first nation to sign a “Treaty of Friendship” where Rangoon (Burmese Capital) and Beijing (Chinese Capital) agreed to a mutual non-aggression policy.

Throughout the military coup of Ge Ne Win, the Burmese government had tremendous support from both the Soviet Union and China. When the relationship between Myanmar and China began to deteriorate, the new socialist state still had a world superpower it could rely on.

The devaluation of the Kyat (Burmese Currency) occurred in 1987, this wiped out the savings of a large part of the population and unsurprisingly left the people infuriated. Anti-Government riots and protests were triggered. In 1988 thousands of people were killed in these riots and The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) was formed. Throughout 1989 SLORC declared martial law, arrested thousands, including advocates and preachers of human rights and democracy, renamed Myanmar to “Myanmar” and the capital Rangoon, became Yangon. The leader of the NLD Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of Aung San, is placed under house arrest,

1990-2001 were historic years for the country of Myanmar. In 1990 the NLD won the elections by a landslide however, the results were brushed aside by the military. Aung San Suu Kyi is awarded the Nobel peace prize for her resilience in the fight for democracy and in peaceful change. In 1991, Than Shwe became the SLORC chairman, Prime minister and Defence minister and several political prisoners were released in an attempt to improve Myanmar’s international public image. In 1995 Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest and in 1996 attended her first NLD conference since her release. SLORC arrested over 200 delegates attending the conference.

In 1997 Myanmar was admitted to the Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and SLORC was renamed to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). ASEAN is a corporation that aims to maintain peace and stability amongst South Asian

countries, it was founded in 1976 and another one of its goals is to encourage and accelerate economic growth and development with its members.

Ethnic Differences

The minorities in Myanmar have historically been greatly mistreated and oppressed. The Bamar (native Burmese people) make up 68% of Myanmar's population while the other 32% is spread out amongst 135 other ethnicities. The main religion in Myanmar is Buddhism, a religion which, ironically, has core values in pacifism and anti-war. Rohingya Muslims have been the main target of religious intolerance. Rohingya Muslims were denied citizenship by the government of Myanmar in 1982 and are seen as illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. They have been targets of violence from the military and from Buddhist nationalists who view them as a "plague". The military has been accused of rape, sexual abuse, torture, murder, homicide, looting and various other crimes towards ethnic minorities in Myanmar.

Current Situation

In 2021 the NLD beat pro-military candidates in the November parliamentary election, causing the army to declare fraud and challenge the results. The army proceeded to overthrow the government and established a military coup. Over 16,000 advocates of democracy were detained arbitrarily by the junta authorities in Myanmar. Reports have emerged from former detainees about mistreatment, including torture and sexual violence. One journalist has shared his harrowing experience, alleging that he was subjected to rape and physical assault during his time in custody.

The Myanmar police and military have been implicated in numerous custodial deaths. It highlights the death of six activists under questionable circumstances, suggesting torture or a lack of medical attention. The *UN's Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR)* notes that at least 273 individuals have tragically lost their lives while in custody since the coup.

The junta has also engaged in extensive trials behind closed doors, with verdicts often being heavily biased and leading to severe penalties. Recent reports show that by November 2022, around 2,400 individuals had been killed by the junta's security personnel, as documented by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the deposed National League for Democracy party currently faces numerous charges. These range from corruption and incitement to breaching the Official Secrets Act. In a series of closed court verdicts, several members of her former cabinet and an Australian economic advisor were found guilty of these charges under the Official Secrets Act, each receiving three-year sentences. Aung San Suu Kyi herself and the former President Win Myint were sentenced to three years with hard labour on electoral fraud allegations. In a subsequent ruling, she received an additional 7-year sentence, totaling 33 years of imprisonment.

In a gesture during National Day in November, the junta declared the release of up to 6,000 prisoners, including some who were detained without clear reason. Among the released were Australian professor Sean Turnell, former UK ambassador to Myanmar Vicky Bowman along with her spouse Htein Linn, Japanese filmmaker Toru Kubota, and American botanist Kyaw Htay Oo.

Notably, in July, the junta reintroduced capital punishment, executing four individuals. This marked the first executions in Myanmar in over three decades. These men, including a former opposition lawmaker and a renowned activist, were convicted in trials that lacked transparency and did not meet international legal standards.

The National Unity Government (NUG), formed by ousted lawmakers and anti-coup activists, sought to represent the aspirations of the civilian population and various ethnic groups in their pursuit of democracy and national reconciliation. However, the situation remained highly complex, and the path towards peace and stability faced numerous challenges. The international community expressed strong condemnation of the military coup and the human rights abuses committed during the civil war. Countries such as the United States, Canada, and New Zealand imposed sanctions on the military junta and provided support to pro-democracy activists and ethnic groups.

