

## **The Killing of Activists in Myanmar**

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

Recently, Myanmar's junta executed four pro-democracy activists and has called the executions "lawful" and said it was "justice for the people."

### **What has happened in Myanmar since the coup in 2021?**

# MYANMAR MILITARY BACK IN POWER: TIMELINE OF EVENTS



**2010**

**Nov 9**

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

**Nov 13**

Aung San Suu Kyi freed after 7 years of house arrest

**2011**

**Jan 31**

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

**2015**

**Nov 8**

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

**2020**

**Nov 8**

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

**2021**

**Jan 26**

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

**Jan 30**

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

**Feb 1**

**Early morning**

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

**About 10.30am**

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

- The military (Tatmadaw) seized power from the democratically elected party in 2021 and formed the State Administrative Council (SAC).
- Following the coup, Aung San Suu Kyi and several other leaders were detained immediately and are still in detention.
- As mass protests, called the 'spring revolution', against the regime began, a parallel

government was formed.

- It has an armed division known as the People's Defence Force (PDF), which is trained by several armed ethnic groups but they have not been able to make a change against the junta's repressive measures.

*The "88 Movement" remains one of the defining moments of Myanmar's modern history where protestors voiced their resentment over the economy and the government's wide restrictions on personal freedom.*

### **What led to the latest executions?**

*Myanmar's economy contracted 18% last year and GDP this year is expected to be 13% lower than in 2019, according to the World Bank.*

- **Junta's failure to establish legitimacy-** There is growing restlessness within the junta for failing to establish control and legitimacy despite being in power since 2021.
- **Boosting the morale of the military leadership-** A section within the Tatmadaw has questioned Senior General's leadership capabilities, compared to his predecessors.
- Some military and police officials have even joined the pro-democracy movement.
- **People's resistance-** The government is grappling with a resistance movement, ethnic conflicts, terror attacks and a failing economy.
- **Global focus-** Perhaps the regime sees the global focus on Ukraine and Sri Lanka as an opportunity to carry out something in its own backyard.

### **What about the international responses?**

- The execution has been condemned by individual countries and international organisations.
- Regionally, the strongest voice has been from Cambodia, the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Myanmar is a member.
- Neither the condemnations nor the earlier sanctions levied by the U.S., Canada, Australia, the U.K., the European Union and others, have made an impact on the regime.
- Successive military regimes have resisted external pressure, both from within the region and the rest of the world.
- The Senior General did not budge to honour ASEAN's five-point consensus for the peace and stability of Myanmar, although he agreed to implement them in a regional meeting in 2021.
- Russia has strongly supported the junta since the coup.
- China, the junta's oldest ally, was one of the first to give it de facto recognition after the coup.

### **References**

1. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/explained-the-killing-of-activists-in-myanmar-and-its-aftermath/article65685690.ece?homepage=true>
2. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/desperate-measures-the-hindu-editorial-on-the-myanmar-juntas-killing-of-political-prisoners/article65685980.ece>

