

## **Exclusion of Myanmar's Military Junta**

### **What is the issue?**

ASEAN has decided to exclude Myanmar's military junta from its annual summit which is a major setback for the Generals' attempt to gain regional legitimacy for their brutal regime.

### **Why did the coup occur?**

- The Military had a tight grip on Myanmar as the constitution guarantees it a quarter of all seats in parliament and control of its most powerful ministries.
- In the last November's general election, military-backed party- USDP- performed poorly whereas the NLD did even better than in 2015.
- This created tensions between the armed forces and the government.
- The opposition raised allegations of widespread fraud in the election which was not backed by the electoral commission.
- Later, Myanmar's military seized power after detaining Aung San Suu Kyi and other democratically elected leaders.

# TIMELINE: MYANMAR COUP



**2010**

**9 Nov**

Military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) wins election by landslide.  
Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) boycotts election.

**13 Nov**

Aung San Suu Kyi is freed after 7 years of house arrest.

**2011**

**31 Jan**

Elected parliament convenes for first time in half a century, charged with choosing first civilian president since 1962 coup.

**2015**

**8 Nov**

NLD wins by landslide in Myanmar's first openly contested general election since 1990; Aung San Suu Kyi becomes de facto leader.

**2020**

**8 Nov**

NLD captures 396 of 476 seats in lower and upper houses of parliament in general election.\*  
USDP alleges voter fraud, challenges results.

**2021**

**26 Jan**

Military ramps up demands for investigation into alleged voter fraud, doesn't rule out coup possibility.

**30 Jan**

Military says it will protect the constitution and act according to the law amid coup fears.

**Early morning**

Military detains Aung San Suu Kyi, other leaders from ruling NLD party.

**1 Feb**

**About 10:30am**

Military declares state of emergency for a year, hands power to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

\*Myanmar has a constitutional arrangement for 25% of parliament seats to be reserved for the military.

## What was the followup of the power siege?

- The junta has unleashed a reign of terror claiming an estimated 1,000 lives.

- Ms. Suu Kyi who had been the State Councillor for five years from 2015 heading the quasi-democratic government has been in detention.
- Thousands of others were arrested by the military for their democratic protests.
- In cities, protests turned into armed fighting between pro-democracy protesters and security personnel, while in the jungles, anti-junta groups joined hands with rebels for military training.
- The situation was so grave that the UN Special Envoy warned that Myanmar had descended into a civil war.
- Recently, Myanmar's military sentenced a close aide of ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to 20 years in prison.

### **What has been the international reaction to the coup?**

- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has accused the security forces of a "reign of terror".
- The US, UK and European Union have all responded with sanctions on military officials.
- South East Asian countries have been pursuing diplomatic efforts to end the crisis.
- China blocked a UNSC statement condemning the coup, but has backed calls for the release of Ms Suu Kyi and a return to democratic norms.

### **What led to the exclusion of the junta by ASEAN?**

- In April, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing was invited to Jakarta for emergency talks with ASEAN members which led to the **ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus**.
- The Consensus that includes immediately ending violence, starting the reconciliation process and allowing a regional special envoy to meet all stakeholders has not been met by the military regime.
- There have been reports of the junta torturing political prisoners.
- Regime violence, political crises and strikes and counter-attacks by protesters have all led to the exclusion of Myanmar.
- According to the UN, around 3 million people are in need of life-saving assistance because of conflict, food insecurity, natural disasters and COVID-19.
- The international community should continue to put pressure on the junta and urgently start a reconciliation process.

### **References**

1. <https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/descent-into-chaos/article37244869.ece>
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55902070>

## Quick facts

### Myanmar

- Myanmar, also known as Burma is in South East Asia.
- It neighbours Thailand, Laos, Bangladesh, China and India.
- The main religion is **Buddhism**.
- The biggest city is Yangon (Rangoon), but the capital is **Nay Pyi Taw**.
- There are many ethnic groups in the country, including **Rohingya Muslims**.