The Myanmar Civil War involved several major ethnic armed groups operating in different regions of the country. Some of the prominent groups included:

- **Karen National Union (KNU):** The KNU is one of the oldest and most significant ethnic armed groups in Myanmar, representing the Karen ethnic minority. They have been fighting for greater autonomy and self-determination in the Karen State and other Karen-populated areas.
- **Kachin Independence Army (KIA):** The KIA represents the Kachin ethnic group and operates in the northern part of Myanmar, mainly in Kachin State. They have been fighting for political and cultural rights and control over the region's natural resources.
- **Shan State Army (SSA):** The SSA is an umbrella organisation representing various Shan armed groups in Shan State. The Shan people seek greater autonomy and recognition of their rights in the region.
- **Arakan Army (AA):** The Arakan Army represents the ethnic Rakhine people in Rakhine State. They have been involved in clashes with the Myanmar military and have been fighting for greater autonomy and ethnic rights in the region.
- **Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA):** The TNLA represents the Ta'ang (Palaung) ethnic group and operates in northern Shan State. They are fighting for the rights of the Ta'ang people and have been involved in clashes with both the Myanmar military and other ethnic armed groups.
- **United Wa State Army (UWSA):** The UWSA is one of the largest and most powerful ethnic armed groups in Myanmar. They represent the Wa ethnic group and control areas in northern Shan State. The UWSA has maintained a ceasefire with the Myanmar government but operates with considerable autonomy.

Past UN Actions

2020:

The UN and Partners are currently providing humanitarian assistance to up to three million people in Myanmar.

- **Food Security:** Many people were in need of food assistance, and organisations like the World Food Programme (WFP) actively provided them.
- **Healthcare:** With hospitals and healthcare centres being affected by the political situation, organisations like the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners worked to ensure that essential health services remained available.
- **Protection:** The conflict, especially in ethnic areas, led to numerous protection concerns, including human rights abuses. The UN and its partners tried to ensure that vulnerable populations, especially children, women, and displaced individuals, received protection.
- **Shelter:** Due to conflict and displacement, many required immediate shelter. Organisations such as UNHCR provided essential shelter materials to the internally displaced persons.
- **Education:** The political situation affected the education system. Efforts were made to ensure that children still had access to education, even in dire circumstances.
- **Water and Sanitation:** Access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities was another major area of focus, especially for UNICEF.
- **Livelihood Support:** With the economic situation deteriorating, support was provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to help people sustain their livelihoods.

2020-Present:

UNOPS (United Nations Office of Private Services) manages two of the largest development funds in Myanmar, including the Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT) and the Access to Health Fund.

- **Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT):**
 - **Purpose:** LIFT was established to improve the lives and prospects of rural people in Myanmar. It works to ensure food and livelihood security for the most vulnerable and marginalised communities.
 - **Activities:** LIFT supports initiatives related to agriculture, fisheries, livestock, rural financial services, and other income opportunities. This includes promoting sustainable farming practices, diversifying income sources, and improving market access for farmers.

- **Impact:** Since its inception, LIFT has made significant contributions to reducing poverty and boosting rural development in Myanmar. It has supported millions of people, directly and indirectly, helping households improve their food security and increase their incomes.
- **Donors:** LIFT is supported by several international donors, including Australia, Denmark, the European Union, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- **Access to Health Fund:**
 - **Purpose:** This fund was established to support efforts to ensure that the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations in Myanmar have improved access to quality health services.
 - **Activities:** The fund backs initiatives that provide essential health services, including maternal and child health, communicable disease control (like TB, HIV, and malaria), and health system strengthening. It has a particular focus on conflict-affected areas and ensuring health equity.
- **Impact:** The Access to Health Fund has played a vital role in addressing key health challenges in Myanmar, especially in regions where the formal health system struggles to deliver services. It has facilitated partnerships between the government, NGOs, and community-based organisations.
- **Donors:** The fund has received contributions from multiple donors, including the United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States.

2021:

The UN Network worked closely with the former Government to draft a new prioritised multi sectoral National Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Security (2016-2025) as the country's response to the UN Secretary-General António Guterres' Zero Hunger Challenge.

- **Displacement:** Prolonged conflict has led to a significant number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Myanmar. Displaced populations often face severe food and nutrition security challenges. The National Action Plan needed to incorporate strategies that addressed the immediate and long-term needs of these populations.
- **Inaccessibility:** Conflict zones, particularly in states like Kachin, Shan, and Rakhine, are often hard to access due to active hostilities or restrictions imposed by various actors. This inaccessibility poses challenges to the implementation of food and nutrition security interventions.

