



DEFEND
MYANMAR
DEMOCRACY

Open Letter from
237 civil society organizations to
exclude Myanmar military representatives
from upcoming ASEAN summit
and related meetings



DATE :
September 30



TO:
ASEAN Secretariat
H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General
Heads of State, Foreign Ministers
& Coordinating Council Representatives of
Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia,
Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

DEAR ASEAN LEADERS,

We, the undersigned 237 organisations, write this open letter to call on you to support the democratic will of the people of Myanmar at the upcoming **ASEAN Summit and related events** to be held from October 6 to 11 in Vientiane, Laos.

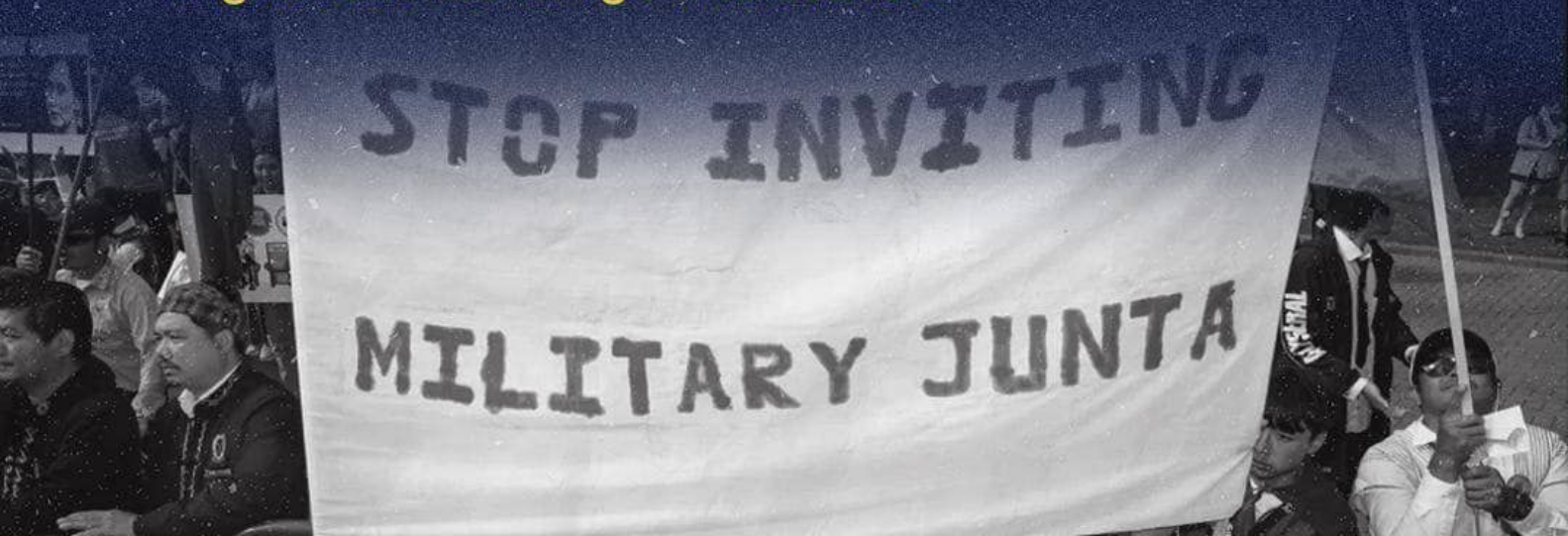


We call on the ASEAN Coordinating Council to:

1. review the representation of Myanmar at ASEAN meetings in consideration of the information provided below about military junta attendance at recent meetings.

We call on the ASEAN Coordinating Council and all ASEAN leaders to:

1. exclude all Myanmar military junta representatives from the upcoming ASEAN Summit and related meetings from all other ASEAN meetings and events;
2. invite members of the National Unity Government as representatives of the people of Myanmar to the ASEAN Summit and related meetings, and all upcoming ASEAN meetings and events.



We would like to draw your attention to the fact that **Myanmar military junta representatives have attended more than 500 ASEAN meetings** at various levels since October 2021. Among these, **senior junta representatives have attended more than 20 ministerial-level ASEAN meetings** on defence, economics, transport, tourism, digital connectivity, energy, agriculture, forestry, environment, disaster management, drugs and transnational crime, as well as many other high-level ASEAN meetings.

Many of these senior junta representatives **have played key roles in the junta's attempted coup and ongoing campaign of terror and have consequently been sanctioned by ASEAN Dialogue Partners.** In the annex to this letter, you will find a summary of senior junta members and the recent ASEAN meetings they attended.

ASEAN's decision in October 2021 to accept only "non-political" representatives of Myanmar at Summit and Foreign Ministers' Meetings has been completely ineffective.

