

**A coalition of the unwilling:  
ASEAN's response to the crisis in Burma/Myanmar**

- Since seizing power on 1 Feb, the illegal military junta's destructive efforts to gain territorial and political control have dragged the country into a crisis and growing civil war, and allowed the COVID-19 pandemic to ravage the people of Burma.
- The international community has repeatedly called on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—of which Burma is a member—to address the situation. Instead of following ASEAN's weak 5-point consensus, the junta did the opposite.
  - Attacks on civilians or armed clashes that failed to protect them increased by an estimated 27% after the consensus was adopted. The junta increased attacks on NLD and NUG members, and charged associates with treason, a capital offense.
  - ASEAN did nothing to facilitate dialogue between the junta and the civilian National Unity Government (NUG) or Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). Worse still, ASEAN did not engage with these parties either.
  - ASEAN took over six months to appoint a special envoy to Burma. The envoy has not met with the NUG or facilitated dialogue, his only two specific mandates.
  - ASEAN began to facilitate humanitarian aid in August, but it is doing so only through the junta. The junta has consistently undermined public health and COVID-19 pandemic response, and it has consistently shown that it is not a capable or a trustworthy partner.
- ASEAN's recent decision to bar General Min Aung Hlaing from the ASEAN Summit is a significant step, but needs to be followed up with substantive action:
  - At the Summit and beyond, ASEAN members must push for stronger action including dialogue with the NUG and clear consequences for junta violations that go beyond revoking invitation to individual meetings.
  - ASEAN members should focus their efforts outside the bloc, and engage dialogue partners and the UN Security Council to step up additional efforts to implement a comprehensive, effective strategy.

**CONTENTS**

- 2 Illegal military coup
- 4 International shock, lack of response
- 4 ASEAN response
- 4 ASEAN high-level meeting
- 5 Junta walks back commitments
- 6 Brunei subverts ASEAN process
- 7 ASEAN appoints special envoy
- 7 Humanitarian aid and a fake ceasefire
- 8 ASEAN fails to put its foot down
- 8 Meetings include junta, exclude elected government
- 9 ASEAN members impair UN action
- 9 International support for ASEAN
- 10 Not everybody agrees
- 11 China's support for ASEAN

As soon as the Burma military (Tatmadaw) attempted to seize power on 1 Feb 2021, there were calls for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to take action. As a regional bloc of countries most likely to be affected by the coup, and including Burma as a member, the expectation has been that it would be the most appropriate party to take action.

Eight months later, ASEAN has shown little progress in addressing—much less resolving—the situation. Consequently, there is continuing concern that the bloc is not only failing to help, but actually impeding the international community by keeping the ball in its own court. Overreliance on ASEAN has become an extremely risky gamble.

Consequently:

- At the October Summit, ASEAN must decide on concrete means to engage with the NUG, Burma’s legitimate, democratically-elected government; and must decide how to facilitate dialogue between the junta and NUG, who are now supporting opposing sides in a civil war.
- ASEAN member states should engage, either individually or as a bloc, with dialogue partners and the UN Security Council to implement a comprehensive, effective strategy. It has become clear that ASEAN members cannot rely on the bloc.
- This strategy must involve recognizing the NUG, engaging in dialogue, halting violence, and facilitating cross-border humanitarian aid.

The failure of the junta and ASEAN to implement the Five Point Consensus poses threats to the region. Burma has further increased the number of people displaced or desperate to migrate to neighboring countries. The junta has failed to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, posing a threat of further outbreaks in the region.

### Illegal military coup

On 1 February 2021, the Burma military (Tatmadaw) detained President Win Myint, State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, and hundreds of other politicians from the National League for Democracy (NLD).<sup>1</sup> It forcibly confined the parliament—set to convene on the same day—to its quarters in Naypyidaw; it jailed some MPs, and put others under house arrest.<sup>2</sup>

The Tatmadaw violated the 2008 Constitution—which it drafted—when it grabbed power.<sup>3</sup> Vice President Myint Swe seized the Presidency and transferred all executive, legislative, and judicial powers to Commander-in-Chief General Min Aung Hlaing, citing voter fraud in the 2020 elections and Sections 417–19 of the Constitution.<sup>4</sup>

### Junta targets politicians

Since launching its coup on 1 Feb, the junta has consistently targeted politicians, detaining them and often charging them with spurious legal claims. This ongoing practice, along with failure to meet with NUG leaders, shows the junta’s unwillingness to engage in dialogue and resolve the situation peacefully.

On 1 February 2021, the Tatmadaw detained President Win Myint, State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, and hundreds of other politicians from their National League for Democracy (NLD) party. It confined the parliament—set to convene on the same day—to its quarters in Naypyidaw. Suu Kyi faces up to 11 different charges and a potential sentence of over 100 years. On 23 Sep, court hearings began for Suu Kyi, Finance Minister Kyaw Win, his successor Soe Win, and Deputy Minister Set Aung.

As of 1 Sep, the junta had arrested at least 324 NLD members, including 98 MPs, over 300 of whom remained in detention. It had charged at least 100 elected leaders, ministers and prominent NLD members with high treason, corruption, and incitement. The junta allegedly tortured at least three party members to death in custody.

On 7 May, it designated the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), National Unity Government (NUG), and NUG’s People’s Defense Force (PDF) as terrorist organizations, meaning that anybody suspected of affiliation with the groups could face life in prison. It had already declared that the CRPH administrative body members would face imprisonment or death for high treason, and that those who communicated with these bodies could face up to seven years; charged the Interim Vice President with high treason; and issued arrest warrants for NUG members. On 7 Sep, junta forces ransacked the home of acting NUG president Duwa Lashi La in Lashio (Shan State).

Al Jazeera (2 Feb 2021) Myanmar legislators remain held in ‘open-air detention centre’; Radio Free Asia (14 Sep 2021) Aung San Suu Kyi Trial Resumes in Myanmar After a Day’s Delay Over Health Concerns; Myanmar Now (23 Sep 2021) Court hearings around Official Secrets Act charge commence for Aung San Suu Kyi and Sean Turnell; Radio Free Asia (16 Aug 2021) Myanmar’s Junta Seen Moving to Dissolve NLD to Ensure Grip on Power; Irrawaddy (1 Sep 2021) 100 Senior NLD Leaders Arrested and Charged Since Myanmar Junta’s Coup; Irrawaddy (10 May 2021) Myanmar Junta Declares National Unity Government, CRPH, Defense Forces as ‘Terrorist’ Groups; SAC (5 Mar 2021) Announcement for CRPH that commits high treason and its organizations; SAC (17 Mar 2021) Lawsuit filed against Dr Sasa and arrest warrant issued; SAC (18 Mar 2021) Legal action charged against U Mahn Win Khine Than; SAC (21 Mar 2021) Order 2/2021 Declaration of Unlawful Association; SAC (21 Apr 2021) Ministry of Home Affairs Press Release; Jakarta Post (23 Apr 2021) Junta issues arrest warrants for 26, mostly members of Myanmar parallel government; Myanmar Now (10 Sep 2021) Military raids home of acting NUG president

