



Myanmar Situation Update (24 - 30 January 2022)

On 1 February 2022, Myanmar completed a year since the military coup during which the junta detained Myanmar state counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint, Chairman of the Union Election Commission Hla Thein and many other political leaders and activists in the early hours of 1 February 2021. ANFREL has been closely monitoring the situation in Myanmar since the coup and publishes weekly updates, and also published a timeline of the key incidents that happened over the last year that you can access [here](#). ANFREL also reaffirmed that “the 2020 Myanmar General Elections were, by and large, representative of the will of the people of Myanmar and ANFREL will stand with the people of Myanmar in their fight for the restoration of democracy in the country”¹.

Despite the junta’s threats of charges of sedition or terrorism against anyone who participates in the silent strike on 1 February, many streets were deserted and shops abandoned across the country including in the commercial hub of Yangon. The junta also threatened the business owners that their properties would be seized if they participated in the strike. Anti-junta protests were also held across the country while two people were killed and 38 injured in a grenade attack at a pro-military rally conducted in Tachileik, Shan State². More than 1,519 people have been killed by the junta in the last 12 months and over 11,980 people detained, with 8,977 still indetention³. Reports also say over 400,000 people have been displaced since the coup by the junta air strikes, heavy weaponry attacks and mass arrests in different parts of the country⁴.

A joint statement issued by the European Union, and the Foreign Ministers of Albania, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States urged the junta to immediately end the State of Emergency, allow unhindered humanitarian access, release all arbitrarily detained persons and swiftly return the country to a

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/ANFREL/posts/5397314710282743>

² <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/two-killed-38-injured-at-rally-attack-on-myanmar-coup-anniversary.htm>

³ <https://aappb.org/?p=20023>

⁴ https://www.instagram.com/p/CZhBxz3Myiu/?utm_medium=copy_link

democratic process. The statement further called on members of the international community to support efforts to promote justice for the people of Myanmar and hold those responsible for human rights violations and abuses accountable⁵. In a special statement, the ministry of foreign affairs of Singapore also expressed concern about the situation in Myanmar, said Singapore is disappointed by the lack of progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus, and called on the junta to release of all political detainees including ousted president Win Myint and state counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi⁶.

The UN Security Council also repeated its call for the pursuance of dialogue with all parties concerned and reconciliation in accordance with the will and interests of the people of Myanmar in a statement that further calls for the release of all those who remain arbitrarily detained⁷. In the meantime, the Council has continuously failed to impose the global arms embargo on the Myanmar military that rights groups and Myanmar civil society has been calling for since the coup in February, 2021.

Cambodia, the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that Myanmar Junta's Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin will not be invited to the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting in Phnom Penh in February. Instead, ASEAN will invite a non-political representative⁸. The ASEAN foreign ministers meetings scheduled in January 2022 were postponed amid reports of disagreements among the member states over Myanmar with Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia having strongly opposed inviting the junta appointed foreign minister. Last November, ASEAN barred the junta leader Aung Min Hlaing from attending the ASEAN summit and invited a non-political representative; the junta refused the invitation.

In an interview with Channel News Asia, Noeleen Heyzer, the United Nations' special envoy for Myanmar said that the junta cannot be ignored and left out of any upcoming peace process⁹. Responding to her interview, civil society organizations in Myanmar have heavily criticized her views on power sharing with the military and her claims that the military is in control at this particular time. 247 CSOs rejected her views in a joint statement¹⁰ which further mentioned her views provide a signal that the "UN is willing to act as a broker for their power despite the grave crimes that the junta committed". Noeleen Heyzer responded to the criticisms and said the term

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/usembassy.rangoon/posts/4782950288453419>

⁶ <https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2022/01/20220201-Myanmar>

⁷ <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14785.doc.htm>

⁸ <https://www.voacambodia.com/a/cambodia-says-myanmar-junta-s-foreign-minister-not-invited-to-upcoming-asean-meeting/6423284.html>

⁹ <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/myanmar-coup-junta-un-special-envoy-noeleen-heyzer-nug-2471056>

¹⁰ https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2022/02/02/civil-society-organizations-reject-un-special-envoys-proposal-of-power-sharing/?fbclid=IwAR1VJzkm_mt-Vw-ztaWEQghg6t_fsBoj_oL-FLeUEuldZbxCxJpYHDFdKA

“power-sharing” as a solution to the current crisis was taken out of context¹¹. The civil disobedience movement in Myanmar in their official twitter handle called for the resignation of the UN special envoy stating that she doubled down on her mistake and lied it was “misrepresentation” when she was given a chance to correct¹².

