

ASEAN must support Myanmar federal democracy building and justice seeking
Myanmar civil society urges ASEAN to pursue Myanmar people-led solution to crisis

Today, the Myanmar National Organizing Committee for ACSC/APF (Myanmar NOC) launched the *Civil Society Position Paper Addressing ASEAN's Goal of a "Myanmar-Owned and -Led Solution,"* endorsed by 260 civil society organizations. The Position Paper provides a critical analysis of ASEAN leaders' decision to maintain the dead-on-arrival Five Point Consensus (5PC), explicates the requirements of a genuinely "Myanmar-owned and -led solution" to the country's crisis, and offers key recommendations to ASEAN.

Since its adoption in April 2021, ASEAN's 5PC has proven extremely harmful to the Myanmar people in its futile attempt to address the junta-caused crisis in Myanmar. Despite repeated calls from Myanmar, regional, and international civil society to move beyond the 5PC, on 9 October 2024, ASEAN leaders announced their decision to "maintain the 5PC as the main reference to address the political crisis in Myanmar."

In that decision, ASEAN leaders hypocritically claimed that their goal is "to help the people of Myanmar to achieve an inclusive and durable peaceful resolution that is Myanmar-owned and -led," while in reality ASEAN continues to fail to align with the people's efforts and sacrifices to dismantle military tyranny and establish an inclusive federal democracy. In recent months, ASEAN has allowed the junta to represent Myanmar, lending the junta false legitimacy as if it were a state authority. ASEAN has also continued to enable the junta's access to cash, arms, and aviation fuel—thereby deepening ASEAN's complicity in the junta's atrocity crimes against Myanmar's peoples.

This Position Paper responds directly to ASEAN's October 2024 decision in which ASEAN leaders also stated their intention to accelerate "informal consultations" in the name of "an inclusive and durable peaceful resolution that is Myanmar-owned and -led." ASEAN's course of action clearly aims to impose quick-fix solutions for its state-centric approach to stability, which will only keep Myanmar trapped in a cycle of violence and military tyranny. Any involvement or engagement of the junta for the future of Myanmar is untenable and contravenes the reality on the ground where townships covering 86% of the country's territory are not under stable control of the junta.

The reality is that the only path to an inclusive and sustainable peace in Myanmar is by completely dismantling the criminal military institution and establishing civilian-led federal democratic governance that ensures equal power-sharing and guarantees human rights for all. It is therefore in ASEAN's best interest to support the people's will and efforts to achieve these goals.

The Position Paper proposes six key recommendations to ASEAN for concrete actions that genuinely support the people of Myanmar. First and foremost, ASEAN must move beyond the 5PC to achieve a Myanmar people-led and people-centered solution to the crisis. This means unequivocally supporting the Myanmar people's goals to fully dismantle the criminal military institution and establish an inclusive federal democracy. To do so, ASEAN must cease all pressure on Myanmar's revolutionary forces and civil society to engage or compromise with the illegitimate military junta; stop any plan to support the junta's illegal sham election; recognize Myanmar's legitimate representatives, including the National Unity Government, Ethnic Resistance Organizations, and federal units; and support a locally led political consultation process that entirely excludes the junta.

Kyi, Secretary of Queers of Burma Alternative, member of the Myanmar NOC, said: “The military junta has been waging a systematic nationwide campaign of terror against the people of Myanmar for nearly four years, including airstrikes, massacres, and sexual violence. In the face of the military’s horrific violence, the people of Myanmar have made their demands of ASEAN unmistakably clear. It’s time for ASEAN to live up to its own pledges regarding the principles of democracy and human rights enshrined in its own Charter, and to stand firmly on the side of the Myanmar people. ASEAN must support the people’s efforts to dismantle military tyranny for good and establish a federal democracy where equality, dignity, and justice are a reality for all peoples of Myanmar.”

Bo Bo, Executive Director of Generation Wave, member of the Myanmar NOC, said: “ASEAN’s Five-Point Consensus (5PC) has completely failed to provide any solutions to the military junta-caused crisis. The junta has blatantly disregarded the 5PC and only escalated its violence, ramping up its international crimes against civilians across the country as a tactic to defeat the democratic resistance movement against its tyranny. By continuing to rely on the failed 5PC, ASEAN has severely undermined the people’s efforts for a sustainable peace, ultimately resulting in a complete lack of trust from the Myanmar people. ASEAN must immediately move beyond the 5PC, end all engagements with the military junta, and unequivocally denounce the junta’s plans for a sham election.”

Mulan, Head of Blood Money Campaign, member of the Myanmar NOC, said: “Over the past year, the military junta has escalated its airstrikes targeting civilians across the country, and ASEAN has only deepened its complicity in these atrocities. According to Amnesty International, between January and June this year, at least two shipments of aviation fuel reached the junta after being transported through Vietnam, a member state of ASEAN. Meanwhile, the Myanmar military is facing allegations of atrocity crimes at the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, and in Argentina. ASEAN must stop aiding and abetting the junta’s atrocity crimes against the people. Instead, ASEAN must join current international efforts to hold the Myanmar military accountable under international law, in addition to supporting federal democracy building in Myanmar.”

Download the full position paper: <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2024/12/15/civil-society-position-paper-addressing-aseans-goal-of-a-myanmar-owned-and-led-solution/>

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About the Myanmar National Organizing Committee for ACSC/APF: Myanmar National Organizing Committee for the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People’s Forum (ACSC/APF) comprises 18 civil society organizations: Action Committee for Democracy Development (ACDD); Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters (HRDP); Athan – Freedom of Expression Activist Organization; Blood Money Campaign (BMC); Creative Home (CH); Equality Myanmar (EQMM); Generation Wave (GW); Generations’ Solidarity Coalition of Nationalities (GSCN); Justice & Equality Focus; Kyae Lak Myay; Network for Human Rights Documentation – Burma (ND-Burma); Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica; Progressive Voice (PV); Queers of Burma Alternative (QBA); Rohingya Maiyafuīnor Collaborative Network (RMCN); Women Advocacy Coalition – Myanmar (WAC-M); Women’s League of Burma (WLB); and Yangon Medical Network (YMN).