



2023 Strategy for Restoration of Democracy and Human Rights in Burma

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Although Burma won independence in 1948, the freedom did not last long. Since 1962, it has been under one form or another of military rule for more than 50 years till 2015 when power sharing between the military and democratic forces commenced. Under the arrangement, the country was freer, more peaceful, stable, and prosperous till 2020. The Burmese people and the international community expected that after the smooth and short transition period, full-blown democracy and human rights would prosper.

However, making an excuse for alleged election fraud, the military generals made another coup in February 2021 aiming to cling to power permanently in order to protect their social, political, and business interest forever. It is totally against the best interest of the whole population, so most of the people remain defiant, and have continued striving to restore democracy and human rights in Burma. All of them became the targets of the military, facing intimidation and threats not only to themselves but also to their families, relatives, friends, and the community. Since the coup, they have been facing all sorts of human rights violations including indiscriminate shootings, torture to death, execution, unlawful arrest and detention, house raid, eviction from home, lock-up of all their properties, trumped-up criminal charges, judicial harassment, burning down of whole villages or towns and even indiscriminate air-strikes.

These factors along with the civil war, social instability, and disregard for rule of law led to a severe socioeconomic crisis including extreme and widespread poverty, and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees. The UN underlined that **Burma was in unprecedented crisis in all areas** including political, social, economic, human rights, and health sectors which were programmed to have driven half of the population into poverty; in the current situation 14 out of 15 states and regions were within the critical threshold



for acute malnutrition; that it was expected to have 14 million people needing humanitarian aid by 2022.

On the other hand, the CRPH (Committee Representing People's Parliament) and the NUG (National Unity Government) were formed by the parliamentarians and supported by the people. The NUCC (National Unity Coordination Committee) was also created to include all stakeholders. Moreover, the PDF (People's Defence Force), some of them are under the NUG; some are independent local guerilla forces protecting the local people, have been in place extensively in almost all regions and states; and active especially in Chin State, Sagaing Region and Karenni State. The NUG and many EAOs (Ethnic Armed Organisation) have been working in coordination whilst several EAOs have been still under ceasefire agreement officially or unofficially.

Developments in 2022

In 2022, the resistance forces became stronger in coordination, manpower, finance, and materially, leading to more intense and spreading armed clashes in many areas inflicting increasing casualties on the regime's military.

The international community in general, especially democratic countries led by the US has been increasingly supportive diplomatically. The US has approved the Burma Act underlining its support to the NUG, NUCC, and CRPH, calling for sanctions on the military and associates, and promising to fund the democratic and ethnic organisations and their activities. UN Security Council also made a strong resolution for the first time in history calling for an immediate end of violence, the release of political prisoners, the pursuit of dialogue and reconciliation, acknowledging the role of ASEAN to have a peaceful solution and encouraging the international community to support ASEAN in this respect. Even China started to distance away from the regime.

The NMF believes that the removal of the regime will be accomplished within one year before the end of 2023. In this context, relying on its own capacity as an independent local NGO, the following strategies and programs will be



implemented to strive for the restoration of democracy and human rights in Burma.

Strategies

1) The NMF will continue strengthening its networks while working in coordination and collaboration with all democratic organizations inside and out.

2) It will continue supporting the democratic movement inside Burma.

It will continue and extend its support to

- IDPs especially in Sagaing region, Chin state, and Kayah state
- the political detainees and prisoners for legal aid and prison visits
- the activists and HR defenders who were fleeing from their homes and staying hiding around Burma

3) It will also continue and extend its support to the HRDs fleeing from persecution in the country by

- assisting them for safe passage to Maesot, providing refuge, accommodation, safe houses and basic needs, vocational training, job facilitation, healthcare through a telehealth program, online Thai and English language training, and online formal education for the children by the newly arrived CDM school teachers.

4) Furthermore, it will continue strengthening the migrant Burmese people and refugees at Thai Burma border, especially Maesot by

- Providing ongoing emergency assistance when required. (It provided emergency humanitarian assistance and free funeral services to them when COVID-19 spread wide in 2021 July. It also provided emergency food and basic supplies to the new refugees in December 2021.)
- Continuation of providing job creation programs including vocational training, especially to vulnerable groups such as women and girls



- Strengthening local and international networks of the Burmese migrant workers
- 5) It will strengthen its relations with the Thai people and organizations by building up networks and relations with Thai authorities, NGOs, intellectuals, and parliamentarians at the local and national levels.**
- 6) It will lobby the international community via physical and online communication for their effective support to the Burmese democratic movement.**

The required support includes but not limited to:

- support to the democratic movement including the NUG, CRPH, and NUCC.
- Condemning the coup and, denial of the military regime in international and regional arena
- support to take UN and international action and intervention in Burma for humanitarian aid, cross-border assistance, reduction of violence, and political settlement.
- support to have international observers and peacekeeping forces for ceasefire and dialogue, when and if happens.
- support to have targeted sanctions on the generals and associates, and funding humanitarian assistance
- encouraging China and Russia to act responsibly on Burma.

The above strategies will be followed up and implemented through the programs designed for each sector.

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