According to sources, the trial of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi for election fraud will begin on 14 February 2022¹³. Last November, the junta-appointed election commission filed charges against Aung San Suu Kyi, President U Win Myint, Chair of the Union Election Commission Hla Thein and 13 other people over the alleged electoral fraud in the 2020 elections. The junta has also fined election officials for alleged fraud in the 2020 elections. Media reported on 4 February 2021 that 12 election sub-commissioners from Taunggyi in Shan State were fined 10,000 kyats each under Section 130 (a) of the Penal Code¹⁴ that criminalizes any act that fail to comply that requires to be done by the constitution of the Union of Myanmar or in any act enacted by the parliament¹⁵. Several sources also revealed that the junta is pressuring officials from the UEC sub-commissions to sign a confession stating that they “knowingly rigged the elections”. Those who failed to confess would be charged in junta courts.

In a meeting in the Myanmar capital Naypyitaw, Senior General and the junta leader Min Aung Hlaing expressed that the current First Past The Post (FPTP) electoral system does not match with the democracy and federalism of Myanmar and the Proportional Representation (PR) system is a need for a wide representation of ethnic nationalities¹⁶. Since the coup junta appointed the election commission has been tasked to change the Myanmar electoral system that will provide an advantage to the military aligned political parties. The UEC also have conducted several rounds of meetings with political parties to introduce a PR system in Myanmar that the bigger political parties that secured seats in the 2015 and 2020 general elections such as NLP, SNLD and ANP have been in the forefront against introducing such a system.

The junta also filed a fresh corruption charge against Aung San Suu Kyi for allegedly receiving US\$550,000 of donation for a charity foundation named after her mother¹⁷. She faces 10 more

¹¹ <https://english.dvb.no/un-special-envoy-replies-to-cna-interview-criticism/>

¹² <https://twitter.com/cvdom2021/status/1489087271961829376>

¹³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/election-fraud-trial-of-myanmars-suu-kyi-set-for-feb-14/2022/01/31/f8f974a2-82b2-11ec-951c-1e0cc3723e53_story.html

¹⁴ <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-fines-election-officials-for-alleged-fraud-over-2020-poll.html>

¹⁵ https://www.burmalibrary.org/docs6/MYANMAR_PENAL_CODE-corr.1.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-leader-endorses-proportional-representation-election-system.html>

¹⁷ <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-files-11th-corruption-charge-against-daw-aung-san-suu-kyi.html>

corruption charges in junta courts and a court already sentenced her to four years in prison in early December 2021 on charges of incitement and breaches of COVID-19 regulations, later reduced to two years, and another four-year sentence in January 2021 for the illegal import of walkie talkies under the export-import law, possession of the devices under the telecommunications law and breaching COVID-19 protocols under the natural disaster management law.

Amid the junta's proposed cybersecurity law that would ban the use of VPN and the digital currencies, the junta spokesman indicated that the junta plans to establish a digital currency to support domestic payments and boost the economy¹⁸.

The Arakanese Army known as AA, which has been very much silent since the military coup in Myanmar, clashed with the junta forces in Maung Taw Township, Rakhine State¹⁹.

As of 28 January 2022, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) recorded that 1,519 people have been killed by the junta. 8,977 people are currently under detention. 84 have been sentenced to death and 1,974 are evading arrest warrants²⁰.

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¹⁸<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-04/myanmar-plans-its-own-digital-currency-this-year-to-lift-economy>

¹⁹<https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/5290378837663645/>

²⁰<https://aappb.org/?p=20023>