

Committee: United Nations Human Rights Council

Agenda: Addressing the Human Rights Issues of Myanmar Coup d'état

I. Committee Introduction

The United Nations Human Rights Council, founded by the General Assembly in 2006 by resolution, serves to promote and protect human rights around the world. The UNHRC consists of 47 members, elected yearly by the General Assembly and selected based on the equitable geographic positions: 13 for the African group, 13 for the Asia-Pacific group, 6 for the Eastern European, 8 for the Latin American group, and 7 for the Western European group. The Council serves as a forum for dialogue among nations, with input from other stakeholders. According to the discussions that happen within the forum, the Council makes resolutions calling on States to take specific actions or uphold certain principles, or suggest mechanisms to investigate or monitor questions of concern.

Human rights are defined by the United Nations as rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights are recognized to be inalienable, indivisible, and universal to everyone. The Council addresses situations of human rights violations and makes recommendations on them. The Council addresses human rights issues such as freedom of association and assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of belief and religion, women's rights, LGBTQ rights, and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities. Each session of the United Nations Human Rights Council is established with respect and in consultation with Member States.

II. Agenda Introduction

This agenda demands for practical solutions that address the human rights violations in Myanmar during the military coup d'état. Since the military regime took the control of Myanmar, human rights have seriously eroded and legal protection for the citizens has been absent. The military staged a coup after the defeat at the 2020 election by the pretense of election fraud caused by the winner, *NLD*. This agenda focuses on the third coup d'état happening in Myanmar after 1988. After the coup d'état, the Myanmar people have been deprived of their freedom of press, freedom of speech, and freedom of movement. More than 500 have died during the coup and SNSs such as Facebook and Twitter have been blocked. With the military coup d'état in place, there are no secure human rights

for the Myanmar citizens. Thus the problem with the violation of human rights in Myanmar is an urgent and critical issue.

Despite the seriousness of the situation, there has been a lack of attention to the human rights violations, mainly because the United States and China have a certain amount of power over Myanmar. . Since 1962, when the first military regime took over Myanmar, China was the only country Myanmar could rely on as they were the only country not aiming for democracy. In addition, Myanmar is the last country for China to ally with for their *one-belt one-road project*.

In 2010, after the first election in Myanmar, on the road of democratization, they recovered their relationship with the United States by the U.S closing the economic sanction which they previously deployed to Myanmar, then became the strategic point in south eastern Asia for both U.S



and China, which then built up the political tension between the two powers. In other words, political tension has prevented the issue from being properly addressed, thwarting the promotion of human rights in Myanmar. Thus, there is no doubt that this should be the secondary problem that should be considered after the relief of the human rights that have been violated, and that is being violated until now in Myanmar.

III. Definition of Key Terms

Coup d'état

A coup d'état refers to a strike against the government. In political terms, it is often the military taking over the control power of the country by using force with violence. Myanmar has had three coup d'états throughout its history. The first coup d'état in 1962, the second in 1988, and the third current coup d'état from February 1st, 2021. With a coup d'état in force the ruling party and the government are unable to control the military and country thoroughly, eventually leading to national instability. Further, coup d'état are often a cause of major human rights violations. The military are violating people's sovereignty, freedom of press, and even the freedom of speech. Once there is a protest, the subject of the coup usually tries to react with weapons.

Ethnic Minority

An ethnic minority refers to a group of people who differ in race, color or national, religious, or cultural origin from a dominant group of their nation. Ethnic minorities differ from the majority by their distinctive customs, lifestyles, language or accent, dress, and food preferences to particular attitudes, moral values, and economic or political beliefs.

Most times, ethnic minorities are recognized, but not necessarily accepted by the larger society that it is a part of. The nature of the power relationship of the ethnic minority and majority tends to determine whether the minority group will move towards assimilation or self-segregation. In some cases ethnic minorities have been excluded by the majority, a striking example being African Americans in the American South during the late-19th and 20th centuries.

There are in total 135 ethnic groups all around Myanmar. These ethnic groups all have their own distinct histories and cultures, and may go through conflict struggles.

National League for Democracy (NLD)

The National League for Democracy (NLD) is Myanmar's Democratic Party founded and led by Aung San Suu Kyi. The NLD was founded in 1988 with the ideologies of protection trade, liberal conservatism, liberal democracy, and populism.

After Myanmar went through the second coup d'état in 1988, the new military regime promised their people an election which occurred in 1990. The NLD won 80% of the votes and confirmed to be the ruling party of Myanmar. However, the military did not admit the result of the election decided to give the leader of NLD, Aung San Suu Kyi a home detention.