<sup>1</sup> Frontier Myanmar (1 Feb 2021) Tatmadaw seizes power under state of emergency, to rule for a year

<sup>2</sup> Al Jazeera (2 Feb 2021) Myanmar legislators remain held in ‘open-air detention centre’

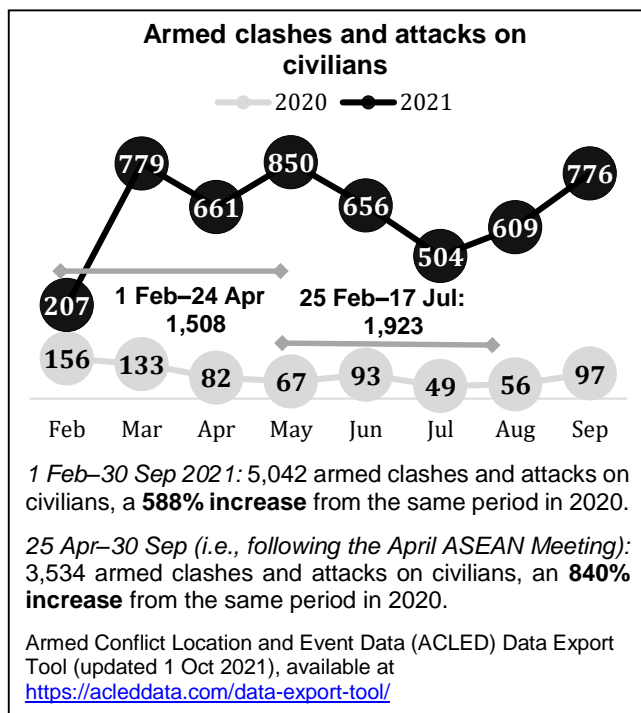
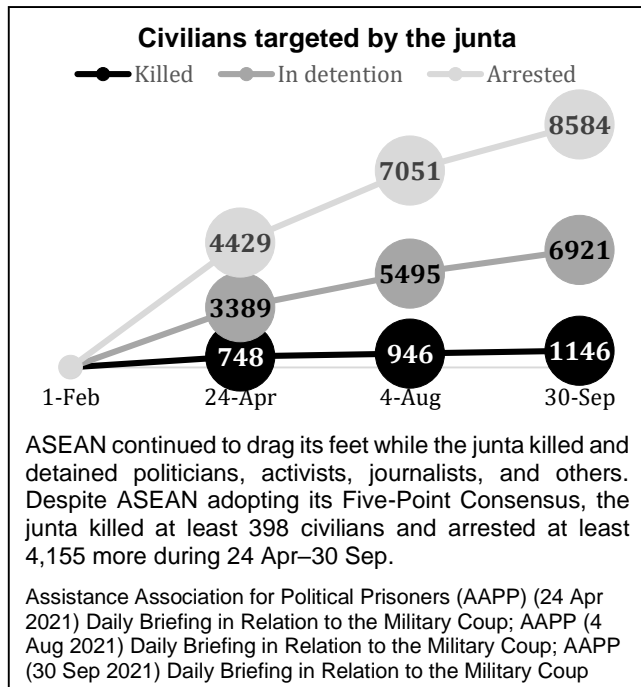
<sup>3</sup> Melissa Crouch (10 Feb 2021) “Why section 144 orders are unconstitutional”

<sup>4</sup> Myanmar Times (1 Feb 2021) Myanmar announces state of emergency

Section 417 says: “if there is sufficient reason for a state of emergency [...], the President may, after co-ordinating with the National Defence and Security Council, promulgate an ordinance and declare a state of emergency.” The basic conditions for a state of emergency did not exist, so it was unconstitutional to declare one and transfer power. The declaration was signed by military-nominated Myint Swe as “Pro Tem (President),”<sup>5</sup> while the President of Burma remained (illegally) detained by the military.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the President could not have coordinated with the National Defence and Security Council, because the Tatmadaw was detaining five members of the Council.<sup>7</sup>

On 4 February, 378 MPs-elect (i.e., at least 76% of the 498 democratically-elected members parliament) defied the military and swore themselves in, complying with parliamentary procedure, at the hostel where they were confined.<sup>8</sup> On 8 February, the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) publicly announced its formation, recognized the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and their common goal of a federal union, and pledged to fulfil this goal.<sup>9</sup> On 16 April, the CRPH announced the formation of a National Unity Government (NUG),<sup>10</sup> with ministers representing diverse ethnic minorities and political parties. The NUG has received support and endorsement from diverse ethnic groups and other organizations.<sup>11</sup> It has taken measures to introduce a new constitution, a federal army, and a federal education system.<sup>12</sup>

Millions of people joined the CDM or otherwise protested.<sup>13</sup> The junta responded with brutality.



<sup>5</sup> Republic of the Union of Myanmar (1 Feb 2021) Order 1/2021  
<sup>6</sup> Myanmar Times (4 Feb 2021) Myanmar State Counsellor and President Charged, Detained for 2 more weeks  
<sup>7</sup> Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008) Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, § 215; Jurist (17 Feb 2021) The Constitutional Fiction of Myanmar’s Coup  
<sup>8</sup> Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) (5 Feb 2021) Over 300 elected representatives convened Emergency Union Parliament Meeting  
<sup>9</sup> CRPH (8 Feb 2021) Announcement 1/2021  
<sup>10</sup> CRPH (16 Apr 2021) Announcement 23/2021 Formation of the National Unity Government; CRPH (16 Apr 2021) Announcement 24/2021 Formation of the National Unity Government  
<sup>11</sup> NUG (via Facebook) (19 Apr 2021) <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/107842168103090>; NUG (via Facebook) (19 Apr 2021) <https://www.facebook.com/NUGmyanmar/posts/108882704665703>  
<sup>12</sup> CRPH (16 Apr 2021) News Statement 11; NUG (5 May 2021) Notification 1/2021: Announcement on the Establishment of People’s Defence Force, [tinyurl.com/326k59wx](https://tinyurl.com/326k59wx); NUG (21 May 2021) Ministry of Education Statement 13/2021, [tinyurl.com/44ncz7dx](https://tinyurl.com/44ncz7dx)  
<sup>13</sup> New York Times (22 Feb 2021) Myanmar’s Protests Are Growing, Defying Threats and Snipers

## International shock, lack of response

Almost immediately, countries around the world expressed their shock and dismay at the power grab. However, even the most powerful international players expressed support for an ASEAN-led solution.

