



Special Advisory Council for MYANMAR

As the Myanmar Military Junta's Electoral Farce Ends, It's Past Time to End Its Campaign of Terror

23 January 2026

The third and final phase of the Myanmar military junta's sham elections will take place on Sunday, bringing to a close a month-long exercise that never rose above farce.

The junta's hollow spectacle has been staged in a desperate bid to attract international legitimacy. Yet no amount of electoral pageantry can refashion the junta as anything other than a fraudulent criminal enterprise.

According calculations based on the junta's projections, at least [7.5 million](#) people have been excluded from its process given the junta's limited territorial reach. Adding to this number, the junta this week announced that it had cancelled voting at a number of phase three polling stations.

In the areas where voting has gone ahead, turnout has been abysmally low. Widespread voter boycotts reflect deep public contempt for the junta and its ballot, which consists almost entirely of handpicked junta candidates. The country's most popular political parties have been deregistered or otherwise barred from participating in the junta's poll, and many prominent democratic leaders continue to languish in junta arbitrary detention.

The junta also continues to intensify its persecution of perceived opponents. On Tuesday, it announced that over [400 people](#) had been prosecuted under its draconian "Election Protection Law", which carries extreme penalties, ranging from prison sentences to the death penalty, for any act deemed critical of the process.

Civilians in vast areas of the country outside junta control face daily aerial bombardment by junta aircraft and artillery. Throughout the entire sham election process, schools, hospitals and homes have been targeted and scores of civilians have been killed by junta mass atrocity attacks from the air.



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Significantly, ASEAN has confirmed that it [will not certify](#) the junta's sham process. Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan said the conditions for a credible election in Myanmar, set out by ASEAN leaders in October 2025, have not been met.

"The junta's sham elections have lived up to all expectations in their absurdity," said Ben Lee, Executive Director of the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M). **"Any State, UN entity or company that legitimises the junta through engagement or recognition is complicit in its crimes."**

Concrete action is urgently needed to hobble the junta and finally end its violence. States must tighten the screws on the junta through an expanded suite of targeted financial sanctions and arms embargoes, while expanding support to legitimate democratic actors including ethnic organisations, the National Unity Government and civil society organisations.

International action is also needed to hold junta members, including accused war criminal Min Aung Hlaing, accountable for their atrocities. States must encourage the International Criminal Court to expand its Myanmar investigation and to expedite its issuance of arrest warrants, endorse the ongoing genocide case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice, and support efforts by domestic courts using universal jurisdiction.

