

Security Council

The situation in Myanmar



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Introduction

Since the independence from Brittan in 1948 the situation in Myanmar has always been turbulent. For almost its entire history as an independent state, Myanmar had been marred by largely ethnic based conflicts. The first 14 years Myanmar was a parliamentary democracy. The short democratic time was cut short by a military coup in 1962. After this coup, Myanmar has been in a constant power struggle between the military and pro-democratic groups. After further escalations in 2021 the conflict has become a full on civil war which has claimed many casualties and forced a lot of people to flee from their home's.

Definition of Key Terms

Military junta

A Junta is a military or political group that has taken power in a country by force. In Myanmar the Junta refers to the military government.

National League for Democracy (NLD)

The national league for democracy is a party founded by the popular pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The NLD was the biggest party in the 2020 elections right before the military coup.

National Unity Government (NUG)

The National unity government is a parallel government formed by ousted lawmakers, civil society activists and several representatives from minority groups. The NUG was formed right after the military coup. The military government immediately declared the NUG illegal and a terrorist organization. In September 2021 the NUG declared a 'people's defensive war' against the military, calling on all citizens within the whole of Myanmar to revolt against the rule of the military terrorists in every corner of the country. The NUG wants a fair democracy.

People's Defense Force

The people's defense force is the armed wing of the NUG. They fight against the military.



General Overview

Myanmar gained independence from Brittan in 1948 after having been ruled by Brittan for about a century. At first Myanmar became a parliamentary democracy, but that ended after 14 years. In 1962 the military took control over the country. Until 1988 general Ne Win led a totalitarian one party state, but his resignation did not mean the end of military rule. During nationwide protests against military rule, Aung San Suu Kyi emerged as one of the most prominent pro-democracy leaders. The military government promised to hold fair elections in 1990, which were won by Aung San Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy (NLD). After these elections the military refused to honor the outcome and took control again. They arrested and incarcerated multiple opposition party members. After rising tension in the country and international pressure the military began to loosen its control over the country. They issued a new election in 2010. This election was boycotted by the NLD. These election brought a civilian party, that was backed by the military, to power. This government began to make some reforms, like less strict press laws and the freeing of thousands of political prisoners. In 2015 the country held its first nationwide multi-party election in decades. The NLD participated and won by a landslide. Aung San Suu Kyi became Myanmar's de facto leader through his new position as state counselor. Even though the NLD was the biggest party in the country, the military stayed very influential. In the next elections in November 2020 the NLD won again, but on the first of February 2021, a day before the new parliament was about to meet, the military declared the elections invalid. They arrested Aung San Suu Kyi, president Win Myint and many more political enemies.

The coup was condemned internationally, and sparked nationwide protests. These were peaceful protests but were met with extensive violence. After a few weeks a parallel government was formed by ousted lawmakers, civil society activists and several representatives from minority groups. The government was called the National Unity Government (NUG). The military immediately declared this government illegal and a terrorist organization. In May the NUG announced they had formed an armed wing called the people's defense force. The People's Defense Force was formed to oppose the military and protect the NUG's allies against oppression, which had only gotten worse since the coup. This quickly evolved in a full on armed conflict between the People's Defense Force and the military. The military was also fighting against various armed ethnic organizations who had been fighting the state for decades seeking greater autonomy. In September 2021 the NUG declared a 'people's defensive war' against the military, calling on all citizens within Myanmar to revolt against the rule of the military terrorists in every corner of the country.

On the 27th of October 2023 operation 10-27 was launched by the resistance to help in their fight against the military junta. This is an offensive in the northern Shan state that is being carried out by the Three Brotherhood alliance. This is an alliance of three ethnic armed groups. Within a few days the alliance took control of multiple military outposts and bases as well as capturing important transit points. They also captured the important town of Chinshwehaw. This is a key trade point on the border with China. The trade with China was one of the militaries most important sources of income. These escalations around the border have sparked concerns especially from China, since during a counterattack from the military Chinese soil accidentally got hit by a shell. This prompted China to call for a cease fire.



Operation 10-27 inspired other parts of the resistance to intensify their antigovernment operations. The People's Defense Force alongside local ethnic groups managed to capture the town of Kawlin in the Sagaing region. This was the first district capitol that has been captured by resistance forces.

The military and its proxies have been accused of terrible acts of violence. As the conflict has evolved the military has become increasingly more reliant on seemingly indiscriminate airstrikes. These airstrikes have come at a huge cost for civilian live. A recent UN report states that the military and its allies were engaging in more frequent war crimes and crimes against humanity. These include indiscriminate attacks on civilians from areal bombings, mass executions of civilians and detained combatants, and large scale and intentional burning of civilian homes and buildings.

The conflict has caused a lot of harm to the population on Myanmar. Lots of civilian houses and buildings have been destroyed. Many people have been forced to flee from their home, because of the mass destruction and constant violence. Thousands of refugees have fled to neighboring countries and over 1.95 million people are displaced within Myanmar. Humanitarian help is desperately needed but access is very unpredictable. Access to potential areas of return has also not been granted in 2023.

Major Parties Involved

The military junta

The military junta has control over the country. They claimed that the 2020 elections were invalid and took control over the country by a coup. They claim that the NUG is an illegal and terrorist organization

National Unity Government (NUG)

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Ethnic armed groups

Myanmar is home to various ethnic groups, each with its own armed organizations. Some of these groups have been in conflict with the central government for decades. The situation varies across different regions of the country.