- **Direct Impact on Livelihoods:** Armed conflicts frequently disrupt the livelihoods of local communities. Agriculture, fishing, and other forms of subsistence can be severely affected either due to the conflict itself or due to displacement. The National Action Plan would have had to incorporate strategies that helped communities restore and diversify their livelihoods.
- **Health and Nutrition:** Conflict-affected regions often record higher malnutrition rates, especially among children. Providing health services, including nutrition interventions, becomes crucial in these contexts.
- **Collaboration with Local Actors:** In areas where the national government might have limited reach or acceptability, local NGOs, community-based organisations, and even ethnic governance structures play a crucial role. Collaboration with these entities would be essential to successfully implement any food and nutrition security plan.
- **Building Resilience:** In addition to immediate relief, it's vital to enhance the resilience of conflict-affected communities. This means not only addressing food and nutrition needs but also building capacities, diversifying income sources, and ensuring that communities have the means to cope with both conflicts and other shocks, like natural disasters.

2022:

The United Nations in Myanmar stands by the people of Myanmar and is supporting them through the unprecedented crises facing the country.

- **Humanitarian Assistance:**
 - **Conflict:** Due to the protracted conflicts, particularly in states like Kachin, Shan, and Rakhine, many people have been internally displaced. The UN and its associated agencies have provided relief in the form of food, shelter, healthcare, and other essentials to these internally displaced persons (IDPs).
 - **Natural Disasters:** Myanmar is vulnerable to natural disasters like cyclones, floods, and earthquakes. The UN assists in disaster response, recovery, and resilience-building efforts.
- **Development Initiatives:**
 - The UN supports various programs aimed at poverty alleviation, infrastructure development, education, health, and more.
 - With the socio-economic challenges brought about by the 2021 coup, the role of the UN in sustaining development endeavours and preventing a complete economic downturn became even more crucial.
- **Health and Pandemic Response:**
 - The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic placed an enormous strain on Myanmar's healthcare system. The World Health Organization (WHO) and other UN entities have provided support in terms of public health

advisories, medical supplies, and capacity-building to deal with the pandemic.

- **Human Rights and Justice:**

- Given the numerous human rights violations, especially in the post-coup context, the UN has consistently raised concerns and advocated for the protection of human rights.
- The UN Human Rights Council has held sessions addressing the situation in Myanmar, emphasising the need for justice, accountability, and redress.

- **Peace and Reconciliation Efforts:**

- The UN has actively been involved in facilitating dialogues and peace-building measures, especially concerning the longstanding ethnic conflicts.
- Efforts like the Myanmar Peace Process, though challenging, have had some support and involvement from the international community, including the UN.

- **Support for Vulnerable Groups:**

- Special attention has been given to vulnerable groups like children, women, and ethnic minorities. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), for instance, has been active in supporting children's rights.

Major Bloc Positions

United States of America

On February 2, 2021, the U.S. Department of State made a significant assessment regarding the political situation in Myanmar (Burma). Consequently, it concluded that the actions of the Burmese military on February 1, which involved the removal of the duly elected Head of Government, Aung San Suu Kyi, constituted a military coup d'état. This designation of a "military coup" had significant implications for the United States' relationship with Myanmar and its military government.

Following this assessment, the U.S. government took a firm stance against the coup and expressed its support for the people of Myanmar who were striving for democracy and a better future. USAID (United States Agency for International Development), being a vital player in promoting democracy and development worldwide, has long been involved in Myanmar, partnering with civil society organisations, local and international NGOs, and other donors. The objective of these partnerships was to reinforce democratic values, support human rights, and work towards an inclusive and prosperous future for the people of Burma.

In the wake of the military coup, the U.S. government, through USAID, intensified its efforts to back democratic initiatives and uphold human rights in Myanmar. This has included financial assistance to organisations working on promoting democracy, improving governance, advancing human rights, and supporting marginalised communities.

By collaborating with civil society organisations and local entities, USAID aimed to empower grassroots movements and strengthen the voices of the people. It sought to provide avenues for peaceful participation and representation, ensuring that the diverse aspirations and needs of the Burmese people were taken into account in the process of rebuilding their country.

China

China's stance on the military rule in Myanmar has been a subject of scrutiny and criticism from the international community. While China has publicly stated its support for a peaceful resolution to the conflict without foreign interference, its actions at the United Nations have raised concerns.

China, along with Russia, has repeatedly used its veto power as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to block resolutions condemning the escalating brutality of the Burmese military junta. This has frustrated other member states that have sought stronger measures to address the human rights violations and restore democracy in Myanmar.