In 2015, the next election was held by the Thein Sein government. It was an election after the Thein Sein government ruled the country. As Aung San Suu Kyi was liberated from her detention in 2010 by the Thein Sein government, the NLD party participated in the election which they once again won by occupying 390 seats of the 481 of the senate. Then in the 2020 election, NLD again won by occupying 399 seats, which became the start of the 2021 Myanmar coup d'état.



Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP)

The USDP, is a political party in Myanmar founded in 2010 by Thein Sein. They are that military party of Myanmar, and the biggest opposition party to the NLD.

The USDP was elected in the 2010 Myanmar election after the military junta. After they were elected, Myanmar started to open their country. Most parts of the economy were opened to the people and to the foreigners, they tried to accept the demand of the citizens, and from this flow, Aung San Suu Kyi was liberated from her home detention. The USDP also focused on recovering the relationships with the western powers, especially the United States. They invited president Obama and Clinton for a discussion with both the political and economic aspects. In 2012, the U.S promised Myanmar a close of economic sanction that has been longing for decades.



The USDP lost in both the 2015 and 2020 general election against Aung San Suu Kyi of the NLD. However, they still have the biggest power among the opposition parties in Myanmar.

Military Junta

Military junta is when a country is being led by the military leader. It often comes off as a result coup d'état and so as Myanmar's. The term *junta* means “meeting” or “committee” in Spanish, but now can be interpreted as autocratic dictatorship by military. Military junta itself does not cause a problem. But in the very situation in Myanmar directly shows the human rights being disrupted from the way of installment of military regime or by the junta itself.

IV. Background Information

Myanmar, also known as and once Burma, is a Southeast Asian country which was part of the British colony from the late 19th century until the mid-20th century. After 63 years of colonization by the British Empire, they became independent as the union of Burma in 1948. U Nu, the man who led the independence of Burma became the prime minister and Sao Shwe Thaik as their president. Myanmar first pursued the western democracy model for their national development. However, due to a combination of factors, including the government's uncertain policies, division of ethnic minorities, market failure, and hyperinflation, the new born nation faced danger of collapse. With the purpose of stabilizing the governance and economy of the country, the military deployed a coup d'état in 1962. The protesters, who were against the military coup, reacted with guns and swords and this continued until the 1980s. In 1986, the military junta finally noticed the problem of their communism market and therefore started to accept capitalism. However, the citizens could not accept them still in the governance, and the mass protest began on August 8th, 1988, known as the *8888 uprising*. The people of Myanmar hoped for the democratic party to take control of the country but, once again, another military seized the control tower of Myanmar, which led to the second coup d'état.

After more than 20 years, in 2010, a general election took place under the repulsion of the citizens however, unlike their hope, a party which actually had the military general as their leader seizes the power regardless of the actual result of the election. Thus, Myanmar has had a military regime for more than 50 years.

In Myanmar's 2020 election, NLD won by occupying 83% of the senate seat. The USDP however did not accept the result of the election. They started to claim that there was election fraud. As a result, the USDP announced an invalidity of the election and once again the military coup d'état happened.

Throughout each of the three coup d'états, hundreds and thousands were killed or lost homes. Even only for this case, over 3,331 people are under detention, 76 sentenced and 739 people are dead were killed under no defense of the nation but themselves and the very rights of each personnel were violated plus breached. This death toll is a result and the truth of devastating human rights violating situation happening concurrently in Myanmar.

V. Position of Key Member Nations and Other Bodies

Myanmar

Throughout the history of Myanmar, the Myanmar government has never had full control of the nation except for the first 18 years after their independence. Since the first military junta in 1966, both major and minor political parties lost their power. Although the NLD had full support from the citizens and actually once became the leading party of Myanmar in 2012, the amount of influence the military had in the politics were rather substantial.

In current situation, where the military fully grabbed the control of its nation where the government cannot make any significant reaction to this devastating status. In other words, Myanmar government's solo effort to solve the problem cannot make more result than an unnecessary loss, meaning that the United Nations now should present practical solution of the anarchism of member nation.

United States

The United States is one of the two countries with the biggest influence on Myanmar with China. The United States has largely supported improving the lives of the people of Myanmar. Since the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission closed in 1989, the United States has continued to deliver emergency humanitarian assistance along the Thailand-Burma border,

including through the Department of State (DOS)/Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration's (PRM) funding to non-governmental organization (NGO) partners for assistance to Burmese refugees and asylum seekers in the refugee camps on the Thailand side of the border. The United States resumed targeted health programs in 1998 and scaled up assistance efforts in response to the devastation caused by Cyclone Nargis in 2008. The United States re-established a full USAID Mission in 2012.