In April, UN Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized the importance of regional actors,<sup>14</sup> and urged the UNSC to cooperate with ASEAN to orchestrate a robust international response grounded in a unified regional effort.<sup>15</sup> The UN Special Envoy for Myanmar echoed this call.<sup>16</sup>

At the UNSC, China emphasized the importance of supporting ASEAN efforts towards reconciliation.<sup>17</sup> The UK and Japan said they would support ASEAN's efforts to resolve the crisis.<sup>18</sup>

## ASEAN response

ASEAN members reacted by condemning the violence but maintaining their distance, in line with the bloc's principle of non-interference. A division quickly emerged between member states willing and unwilling to call for democracy and release of political prisoners.

Reacting quickly on 1 Feb, ASEAN Chair Brunei made a statement encouraging "dialogue, reconciliation and the return to normalcy in accordance with the will and interests of the people of Myanmar," and recalling "the purposes and the principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, including, the adherence to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance, respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms."<sup>19</sup>

On 2 Mar, ASEAN leaders convened an Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (IAMM), and expressed support and concern, calling on all parties to avoid violence and engage in dialogue. They noted the importance of repatriating displaced people from Rakhine state, but did not say "Rohingya."<sup>20</sup>

## ASEAN High-Level Meeting

On 19 Mar, Indonesia called for ASEAN members to meet as soon as possible to discuss Burma,<sup>21</sup> a call

### ASEAN member state positions

**Brunei** is the current chair of ASEAN. It has generally refrained from commenting on the situation. It has been slow to facilitate meetings and the selection of a special envoy, it has ignored calls for participation from the civilian CRPH and NUG, and in April it facilitated a meeting with the junta without telling other ASEAN members.

**Cambodia** has openly welcomed Min Aung Hlaing as the leader of Burma. It has lamented violence against citizens, and pledged to give humanitarian support, but also committed to non-interference.

**Indonesia** has been one of most vocal ASEAN critics of Burma. On 1 Feb, it called on Burma to observe the rule of law, good governance, and principles of democracy and constitutional government; and to use legal mechanisms address electoral differences.

**Laos**, like Cambodia, has been fairly silent, but has pledged to give humanitarian support.

**Malaysia** has been the most vocal critic. It called for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political leaders, the restoration of the status quo under the NLD government, and security forces to restrain their violence. It said that if the situation worsens ASEAN would have to consider it a serious threat to regional peace and stability.

The **Philippines** has strongly indicated it will not interfere in Burma's affairs, while saying that this does not mean it supports the junta's actions.

**Singapore** has criticized the junta, calling its violence against citizens "the height of national shame," and said that continued tensions in Burma threatened to undermine regional stability. However, it has expressed a desire to engage with, rather than isolate, the junta.

**Thailand** has tried not to interfere in Burma's "internal affair," but has hinted that it engaged in quiet diplomacy. At the same time, Thailand has needed to address multiple incidents of junta shells landing in its territory, as well as continued migration, both due to the ongoing crisis.

**Vietnam** has expressed concern over violence and deaths, and called at the UN Security Council for dialogue and democracy in Burma.

<sup>14</sup> UN (12 Apr 2021) Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Secretary-General (19 Apr 2021) Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council - on enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and Subregional Organizations in enhancing confidence building and dialogue in conflict prevention and resolution [as delivered]

<sup>16</sup> UN (8 Apr 2021) Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General

<sup>17</sup> Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Thailand (20 Apr 2021) Working in the Same Direction to Build Peace Together

<sup>18</sup> Reuters (7 Apr 2021) Indonesia says UK backs ASEAN push for Myanmar crisis resolution; Jakarta Post (30 Mar 2021) Indonesia, Japan agree to work closely in resolving Myanmar crisis

<sup>19</sup> Channel News Asia (1 Feb 2021) ASEAN chair Brunei calls for 'dialogue, reconciliation and return to normalcy' in Myanmar

<sup>20</sup> ASEAN (2 Mar 2021) Chair's Statement on the Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (IAMM)

<sup>21</sup> Channel News Asia (19 Mar 2021) Indonesia president calls for ASEAN high level meeting on Myanmar crisis; Tom Allard (via Twitter) (19 Mar 2021) [https://twitter.com/tom\\_allard/status/1372769507438030855](https://twitter.com/tom_allard/status/1372769507438030855)



quickly backed by Malaysia and Singapore.<sup>22</sup> On 21 Apr, ASEAN Chair Brunei announced the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting. It did not mention Burma.<sup>23</sup>

Member states and observers outlined what they wanted to accomplish at the meeting, cognizant of international expectations of concrete solutions.<sup>24</sup> Malaysia said it would call for an immediate end to violence, release of prisoners, and for Burma to receive ASEAN representatives to help it return to normalcy.<sup>25</sup> Indonesia and Vietnam said they would push for the best possible outcome for the people of Burma.<sup>26</sup> Cambodia said it proposed cessation of violence, and ASEAN mediation and humanitarian aid.<sup>27</sup> Thailand's proposal, made public after the meeting, included the release of detainees.<sup>28</sup>

On 22 Apr, the National Unity Government (NUG) wrote an open letter to ASEAN leaders, expressing willingness to join the ASEAN summit and listing its conditions for engaging with the junta.<sup>29</sup> However, no NUG representative was invited, and Min Aung Hlaing represented the junta.

On 24 Apr, ASEAN members convened a high-level forum in Jakarta. Philippines Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. welcomed Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting, telling him: "You are among brothers and sisters, and this too is your ASEAN family." He said "these times call for a vocal, polite but firm and clear ASEAN engagement in the form of a united appeal to the better angels of our nature. We are better than our critics make us out to be."<sup>30</sup>

Brunei released a statement on the outcome of the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting, expressing deep concern and calling for repatriation as soon as possible.<sup>31</sup> It also laid out the five-point consensus from the meeting (Consensus), calling for: **immediate cessation of violence** and all parties to exercise restraint; **constructive dialogue** among all parties concerned, to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people; a **special envoy** of the ASEAN Chair to **facilitate mediation of the dialogue** process; **humanitarian assistance** through ASEAN's AHA Centre; and the **special envoy** and delegation to **visit Burma** to meet with all parties concerned.

The summit was counterproductive: five days after Min Aung Hlaing attended, the junta declared itself "recognized" by ASEAN;<sup>32</sup> the junta also disclaimed its commitments, reverting to its own plan.