China

China has a very long shared border with Myanmar. They are an important ally for Myanmar. Most of Myanmar's earnings come from the trade with China. In recent times China has called for a cease fire in Myanmar. One of the reasons is a shell that accidentally landed on Chinese soil during an counter attack from the military on an village close to the Chinese border.



Timeline of Events

1948: Myanmar gained independence from Britain after having been ruled by Brittan for about a century.

1962: The military took control of the government.

1988: End of the military rule.

1990: The fair elections were won by the NLD. After the elections the military refused to honor the results and took control again.

2010: The military held new elections, which were boycotted by the NLD. A civilian but military backed party won.

2015: New elections which were won by the NLD.

November 2020: New elections, the NLD stayed the biggest.

February 2021: The military declared the elections invalid and took control again.

September 2021: The NUG declares a people's defensive war against the military.

27 October 2023: Operation 10-27 was launched.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

There have been many attempts to resolve the issue in Myanmar. First of all there have been diplomatic measures taken. Numerous countries and international organizations have strongly condemned the military coup in Myanmar. Governments from around the world, including the United States, European Union member states, and others, issued statements expressing their disapproval of the seizure of power and calling for the restoration of the civilian government. The international community has consistently voiced its concern over the violation of democratic principles and human rights in Myanmar. Diplomatic efforts have been ongoing to engage with key stakeholders in Myanmar, including representatives of the military junta and civilian leaders. Some countries and international bodies have attempted to facilitate dialogue between the conflicting parties, urging for a peaceful resolution to the crisis. However, achieving meaningful dialogue has proven challenging, given the entrenched positions of the military leadership.

Secondly, there have been sanctions imposed by other countries. Several nations, including the United States, European Union member states, Canada, and others, have imposed targeted sanctions on individuals and entities associated with the military junta. These sanctions typically involve the freezing of assets, travel bans, and restrictions on financial transactions for those identified as responsible for human rights abuses and undermining democratic processes. The aim is to exert pressure on the military leadership to change its course of action. In addition to individual sanctions, some countries have implemented broader economic sanctions on Myanmar to discourage trade and investment that may benefit the military regime. Economic sanctions are designed to create economic pressure, with the hope that this will influence the behavior of the military junta and encourage a return to democratic governance.

Lastly, there have been international organizations involved in the issue. The United Nations have played a crucial role in addressing the situation in Myanmar. The UN Secretary-

General and various UN agencies have consistently called for the release of political prisoners, respect for human rights, and the restoration of democratic governance. However, achieving a unified response within the UN Security Council has proven challenging, with differing views among member states on the appropriate course of action. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been involved in diplomatic efforts to address the crisis, with some member states expressing concerns over the situation in Myanmar. However, the organization's traditional principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states has limited its ability to take decisive actions. ASEAN's engagement has been characterized by a balance between diplomatic dialogue and non-intervention.

Possible Solutions

In the pursuit of stabilizing Myanmar and fostering a path towards democracy, a comprehensive approach is imperative. This approach involves fostering national dialogue, engaging in diplomatic efforts, and ensuring humanitarian assistance reaches those in need.

To initiate healing and understanding among Myanmar's diverse communities, a structured and inclusive national dialogue is essential. This dialogue, orchestrated by representatives from the military, political parties, ethnic groups, and civil society, aims to address historical grievances and chart a shared vision for the future. International mediation may play a pivotal role, offering impartiality and expertise in conflict resolution. Community engagement is equally crucial, ensuring that the voices of ordinary citizens, including marginalized groups, are integral to the dialogue process. Simultaneously, supporting a Truth and Reconciliation Commission can provide a platform for investigating past human rights abuses, promoting accountability, and allowing victims to share their experiences. Legal reforms that reflect principles of justice, equality, and inclusivity are also vital. Community-building initiatives can further foster social cohesion and reconciliation, emphasizing shared values and collaborative projects that bring different communities together.

In the realm of international diplomacy, a multilateral approach is fundamental. Collaboration with international partners, regional organizations, and neighboring countries amplifies the collective voice against the military junta's actions. Diplomatic pressure, particularly through international forums, is leveraged to underscore the importance of respecting human rights, democratic principles, and international norms. Engaging with ASEAN and its member states is a pivotal component of this strategy. The aim is to encourage a regional approach to the Myanmar crisis, seeking support for diplomatic initiatives and fostering regional cooperation to address political and humanitarian challenges. Utilizing international summits and conferences poses an opportunity to raise awareness, build alliances, and garner support for diplomatic efforts.

As diplomatic efforts unfold, ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid remains a critical priority. Rigorous needs assessments guide the identification of pressing humanitarian needs, particularly in conflict-affected areas and among displaced populations. Collaborating closely with international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and local partners ensures effective and equitable distribution of humanitarian aid. Advocating for unimpeded access for humanitarian organizations is paramount, especially in conflict zones. The integration of humanitarian assistance with long-term development programs addresses

underlying economic and social challenges. Focus areas include sustainable livelihoods, education, and healthcare. Capacity building within local institutions and communities enhances their ability to respond to crises, emphasizing resilience and preparedness.



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