



From: Security Alert - International SOS <riskinsights@internationalsos.com>  
Sent: 02 February 2021 02:24  
To: Mansi Agarwal  
Subject: 0 travellers now - Advisory: Myanmar - Stand fast until 3 February following military takeover of power; expect heightened security, protests (Revised)


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## Myanmar: Stand fast until 3 February following military takeover of power; expect heightened security, protests (Revised)

### OVERVIEW

 **Level:** **Advisory**

 **Location:** Myanmar

 **Category:** Political unrest, Protest/Rally, Curfew, State of emergency, Transport disruption

 **Active:** 01 Jan 2021 - 06 Feb 2021

**Last Updated: 01 Feb 2021 20:52 (GMT)**

The table below shows the number of impacted and potentially impacted individuals and assets at the date/time the alert was issued. The counts include individuals within the impact radius of the alert and may not reflect the total number of people in each area listed.

Please log into [Tracker](#) for the latest information or [click here](#) for an up-to-date list of affected individuals and assets in the impacted area.

EXPOSURE IN IMPACTED AREA ONLY				
Location	There Now	There in next 24 hours	There in next 1-7 days	There while the alert is active
Myanmar (Medium Risk)	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Staff in the country should continue to stand fast **until at least 3 February** following the military takeover of power from civilian rule on 1 February. There is a heightened security presence in major urban centres and on several intercity highways. While communications services have largely resumed, all airport operations have been suspended **until 31 May**. A nationwide curfew has been imposed **from 20.00 to 06.00** (local time), during which people are only allowed to leave their residences for essential activities. No notable protests supporting the National League for Democracy (NLD) have thus far occurred; however, related gatherings and counter-demonstrations by pro-military groups are likely **in the coming days**. While the military remains intent on and capable of containing unrest, employees and managers should remain prepared for a range of scenarios, including a deterioration in the country's security environment.

## MORE DETAIL

### *Situation*

The military has imposed a one-year nationwide state of emergency and taken over the executive, legislative and judicial functions. A military spokesperson stated that the army will hold new general elections after the state of emergency period ends. The latest developments follow weeks of tensions between the government and the military, which has demanded investigations into allegedly fraudulent November 2020 elections that saw the then-ruling NLD party win a second term.

The security forces detained former de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi, along with President Win Myint and other leading figures of the NLD party, during early-morning raids on 1 February. General Min Aung Hlaing has since assumed power, while former vice-president Myint Swe has become the country's new president. The military has increased security around key infrastructure, such as the parliament building in Naypyitaw, as well as at entry points to major cities and on major highways.

### *Protest activity*

Some pro-military gatherings were reported on 1 February in Yangon city in support of the military's takeover of power. A journalist was reportedly assaulted during one such gathering near the city's Sule Pagoda. No notable gatherings by NLD supporters have occurred. Statements purportedly from NLD leadership calling for protests circulated widely on social media and news channels, although their authenticity remains unconfirmed. Nevertheless, such information – or misinformation – has the potential to provoke large protests, particularly in major cities in the NLD strongholds of Ayeyarwady, Bago, Magway, Mandalay, Sagaing, Tanintharyi and Yangon regions.

All pro-NLD demonstrations will be met with a tough response from the security forces. Clashes with pro-military groups holding counter-demonstrations are

also possible, particularly in Yangon city, Naypyitaw and Patheingyi (Ayeyarwady region); pro-military groups have organised a series of demonstrations in various urban centres in recent weeks.

### *Communications*

Our in-country contacts have confirmed that internet and telephone services in Naypyitaw and Yangon city have largely been restored after they were temporarily suspended for several hours on 1 February. However, connections remain erratic and the services are liable to be suspended again with little notice, especially in locations where major protests break out. Broadcast services have similarly been disrupted.

### *Transportation*

The military has taken control of Yangon (RGN), Mandalay (MDL) and Naypyitaw (NYT) international airports, suspending all flights **until 31 May**. The status of border crossings to neighbouring Thailand, China and India remain unclear. Checkpoints are also likely at entry and exit points of major cities such as Yangon, Naypyitaw and Mandalay.

Challenges around logistics and travel practicalities will remain a key concern during this period. Movement within the country may be affected by short-notice road closures. The military may further increase security, block routes to certain cities, or even restrict movement within cities – especially to areas affected by protest activity. This will increase uncertainty around travel within the country, which is largely dependent on the status of overland routes **in the coming weeks** amid the closure of the airport operations.