The decision to exclude Min Aung Hlaing and his 'foreign minister' from ASEAN Summit and Foreign Ministers' Meetings has no impact when senior junta members in key military and political roles are permitted to attend other high-level ASEAN meetings. In 2022, ASEAN leaders "tasked the ASEAN Coordinating Council to further review Myanmar's representation at ASEAN meetings, if the situation so requires". We are calling on you to conduct **an urgent review of ASEAN's decision on the representation of Myanmar**, with the intention to remove all military junta representatives, including the so-called 'non-political' representatives, and ensure democratic representation of the people of Myanmar.

Further, **'non-political' representatives, who are to be invited to the Summit and Foreign Ministers' Meeting on behalf of the military junta, do not exist.** Since the junta began its attempted coup, hundreds of thousands of civil servants from ministries and other entities of government in Myanmar who oppose the military junta have been participating in the nationwide Civil Disobedience Movement in which they refuse to work under the illegal and illegitimate military junta. Anyone attending an international meeting on behalf of a ministry that is currently occupied by the military junta is therefore a political representative appointed by, and acting on behalf of, of the junta.

When ASEAN enables senior junta members and their appointees to represent Myanmar this risks significant harms for the people of Myanmar, including:

- decisions being made illegitimately on behalf of Myanmar people;
- legitimising the Myanmar military junta and assisting their illegal attempts to appear as a government;
- assisting the military junta to build relationships and gain access to funds and resources; and
- undermining the people of Myanmar's efforts to build a federal democracy; and
- ultimately, assisting the military junta in its illegal (and to date unsuccessful) quest to take full control of the country.

Continuing support for the Myanmar military junta also inflames existing tensions within Myanmar and dramatically undermines ASEAN's credibility for diplomacy and mediation.



The Myanmar military junta is not, by any definition, a government and therefore has no legitimacy to represent the people of Myanmar in any ASEAN meetings or activities, regardless of the level of the meeting or the junta representative. A democratic general election was held in Myanmar on November 8, 2020. In a landslide victory, the voters elected a government led by the incumbent National League for Democracy party. Independent national and international election observers unanimously concluded that the election was free and fair, and the result represented the will of the people of Myanmar.

Following the junta's coup attempt on February 1, 2021 in which the military began occupying multiple institutions of government and imprisoned many elected members of the government, the remaining elected members of the government and parliament (the 'Pyidaungsu Hluttaw' in Burmese) formed the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) and then the **National Unity Government (NUG) based on the mandate gained from the 2020 election results**. Thus, this is the only legitimate government to represent the people of Myanmar.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

ASEAN's decision on the representation of Myanmar was adopted in response to the military junta's failure to implement ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus which called for a cessation of violence and dialogue towards a peaceful resolution to the crisis that has resulted from the junta's attempted coup.

We expect that you would also be aware that since then the **military junta has made no effort or progress on returning to the path towards peace and democracy**. On the contrary, during the past three and a half years the **military has killed over 5,600 people – of whom more than 600 were children** – arrested over 27,300 and detained over 20,800. The military has committed massacres, indiscriminate airstrikes, artillery shelling, sexual and gender-based violence, mass torture and mass arson.

During the past year, the military junta has dramatically increased the frequency of its air strikes as well as the number of civilians killed and injured. If this continues, 2024 is set to become the deadliest year of the conflict so far for civilians.

Serious action is urgently needed to ensure that the people of Myanmar are represented by their democratically elected government. These actions would be **in line with the United Nations' decision** to avoid allowing military junta members to represent Myanmar in the General Assembly. This request **also echoes the concerns raised by the United Nations Special Rapporteur** on the situation of human rights in Myanmar who recommends that ASEAN must not allow Myanmar military junta personnel to participate in any ASEAN meetings. He also calls on ASEAN Member States to "not attend if the invitations to the junta military personnel are not rescinded." Further, the Special Rapporteur urges that "Member States who support human rights, democracy, and the aspirations of the people of Myanmar publicly reject the SAC's false claim as a legitimate government and instead recognise the NUG as the legitimate representative of the people of Myanmar."

The appropriate democratically elected representatives of the people of Myanmar in all international fora, including all ASEAN meetings, are the **NUG**. We encourage you to formulate a relationship with them, if you have not done so already.

When engaging with Myanmar, we call on foreign governments and international organisations to recognise the NUG as the legitimate government of Myanmar, the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) as the highest consultative body and the state/federal units and ethnic resistance organisations (EROs) as key stakeholders.

We await your response with much anticipation. Meanwhile, we will continue to monitor whether your actions support the people of Myanmar or the brutal and illegitimate military junta.