The main reason behind China's reluctance to support such resolutions is its concern over potential additional sanctions that could be imposed on Myanmar. China is one of Myanmar's most significant trading partners and investors, making it wary of measures that could harm its economic interests in the region. China's investment in Myanmar covers various sectors, including energy, infrastructure, and natural resources, and any further sanctions could have significant economic implications for both countries.

China's approach to the situation in Myanmar reflects its broader foreign policy principles of non-interference and respect for national sovereignty. China has historically been cautious about supporting international interventions in the domestic affairs of other countries, fearing that it could set a precedent that might be used against its interests in the future.

Another aspect to consider is that China shares a border with Myanmar, which adds to its sensitivity toward developments in the country. Stability and security in Myanmar are vital for China's own regional interests, including border security and the prevention of cross-border activities such as illegal migration and illicit trade.

China's involvement in Myanmar also extends beyond economic interests. It has had diplomatic relations with Myanmar for many years and has supported the country in various international forums. This relationship has historical and geopolitical dimensions that influence China's approach to the ongoing political crisis in Myanmar.

Despite China's resistance to UN resolutions, it has engaged in behind-the-scenes diplomacy to mediate and influence the situation in Myanmar. China has sought to foster dialogue between the military junta and various stakeholders in an attempt to find a peaceful resolution. It has also advocated for regional organisations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to play a more active role in facilitating dialogue and promoting stability in Myanmar.

However, China's approach has drawn criticism from human rights advocates and pro-democracy activists, who argue that it prioritises economic interests over the well-being of the people of Myanmar. They believe that stronger international pressure, including sanctions, is necessary to hold the military junta accountable for its actions and restore democratic governance in the country.

United Kingdom

The UK had implemented a comprehensive arms embargo on Myanmar in response to the military coup and the subsequent human rights abuses perpetrated by the military regime. The embargo is part of the UK's efforts to exert diplomatic pressure on the military junta and signal its stance against the coup and the suppression of democracy.

By imposing a complete arms embargo, the UK aims to prevent the flow of military equipment and weapons to the Myanmar military, known as the Tatmadaw. This measure is intended to restrict the military's access to resources that could be used to further oppress the people of Myanmar and perpetuate violence.

In addition to its own arms embargo, the UK has been actively advocating for other countries and Member States of the international community to join in halting the flow of arms to Myanmar. The UK's diplomatic efforts aim to create a coordinated and united front against the military regime's actions and to ensure that the coup does not receive tacit support or encouragement from other nations.

The UK government has consistently voiced its condemnation of the military coup and called for an immediate return to democratic governance in Myanmar.

France

France had been a vocal advocate for human rights and democracy in Myanmar following the military coup on February 1, 2021. France's stance has been consistent in condemning the actions of the Burmese military regime and urging for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

One of the key elements of France's position is its call for the release of all individuals who have been arbitrarily detained since the military coup. The military junta's crackdown on dissent and opposition figures has led to widespread arrests of political activists, journalists, and pro-democracy leaders. France, along with the international community, has expressed deep concern about these human rights violations and has demanded the immediate release of those detained without proper legal process.

In addition to the call for the release of detainees, France has repeatedly condemned the violence perpetrated by the Burmese military regime. The military's actions, including the use of force against peaceful protesters and civilian populations, have resulted in numerous casualties and human rights abuses. France has emphasised

the importance of ending the violence and ensuring the protection of civilians in Myanmar.

Furthermore, France has urged for the establishment of a dialogue that includes all stakeholders in Myanmar. This call for inclusivity aims to promote a comprehensive and peaceful resolution to the crisis. France recognizes that a sustainable solution to the political situation in Myanmar can only be achieved through meaningful dialogue involving all relevant parties, including the military, pro-democracy groups, ethnic minorities, and civil society representatives.

France's diplomatic efforts are part of broader international attempts to address the political crisis in Myanmar. It has engaged with regional and global partners, including other European Union member states, to coordinate actions and amplify the call for a return to democratic governance and respect for human rights in Myanmar.

Russia

Russia is alongside China in one of the few countries who have not demonstrated immediate support for the minorities in Myanmar and showed some signs of support for the military junta. Along with China, Russia is also reportedly one of Myanmar's top weapon-suppliers, supplying equipment such as fighter jets, arms, armoured vehicles, and other military. Actions such as having vetoed a UN resolution condemning the abuses of the military are some of the factors that depict Russia as a supporter of the coup. Russia used to be part of the USSR, an ex-country notoriously known for its communist ideologies and Myanmar was a socialist, communist country until 1989, it is possible that Russia has a lot to gain from turning Myanmar back into what it was.