### Junta walks back commitments

On 26 Apr, the junta said that ASEAN's five points—which it called "suggestions"—would only be considered after stability was restored in Burma,<sup>33</sup> a statement widely seen as walking back the junta's commitments two days earlier.<sup>34</sup> UN Special Rapporteur Thomas Andrews wrote to Min Aung Hlaing,

---

<sup>22</sup> Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia (19 Mar 2021) Media Statement: The Situation in Myanmar; Forum Asia (22 Apr 2021) Brief: One Vision, Different Responses: An Analysis of ASEAN Member States' Responses to the Myanmar Coup and Recommendations; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore (28 Mar 2021) Remarks by Minister (Foreign Affairs) Dr Vivian Balakrishnan at Joint Press Conference with Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi on 25 March 2021, 1800hrs, Gedung Pancasila, Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Diplomat (26 Mar 2021) Singapore Joins Calls for Emergency ASEAN Summit on Myanmar; Radio Free Asia (25 Mar 2021) Singapore Calls For Regional Leaders' Summit to Discuss Myanmar Crisis

<sup>23</sup> Government of Brunei Darussalam (21 Apr 2021) ASEAN to hold the ASEAN leaders' meeting in Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia

<sup>24</sup> Straits Times (22 Apr 2021) Myanmar crisis summit a test of Asean's credibility, says Thailand

<sup>25</sup> Star (20 Apr 2021) PM to reiterate Malaysia's stand to end Myanmar violence at Asean meet, says Hisham

<sup>26</sup> Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia (23 Apr 2021) Indonesia, Vietnam Push ASEAN Leaders' Meeting to Give Best Solution for Myanmar

<sup>27</sup> Cambodia Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (25 Apr 2021) Outcomes of the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand (26 Apr 2021) Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Proposed Way Forward For ASEAN in Addressing the Situation in Myanmar in the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting in Jakarta

<sup>29</sup> National Unity Government (22 Apr 2021) Open Letter from Dr Sasa to ASEAN

<sup>30</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs, The Philippines (24 Apr 2021) Philippine intervention at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting

<sup>31</sup> ASEAN (24 Apr 2021) Chairman's Statement on the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting

<sup>32</sup> Monstar (29 Apr 2021) The military council declares itself to be recognized by Asean

<sup>33</sup> Global New Light of Myanmar (26 Apr 2021) Press Release on ASEAN Leaders' Meeting; Bangkok Post (27 Apr 2021) Myanmar's junta rebuffs Asean plan to end months of violence; Thai PBS World (27 Apr 2021) Stability before ASEAN proposals to be considered — Myanmar junta leader

<sup>34</sup> Bangkok Post (27 Apr 2021) Myanmar's junta rebuffs Asean plan to end months of violence; Thai PBS World (27 Apr 2021) Stability before ASEAN proposals to be considered — Myanmar junta leader; Frontier Asia (30 Apr 2021) The top stories in Myanmar this week; Nikkei Asia (28 Apr 2021) Myanmar's junta takes ASEAN for a ride; Scot Marciel (via Twitter) (27 Apr 2021) <https://twitter.com/MarcielScot/status/1386901333840515079>

seeking public confirmation that the junta would honor its commitments from the summit, including honoring the right of the people of Burma to freely express their views.<sup>35</sup>

On 27 Apr, the NUG said that the Consensus did not reflect the situation in Burma, and rejected the first point (“all parties shall exercise utmost restraint”) as the military alone was the perpetrating violence.<sup>36</sup> On 9 May, it was reported that the NUG would not defy the people’s will by negotiating with the junta.<sup>37</sup>

On 11 May, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said the junta had not shown any sign of abiding by the Consensus, and called on ASEAN to quickly react and intensify action.<sup>38</sup>

On 23 May, in a Chinese television interview, Min Aung Hlaing reportedly said he did not see how the Consensus could be implemented. Sources differed on the exact translation of the interview, with Radio Free Asia stating the General said he is “not ready” to implement the Consensus.<sup>39</sup>

### **Brunei subverts ASEAN process**

On 4 Jun, Brunei representatives met with Min Aung Hlaing and junta election commission chairman Thein Soe, where they reportedly discussed cooperation with ASEAN and procedures for an upcoming election.<sup>40</sup> The delegation aimed to present the junta with “the nominations proposed by ASEAN member states for the special envoy,” allowing it to dictate the special envoy candidacy.<sup>41</sup>

Brunei did not tell ASEAN members about the trip beforehand or brief them afterward.<sup>42</sup> An ASEAN statement the next day said Brunei representatives’ visit was to advance “a peaceful solution in the interests of [Burma’s] people” by implementing the Consensus.<sup>43</sup> It referred to Min Aung Hlaing as “chairman” of the junta’s State Administration Council for the first time.<sup>44</sup> As of 8 June, the statement is no longer available on the ASEAN website.

The delegation did not meet with NUG representatives.<sup>45</sup> Protesters in Yangon and Mandalay burned ASEAN flags, accusing the bloc of colluding with the junta and ignoring the wishes of the people.<sup>46</sup>

### **ASEAN’s pace frustrates members, sows disunity**

ASEAN’s slowness in responding to the Burma situation frustrated members—particularly Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore—threatening to further impair the bloc.

In June, Thailand and Indonesia repeated calls for swift, concrete implementation of the Consensus; Singapore voiced disappointment; and Malaysia said the international community was awaiting ASEAN action after the “painfully slow” development of the Consensus.

Experts predicted further fracturing of ASEAN. US Institute of Peace Myanmar Country Director Jason Tower wrote that Min Aung Hlaing had consolidated control over the ASEAN process, and suggested that the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue—potentially alongside Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore—should re-envision itself as a regional security platform that could take the bold steps ASEAN would not. Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue Asia Director Michael Vatikiotis said ASEAN was at a critical juncture: “Disunity [...] is growing from within. Some states will start to feel they must act alone. That will leave ASEAN exposed to the threat of the very kind of intrastate conflict it was designed to prevent.”

Reuters (6 Jun 2021) Thailand concerned at Myanmar violence; Reuters (7 Jun 2021) ASEAN ministers pressure Myanmar after ‘painfully slow’ progress; Hishammuddin Hussein (via Twitter) (7 Jun 2021) <https://twitter.com/HishammuddinH2O/status/1401896993480343552>; Nikkei Asia (16 Jun 2021) China’s subjugation of ASEAN is a great leap backward for Myanmar; Nikkei Asia (30 Jun 2021) ASEAN needs an urgent makeover

<sup>35</sup> United Nations Special Rapporteur Thomas Andrews (27 Apr 2021) Letter to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

<sup>36</sup> Irrawaddy (27 Apr 2021) Myanmar’s National Unity Government Disappointed With ASEAN Consensus

<sup>37</sup> Irrawaddy (9 May 2021) Myanmar’s NUG Snubs ASEAN Talks

<sup>38</sup> UN OCHCR (11 May 2021) Press briefing notes on Myanmar

<sup>39</sup> RFA (214 May 2021) Rights Groups: A Month After Consensus, ASEAN ‘Doing Nothing’ on Myanmar; AP (25 May 2021) UN envoy warns of possible civil war in Myanmar, seeks talks

