



## [Joint Statement]

# MYANMAR: International community should reject junta's sham election

**BANGKOK, Thailand (23 December 2025)** – The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Progressive Voice (PV) and the undersigned civil society organizations, condemn the Myanmar military junta's plans to hold a multistage sham general election from late December 2025 to January 2026.

The upcoming elections are widely regarded as a sham due to the absence of fairness, transparency, meaningful political dialogue, legitimacy, and credibility. It is set against a backdrop of widespread and systematic human rights violations and atrocities.

An election held by war criminals is not credible. A fraudulent election will not bring peace or stability to Myanmar; it will only deepen societal divisions and fuel further conflict.

Rejecting sham elections should not be a crime. We, the undersigned organizations, refuse to recognize the results of such an illegitimate election. It should not take place in the first place.

### Sham elections

The illegal Myanmar military junta—which is newly named as the State Security and Peace Commission and formerly the State Administrative Council, —claims to act as an “interim government” responsible for organizing and overseeing the electoral process. However, it has no legal authority to conduct national elections.

In August 2025, the junta-controlled Union Election Commission declared that the general election would start on 28 December 2025, with additional phases to follow.

[Fifty-four political parties](#) have been cleared to participate in the elections, however, most are either small or closely linked to the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party.

Following the election announcement, airstrikes in Myanmar surged. On 10 December—International Human Rights Day—a junta jet [bombed](#) the general hospital of Mrauk-U town in Rakhine State, killing at least 34 people and wounding dozens. This is a clear violation under the International Humanitarian Law, which prohibits attacks on hospitals and other medical facilities. Such acts constitute a war crime.

Myanmar's political opposition parties have all been either deregistered or dissolved. In addition, ad hoc laws have been enacted to exclude them from participating in the electoral process.

The junta will use electronic voting machines, posing security risks for those who vote against military-backed parties. Critics have also warned against potential vote manipulation.

It is important to note that the military junta does not control all of Myanmar's 330 townships since resistance groups have expanded their effective control over areas where millions of people have categorically rejected the military's attempted coup in 2021. Since then, the people of Myanmar have endured the junta's violence and atrocity crimes.

## **International response**

In October 2025, the [European Union](#) announced that it would not send observers to monitor the said election. Likewise, the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations](#) (ASEAN) will not deploy observers.

[Civil society](#), as reflected in a statement endorsed by more than 300 organizations, called for the rejection of the junta's sham election.

Some ASEAN member states, such as Malaysia, have also voiced criticism against the upcoming election. Cambodia, however, confirmed that it will send election observers, raising concerns over regional complicity in legitimizing a deeply flawed process.

On 8 November, the French Government [reiterated](#) its call for the release of individuals detained or sentenced for political reasons since the junta's takeover. It condemned the continued airstrikes and violence in Myanmar, expressing concern over the country's severely deteriorating human rights situation.

On 9 December, the European Union's High Representative raised [concerns](#) over the election's credibility, highlighting the widespread violence, restrictions on fundamental freedoms, mass detentions, and the lack of a transparent and inclusive process happening in Myanmar.

On 10 December, the [Australian Government](#) expressed concern over the ongoing political and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. It warned that holding elections under such conditions would likely exacerbate instability, hinder peaceful resolution, and result in grave consequences.

Within the international community, opposition against the junta's sham elections is growing, with significant protests taking place in South Korea, Japan, and the US. The [Myanmar junta's embassy](#) in Seoul extended the advance voting period by five days due to an extremely low voter turnout.

## **Repressive laws, unfair elections**

Statements from civil society and experts have stated that the junta-planned elections do not meet international standards and cannot be considered credible or legitimate.

Following its illegal coup attempt in February 2021, the junta pledged to hold new elections. However, it has repeatedly been postponed under the pretext of a nationwide state of emergency, further undermining democratic governance in Myanmar.

The last election was held on 8 November 2020, in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) won a decisive majority in parliament, securing the mandate to form the next government. However, the military violently overturned the results, unleashing a brutal crackdown on the people of Myanmar. This campaign of terror continues to this day.

Consequently, after the military's seizure of power, Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested immediately along with many other senior NLD leaders.

The junta has carried out attacks on civilian populations, including airstrikes and artillery bombardments, [resulting](#) in more than 7,000 deaths. Over 22,000 political prisoners remain behind bars, most detained solely for exercising their fundamental rights.

The junta has also enacted a series of repressive laws ahead of the election.

In January 2023, the junta enacted the [Political Party Registration Law](#), which sets strict membership and financial requirements, blocking many long-established political parties—including those from ethnic minority areas—from registering. The law also allows the Union Election Commission to cancel a party's registration if it has alleged links to any organization designated as an unlawful or terrorist group under existing laws.

Since then, more than [40 political parties have been dissolved](#) for not submitting their applications to the Union Election Commission.

The law can disqualify existing parties if they fail to meet strict conditions. The National League for Democracy—which won a landslide victory in the 2020 election—was dissolved for failing to re-register under the electoral law.

In July 2025, the [Myanmar Cyber Security Law](#), came into effect. Under the law, the people of Myanmar can face penalties even if they are outside the country's borders.

Since July 2025, the [Law on the Prevention of Disruption and Sabotage of Multi-Party Democratic General Elections](#) can impose the death penalty on any individual who opposes or disrupts the elections. Since then, more than [300 people](#) have been prosecuted under this law.

In December 2025, the military junta sought the arrest of 10 activists under a section of a new election law. The activists were accused of misleading the public by distributing leaflets against the sham election.