Sincerely,
Defend Myanmar Democracy
Blood Money Campaign



This letter is endorsed by 237 civil society organizations. 65 organizations have chosen not to disclose the names due to security concerns.

List of organisations:

- 1 5/ of Zaya State Strike
- 2 A-Yar-Taw People Strike
- 3 ACTION COMMITTEE FOR DEMOCRACY DEVELOPMENT ACDD-
ဒီမိုကရေစီဖွံ့ဖြိုးတိုးတက်ရေးလှုပ်ရှားဆောင်ရွက်မှုကော်မတီ
- 4 Action Committee of Basic Education Students (ACBES)
- 5 Ah Nah Podcast - conversations with Myanmar
- 6 All Arakan Youth Organizations Network AAYON
- 7 All Aung Myay Thar San Schools Strike Force
- 8 All Burma Federation of Student Unions (Monywa District)
- 9 Alliance Coalition Strike Mya Taung Strike
- 10 Alliance of Students' Union – Yangon (ASU-Yangon)
- 11 ALTSEAN-Burma
- 12 Anti-coup Forces Coordination Committee (ACFCC -Mandalay)
- 13 Anti-Junta Alliance Yangon-AJAY
- 14 Arakan CSO Network
- 15 Arakan Rohingya Development Association - Australia
- 16 Arakan Rohingya Union (ARU)
- 17 Association Suisse-Birmanie
- 18 Australian Burmese Rohingya Organization (ABRO)
- 19 Ayeyarwaddy West Development Organisation AWDO (Nagphe)

- 20 Ayeyarwaddy West Development Organisation.AWDO (Magway)
- 21 Basic Education General Strike Committee (BEGSC)
- 22 Basic Education Worker Unions - Steering Committee
(BEWU-SC) Representative
- 23 Blood Brotherhood
- 24 Blood Money Campaign
- 25 Burma Action Ireland
- 26 Burma Human Rights Network
- 27 Burmese Rohingya Association in Japan (BRAJ)
- 28 Burmese Rohingya Association North America (BRANA)
- 29 Burmese Rohingya Community in Denmark (BRCD)
- 30 Burmese Rohingya Community of Georgia (BRCG)
- 31 Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK)
- 32 CDM Medical Network (CDMMN)
- 33 Chaung Oo Township Youth Strike Committee
- 34 Chindwin (West) Villages Women Strike
- 35 Civil Information Network (CIN)
- 36 Coalition Strike Committee – Dawei
- 37 Committee of University Teacher Associations (RC of UTAs)
- 38 CRPH & NUG Supporters Ireland
- 39 CRPH Funding Ireland
- 40 CRPH Support Team Germany-Deutschland
- 41 Daung Sitthe Strike
- 42 Dawei (Ashaetaw) Women Strike
- 43 Dawei Youths Revolutionary Movement Strike Committee
- 44 Defend Myanmar Democracy
- 45 Depayin Township Revolution Steering Committee

- 46 Depayin Women Strike
- 47 Doh Atu - Ensemble pour le Myanmar
- 48 Educational Initiatives Prague
- 49 Ethnic Youth General Strike Committee (Mandalay)
- 50 European Rohingya Council (ERC)
- 51 Former Political Prisoners and New Generation Group – Monywa Civil Society
- 52 Free Rohingya Coalition (FRC)
- 53 Gangaw Women Strike
- 54 General Strike Collaboration Committee (GSCC)
- 55 General Strike Committee of Basic and Higher Education (GSCBHE)
- 56 General Strike Coordination Body (GSCB)
- 57 Global Myanmar Spring Revolution - GMSR
- 58 HTY Scout Channel
- 59 India for Myanmar
- 60 Industries Strike
- 61 Info Birmanie
- 62 Information & Scout News (Hlaing)
- 63 International Association, Myanmar-Switzerland (IAMS)
- 64 Justice For Myanmar
- 65 Justice Movement for Community-Innlay
- 66 Kachin Peace Network
- 67 Kachin Student Union
- 68 Kalay Township Strike Force
- 69 Kalay Women Strike
- 70 Kamayut Scout Channel
- 71 KantBaLu Strike Committee
- 72 Kayan New Generation Youth (KNGY)