<sup>40</sup> Reuters (4 Jun 2021) ASEAN envoys meet Myanmar junta chief - state TV; Al Jazeera (5 Jun 2021) Myanmar coup opponents say no faith in ASEAN as envoys visit; Nikkei Asia (4 Jun 2021) Myanmar’s junta chief meets with ASEAN representatives

<sup>41</sup> Nikkei Asia (8 Jun 2021) ‘Painful’ Myanmar engagement sows rage as ASEAN seeks envoy; Business Standard (7 Jun 2021) ASEAN submits list of nominees for special envoy to Myanmar military regime

<sup>42</sup> Jakarta Post (10 Jun 2021) Brunei’s disastrous mission

<sup>43</sup> Reuters (7 Jun 2021) ASEAN ministers pressure Myanmar after ‘painfully slow’ progress; Nikkei Asia (7 Jun 2021) ASEAN meets with China as progress on Myanmar consensus stalls;

<sup>44</sup> Nikkei Asia (16 Jun 2021) China’s subjugation of ASEAN is a great leap backward for Myanmar

<sup>45</sup> Diplomat (7 Jun 2021) Myanmar’s Opposition Shadow Government ‘No Longer Has Faith’ in ASEAN

<sup>46</sup> Matthew Tostevin (5 Jun 2021) <https://twitter.com/TostevinM/status/1401192742336679939>; Civil Disobedience Movement (via Twitter) (14 Jun 2021) <https://twitter.com/cvdom2021/status/1404281582202941447>; Cape Diamond (via Twitter) (14 Jun 2021) [https://twitter.com/cape\\_diamond/status/1404253234261237761](https://twitter.com/cape_diamond/status/1404253234261237761)

## ASEAN appoints Special Envoy

On 1 Aug, Min Aung Hlaing said the junta was ready to cooperate with ASEAN and engage in dialogue with the future special envoy.<sup>47</sup> Three days later, 185 days after the junta's power grab, and 102 days after ASEAN said it would appoint a special envoy, it finally appointed one.

On 4 Aug, ASEAN confirmed Brunei second minister for foreign affairs Erywan Yusof as its special envoy to Burma.<sup>48</sup> The UN Secretary General immediately described the appointment as an important step towards ending the crisis in Burma.<sup>49</sup> However, activist group Justice For Myanmar revealed that the long-delayed appointment was compromised by the business relationship between Brunei's state-owned oil company and Burma's, now under junta control. BRUNEI energy Myanmar has shares in three oil and gas fields in Burma, and is in partnership with the Burma military crony IGE Group.<sup>50</sup>

## Humanitarian assistance and a fake ceasefire

Yusof's responsibilities include creating a clear timeline to implement the Consensus and supervising a humanitarian aid package meant to curb the COVID-19 outbreak. However, the junta resisted ASEAN efforts to approve humanitarian aid to areas in need of urgent assistance.<sup>51</sup>

On 17 Aug, after closed UNSC discussions, the UK called for a humanitarian ceasefire for COVID-19 vaccination programs to proceed in Burma. ASEAN's special envoy supported the call.<sup>52</sup>

On 18 Aug, ASEAN held a virtual conference on humanitarian assistance for Burma. ASEAN members and partners reportedly pledged USD 9 million in assistance; and to set up an ASEAN Coordinating Group in Yangon to ensure accountability and effective coordination.<sup>53</sup> In July, Thailand said it had already given THB 5 million (approx. USD 15,184) to the Myanmar Red Cross, and hoped to see ASEAN's Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Management (AHA Centre) begin operations soon in Burma.<sup>54</sup>

On 31 Aug, Yusof called for a four-month ceasefire to facilitate the distribution of COVID-19 aid; he reported that junta minister Wunna Maung Lwin had accepted the ceasefire.<sup>55</sup> The NUG responded by criticizing Yusof, saying that before calling for a ceasefire to deliver humanitarian aid he should have secured the junta's assurances that it would stop civilian arrests and allow Yusof to meet with detained

## Junta tries to impede humanitarian assistance to desperate population

Before the coup, there were at least 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Burma. Since February, over 200,000 more have fled, many of whom remain in the jungle. Despite this, the junta has interfered with healthcare and humanitarian aid:

- **It blocked and destroyed humanitarian aid.** In June, it destroyed aid headed to IDPs in Karenni State. In August, it blocked aid delivery to Mindat (Chin State), and denied international aid providers access to 50,000 Rohingya refugees in Buthidaung Township (Rakhine State) who had gone three months without aid.
- **It violated international humanitarian law,** by targeting healthcare workers and destroying community detection and treatment facilities. As of July, its 260 attacks on healthcare were more than existed in any other country: it arrested at least 157 healthcare workers, issued arrest warrants for 580 more, wounded 32, killed 12, and occupied at least 51 hospitals.
- **Its forces posed as medical workers to commit human rights violations.** For example, on 22 Aug, junta police officers opened fire on the house of a man believed to be involved in anti-coup protests in Magway Region, killing a civilian, after reportedly arriving in an ambulance.

UNHCR (4 Oct 2021) Myanmar Emergency Update; Irrawaddy (11 Jun 2021) Regime Destroys Food and Medicine for Refugees in Southeastern Myanmar; Mizzima (5 Aug 2021) Food shortages imminent in Mindat township; Irrawaddy (23 Aug 2021) Rohingya in Western Myanmar Starving as Aid Blocked; Associated Press (7 Jul 2021) In Myanmar, the military and police declare war on medics; WHO (updated 30 Jul 2021) Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care; Myanmar Now (24 Aug 2021) One civilian killed, four arrested in Magwe Region police raid

<sup>47</sup> Guardian (1 Aug 2021) Myanmar junta leader declares himself PM as election timeline stalled; Bangkok Post (1 Aug 2021) Asean under pressure to name Myanmar envoy

<sup>48</sup> Reuters (4 Aug 2021) ASEAN appoints Brunei diplomat as envoy to Myanmar; Aaron Connelly (4 Aug 2021) <https://twitter.com/ConnellyAL/status/1422827044451229697>

<sup>49</sup> UN News in Brief (5 Aug 2021) UN chief renews call for calm in Myanmar, welcomes ASEAN mediator appointment

<sup>50</sup> Justice For Myanmar (11 Aug 2021) ASEAN's role in Myanmar further undermined by Brunei business with military and cronies

<sup>51</sup> Reuters (4 Aug 2021) ASEAN appoints Brunei diplomat as envoy to Myanmar; Aaron Connelly (4 Aug 2021) <https://twitter.com/ConnellyAL/status/1422827044451229697>

<sup>52</sup> WestPort News (17 Aug 2021) Britain urges halt to Myanmar clashes to allow vaccination

