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Myanmar: One Year After the Coup



International
Conference

18-19 Feb. 2022



On 1 February 2021, Myanmar's armed forces (Tatmadaw) took power in a coup d'état. Security forces arrested members of the elected government, while many other activists were forced into hiding, or compelled to seek sanctuary abroad. By re-instating military dominance, Myanmar's generals ended a short period when they shared some power with the National League for Democracy (NLD). For now, Myanmar's post-coup trajectory remains uncertain. What we know for sure is that following the coup, human rights violations have been widespread, and violence has increased around the country, both in the areas traditionally controlled by the central government and in the peripheries, ruled by ethnic organisations, many of which control their own significant armed forces.

In this context, different forms of protest have emerged and some elected Members of Parliament – forcibly deprived of their representative function – have established a National Unity Government (NUG). Ethnic armed organisations have assumed different and ever-changing positions, making political alliances and their duration difficult to determine.

One year after the coup, this conference will focus on the practicalities of understanding and engaging a deeply contested political reality. We want to know: What are the perspectives of a return to the polls in the short-medium period? Which international actors can influence the course of events? To what extent has the coup impacted on Myanmar's fragile economy?

To discuss these topics, T.wai (Torino World Affairs Institute) is hosting a hybrid international conference one year after the coup, in partnership with the Department of Cultures, Politics and Society of the University of Turin and with the support of the City of Turin (International cooperation & peace Department) and Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo. The conference will award organisations and young researchers presenting top quality papers.

Background

T.wai (www.twai.it) is a non-profit independent research institute, founded in 2009 by International Relations scholars from the University of Turin. Its main research work deals with contemporary China and Southeast Asia, and human security dynamics.

Since 2014, T.wai has been developing a research agenda on Myanmar – also involving fieldwork in the country – which has produced various contributions to the academic literature and the public debate.

In 2017, T.wai organized, in partnership with the Department of Cultures, Politics and Society, an international workshop entitled *Building New Research Capacity*, attracting researchers from all over Europe and establishing the Myanmar Europe Research Network (MyERN, www.myern.it).

In Autumn 2019 a second international meeting, called *The Kaleidoscope of Myanmar Transformations*, was held, where European and Asian scholars discussed the challenges of Myanmar's (now failed) transition.

International Conference 2022

The conference will take place both as an in-person conference at the University of Turin and as an online event, allowing remote participation.

The conference will deal with four topics:

1. Politics in the centre: armed forces, civil disobedience movements, self-defence groups, political parties, the NUG, constitutional reforms, human rights, social movements, Buddhist church and religious organizations.
2. Politics in the borderlands: ethnic armies and parties, domestic conflicts, cross-border relations, and the peace process.
3. A brittle economy: industrial development, agriculture, primary resources, land grabbing, banking and finance, drug economy, and informal, illegal, and grey economies.
4. The international community: United Nations and other international organizations, the role of great and regional powers, ASEAN influence, and sanctions.

Civil society organisations active in Myanmar are invited and encouraged to take part in a conference forum to share their experience of democracy-building and bottom-up peace processes. We greatly welcome their reflections, ideas and doubts on Myanmar's future.

The best papers will be selected for an English e-book to be published on T.wai's website, similar to this one: <https://www.twai.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Drivers-of-Global-Change.pdf>. Paper excerpts will also be published in Italian as part of our RISE (International Relations and International Political Economy of South-East Asia) and Human Security journals.

No fee will be levied for conference attendance.

Deadlines

Paper abstracts (no more than 300 words) shall be e-mailed to info@myern.org by 10 January 2022.

Paper drafts shall be e-mailed to info@myern.org no later than 31 January 2022.

Awards

The organising committee will award the best papers presented by under-35 young researchers, according to the following scheme:

- n. 2 awards to the best papers by graduate students and recent graduates of the University of Turin > 500 € each
- n. 2 awards to the best papers by young international scholars > 500 € each
- n. 2 awards to the best papers by Myanmar's scholars > 750 € each
- n. 2 contributions to Myanmar NGOs and/or entities presenting their research on education and society > 1,000 € each

Convenors

Giuseppe **Gabusi** – University of Turin and T.wai

Stefano **Ruzza** – University of Turin and T.wai

Nicholas **Farrelly** – University of Tasmania and T.wai

Anja-Desirée **Senz** – Heidelberg University

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