In an attempt to gain legitimacy ahead of the election, the junta [released](#) more than 3,000 political prisoners and dropped charges against 5,500 people. However, this appears to be merely a tactical move, as some of those released were [re-arrested](#) the following day on terrorism charges.

Ward and village administrators threaten community members to cast a ballot. Residents who do not vote as instructed are denied the ability to work, obtain travel permissions, and receive official endorsements.

The junta also warned that those who are of conscription age may be taken for military service if they do not vote. Meanwhile [university students](#) in areas controlled by the junta are barred from entering campus grounds unless they can present evidence of having cast an advance vote.

The junta is also expanding its use of military-controlled non-governmental organizations to distort the truth. False narratives must be confronted, particularly the US government's assertion that Myanmar is on a path toward peace and stability and its expressed confidence in the junta's planned election.

On 26 January 2026, the US [will terminate](#) the "Temporary Protected Status", an immigration designation granted to individuals facing war or natural disasters in their home countries. This termination will affect at least [4,000 Burmese nationals](#) living in the US.

### **Call to action**

Sustained international pressure is essential to ensure that Myanmar's struggle is not forgotten.

We urge the international community to express solidarity with the people of Myanmar and to support their demands for genuine freedom and democracy.

We call on the international community to reject the junta's sham election. We must refuse to acknowledge its outcome and end all forms of engagements with the junta.

We urge the US government to reverse the decision to end the Temporary Protected Status for the people of Myanmar, who face persecution and grave danger if deported.

To ensure that aid reaches the most vulnerable communities, we call on international donors to increase and channel humanitarian aid to Myanmar's internally displaced persons through local civil society organizations and border-based networks that bypass the junta.

ASEAN member states should cease all forms of support and engagement with the junta. They should not send election observers since doing so would only legitimize the sham process.

As incoming ASEAN Chair, the Philippines should uphold democratic principles as previously advanced by Malaysia. It must also ensure ASEAN's decisive leadership to renounce the sham election. Likewise, it must call out the junta's indiscriminate and ineffective delivery of humanitarian aid.

## List of Endorsement

1. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
2. Ah Nah Podcast - conversations with Myanmar
3. ALTSEAN-Burma
4. Anti Dictatorship in Burma - DNVPA Area
5. Arakan Youth Peace Network (AYPN)
6. Asia Democracy Network (ADN)
7. Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR)
8. Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)
9. Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters (HRDP)
10. Association of Spring Rainbow (ASR)
11. Athan – Freedom of Expression Activist Organization
12. Blood Money Campaign (BMC)
13. Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan
14. Boston Free Burma
15. Burma Action Ireland
16. Burma Campaign UK (BCUK)
17. Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK)
18. Cambodian League for the Promotion & Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO), Cambodia
19. Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO)
20. Citizens of Burma Award (Buffalo Chapter)
21. Civil Rights Defenders
22. CRPH & NUG supporters Ireland
23. CRPH Funding Ireland
24. Defend Myanmar Democracy (DMD)
25. Democracy, Peace and Women's Organization
26. Educational Initiatives Prague
27. Equality Myanmar
28. Exile Hub
29. Feminist Equality Justice & Peace Myanmar
30. Former ABSDF
31. Generation Wave (GW)
32. Greater Equitable Measures (GEM), Malaysia
33. Human Rights Educators Network (HREN)
34. Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)
35. IMRAC MR
36. Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI), Indonesia
37. Info Birmanie
38. International Legal Initiatives, Kazakhstan
39. Kachin Human Rights Watch (KHRW)
40. Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT)
41. Karapatan Alliance Philippines
42. Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)
43. Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN)
44. Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG)
45. Karenni National Women's Organization (KNWO)
46. Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law
47. Keng Tung Youth
48. Korean House for International Solidarity(KHIS)
49. Kyae Lak Myay
50. Kyauktada Strike Committee (KSC)
51. Loveurcontent Entertainment

52. Maldivian Democracy Network, Maldives
53. Mekong Watch
54. Milk Tea Alliance Calendar Team
55. MyaYar Knowledge Tree
56. Network for Human Rights Documentation - Burma (ND-Burma)
57. New York City Burmese Community
58. NLD International Network Members
59. Nyan Lynn Thit Analytical (NLTA)
60. Olive Organization
61. Pa-O Women's Union (PWU)
62. Pa-O Youth Organization (PYO)
63. Pace on Peaceful Pluralism
64. People's Watch, India
65. Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), Philippines
66. Public Association "Dignity"
67. Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), Bangladesh
68. Rohingya Maiyafuñor Collaborative Network (RMCN)
69. Save Myanmar - U.S.A
70. Save Myanmar San Francisco
71. Shan MATA
72. Sisters2Sisters
73. Sitt Nyein Pann Foundation
74. Southern Initiatives (SI)
75. Southern Youth Development Organization
76. Spring Revolution Myanmar Muslim Community - SRMMC
77. Survivors United for Rights and Justice (SURJ)
78. Taiwan Association for Human Rights (TAHR)
79. The Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS)
80. U.S. Campaign for Burma
81. Volunteers in Myanmar
82. Yain Nweh Par (Rainbow Win The Storm - RIS)
83. Yangon Deaf Group
84. စွန်ရဲလေကြောင်းကင်းထောက်အဖွဲ့ (KING)
85. ပဉ္စမ မဏ္ဍိုင် ပြည်သူ့အကူအညီပေးရေးအဖွဲ့ (PMCSG)
86. မျက်မှောက်ခေတ် သတင်းဌာန (MMK News)
87. သမိုင်းသယ်ဆောင်သူများအဖွဲ့