<sup>53</sup> Vietnam Plus (18 Aug 2021) Vietnam committed to supporting Myanmar: Foreign Minister

<sup>54</sup> Star (13 Jul 2021) Thailand hopes Asean centre will start humanitarian assistance in Myanmar soon

<sup>55</sup> Kyodo News (5 Sep 2021) ASEAN envoy to Myanmar calls for 4-month cease-fire to deliver aid

State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi.<sup>56</sup> On 6 Sep, the junta said that while it would allow ASEAN visits and would not block humanitarian aid, it had *not* accepted Yusof’s call for a ceasefire.<sup>57</sup>

On 15 Sep, ASEAN’s Secretary-General handed over medical supplies worth USD 1.1 million to the Myanmar Red Cross (MRCs).<sup>58</sup> ASEAN said that the AHA Centre, as the operational lead, would facilitate the delivery of assistance, while local partner MRCs would support it by providing last mile distribution to the communities in need.<sup>59</sup> On 17 Sep, it was reported that the junta had rebuffed a request for expanded humanitarian access for the delivery of COVID-19 assistance from the UN acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, saying the situation was “under control.”<sup>60</sup>

### ASEAN fails to put its foot down

In the lead-up to ASEAN’s planned 26–28 October 2021 meeting, members and observers (again) pushed for the exclusion of the junta, in light of its continued violations and failure to abide by the Five-Point Consensus. The junta continued to obstruct dialogue, including by preventing the ASEAN Special Envoy from meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi and eight ethnic political parties in October.<sup>61</sup>

On 15 Oct, ASEAN Chair Brunei announced that it would not invite a junta representative, but only a “non-political representative,” given the lack of progress in implementing the Consensus.<sup>62</sup> This was a big step for the bloc, but left space for the junta to send a regime member sympathetic to the Tatmadaw. ASEAN did not invite an NUG representative.

### Meetings include junta, exclude elected government

ASEAN members have repeatedly met—as a bloc and individually—with junta representatives. They have excluded NUG representatives, ignoring NUG statements of willingness to engage and nomination of representatives.<sup>63</sup> The effect of this has been to legitimize the junta and embolden it to commit abuses and continue wielding illegitimate power.

On 27 Mar, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand sent representatives to the Armed Forces Day military parade in Naypyitaw.<sup>64</sup>

### Misplaced reliance on the AHA Center

Consistent with the international community’s overreliance on ASEAN to find solutions to the crisis in Burma, it has deferred humanitarian intervention to the AHA Center. This raises several issues:

- The AHA Center is only mandated and prepared to respond to natural disaster—not armed conflict.
- The Center’s Standard Operating Procedure would give “overall direction, control, coordination and supervision of the assistance” to the junta, the party responsible for this ongoing humanitarian crisis.
- The Center has demonstrated its inability to provide aid in Burma without furthering conflict. When asked to provide assistance after the Tatmadaw’s 2017–18 Rohingya genocide, it responded by failing to acknowledge the Rohingya, failing to acknowledge the atrocities committed, and partnering with institutions that were complicit in the genocide.
- The Tatmadaw has illustrated time and again that it is not a responsible steward of humanitarian aid or any other assistance for the people of Burma.
- Tatmadaw presence, even along with foreign aid providers, is likely to frighten communities in need of aid, and the Tatmadaw—still heavily engaged in fighting—could use aid delivery as a means to further securitization and atrocities.

Progressive Voice and FORUM-ASIA (2021) Great Expectations: Analysis of the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management; Human Rights Foundation of Monland, Kachin Women’s Association Thailand, Karen Human Rights Group, Karen Peace Support Network, Karen Women’s Organization, Karenni Civil Society Network, Karenni National Women’s Organization, Pa-O Women’s Union, Progressive Voice, and Ta’ang Women’s Organization (Sep 2021) Nowhere to Run: Deepening Humanitarian Crisis in Myanmar

<sup>56</sup> Irrawaddy (6 Sep 2021) NUG Questions ASEAN’s Ceasefire Agreement With Myanmar Junta

<sup>57</sup> Irrawaddy (7 Sep 2021) Myanmar Junta Denies Accepting ASEAN Ceasefire Proposal

<sup>58</sup> Mizzima (17 Sep 2021) ASEAN gives medical supplies and equipment to Myanmar Red Cross

<sup>59</sup> EMG (18 Sep 2021) Asean delivers Covid-19 medical aid to Myanmar

<sup>60</sup> Myanmar Now (17 Sep 2021) During a top UNOCHA official’s trip to Myanmar, the military council’s health minister reportedly refused to facilitate conditions for greater Covid-19-related aid distribution

<sup>61</sup> Myanmar Now (12 Oct 2021) ASEAN envoy’s Myanmar trip and meeting with political parties delayed

<sup>62</sup> Reuters (17 Oct 2021) ASEAN excludes Myanmar junta leader from summit in rare move

<sup>63</sup> See, e.g., Irrawaddy (23 Aug 2021) Myanmar’s Ousted MPs Condemn ASEAN for Inviting Junta to Parliamentary Summit

<sup>64</sup> Nikkei Asia (28 Mar 2021) Myanmar coup latest: US ambassador calls bloodshed ‘horrifying’



## ASEAN members impair UN action

On 9 Mar, the UN Security Council (UNSC) failed to finalize a statement condemning the military takeover in Burma, after China, Russia, India, and **Vietnam wanted to remove any direct reference to a coup**, as well as any threat of further action.<sup>65</sup>

On 19 Jun, the UNGA vote 119-1 to adopt a resolution, with 36 abstentions, calling for an end to the violence, respect of the people's democratic will in the 2020 elections, the release of political detainees, and the end of the state of emergency imposed on 1 Feb; and for member states to "prevent the flow of arms" into Burma. **Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and China abstained.**<sup>66</sup>

The vote had been scheduled for 18 May,<sup>67</sup> but anonymous diplomats said that the resolution authors needed time to gain more support and to negotiate with ASEAN.<sup>68</sup> On 27 May, Liechtenstein representative to the UN Georg Sparber said that nine **ASEAN countries—all except Burma—had called for language about an arms embargo to be eliminated** from the resolution.<sup>69</sup>

## Foreign support for ASEAN

In April, the EU expressed support for the Consensus,<sup>70</sup> and for ASEAN and UN efforts to resolve the crisis.<sup>71</sup> The European Parliament called for immediate implementation.<sup>72</sup> In August, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell spoke with ASEAN's Special envoy.<sup>73</sup>

In April and May, the UN Secretary-General called for full, timely implementation of the Consensus.<sup>74</sup> The UNSC commended ASEAN's efforts and expressed strong support for ASEAN's role in facilitating a peaceful solution.<sup>75</sup> On 12 Jul, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution condemning human rights violations in Burma, in which it called for Burma to implement the ASEAN Consensus.<sup>76</sup>