Myanmar

The current government of Myanmar is a military regime. They have taken an undemocratic approach and taken control of the country. The full and complete reason for Min Aung Hlaing's coup remains somewhat opaque and not 100% clear there are still educated assumptions that can be made on their position. The military has, since the coup, restricted internet access and even arrested comedians who have made fun of the military. The coup has acted as a dictatorship would and is not even trying to hide it. The Junta has also been extremely violent towards Rohingya Muslims and other minorities, being accused of rape, sexual assault, arson of villages, murder, torture and perpetration of large-scale violence in general. This undemocratic government has been largely protested by civilians and has responded to these protests with more violence.

Timeline of Events

- 1948** Myanmar gains independence from British colonial rule
- Late 1940 - 1950** The Panglong Agreement is signed between various ethnic groups and the government, promising autonomy and equal rights. However, tensions and conflicts continue to emerge over time.
- 1962** The military junta takes power in Myanmar through a coup led by General Ne Win, beginning a period of military rule.
- 1988** Pro-democracy protests erupt in Myanmar, leading to widespread civilian demonstrations and calls for political reforms. The military responds with a brutal crackdown, resulting in thousands of deaths.
- 1990** The first multi-party elections since 1960 are held in Myanmar. The National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, wins a landslide victory. However, the military junta refuses to hand over power.
- 1996** The military government and some ethnic armed groups sign ceasefire agreements.
- 2007** Large-scale protests known as the Saffron Revolution take place, with Buddhist monks at the forefront. The military suppresses the protests violently.
- 2010** Myanmar holds elections, but the military-backed party wins the majority of seats, and military rule continues in a semi-civilian form.

- 2011** The military junta nominally dissolves, and a nominally civilian government is established. However, the military retains significant control and influence over the government.
- 2015** Myanmar holds relatively free elections, and the NLD wins a landslide victory. Aung San Suu Kyi becomes the de facto leader of the country, although she is barred from becoming president.
- 2016** The conflict escalates in ethnic regions, particularly in the northern states of Kachin and Shan, leading to increased violence and displacement of civilians.
- 2017** The Rohingya crisis reaches a peak as the Myanmar military launches a brutal crackdown against the Rohingya Muslim minority in Rakhine State. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya flee to neighbouring Bangladesh, leading to an international outcry over human rights abuses.
- 2021** In February, the military stages a coup and seizes power from the civilian government, detaining Aung San Suu Kyi and other NLD leaders. Mass protests erupt across the country, with citizens demanding the restoration of civilian rule.
- 2021- Present** Since 2021, the conflict has continued the same, impacting many people's lives in Myanmar causing deaths and political turmoil for the past 2 years.

Definition of Key Terms

❖ Military Junta

A military junta is a type of leadership structure in a military dictatorship in which a committee of military officers rules in unison. The junta typically includes the leader of each branch of the military and sometimes the state police.

❖ NLD

National League for Democracy.

❖ Coup d'état

A sudden, violent, and unlawful seizure of power from a government.

❖ Ceasefire Agreements

A cease-fire is an agreement that regulates the cessation of all military activity for a given length of time in a given area. It may be declared unilaterally, or it may be negotiated between parties to a conflict.

❖ Rohingya Crisis

When hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees began flooding onto the beaches and paddy fields of southern Bangladesh in August 2017, it was the children who caught many people's attention.

Further Research

1. www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-65248242.
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3. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/humanitarian-crisis-worsens-as-fighting-in-myanmar-civil-war-ramps-up>

Guiding Questions

- ❖ What are the historical factors that have contributed to the outbreak and continuation of the Myanmar civil war?
- ❖ What measures can be taken to ensure the protection and safety of vulnerable groups, including women and children?
- ❖ What role should regional organisations, such as ASEAN, play in facilitating dialogue and conflict resolution in Myanmar?

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[Territorial division of Moroccan and Western Saharan land](#)

Topic B:

Moderating the Ongoing Western Sahara Africa Dispute

Background Information

Introduction

The dispute over Western Sahara began with the French colonisation of Morocco, when France established a protectorate over it called the Treaty of Frez in 1912. The Moroccan soldiers, however, did not want to be submitted to French imperialism or the local French general Robert Monier, thus, as a result the French sieged the territory. Protests surged from Moroccans as a response to these measures, and in attempts to shut them down, the French government was responsible for over 800 deaths in 1912. The Moroccan nationalist movement was consolidated between 1925 and 1930, and besides protests against French control, they began to battle for the maintenance of Islamic law rather than customary law imposed by the Sultan. This rebellion was once more shut down by the French government in 1937.

