

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	532
Land:	Myanmar
Kilde:	Human Rights Watch
Titel:	Myanmar Junta dissolves political parties
Udgivet:	29. marts 2023
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	22. juni 2023



Document #2089779

HRW – Human Rights Watch
(Author)

Myanmar Junta Dissolves Political Parties

Military Seeks to Legitimize Rule Through Sham Elections

Myanmar's military junta announced this week that the National League for Democracy (NLD) is among 40 political parties and other groups dissolved for failing to meet a political party registration deadline imposed under the new [Political Party Registration Law](#).

The junta, which staged a military coup on February 1, 2021, claims it wants to hold elections, and promulgated the party registration law on January 26. However, its provisions appear intended to indefinitely delay, rather than facilitate, Myanmar's return to civilian democratic rule. The law requires existing political parties to reregister within 60 days or be dissolved. But many of the parties – including the NLD – [refused](#) to comply, saying that ongoing military oppression prevents proposed elections from being credible.

ecoi.net description:

Article on the political situation; political parties dissolved by military junta

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[HRW – Human Rights Watch](#) (Author)

Original link:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/03/29/myan>

The 2021 coup resulted in the military overthrow of the newly elected NLD-led government and the detention of elected civilian officials. The junta has since committed numerous abuses including crimes against humanity against protesters and activists, and war crimes in ethnic minority areas. It has also severely restricted freedom of speech, association, and assembly.

The registration law also stacks the deck for the military by prohibiting anyone convicted of a crime from joining a party, effectively disqualifying many opposition leaders, including NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi and president Win Myint, who are both serving lengthy sentences on [politically motivated charges](#).

Under the new law and earlier martial law orders, any election would be dominated by junta-backed political parties and the military itself, which already holds 25 percent of seats in the national and local legislatures under the 2008 Constitution. But the junta still seems determined to remove the NLD and other independent political parties from polls and install its own parties instead.

In the face of widescale political oppression, genuinely free and fair elections are not possible in Myanmar for the foreseeable future. Concerned governments, including regional partners such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), [Japan](#), and [India](#), should not be fooled into thinking that the junta's new election laws and regulations can be the basis for a credible electoral process. Instead, they should recognize that the junta is merely attempting to legitimize military rule through sham elections.

Document type:
Appeal or News
Release

Language:
English

Published:
29 March 2023

**Available on ecoi.net
since:**
3 April 2023

Document ID:
2089779

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