



Myanmar Situation Update (14 - 20 February 2022)

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) conducted the annual foreign ministers meeting on 16-17 February 2021 without the participation of Myanmar as ASEAN denied junta's Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin joining the meeting in Phnom Penh. The decision not to invite Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin also reflected a disagreement within ASEAN member countries over Myanmar's lack of progress in implementing the five-point consensus that the junta leader agreed in April 2021. The five points included immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar, constructive dialogue among all parties, the appointment of a special ASEAN envoy to facilitate dialogue, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and a visit by the envoy to Myanmar¹.

The statement issued on 17 February by the ASEAN chair on the meeting urged the junta "to facilitate missions of the special envoy of the ASEAN chair, beginning with the first visit to Myanmar as soon as possible in order to move forward implementation of the five-point consensus". Further, the statement stressed on the special envoy could engage with all the parties concerned².

Prak Sokhonn, ASEAN special envoy to Myanmar said he believes that he should meet with Myanmar's National Unity Government. If Naypyitaw is not speaking with the NUG, let the special envoy, as the bridge, as the facilitator, speak with (the NUG), he said³. Ousted Myanmar state counselor Aung San Suu Kyi's trial on election fraud charges also have begun in last week that junta-appointed election commission filed charges against Aung San Suu Kyi, President U Win Myint, Chair of the Union Election Commission Hla Thein and 13 other people over the alleged electoral fraud in the 2020 elections.

¹<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/Chairmans-Statement-on-ALM-Five-Point-Consensus-24-April-2021-FINAL-a-1.pdf>

² <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2nd-round-consolidated-draft-Press-Statement-final.pdf>

³<https://www.voacambodia.com/a/asean-foreign-ministers-meet-dominated-by-myanmar-s-absence/6445866.html>

Teodoro Locsin Jr., Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Philippines said in the ASEAN Foreign ministers meeting that the Philippines would not accept Myanmar's accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest free-trade pact with 15 include 10 ASEAN members, along with China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea. New Zealand also opposed the entry of Myanmar citing the deadly violence and democratic setback in the country since the military coup⁴.

The junta-appointed Union Election Commission (UEC) led by former major general, Thein Soe who led the controversial 2010 Myanmar General Elections under the previous military regime has published a report titled "Findings of the Investigation into Electoral Fraud and Irregularities in the 2020 General Election." Irrawaddy reported that the junta distributed copies of the report to Buddhist monasteries in early 2022 and the report attempts to justify the junta's allegations of voting irregularities in the 2020 general election, citing figures, charts and photos⁵. Junta appointed UEC has continuously failed to provide evidence for the over 11 million instances of fraud in voter registration.

Free Expression Myanmar has questioned the legality of the sale of Telenor Myanmar under Norwegian law as the major shareholder, Shwe Byain Phyu Group (SBP) in the company that formed with Lebanese M1 Group for Telenor's acquisition has reportedly worked in partnership with at least one military-controlled company already sanctioned by Norway and the EU⁶. In July 2021, Telenor announced that they will sell the Myanmar unit to the M1 Group. The new information shows the M1 will only own 20%⁷.

Norway's industry minister said last week The Norwegian government would not be able to prevent a transfer of customer data from Telenor's Myanmar unit to the Myanmar junta. Rights groups and Myanmar civil society have been urging Telenor not to sell its Myanmar unit as it will risk data of 18 million subscribers in the country.

The Japanese beverage maker Kirin Holdings reaffirmed that the company will withdraw from its business in Myanmar and terminate its joint venture with a military-linked Myanmar Economic Holdings Public Company Limited (MEHPCL). Referring to the Kirin exit, junta said "the withdrawal of beer business is easy to substitute"⁸.

⁴<https://apnews.com/article/business-asia-new-zealand-myanmar-global-trade-b54b9f97ddeb4287762ea2797e44de8d>

⁵<https://www.irrawaddy.com/opinion/guest-column/myanmar-junta-appointed-uecs-report-on-2020-election-ignores-history-facts-and-the-law.html>

⁶ <https://mailchi.mp/783a7208f00d/telenor-sale-potentially-illegal-under-norwegian-law?e=2627530fcc>

⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/myanmar-telenor-idUSL1N2UJ1GM?>

⁸ <https://japantoday.com/category/business/myanmar-junta-says-'easy-to-substitute'-japan's-kirin-after-exit>

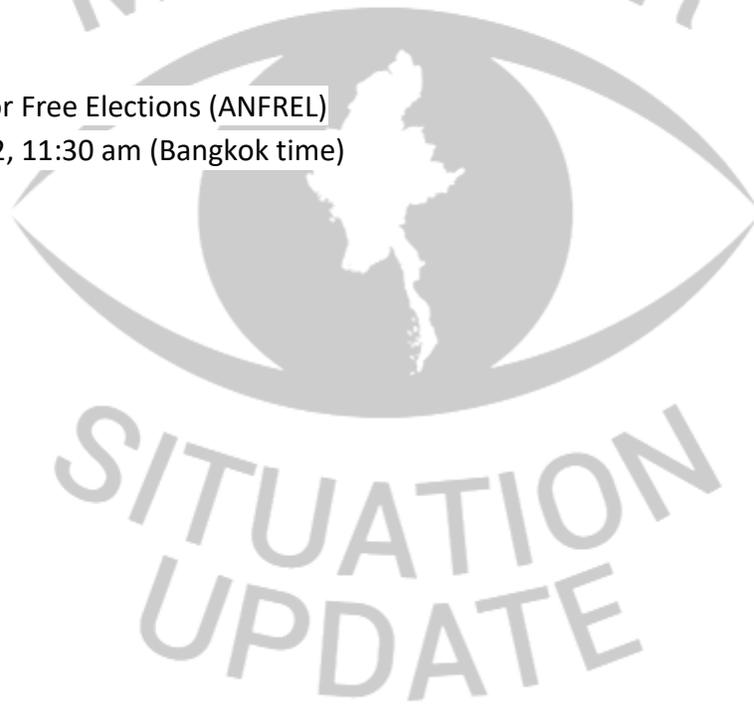
The junta also conducted air raids in Shan State as fighting continued with the Northern Alliance members including Burma Army (BA) Light Infantry Battalion 99 and the Kachin Independence Army, Ta'ang National Liberation Army, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and Shan State Progress Party and the Rakhine based Arakan Army⁹. People have fled the Mong Yaw in Lashio township following the strikes. The junta also concluded heavy air strikes and shelling in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin lead over 200,000 people have been displaced since the coup¹⁰.

As of 18 February 2022, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) recorded that 1,560 people have been killed by the junta. 9,215 people are currently under detention. 84 have been sentenced to death and 1,973 are evading arrest warrants¹¹.

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⁹ <https://english.shannews.org/archives/24686>

¹⁰ <https://myanmar.anfrel.org/en/news/382>

¹¹ <https://aappb.org/?p=20234>