

## Committee: Security Council

### Topic: The Question of Myanmar

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## Summary

A coalition of three ethnic armed groups in Shan State launched a coordinated offensive against the ruling military junta, posing the strongest challenge to its rule since the February 2021 coup. A junta spokesperson said its forces were under “heavy assault” as insurgents use drones to bomb military and police outposts in eastern Kayah State, bordering Thailand; western Rakhine State, bordering India; and northern Shan State, bordering China. Amid the expansion of fighting, the United Nations reported over two million civilians have been displaced by the conflict.

Since staging a coup on February 1, 2021, the Myanmar military has carried out a brutal nationwide crackdown on millions of people opposed to its rule. The junta security forces have carried out mass killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual violence, and other abuses that amount to crimes against humanity.

Expanded military operations have resulted in numerous war crimes against ethnic minority populations in Kachin, Karen, Karenni, and Shan States. The military has also committed abuses including using “scorched earth” tactics, burning villages in Magway and Sagaing regions. The Myanmar military has long defied international calls for accountability, including for atrocity crimes committed against the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities. The junta’s ineptitude and mismanagement of the country’s economy since the coup has heightened the suffering of the population and entrenched a climate of fear and insecurity.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Military Coup:** The sudden overthrow of a government, specifically the action taken by the Myanmar military on February 1, 2021, to depose the democratically elected government and detain its leaders.

**Rohingya Crisis:** A humanitarian crisis involving the Rohingya people, an ethnic minority in Myanmar, who have faced persecution, violence, and displacement, particularly during military operations in Rakhine State.

**National Conscription Law:** A law enacted by the Myanmar military requiring citizens to serve in the military, which has led to increased social unrest and fear among the population.

**Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF):** A fund established by the United Nations to provide rapid funding for humanitarian responses in crises around the world.

**International Criminal Court (ICC):** A court established to prosecute individuals for international crimes, including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, potentially relevant to the situation in Myanmar.

**Human Trafficking:** The illegal trade of people, often for forced labour or sexual exploitation, which has been exacerbated by the crisis in Myanmar.

## Background Information

Since the coup on 1 February 2021, at least 5,350 civilians have been killed, more than 3.3 million displaced, and over half the population is living below the poverty line, primarily due to military violence, according to the report.

The report looks at the devastating impact of the violence, destruction, and deprivation on people's mental health, as well as the regression in economic and social rights, which is precipitating further economic decline. At the same time young people, who provide the key to Myanmar's future, are fleeing abroad to escape being forced to serve in or fight for the military. It also documents the vast scope of detentions undertaken by the military. Nearly 27,400 individuals have been arrested since the coup, with arrests on the rise since the military's implementation of mandatory conscription in February 2024. Credible sources indicate that at least 1,853 people have died in custody, including 88 children and 125 women. Many of these individuals have been verified as dying after being subjected to abusive interrogation, other ill-treatment in detention, or denial of access to adequate healthcare.

Torture and ill-treatment in military custody are pervasive. Interviewed detainees described methods, such as being suspended from the ceiling without food or water; being forced to kneel

or crawl on hard or sharp objects; use of snakes and insects to instil fear; beatings with iron poles, bamboo sticks, batons, rifle butts, leather strips, electric wires and motorcycle chains; asphyxiation, mock executions; electrocution and burning with tasers, lighters, cigarettes, and boiling water; spraying of methylated substances on open wounds; cutting of body parts and pulling of fingernails. There were also disturbing reports of sexual violence.

All those responsible for gross human rights violations and serious violations of international humanitarian law must be held accountable. The lack of any form of accountability for perpetrators is an enabler for the repetition of violations, abuses and crimes. It is essential that such behaviour be clearly identified and deterred. Accountability for such violations must apply to all perpetrators.

The enormity of challenges Myanmar is facing and will face in the years ahead to ensure respect for the rule of law and functional justice institutions is daunting.

In light of the above findings, High Commissioner Volker Türk renews his recommendation, among others, to the UN Security Council to refer the full scope of the current situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court. He reiterates his calls for an end to the violence and for the immediate and unconditional release of all those arbitrarily detained. Equally important for the future of Myanmar and its people are the grassroots efforts of civil society and community-based organizations to provide essential services, including mental health care. These should also be specifically supported.

## **Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

**Myanmar (Military Junta)**

**United Nations (UN)**

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

**Bangladesh**

**China**

**India**

**United States**

**United Kingdom**

**Russia**

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description
12 January 2007	This was a draft resolution on the situation in Myanmar which was vetoed by China and Russia.
10 April 1948	This resolution recommended Myanmar (Burma) for UN membership.
26 February 2021	Myanmar UN Ambassador denounces coup
7 September 2022	Min Aung Hlaing meets Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the Moscow-organised Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Russia.
17 November 2022	Australian economist Sean Turnell, Japanese filmmaker Toru Kubota, prominent business adviser and former United Kingdom Ambassador Vicky Bowman, and American Kyaw Htay Oo are among 5,774 prisoners released in an Amnesty to mark Victory Day.
22 December 2022	The UN Security Council adopts its first resolution on Myanmar since it was admitted to the world body as Burma in 1948, demanding an end to violence and the release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi.
24 January 2023	More than a dozen survivors of military abuses in Myanmar lodge a criminal complaint in Germany, asking prosecutors to investigate and bring to trial those responsible for committing atrocities during crackdowns on opponents of the coup and against the Rohingya minority.
1 February 2023	Two years since the military seized power.

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):** Establishes fundamental human rights that should be protected for all individuals, including those in Myanmar.

**Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989):** Emphasizes the protection of children's rights, relevant due to the significant impact of the conflict on Myanmar's youth.

**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966):** Protects civil and political rights, including freedom of expression and assembly, which are being violated in Myanmar.

**UN Security Council Resolution 2669 (2022):** Calls for an end to violence in Myanmar and stresses the importance of restoring democracy and human rights.

**Human Rights Council Resolutions on Myanmar (various years):** Address human rights violations and the need for accountability and justice in the wake of the military coup.

**UN General Assembly Resolution (October 2022):** Urges member states to support the return to democracy and calls for an end to violence against civilians in Myanmar.

**Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (2011):** Established to promote and protect human rights, though its effectiveness has been questioned in the context of ongoing abuses.

## **Previous Attempts to solve the Issue**

ASEAN Five-Point Consensus

National Ceasefire Agreement

United Nations Special Envoy Engagements

Myanmar National Unity Government (NUG) Formation

Diplomatic Efforts by Neighbouring Countries

Human Rights Council Resolutions

## **Possible Solutions**

International Mediation and Dialogue

Inclusive Political Negotiations

Strengthening Civil Society and Local Governance

Targeted Sanctions on Military Leaders

Engagement with ASEAN and Regional Partners

Implementation of the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus

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