### *Essential supplies and services*

There have been reports of panic buying of supplies in some locations. Most banks across the country closed on 1 February following the military takeover. The closures were reportedly triggered by poor internet connectivity. The Myanmar Banks Association stated that banks will resume services on **2 February**. Meanwhile, many supermarkets have also reduced their operating hours to **between 09.00 and 18.00 until further notice**.

### *International response*

International responses have been mixed. In the Asia-Pacific region, China issued a statement 'noting' the developments and expressing hopes for a resolution to the differences between all sides. Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Philippines and Thailand issued similarly balanced statements. The US and UK governments condemned the military takeover of the civilian government and urged the military to release the detained leaders.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Localised protests and counter-protests remain the primary concern **in the coming days**, although the extent of the NLD's popular support – and its

potential to translate into major unrest – remains unclear. Regardless, the military remains both intent on and capable of containing violence amid a tight security presence, meaning we do not expect a significant deterioration in the immediate term.

Nonetheless, escalatory triggers to monitor – and that may suggest a significant escalation driven by widespread unrest and ethnic violence – include:

- Strong calls for protests from the NLD and/or supporter groups on social media;
- Coordinated protest activity and organised gatherings;
- Widely circulated mis- or disinformation that stokes public anger;
- Further arrests of NLD supporters and/or activists;
- Clashes between NLD and pro-military activists, resulting in serious injury and/or death;
- Heightened curfew measures;
- Substantial military deployment to support domestic policing and anti-protest activity;
- Prolonged communications blackouts;
- An increase in militant activity or related attacks in conflict-affected areas in Shan, Rakhine, Kachin and Chin states amid the military's focus in maintaining a strong presence and enforcing movement restrictions nationwide.

More broadly, while Myanmar in 2011 underwent substantial democratic reforms with civilian rule reinstated, the military retained significant political influence. In this sense, the latest developments do not indicate a major shift in the country's power dynamics, or in the nature of its security environment.

## WHAT WE ADVISED YOUR PEOPLE

### *Inbound travellers*

- International SOS maintains its standing advice to defer all travel to Myanmar due to restrictions related to COVID-19. Additionally, the driver for this advice now applies equally to the prevailing security situation, until otherwise indicated. This assessment is made jointly by our medical and security professionals.

### *In-country employees*

- Stand fast **until at least 3 February** and engage your manager on the latest developments before de-escalating this posture. Monitor in-country sources, security networks, diplomatic missions, and our Myanmar alerts for updates.
- Expect heightened security on the streets and around government buildings, especially in the capital Naypyitaw, Yangon city (Yangon region) and Mandalay city (Mandalay region). Follow all official directives.
- All information circulating on social media and news channels should be verified via official and reliable sources.

- Anticipate further and prolonged disruption to telecommunications services. Maintain a list of emergency contacts, both electronically and on paper. Always keep copies with you. Register all contacts on your mobile phone. In case you do not have access to alternative means of communication, check your organisation's incident management protocol.
- Ensure you have sufficient cash and liaise with local contacts to ascertain which banks are operating for cash withdrawals.
- Ensure the ability to stand fast for at least one week with appropriate physical security measures, as well as access to secure accommodation, essential supplies (food, water and essential medication), fuel and communications devices. Ensure the ability to stand fast for longer periods in rural areas.

#### *Advice for managers*

- Closely monitor developments and triggers, which may require the enhancement of the current security arrangements.
- Ensure staff in Myanmar are supported and able to stand fast with appropriate physical security measures. Staff should have access to secure accommodation, essential supplies (food, water and essential medication), fuel and communications devices. Ensure the ability to stand fast for a period of at least one week, or longer in rural areas.
- Activate crisis management and business continuity plans (BCP). Ensure in-country staff are aware of BCP and emergency protocols, including communication procedures.
- Prepare for prolonged disruption to telecommunication services. Establish a communications protocol, including a cycle for regularly checking the status of in-country staff and the use of various modes of communication, as well as steps to be taken when communication is lost.
- Ensure relevant evacuation or escalation plans are ready to be implemented at short notice. Such plans should take into account COVID-19-related restrictions and the likely need to have a negative result of a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for commercial flights out of country, when they resume. Arrangements should be made to have a PCR test when safe to do so in liaison with local providers.
- Reconfirm the capabilities of local security and logistics providers, including the ability to support ground transport and any manned guarding arrangements.

## ASSISTANCE



**+1 215 942 8226**  
Philadelphia, USA

**+33 155 633 155**  
Paris, France

**+44 208 762 8008**  
London, UK

**+65 6338 7800**  
Singapore

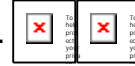
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**Dubai, UAE**

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