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| <b>FORUM:</b>           | Security Council               |
| <b>ISSUE:</b>           | Situation in Myanmar           |
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| <b>POSITION:</b>        | Head Chair of Security Council |

## Introduction

The current situation within the nations of Myanmar is standing as one of the most serious security crises that Southeast Asia is facing today. A military coup in Myanmar on February 1, 2021 led by the Myanmar military (known as the Tatmadaw) successfully gained control of the entire Myanmar government and arrested vital political leaders, one of which was State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, who still remains arrested to this day.



Stemming from a relatively local political crisis, this situation transformed into a dreadful nationwide conflict. Frequent protests broke out against the military rulers in Myanmar, and the military suppressed these protestors through violent means. Resistance against this military rule began forming all across the nation. Multiple ethnic armed organizations, such as the National Unity Government (NUG) and the People's Defense Forces (PDFs) have been challenging the military authority within the nation. Now, fighting has spread all across multiple regions, resulting in dire humanitarian consequences.

This crisis cannot be ignored, as it is extremely vital to the United Nations due to its effects on global peace and security. Unrelenting fighting has brought the nation of Myanmar to a situation where there is mass civilian displacement, food insecurity, and large-scale needs in the humanitarian aspect. This also poses a large threat to the sovereignty and stability of neighboring nations around Myanmar such as India, Bangladesh, Thailand, and China.

As for the Security Council, the main concern is determining how to implement levels of international diplomacy and mechanisms in order to prevent violence occurring within Myanmar. The Security Council must also take into consideration the sovereignty of Myanmar and of its people. The Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) has a vital role in this situation, as ASEAN has pushed for

diplomatic efforts in Myanmar as well as for inclusive solutions taking the unstable political situation of Myanmar into account.

## Background

For decades, Myanmar has been experiencing ethnic as well as political conflict. After gaining independence in the year 1948, multiple governments have subsequently failed to establish lasting peace within the nation between the government and armed ethnic groups.

Following a coup led by General Ne Win in 1962, military rule became a significant part of life in Myanmar. Despite Myanmar's previous attempts to shift towards a more civilian-focused government in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, electoral fraud and deceit still caused lasting issues for the nation and its people, preventing a clean shift in the government of Myanmar.

After the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won the elections by a majority vote in 2020, the military in Myanmar had some issues over the results, claiming there was

election fraud. The authorities overseeing the elections said that these allegations posited by the military were actually false, and they stated that there was no foul play in the elections.

Later on in 2021 February, the military in Myanmar seized control of the control and arrested political leaders such as Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint. The military government, also known as the State Administration Council

(SAC) stated publicly it would operate the nation under the terms of a state of emergency

Almost overnight, large protests formed in Myanmar; subsequently, Myanmar security forces arrested protestors. This resulted in more organized armed groups to form against the Myanmar government.

The National Unity government, formed by politicians and those opposed to military rule, supported the formation of the People's Defense Forces, which is highly involved in military resistance against the Myanmar government. Across the country, ethnic groups began increasing military activity in multiple parts of the country.



Figure 2 Military in Myanmar



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Because of all this, the situation in Myanmar developed into a highly complex multi-factor civil war. The different ethnic groups within the nation all seem to have different objectives, while the groups NUG and PDFs are looking to establish a more democratic political system over the current military rulers.

To address the crisis, ASEAN has attempted to form a diplomatic framework. Being revealed in April 2021, ASEAN officially adopted the Five-Point Consensus, which called for the immediate end of hostilities between nations, diplomatic discussions between all involved parties, humanitarian aid and assistance, and the establishment of a special envoy.

Despite these continued efforts by multiple parties involved, the implementation of this plan has been severely limited. On December 2022, the Security Council passed Resolution 2669, which called for an immediate cessation of hostilities between parties, the release of political leaders from jails, more dialogue proceedings, and more involvement in crisis resolution from ASEAN. The resolution additionally called for unrestricted humanitarian aid in the area.

Even with such efforts such as these, violence and armed conflict continues to ravage the nation. Millions of civilians have been displaced due to the conflicts, and a large number of them need humanitarian aid.

This continuing conflict goes far in showing how difficult resolving the situation in Myanmar is through only diplomacy. The goal of the Security Council is to find how to solve this issue through methods such as international pressure, humanitarian aid, and peacebuilding in the nation.



Figure 3 Police in Myanmar forming a line

## Problems Raised

### *Problem 1: Displacement of Civilians and Humanitarian Aid*

Due to the conflict, there now remains an immense humanitarian emergency within Myanmar. There are currently millions of people who need assistance from humanitarian organizations, and large groups of people have needed to entirely leave their homes because of regional instability.

Civilians in Myanmar have been highly affected because airstrikes destruction of villages, and restricted humanitarian aid have done high levels of damage to the already serious situation.

People internally displaced in Myanmar have been lacking shelter, food, water, education, healthcare, and more essential needs. Organizations involved in humanitarian aid have been stopped by



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many obstacles, such as active combat in regions, government restrictions, and insecurity, which has really hurt the people in the country.

This crisis has also gone further than just in Myanmar. People that have been displaced due to the continuing conflict and instability travelled to nearby nations like Bangladesh, Thailand, and India in order to find safety from the civil war.

The UN has fully emphasized how important access to humanitarian aid is, and Security Council Resolution 2669 calls for this exactly.