In 1943, the Istiqlal Party, the Moroccan Arabic nationalist party, was established, and it received support from the Arab League in hopes of achieving Moroccan independence.

In 1955, France agreed to grant the Kingdom of Morocco independence, which it only formally achieved in 1956. Nevertheless, it is crucial to point out that even before French imperialism had reached Morocco, Spain had already exerted influence over the territory. Even during French presence in Morocco, Spain had control over Southern Moroccan and the Western Sahara territory, and eventually had control over the Tangier International Zone, located in the Northern part of Morocco. Due to Spanish objectives of imperialism, under the control of Francisco Franco, former governor of Spain, this country imposed policies against the French domain over Morocco aiming to push back France in order to exert control over Moroccan territory. In this country, the National Army was composed solely of Spanish soldiers - known as the Spanish Army of Africa- who during World War II, were able to occupy Tangier.



[French Protectorate over Morroco and Spanish Sahara demonstrated in a map](#)

When France declared its decolonization of Morocco, in 1956, Spain used this opportunity to guarantee possession of certain Moroccan territories, specifically Ceuta and Melilla, located in Northern Morocco, and Sidi Ifni, located within Central Morocco. The Moroccan Army of Liberation was unwilling to accept such and once again fought. However, due to international pressure, through the Fez Agreement in 1969, Spain returned Sidi Ifni back to Morocco.

Polisario front

The Polisario Front stands for Popular Front or the “Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro”. Alongside the Sahrawi People's Liberation Army's rebellion against Spanish colonization, in the year of 1973 the Polisario Front was founded, being classified as a political-military organisation.

Finally, in 1975 Spain abandoned Western Sahara, leaving it to Morocco and Mauritania. Spain was responsible for 5,000 civilian deaths during this time, weakening the territory and facilitating Moroccan control over the region. Likewise, before leaving, Spain signed an agreement with Morocco and Mauritania yielding possession of Western Sahara. Due to its failure in finalising the establishment of an Arab State as the Polisario Front, Mauritania retreated from Western Sahara in 1979. Tensions continued as Morocco declared they intended to occupy the Mauritanian

part of Western Sahara to prevent the Polisario Front from taking this territory. Over 80,000 people lived in the disputed territory, which bordered the Atlantic Ocean; underneath the territory were large amounts of phosphates, iron ore and uranium reserves.

Before Mauritania relinquished control of Western Sahara in 1979, the United Nations Fact-Finding Missions undertook two crucial actions that escaped the attention of the disputing nations but required that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to become involved. Their involvement began with the UN Fact-Finding Mission passing a resolution urging the ICJ to take a position on the ongoing dispute. Simultaneously, the UN dispatched a Fact-Finding mission to understand the population's preferences for government. The outcome of the survey revealed a desire for an independent territory rather than being subjected to the authority of Mauritania and Morocco.

Subsequently, the International Court of Justice issued a declaration asserting that the bonds between the Kingdom of Morocco and Mauritania and Western Sahara were insufficiently strong to prevent potential uprisings from Sahrawi civilians. This judgement effectively removed barriers to the enforcement of Resolution 1514, also referred to as the "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples." This resolution was adopted during the 947th session of the General Assembly's fifteenth meeting in 1960. By condemning the colonization of foreign territories the resolution established that Morocco and Mauritania's actions were human rights violations.

Following these developments, a ceasefire was established in 1991 through the MINURSO document, which came about due to pressure from the Polisario.

Current Situation

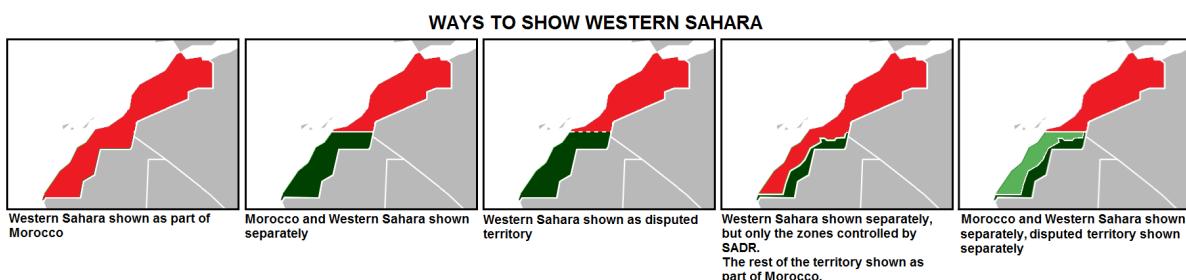
In 2020, the Polisario Front put an end to the stalemate that had been going on since 1991. There's a big difference in strength between the Polisario and Morocco, so breaking the ceasefire was seen as a strategic move. It is commonly agreed upon that the Polisario did so to get attention for the forgotten territory that has been occupied and exploited continuously, with the main aim being to make the international community focus on this problem again.