## Events attended by junta and not NUG (not exhaustive)

18 Mar	ASEAN Chiefs of Defense Forces' Meeting
24 Apr	ASEAN High-level Summit
4 Jun	Brunei representatives' meeting with Min Aung Hlaing and UEC chair Thein Soe
22 Jun	106th Mekong River joint patrol
2 Aug	54th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting
2 Aug	23rd ASEAN Political-Security Community Council Meeting
2 Aug	ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Interface with AICHR Representatives
2 Aug	29th ASEAN Coordinating Council
2 Aug	Meeting of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
2 Aug	Mekong-US Partnership Plan of Action (2021-23) meeting
22 Aug	42nd ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Assembly
10 Sep	53rd ASEAN Economic Ministers meeting
11 Sep	13th Cambodia-Lao PDR-Myanmar-Vietnam Economic ministers' meeting

South China Morning Post (19 Mar 2021) Head of Myanmar's military junta Min Aung Hlaing appears in online Asean conference; Nikkei Asia (8 Jun 2021) 'Painful' Myanmar engagement sows rage as ASEAN seeks envoy; Business Standard (7 Jun 2021) ASEAN submits list of nominees for special envoy to Myanmar military regime; Mizzima (24 Jun 2021) Myanmar joins 106th joint Mekong River patrol; Global New Light of Myanmar (3 Aug 2021) Volume VIII, No. 107; US Department of State Press Release (3 Aug 2021) The Mekong-U.S. Partnership and the Friends of the Mekong: Proven Partners for the Mekong Region; Global New Light of Myanmar (4 Aug 2021) Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin participates in Second Mekong-US Partnership Ministerial Meeting via Videoconferencing; Irrawaddy (23 Aug 2021) Myanmar's Ousted MPs Condemn ASEAN for Inviting Junta to Parliamentary Summit; Global New Light of Myanmar (10 Sep 2021) Second day of 53rd ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting, OECD Competition Assessment and Competitive Neutrality Reports on Logistics Sector in ASEAN held; Global New Light of Myanmar (11 Sep 2021) 13th Cambodia - Lao PDR - Myanmar - Viet Nam Economic Ministers' Meeting held

<sup>65</sup> Reuters (10 Mar 2021) U.N. Security Council wrestles with threat of action over Myanmar coup

<sup>66</sup> VOA (18 Jun 2021) At UN, States Condemn Myanmar's Junta

<sup>67</sup> Reuters (18 May 2021) U.N. vote on call to stop arms supply to Myanmar postponed

<sup>68</sup> France 24 (18 May 2021) United Nations vote on Myanmar arms embargo postponed

<sup>69</sup> Benar News (27 May 2021) ASEAN Lobbying to Omit Arms Embargo from UN Resolution on Myanmar

<sup>70</sup> European Union External Action Service (24 Apr 2021) Myanmar: Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell on the outcome of the ASEAN Summit

<sup>71</sup> Council of the European Union (30 Apr 2021) Myanmar/Burma: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the outcome of the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting

<sup>72</sup> EU Parliament Delegations (11 May 2021) Joint Statement with the Indonesian Parliament on Myanmar

<sup>73</sup> ANI News (14 Aug 2021) Myanmar coup: EU calls for immediate release of detained people, says violence must stop

<sup>74</sup> United Nations (26 Apr 2021) Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General; United Nations (11 May 2021) Humanitarian Support, Coherent Global Action Still Needed 100 Days after Deadly Military Takeover in Myanmar, Secretary-General Says

<sup>75</sup> Associated Press (1 May 2021) UN calls for return to democracy in Myanmar, end to violence

<sup>76</sup> UN Human Rights Council (12 Jul 2021) Human Rights Council Adopts 13 Resolutions: Renews Mandate on Eritrea and Calls for the Removal of Unjustified Obstacles Restricting the Export of COVID-19 Vaccines

In May, the US emphasized the importance of the Consensus—particularly the deployment of an envoy—and urged ASEAN to hold the junta accountable.<sup>77</sup> Korea echoed these calls.<sup>78</sup> In August, the US met with the ASEAN envoy, who it said would be critical in holding the regime accountable.<sup>79</sup>

In June, Australia defended its lack of sanctions, saying it supported an ASEAN-led solution.<sup>80</sup> Japanese and Australian ministers agreed to ensure that the Consensus leads to concrete outcomes.<sup>81</sup> In August, Australia welcomed ASEAN’s envoy,<sup>82</sup> and Japan offered to provide him with “maximum support.”<sup>83</sup>

In July, the UK Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee published “the UK Government’s Response to the Myanmar Crisis,” which made recommendations to the UK Government, including encouraging ASEAN to adopt strict deadlines and working with ASEAN on the implementation of its Consensus.<sup>84</sup>

In July, Russia said the ASEAN Consensus should be the means to resolve the situation in Burma.<sup>85</sup>

In August, 16 aid agencies working in Burma warned that the country was facing a spiraling humanitarian catastrophe. Among other things, they called for the immediate implementation of the Consensus to rapidly scale up aid and vaccination across the country.<sup>86</sup>

### **Not everybody agrees**

In April, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon pressed the UNSC to immediately use all tools at its disposal to protect civilians in Burma, and urged Secretary-General Guterres to get directly involved. He said that ASEAN’s non-interference policy is not an acceptable excuse to avoid responding to serious human rights abuses.<sup>87</sup> Australian diplomat Frances Adamson said that Burma is “a security, political and humanitarian crisis that is not only catastrophic for the people of Myanmar but imperils regional stability and enmeshes ASEAN in issues that divert attention from the priorities of economic recovery and strategic agency.”<sup>88</sup>

Within ASEAN member states, politicians criticized the bloc and recommended it take a different course. On 5 Mar, Malaysian MPs called for ASEAN to suspend Burma’s membership.<sup>89</sup> On 17 Mar, six current and former lawmakers demanded that their respective governments (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines) abandon non-interference, and called ASEAN impotent and handicapped by the self-imposed policy.<sup>90</sup> On 24 Mar, former Thai foreign minister and current APHR board member Kasit Piromya criticized ASEAN’s response and Thailand’s role within this.<sup>91</sup> On 7 May, former Singapore diplomat Bilahari Kausikan said the Consensus did not represent progress, and that the junta “took the ASEAN leaders for a ride.”<sup>92</sup>

On 25 Mar, twenty-four MPs from twelve countries formed the International Parliamentarians Alliance for Myanmar (IPAM), to support Burma lawmakers—including CRPH members—to promote democracy and ensure accountability.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> U.S. Department of State (3 May 2021) Secretary Antony J. Blinken and UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab at a Joint Press Availability; US Department of State (3 May 2021) Secretary Blinken’s Meeting with Bruneian Foreign Minister II Erywan