### *Problem 2: Instability Regionally and Politically*

There is a lack of a majority-accepted political agreement, which has propelled the conflict



Figure 4 Military convoy

forward. The military government continues to grasp major establishments and vital regions of the nation, and this has in turn caused multiple ethnic groups to contend for regions across the country.

The fragmentation of the state has caused negotiations between parties very difficult, as there isn't one single opposition group that can fully represent the vast spectrum of political views within Myanmar, as the different ethnic groups have differing political end goals.

The instability and insecurity has also caused high risks for neighboring nations. Illegal trafficking and armed groups have posed a prominent threat to nearby countries, damaging their regional stability.

Another factor bleeding into this is the different aims each country wants for Myanmar. Some nations like Russia, India, and some Western countries have interests in Myanmar, making impartial discussion and diplomacy within nations extremely difficult.

This is why the Security Council must find a middle ground with pressure on the Myanmar military as well as effortful diplomatic discussions.

## **International Actions**

*UN Security Council Resolution 2669*



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One international action of high significance is the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 2669 in the year 2022. This resolution immediately called for a cessation of hostilities within Myanmar, as well as for the de-escalation of the entire situation within the region.

The resolution also called for the release of detained prisoners who were detained due to an arbitrary reason, as well as for the protection of human rights and constructive dialogue between conflicting parties.

However, this resolution did not deploy a peacekeeping or military force within the region, and this shows the limitations that international diplomatic efforts have in regards to a party that does not want to cooperate with international laws.



Figure 5 Democratic protestors

### *The Five-Point Consensus and Diplomatic Control*

ASEAN attempted to take a leading role in keeping the peace within Myanmar by establishing the Five-Point Consensus, which called for an immediate end to violence and armed conflict within the nation. It also urged for the entrance of humanitarian aid in the nation, as well as the establish of a special envoy just for Myanmar.

The UN actively supports ASEAN and its efforts to promote peace within the Myanmar region. The UN has also encouraged cooperation between itself and ASEAN.

Despite the efforts coming from ASEAN, the Five-Point Consensus has not been able to be successful to its fullest extent. As violence continues within the nation of Myanmar, it is clear that diplomatic resolutions need stronger international mechanisms in order to succeed.

## **Key Players**

### *Myanmar Military / State Administration Council*

The State Administration Council remains known as the administration that successfully seized power in early 2021. This party argues that their actions were deemed necessary due to potential dishonesty within the 2020 general election in Myanmar.

So far this party has resisted pressures internationally to surrender their political power. This party has participated in dialogue with ASEAN and other Southeastern Asian nations.



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### *National Unity Government*

The National Unity Government was simply established by politicians in Myanmar and other individuals against the military rulers of the nation. It states that it is the representation of the democratic movement within Myanmar.

This political organization strongly opposes the military rule within Myanmar, and it seeks for the restoration of a civilian government instead of the current military government. International recognition of this party is still controversial, as the official Myanmar government remains unstable.

### *Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)*

ASEAN has done much to attempt to resolve and de-escalate the situation in Myanmar and around neighboring countries. Its Five-Point Consensus remains one of its most important resolutions for the current conflict.

This organization highly values dialogue between conflicting parties and humanitarian assistance to those who need it. However, seemingly irresolvable differences between members of ASEAN have caused extreme difficulty in reaching common responses and decisions.

### *Bangladesh*

This nation is very relevant to the current situation because of the fact that it hosts many a refugee from Myanmar. Bangladesh is a great space for displaced refugees to easily reenter Myanmar when the situation becomes less volatile.



Figure 6 Humanitarian aid in Myanmar

## **Possible Solutions**

### *Strengthening ASEAN and UN Diplomatic Collaboration*

The Security Council ought to strengthen cooperation between ASEAN and the UN through effective diplomatic mechanisms. A coordinated process could be established in order to prevent chaos within discussions.

The ASEAN created the Five Point Consensus, and this should continue to be used as a vital part of the solution to the situation in Myanmar. This should be added on with clear monitoring and reporting



of the various situations in the region of Myanmar. This diplomatic process should include involved parties such as the Myanmar military and the NUG.

### *Establishing a Humanitarian Ceasefire and Oversight Mechanism*

There should be a humanitarian ceasefire established in Myanmar in order to ensure that those people in Myanmar who need help are in a viable position to receive help from humanitarian organizations.

An international oversight mechanism should also be implemented, which could potentially significantly lower the amount of violations of internationally established law within Myanmar and the regions around Myanmar.



Figure 7 Military installment in Myanmar

## **Glossary**

### *ASEAN*

Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which is a regional organization consisting of Southeast Asian states.

### *Five-Point Consensus*

ASEAN's 2021 framework for addressing the Myanmar, situation calling for an end to armed fighting, dialogue, humanitarian assistance, and extensive diplomatic engagement.

### *Humanitarian Access*

The ability of humanitarian organizations to give those in need significant help or aid, notably in developing nations or war-torn countries.

### *De-escalation*

Turning a situation into a less severe or serious situation

### *Sovereignty*

A country's ability to govern itself and control its territory without other nations interfering; independent governance apart from other nations

### *Cessation*

The process or fact of ending or being brought to an end.



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*National Unity Government (NUG)*

Party established by democratically-oriented politicians against the military regime placed within Myanmar

*People's Defense Forces (PDF)*

The armed sect of the Myanmar National Unity Government, which opposes the military rule of Myanmar.



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