Sahrawi civilians are currently suffering, especially if they go against the Moroccan government. The UN Envoy for Western Sahara registered cases of children walking barefoot during the cold winter, alongside other forms of torture. Currently there are around 165,000 Sahrawi nationals in refugee camps - located within Tindouf, Algeria - of which 90,000 have received assistance from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

It is important to note that after the United Nations asked in 1964, the International Court of Justice ruled that there was no validity behind Moroccan or Mauritanian rule over Western Sahara.

Most of the media is controlled by Morocco, except for the Polisario-backed Medium Wave and some other forms of TV and radio. The Moroccan law about freedom of speech also stops people from speaking out against Islam or the Monarchy.

The president of both the Polisario Front and the The Sahrawi Democratic Republic is Brahim Ghali; he currently governs 20% of the Sahrawi territory, while the remaining 80% belongs to the Kingdom of Morocco. The United Nations has classified Western Sahara as a "Non-Self-Governing Territory" since 1963. Nowadays, this conflict is mostly an economic and humanitarian one. The interest in invading Western Sahara lies greatly in the natural resources available in its territory.



[4 demonstrations of Western Sahara of its territorial division with Morocco and as a colony](#)

Past UN Actions

MINURSO: United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara:

The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara originated due to the rising conflict between the Polisario Front and Morocco. MINURSO and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) attempted to end the conflict.

After Mauritania had already back down in 1985, the UN and OAU initiated a mission known as the “settlement proposal”, which consisted of a ceasefire so that the Sahrawi people could decide on their form of government, and whether they wanted to be an independent nation or be governed by the Kingdom of Morocco. Despite both Morocco and the Polisario Front agreeing to the proposal in 1988, the ceasefire was not implemented until 1991.

Sahrawi citizens were to play a decisive role in determining their preferred form of governance through a voting process. The responsibility of ensuring the participation of Sahrawi citizens in this voting process, especially refugees located in foreign territories, rested with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. This mission encompassed a force of 1,700 military personnel and 300 policemen, in addition to other designated roles. Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of MINURSO, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, was not consistently steady over the years.

In 1996, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' task of identifying Sahrawi citizens situated in foreign territories was suspended. This was due to the necessity of introducing police supervision in the locations where voting was planned. Consequently, in order to maintain the ceasefire, the UN Secretary-General implemented measures to reconcile the differing policies of the involved parties concerning the voting process.

As a result of the insights gathered by MINURSO, the conflict experienced positive advancements. In 2007, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara engaged in two rounds of discussions with Algeria and Mauritania. At that time, these countries held differing viewpoints on Sahrawi self-determination. Further formal and informal meetings took place during 2009 and 2010, although they failed to yield substantial outcomes. Throughout these years, MINURSO continued its operations by monitoring the ceasefire and providing support for refugee programs intended for Sahrawi families.

MINURSO received \$60,908,900 from the General Assembly, supplemented by military contributions from nations including Bangladesh, Egypt, Ghana, Pakistan, Honduras, Malaysia, Russia, Brazil, China, and Nigeria. Additionally, MINURSO mobilised over 470 personnel for roles such as admission experts, staff officers, troops, and police officers.

Major Bloc Positions

Morocco

Morocco is one of the largest exporters of phosphates worldwide, and saw potential of growing its exports with the Sahrawi territory due to its reserves in its desert. Morocco goes against the International Court of Justice which established that it had no affiliations that justified the control exerted over Western Sahara. It also goes against UN legislation which urges it to back out from the Sahrawi territory. Additionally, the location of Western Sahara facilitates access to marine resources; for Morocco, which has grown closer to the West within recent decades, it is crucial to have paths for trade.

Mauritania

A territory close to Western Sahara that previously had possession of a part of the Sahrawi territory. Since leaving Western Sahara in 1979, Mauritania has held limited regard for the nation however, it has gradually strengthened its diplomatic relationship with Algeria which has led to Mauritania's proximity to the Polisario. The bordering fraction of its territory with Western Sahara serves as a UN-patrolled Buffer Zone, and Mauritania has ceased exploitation of phosphate in the Sahrawi territory.

Algeria

Algeria has played a crucial role in this conflict. Besides being one of the main and most loyal countries to the Polisario Front, it has also been hosting refugees of Western Sahara. The current number of refugees in Tindouf, a city in Algeria that borders Western Sahara, is 165,000. In 2018, Algeria cut ties with Morocco due to their unwillingness to back down from Western Sahara. Algeria has served as an ally to the Polisario Front, and has been even more active in it after Morocco occupied Western Sahara.

