

## Public Statement

### **ASEAN: Cambodia Chairmanship Should Thoroughly Address Crisis in Myanmar**

5 November 2021

We, the undersigned organisations, call on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to increase its effort to address the ongoing human rights crisis in Myanmar, which was triggered by the attempted coup in February 2021. Under the incoming chairmanship of Cambodia in 2022, ASEAN needs to align its endeavours with the international efforts of the United Nations and civil society to hold the military junta accountable for its actions. Failure to meaningfully address the suffering of the people of Myanmar will be the failure of the regional bloc to promote and protect human rights in the region.

More than seven months since ASEAN agreed on a Five-Point [Consensus on Myanmar](#), there has yet to be significant progress on the implementation of the consensus, or significant action taken by ASEAN to tackle the escalation of violations and number of victims. Analysis from civil society has revealed that the [Myanmar military junta, and to some extent ASEAN, have failed to uphold all five points](#). This is reflected in the increase in attacks since the adoption of the consensus on civilians and members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and National Unity Government (NUG), which formed as the legitimate government after the November 2020 election. ASEAN's response to this situation has been slow, which is apparent from the late appointment of the ASEAN Special Envoy, while the commitment to facilitate dialogue between the junta and the NUG or other parties is still unclear. This negligence has resulted in a further crisis and shrinking civic space in Myanmar, which is having a ripple effect on the region's human rights situation.

We appreciate the unprecedented decision made through the Emergency ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (EAMM) on 15 October 2021 to exclude the Myanmar junta's representative of the Myanmar junta from sitting as the country's representative during the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summit from 26–28 October. While noting the bloc's decision to invite a "non-political representative" from Myanmar, our stance remains that no seat should be given to the military junta at future ASEAN meetings until the Five-Point Consensus is accomplished or until democracy is restored in Myanmar.

From the Chairman's Statement of the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summits issued by Brunei Darussalam, we noted ASEAN's commitments to [find a balance](#) between the non-interference principle and to upholding the rule of law, good governance, the principles of democracy, and constitutional government in addressing the situation in Myanmar. The exclusion of the Myanmar military junta will need to be normalised in the upcoming ASEAN process.

Moving forward to Cambodia's ASEAN chairmanship in 2022, the regional bloc must move faster and meaningfully to address the situation in Myanmar. This includes formally engaging the NUG and other parties after excluding the military junta from the latest Summit. Only with the willingness to reassess the non-interference principle and consensus tradition can ASEAN act strategically.

We also call for ASEAN to focus its efforts outside the regional bloc, by engaging with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), dialogue partners, and the international community to formulate a time-bound and comprehensive action plan.

*For further information, please contact:*

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### ***Supporting organisations***

*ADN (Asia Democracy Network)*

*AJAR (Asia Justice and Rights)*

*Amnesty International Indonesia*

*CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation*

*FORUM ASIA*

*Kurawal Foundation*

*KontraS (the Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence)*

*Migrant Care*

*SAFEnet (Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network)*

*SEA Junction*