

ASEAN Must Stop Engaging with War Criminals

As ASEAN prepares to meet for its 46th Summit, under Malaysia's chairmanship, Defend Myanmar Democracy (DMD) condemns its continued engagement with the Myanmar military junta, and calls for an immediate end to all junta participation in ASEAN.

ASEAN has failed to take principled action while the Myanmar military continues to commit widespread war crimes—including the bombing of schools, villages, and the displacement of millions. Since the junta's failed coup attempt in 2021, ASEAN has repeatedly offered the military a seat at the table while ignoring the every people being bombed by those seated there.

““Every meeting with the junta strengthens their hand, not peace. ASEAN must stop pretending this is diplomacy—it is complicity,” said Naw Aung, a DMD spokesperson.

In just the past two years, the junta has conducted over 4,000 airstrikes, killing civilians and destroying critical infrastructure. The most recent massacre in Depayin Township, where a junta airstrike killed at least 22 children and two teachers, is yet another horrifying example of the military's absolute contempt for human life and international law.

DMD reiterates Myanmar civil society's position on ASEAN, demanding it:

- End all engagement with the junta and formally engage with legitimate representatives, such as the National Unity Government (NUG) and Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs).
- Move beyond the failed Five-Point Consensus to support a Myanmar people-led solution to the crisis in Myanmar.
- End all pressure on revolutionary forces and civil society to engage and compromise with the junta.

We reject any “quiet diplomacy” or “neutral facilitation” that gives the junta international cover.

Legitimacy cannot be given to those who bomb schools and murder children.

“ASEAN's credibility is collapsing under the weight of its hypocrisy,” said Naw Aung.

“There is no neutrality in the face of mass atrocities. ASEAN must support Myanmar people, not our murderers.”

DMD's ongoing campaign, #NoSeatsForMurderers, calls on ASEAN and all regional stakeholders to take public, and principled action to support the Myanmar people's struggle for federal democracy.

For more information

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