United States of America

The United States holds a keen interest in various resources lying beneath the Sahrawi sands, including uranium. As a global powerhouse, the United States' acknowledgment of Morocco's assertion of authority over Western Sahara significantly impacts the ongoing conflict, even though it lacks a direct connection to

either nation. Former President Donald Trump publicly announced his recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Sahrawi. This stance sets the US apart as the sole nation, alongside Israel, to adopt this position. However, President Joe Biden has yet to confirm his position regarding the conflict.

European and African Union

European nations refrain from endorsing Moroccan control over Western Sahara, notwithstanding their economic interests in the resources located within the Sahrawi desert. These countries maintain trade partnerships with Morocco primarily centered on phosphate, a resource found in abundance beneath the sands of the Sahrawi desert. Moreover, due to its geographical proximity to Europe, the continent seeks stability in this conflict and aims to prevent violent incidents near its borders.

Notably, despite not being a founding member of the African Union — unlike Morocco and Mauritania — the Union has refrained from taking sides in the dispute over Western Sahara. Despite the membership of all three countries in the African Union, the organization has not yet adopted a clear stance on the conflict. It has, however, consistently urged the Security Council to reinforce the implementation of MINURSO (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara). The African Union's objective is to alleviate the internal disputes, seeking to minimize the suffering experienced by the Sahrawi people while comprehending the perspectives of both sides engaged in the dispute.

Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara)

The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic is a territory that is recognized by the UN to be “non self-governing” as less than 50% of its government is actually under Sahrawi control. This part of the territory is governed by a Head of State, and it is the only African country that is not yet independent. It is a very diverse territory with 4 official languages; Arabic, Berber, Spanish and French. The president of the Polisario Front is also the President of Western Sahara; his name is Brahim Gali. This country is rich in natural resources, especially phosphate holding 72% of the world’s phosphate reserves. It is crucial to point out that Morocco claims possession over this phosphate as it claims control of Sahrawi territory.

Timeline of Events

- 1912** Morocco is divided between France and Spain. The central and largest area of the territory is given to France and the Southern and Northern extremes are under Spanish control.
- 1965** The United Nations General Assembly adopts a resolution requesting for Morocco to decolonize Western Sahara.
- 1966** The UN requests for Spain to organise a referendum on Sahrawi self-determination under UN supervision.
- 1972** The UN, once again adopted a resolution for Spain to host a referendum deciding on the future of Spanish Sahara.
- 1973** The Polisario Front was created to go against Spanish Sahara.
- 1975** After Spanish decolonization of Morocco and Western Sahara, the Tripartite Agreement was signed. This agreement consisted of Spain passing down Western Sahara to Mauritania and Morocco.
- 1979** Mauritania backs down from Western Sahara due to pressure mainly from the Polisario Front.
- 1975-91** The Polisario Front fought against Morocco and for a short time against Mauritania for Sahrawi self-determination.
- 1991** Through several resolutions adopted, MINURSO establishes a ceasefire.
- 2019** The ceasefire is knocked down by the Polisario with the aim of calling attention from the international community within a situation of war.

Definition of Key Terms

❖ Referendum

A referendum is an internal vote held to discuss an ongoing issue, political event etc.

❖ Stage of Siege

Stage where authorities are allowed to put restrictions on cross border movement. Within this stage, the government has permission to arrest suspects without charges.

❖ Ceasefire

Temporary suspension of a war or armed conflict. Both sides are obliged to stop military or any other type of offences against the opposing side.

❖ Protectorate

An establishment of a state that is controlled or protected by another one. This protectorate is set by the dominant country over the one that is being protected.

❖ UN Fact Finding Mission

Body of the UN, whose job is discovering accurate information in regions or nations disturbed by conflict.

❖ Guerilla

Independent, small groups that illegally fight and are involved in battles.

❖ Insurgency

A revolt or rebellion that is active or rising.

❖ Berm

Historical wall that ran through Southern Western Sahara all the way towards Southern Morocco. The wall was made of sand and separated Moroccan and Polisario controlled areas.

Further Research

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Guiding Questions

- ❖ How can countries continue to trade natural resources located in Western Sahara?
- ❖ Morocco has been responsible for several casualties throughout all years of control. Given such, should this country be condemned? If so, what would the consequences entail?
- ❖ How should foreign agencies intervene in the conflict at hand?
- ❖ Should countries that are geographically closer to the conflict receive any special support?

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