- 73 Kyae Lak Myay - ကျေးလက်မြေ
- 74 Kyain Seikgyi Spring Revolution Leading Committee
- 75 Kyauktada Strike Committee (KSC)
- 76 Latpadaung Region Strike Committee
- 77 Legal Aid For Human Rights
- 78 LGBT Alliance
- 79 LGBT Alliance Myanmar (Kalay Region)
- 80 LGBT Alliance Myanmar (Kyaukse Region)
- 81 LGBT Union – Mandalay Monywa LGBT Strike LGBT Community Yangon
- 82 Magway People's Revolution Committee
- 83 Magway Region Human Rights Network (MHRN)
- 84 Mandalay University Students' Strike Chanmyatharzi Township
- 85 Mandalay Medical Family (MFM)
- 86 Mandalay Strike Force (MSF)
- 87 Mandalay Students' Strike
- 88 Mandalay Women Strike
- 89 Mandalay-based People's Strike
- 90 Mandalay-Based University Students' Unions (MDY_SUs)
- 91 Mata စစ်ကိုင်း
- 92 Mayangone News
- 93 MayMyo Strike Force
- 94 Min Hla Farmers Group
- 95 Minbu Farmers Group
- 96 Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee
- 97 Monywa Women Strike
- 98 Monywa-Amyint Road Strike Leading Committee
- 99 Monywa-Amyint Road Women Strike

- 100 Multi-Religions Strike
- 101 Mya Yar Knowledge Tree
- 102 Myanmar Action Group Denmark
- 103 Myanmar Ethnic Rohingya Human Rights Organization
in Malaysia (MERHROM)
- 104 Myanmar Global Support Foundation - MGSF
- 105 Myanmar Institute of Information Technology Students' Strike
- 106 Myanmar Labor Alliance (MLA)
- 107 Myanmar Tourism Committee
- 108 Myaung Youth Network
- 109 Myingyan Civilian Movement Committee
- 110 National League for Democracy (Monywa Township)
- 111 Network of University Student Unions – Monywa
- 112 New Myanmar Foundation
- 113 New Power Generation
- 114 No.12 Basic Education Branch High School (Maharaungmyay)
- 115 NOK Information & Scout Echo
- 116 North Dagon & East Dagon News
- 117 NRFF - New Rehmonnya Federated Force
- 118 Organizations Coordination Committee (Monywa)
- 119 Pale Township People's Strike Steering Committee
- 120 People Defense and Supporting Force
- 121 People's Strike Maharaungmyay Township
- 122 People's Strike Mandalay Youth Strike
- 123 Progressive Voice
- 124 Pwintphyu Development Organisation
- 125 Pyi Gyi Tagon Strike Force

- 126 Rohingya Action Ireland
- 127 Rohingya Association of Canada
- 128 Rohingya Community Japan (RCJ)
- 129 Rohingya Community Norway (RCN)
- 130 Rohingya Human Rights Initiative (ROHRIngya)
- 131 Rohingya Women Development Network – RWDN
- 132 Rohingya-Gemeinschaft Deutschland
- 133 RW Welfare Society (RWWS)
- 134 Samgha Sammaga-Mandalay Mandalay
- 135 Seinpann Strike
- 136 Shwe Pan Kone People's Strike Steering Committee
- 137 Sisters to Sisters
- 138 Sitt Nyein Pann Foundation
- 139 Sourthen Monitor
- 140 South Dagon Scouting Infos (SDG)
- 141 Students' Union Co-operative University
- 142 Swedish Rohingya Association (SRA)
- 143 Tamwe Nway Oo Channel
- 144 Taze Strike Committee
- 145 Taze WomenStrike
- 146 Thaketa & Dawbon Scout Channel
- 147 Thakhin Kodaw Mhine Peace Network (Monywa)
- 148 Thayat Chaung Women Strike
- 149 The 88 Generation Peace and Open Society (Monywa)
- 150 Thint Myat Lo Thu Myar
- 151 Twitter Team for Revolution (TTFR)
- 152 University Mandalay Students' Strike

- 153 University Students' Unions Alumni Force
- 154 Volunteers in Myanmar
- 155 Wetlet Revolution Leading Committee
- 156 Wetlet Twonship Women Strike
- 157 White Coat Society Yangon (WCSY)
- 158 Women Alliance Burma (WAB)
- 159 Women Lead Resource Center
- 160 Yadanabon University Students' Union (YDNBUSU)
- 161 Yangon Women Strike
- 162 Yasakyo Township People s Strike Steering Committee
- 163 Yinmarpin and Salingyi All Villages Strike Committee
- 164 Youth Empowerment
- 165 Youth Scout For Democracy (YSD)
- 166 ဒို့မြေကွန်ရက် (LIOH)
- 167 ပွင့်ဖြူလယ်ယာမြေကွန်ရက်
- 168 မျိုးဆက်-Generations
- 169 မြန်မာ့မွတ်စလင်အစည်းအရုံး BMA
- 170 မုန်တိုင်းကြားကသက်တံများ
- 171 သမိုင်းသယ်ဆောင်သူများ
- 172 အညာလွင်ပြင်ရပ်ဝန်း