Since Thein Sein became the new general of Myanmar, the Government of Myanmar initiated a series of political and economic reforms that resulted in a substantial opening of the long-isolated country, therefore increasing the influence of the western nations rather than China. As outlined by the White House on February 11, 2021, following the military coup, the United States is continuing support for the people of Burma, which includes humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable populations. An interagency committee was established to review assistance and engagements toward Burma to ensure no U.S. government funds support the regime.

China

China also has the largest influence on Myanmar, like the United States. China holds close relationships with the military of Myanmar and Myanmar for China is the final gateway to the Indian Ocean and of the most important country for their one belt one road project.

China and Myanmar's relationship has historical foundation. Since its foundation in 1949, Myanmar was the first non-Communist country to recognize the Communist-led People's Republic of China. Myanmar and China formally established diplomatic relations in 1950. Here China and Myanmar signed a treaty of friendship and mutual non-aggression and promulgated a Joint Declaration on June 29, 1954, officially basing their relations on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. From these treaties, China has increased its influence on Myanmar throughout almost a century.

ASEAN

In the 1980s, Myanmar joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) ASEAN now takes an important role in the democratization of Myanmar. As the ASEAN countries are geographically close to each other and with Myanmar, ASEAN works as a external gateway for the Myanmar conflict.

VI. Past Actions

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by the General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 entry into force 3 January 1976, in accordance with article 27, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is a pledge among the state members of the United Nations towards the humans' economic, social, and cultural rights. The covenant pursues the promotion of human rights and equality among member nations. As Myanmar's current situation where it is unable for human rights to be fully considered, the covenant is recommended as it has not yet been deployed.

United Nations resolution suggestion of arms embargo on Myanmar

In June 2021, the *United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)* condemned Myanmar's military coup d'état and called for an arms embargo against the country in the resolution mentioned in June. 119 among the 156 countries participating in the vote voted "yes" while *Belarus* voted "no", showing slight split between the ASEAN and other 36 abstained. The resolution called on Myanmar's military regime to restore the country's democratization, condemning its "*excessive and lethal violence*" since the coup d'état. Thus the prevention of the flow of arms into Myanmar was decided, giving a chance for the military junta to dilute.

United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution 2005/22

The United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution, adopted in 2005, promotes action to effective crime prevention. The Resolution requests the United Nations Secretary-General to report to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its next session of General Assembly in order to promote active crime prevention and for human rights in social and economic terms. Practical and effective crime prevention is highly necessary in the current situation where a coup d'état lays illegal violation but cannot be punished in the very nation where the government lost power to do so.

Security Council Resolution 2436 (2018)

The Security Council (SC) Resolution 2436 (2018) considers the needs in strengthening the UN peacekeeping force and condemns primary responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Resolution speaks out for the greater utilization of peacekeeping forces in order to protect human rights that are being violated by the infringement between the military or governmental bodies.

VII. Conclusion and Suggested Solutions

The Myanmar coup d'état has been drawing attention as an event of human rights violation including genocides, suppression, and dictatorship which immensely breaches human rights. As a result of this coup, over 3,331 people are under detention, 76 have been sentenced and 739 have been killed. The Myanmar coup d'état suggests indiscriminate human violation as a whole which the United Nations cannot tolerate. It is of no doubt that for the Myanmar citizens and United Nations ideology the chain of wrongdoing needs to be stopped as soon as possible.

Establishing long-term stability in the region involves addressing the political tension between the United States of America and People's Republic of China within Myanmar. . ASEAN nations, geographically adjacent countries, should also cooperate for the elucidation of the Myanmar coup d'état, considering the Myanmar government is currently unstable. Furthermore, it is highly encouraged to build a resolution offering standards for such a situation where there is no way for the victim nation to solve human rights violations by only with their own power. There should be a resolution clearly stating and suggesting when the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) and United Nations Programme of Action (UNPoA) should be deployed or activated in certain situations.

It has always been the United Nations' job to keep the world peaceful and promote human rights for people all around the world to enjoy their own lives. It is with no doubt a privilege to serve as a protector of human rights. Indeed, for the short term the delegate should focus on how to preserve vulnerable people's rights as soon as possible by bringing a solution with the military junta of Myanmar.



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