



Myanmar Situation Update (28 February- 6 March, 2022)

The special envoy of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for Myanmar and Cambodia's foreign minister Prak Sokhonn announced that he is to visit Myanmar for four days on 20-23 March 2022¹. This comes after some of the ASEAN member countries criticized the Myanmar junta for making no progress in resolving the crisis that has unfolded in the country since the military coup last year. In January 2022, ASEAN Chair and Prime Minister of Cambodia Hun Sen visited Myanmar while ASEAN members including Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore demanded Hun Sen for consultation with ASEAN on Myanmar. ASEAN also has denied the participation of the junta leader Aung Min Hlaing at the ASEAN summit in December and the junta-appointed Wunna Maung Lwin at the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting in February 2022.

The United States also announced that a non-political representative will be invited to the US-ASEAN Summit as ASEAN also has had its decision to invite a non-political representative from Myanmar to the summit in Washington on 28-29 March. On both occasions when ASEAN decided to invite non-political representatives from Myanmar, the junta refused and condemned the decision².

Ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi pleaded not guilty during her court case on corruption charges because she allegedly accepted \$600,000 and seven gold bars from a political ally. She is also facing 10 additional corruption charges against her in junta courts in Naypyitaw, apart from the charges of violating the Official Secrets Act and alleged election fraud in the 2020 Myanmar General Elections³.

A research group in Myanmar, Data for Myanmar, has announced that more than 6,100 Myanmar citizens' houses were burned by the military junta since the military coup, with more than 60%

¹<https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2022/mar/03/asean-special-envoy-prak-sokhonnto-visit-myanmar-on-march-20-23-2425952.html>

²<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/us-invite-non-political-myanmar-representative-summit-with-asean>

³<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/myanmars-suu-kyi-pleads-guilty-graft-trial-continues-83158296>

reportedly in Sagaing Region⁴. The heavy fighting between the junta forces and civil resistance forces continues across the country, especially in Chin, Kayah, Karen and Kachin states and Sagaing, Magwe, Mandalay and Yangon regions⁵. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, an international research group collecting data across the world in conflict zones also announced over 13,000 political violence and protest cases reported in Myanmar in 2021 that nearly 11,000 incidents were involved with fatalities⁶.

The ultra-nationalist group Ma Ba Tha is to lead a campaign to encourage civilians living in people's resistance forces strongholds to crack down on resistance groups by joining militias led by ordained Buddhists. Media also have reported that the monks from the Yadanar Kan Myint Htale Monastery were armed. The junta's State Administration Council (SAC) also announced that it had distributed 2,080 weapons to 77 paramilitary groups⁷. The junta freed the ultra-nationalist Buddhist monk Ashin Wirathu from the Ma Ba Tha group, after dropping sedition charges filed during the rule of the ousted NLD government in 2019⁸.

Amid the junta's increasing airstrikes against civilians, killing civilians and forcing hundreds of thousands to flee their homes that has created a humanitarian crisis, 55 British Parliamentarians from 9 different political parties and Independent MPs have called for aviation fuel sanctions against the Myanmar junta⁹. The European Union has imposed sanctions against Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) and for more entities last week after more than a year of advocacy by the Myanmar civil society and rights groups. MOGE is the junta's biggest single source of revenue, responsible for financing its repression against Myanmar civilians¹⁰. Despite the criticisms from the rights groups, Norwegian telecom group Telenor will be selling the business to Myanmar conglomerate Shwe Byain Phyu (SBP) controlled by the junta affiliates and Lebanese investment firm M1 Group, the sources said, adding that the \$100 million in retained earnings are held at a Myanmar bank¹¹.

As of 4 March 2022, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) recorded that 1,603 people have been killed by the junta. 9,507 people are currently under detention. 84 have been sentenced to death and 1,973 are evading arrest warrants¹².

⁴ <https://www.rfa.org/english/cartoons/myanmar-arsonist-army-03042022143021.html>

⁵ <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-has-torched-over-6000-civilian-homes-since-coup.html>

⁶ <https://twitter.com/ACLEDDINFO/status/1498587597471293441>

⁷ <https://www.mizzima.com/article/ma-ba-tha-group-takes-side-myanmar-conflict>

⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-military-releases-hardline-monk-wirathu-media>

⁹ <https://burmacampaign.org.uk/55-british-mps-call-for-aviation-fuel-sanctions-against-burmese-military/>

¹⁰ <https://myanmar.anfrel.org/en/news/388>

¹¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/myanmar-telenor-idINL1N2UX0CF>

¹² <https://aappb.org/?p=20399>

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