<sup>78</sup> U.S. Department of State (13 May 2021) U.S.-ROK Pledge To Increase Cooperation on ASEAN and Southeast Asia

<sup>79</sup> U.S. Asia Pacific Media Hub (10 Aug 2021) <https://twitter.com/eAsiaMediaHub/status/1424988630347444226>

<sup>80</sup> SBS News (3 Jun 2021) Marise Payne defends Australia’s refusal to impose sanctions after Myanmar coup

<sup>81</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs Australia (9 Jun 2021) Ninth Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations; Ninth Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations (9 June 2021) Joint Statement; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (9 Jun 2021) Ninth Japan-Australia Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations (“2+2”)

<sup>82</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs Australia (7 Aug 2021) Enhancing the ASEAN-Australia partnership: Statement

<sup>83</sup> Kyodo News (12 Aug 2021) Japan, ASEAN envoy to Myanmar vow to cooperate on resolving crisis

<sup>84</sup> Foreign Affairs Committee (16 Jul 2021) The UK Government’s Response to the Myanmar Crisis

<sup>85</sup> Reuters (6 Jul 2021) Russia backs ASEAN plan on tackling Myanmar crisis

<sup>86</sup> Relief Web (2 Aug 2021) Surge in Covid-19 plunges Myanmar into humanitarian catastrophe amidst political crisis and conflict

<sup>87</sup> AP News (20 Apr 2021) Former UN leader presses for ‘strong action’ on Myanmar

<sup>88</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia) (21 Apr 2021) Leaders on Asia Address, Asia Society

<sup>89</sup> A Joint Statement by Malaysian Members of Parliament on Killings in Myanmar (5 Mar 2021) ASEAN should suspend Myanmar’s membership until killing stops

<sup>90</sup> Malaysia MP Anwar Ibrahim (via Facebook) (18 Mar 2021)

<https://www.facebook.com/anwaribrahim.keadilan/photos/a.10151324968561840/10161454703826840/>

<sup>91</sup> Bangkok Post (24 Mar 2021) Thailand must be a friend to Myanmar people

<sup>92</sup> Nikkei Asia (7 May 2021) What to expect after ASEAN’s Myanmar summit

<sup>93</sup> APHR (25 Mar 2021) Global MPs form International Parliamentarians Alliance for Myanmar

## China's support for ASEAN

China, the most powerful player in the region, has echoed calls for ASEAN to assist and broker peace in Burma, and has met with most ASEAN members to discuss it, but has failed to take a position on the coup. On 2 Apr, it said it would avoid interference in Burma's internal affairs, but encouraged all parties within Burma to reach a political agreement.<sup>94</sup> On the same day, it said it aimed to *support* political settlement through dialogue, ASEAN non-interference, and an ASEAN high level meeting; and to *avoid* civilian casualties, inappropriate UNSC action, and external influences motivated by private gain.<sup>95</sup>

On 5 Jun, China Ambassador Chen Hai met with coup-leader Min Aung Hlaing.<sup>96</sup> On 7 Jun, ASEAN foreign ministers, including junta representative Wunna Maung Lwin, met with China to ask for assistance implementing the April Consensus.<sup>97</sup>

The day after the foreign ministers' meeting, China outlined its own five points, notably missing the appointment of a special envoy. This left China, ASEAN, and the junta with parallel five-point plans, none of which address the demands of people in Burma, meaningfully account for a return to democracy, or are realistic or tenable.

Junta's 5 points (Feb 2021) <sup>98</sup>	ASEAN's 5 points (Apr 2021) <sup>99</sup>	China's 5 points (Jun 2021) <sup>100</sup>
1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted to carry out tasks that should be done, including inspection of voting lists in accordance with the law.	First, there shall be immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar and all parties shall exercise utmost restraint.	We are willing to continue to work with ASEAN to jointly urge all parties in Myanmar to put the interests of the people first, and keep calm to eliminate all kinds of violence.
2. Effective measures will be taken for the prevention of current infectious COVID-19 with added momentum.	Second, constructive dialogue among all parties concerned shall commence to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people.	We encourage all parties in Myanmar to engage in political dialogue within the constitutional and legal framework and restart the process of democratic transformation.
3. Efforts will be made to recover businesses that faced loss caused by COVID-19 in various ways as quickly as possible.	Third, a special envoy of the ASEAN Chair shall facilitate mediation of the dialogue process, with the assistance of the Secretary General of ASEAN.	We will jointly provide assistance for Myanmar in fighting the pandemic, curbing the spread of the pandemic in Myanmar and safeguarding the lives and health of its people.
4. Emphasis will be placed on restoring eternal peace in the entire nation in line with agreements from the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible.	Fourth, ASEAN shall provide humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre.	We will jointly support Myanmar's efforts to restore its economy, improve people's livelihood and ensure the rights and interests of people at the grass-roots level.
5. When missions will be accomplished in accord with provisions of the state of emergency, a free and fair multiparty election will be held in accordance with the Constitution (2008), and further tasks will be undertaken to hand over State duty to the winning party meeting the standards of democracy.	Fifth, the special envoy and delegation shall visit Myanmar to meet with all parties concerned.	We will jointly urge all countries to abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and avoid unilateral sanctions and undue interference.

On 18 Aug, China Foreign Minister Wang Yi spoke with ASEAN's Special envoy to Burma, advising him to approach the crisis rationally and build trust among parties, prioritize the fight against COVID-19, promote peace talks, ensure that the return of power to the people is done in an orderly manner, and oppose interference by external forces in Burma's internal affairs. He said the Special Envoy's role was to help Burma fulfill its commitments to the international community, and offered his support.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2 Apr 2021) Wang Yi Holds Talks with Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi

<sup>95</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (3 Apr 2021) Wang Yi Talks about "Three Supports" and "Three Avoids" Concerning the Situation in Myanmar

<sup>96</sup> Reuters (7 Jun 2021) ASEAN ministers pressure Myanmar after 'painfully slow' progress; Global Times (6 Jun 2021) Myanmar willing to work with ASEAN, highlights China's role in maintaining domestic stability

<sup>97</sup> Nikkei Asia (7 Jun 2021) ASEAN meets with China as progress on Myanmar consensus stalls

<sup>98</sup> Global New Light of Myanmar (24 Feb 2021) Five future programmes of State Administration Council

<sup>99</sup> ASEAN (24 Apr 2021) Chairman's Statement on the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting

<sup>100</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (8 Jun 2021) Wang Yi Talks about the Situation in Myanmar

<sup>101</sup> Xinhua net (18 Aug 2021) Chinese FM, ASEAN envoy to Myanmar exchange views on ties, situation in Myanmar