



Special Advisory Council for MYANMAR

Five Years of Myanmar's Spring Revolution: States Must Support the People's Genuine Will and Act to End the Junta's Atrocities

1 February 2026

On 1 February 2021, the Myanmar military tried to impose its rule in an early morning military coup attempt. Five years later, the junta's attempted takeover has failed, but its mass atrocities against civilians continue to escalate.

Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing's putsch ignited something he never anticipated: mass civilian resistance. His use of extreme violence against the peaceful uprising triggered a youth-led movement centred around an emancipatory new politics. In just five years, Myanmar's Spring Revolution, as the movement became known, has fundamentally transformed the country.

"There is no other contemporary situation in which a people have resisted a military coup for so long and at such scale," said Yanghee Lee, Member of the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M). **"For five years, the Myanmar people have been under daily attack by the criminal junta, yet they continue to resist. They need urgent international support."**

The junta controls less than 40 percent of Myanmar's territory. Despite unprecedented intervention from China on the junta's behalf, it has been unable to regain control over vast swathes of territory captured by revolutionary forces. In these areas, the foundations of federal democracy are being built in the face of relentless junta airstrikes and extreme deprivation.

The junta is now locked in an unwinnable war and is fundamentally unwilling to concede to the federal democratic demands of the Myanmar people. Instead, it continues to escalate its campaign of aerial terror against them.

In the past three months alone, the junta's air force has targeted hospitals, tea shops, homes, and schools in airstrikes that have killed and wounded scores of civilians, including children.



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The junta has also gone to increasingly absurd lengths to distract the international community from its crimes. The third and final phase of the junta's fake elections concluded on 25 January. The process was predictably fraudulent, engineered from the outset to ensure the dominance of junta candidates and proxies.

According to calculations based on the junta's projections, at least [7.5 million](#) were excluded from the process. Opposition parties were barred from participating, and many of Myanmar's democratic leaders continue to languish in junta arbitrary detention. Junta threats, intimidation and coercion failed to prevent widespread voter boycotts, resulting in abysmally low turnout in the limited areas where voting took place.

Notably, ASEAN reaffirmed this week that it would not endorse the junta's poll, after previously setting clear benchmarks for free, fair and credible elections in Myanmar.

"The coup attempt, the relentless war and now the fake elections are all phases in Min Aung Hlaing's violent bid for total military control," said Chris Sidoti, Member of SAC-M. **"He knows nothing of peace, only subjugation through war and extreme violence."**

"States, including those in ASEAN, must take decisive action to hobble the junta's war machine."

The junta's campaign of scorched earth atrocities has killed thousands of civilians and internally displaced 3.6 million people. According to UN estimates, 16 million people, including five million children, will need life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection in Myanmar in 2026. The junta obstructed humanitarian access as a war tactic after the devastating Sagaing Earthquakes in March 2025, and its ongoing aid blockades to areas outside of its control are fuelling one of the world's worst [hunger crises](#).

For tens of millions of Myanmar people, this Sunday, 1 February, will also mark five years of quiet devastation, the result of lost livelihoods, denied educations, uprooted homes, separated families and lasting trauma.

"After five long years, the Myanmar crisis is worsening," said Marzuki Darusman,





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Member of SAC-M. **“In spite of the severe hardship, the people remain united and, together with ethnic revolutionary organisations, are firmly resolved to rid themselves of the despised junta.”**

“But the suffering of the Myanmar people cannot be allowed to become the new normal –that would be an act of complicity,” he said.

“ASEAN must respond to this reality by imposing real and escalating costs on the junta for its continuing intransigence.”

As a matter of urgency, the international community must act to support the people's genuine will and democratic aspirations and to prevent further suffering in Myanmar. SAC-M reaffirms its call on States to support legitimate pro-democracy actors, unequivocally reject the junta's sham elections, and to refrain from engaging with or otherwise legitimising the junta and its proxies.

Action is also needed to blunt the junta's capacity to wage war on civilians by cutting its access to cash and weapons. SAC-M urges States to:

- Expand and strengthen coordinated embargoes on weapons, ammunition, dual-use goods and technology, raw materials and aviation fuel to the junta
- Provide airstrike early-warning systems, drone jammers and modular airstrike shelters to revolutionary actors to protect communities
- Expand and strengthen targeted financial sanctions against the junta, its proxies, cronies, and affiliated entities, including the Myanmar Central Bank and State-owned banks such as the Myanma Agricultural Development Bank.

To save lives and strengthen genuine nation building efforts, States must:

- Reverse funding cuts and scale-up financial support for humanitarian assistance. Expand coordination with legitimate Myanmar representatives, including the National Unity Government (NUG), Ethnic Revolutionary Organisations (EROs), and state/federal units and ethnic-based councils, and Myanmar civil society, to support urgent, impartial and unobstructed delivery of humanitarian and material assistance by all available means, including cross-border channels, to all communities in need in Myanmar
- Provide technical, capacity-building and financial support to legitimate Myanmar





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representatives and emerging federal democratic institutions to bolster governance capacity and expand service provision

- Support legitimate Myanmar representatives and actors and emerging federal democratic institutions including the NUG, EROs, National Unity Consultative Council, Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, and state/federal units and ethnic-based councils in their negotiation of a new federal democratic constitution for Myanmar.

Finally, States must redouble all efforts to hold Myanmar's junta leaders, including accused war criminal Min Aung Hlaing, accountable for the atrocities they have committed by:

- Encouraging the International Criminal Court to expand its Myanmar investigation and to expedite its issuance of arrest warrants
- Endorsing the ongoing case against Myanmar under the Genocide Convention at the International Court of Justice
- Supporting current efforts by countries using their domestic courts to prosecute junta members under universal jurisdiction and launching new prosecutions.

