

## **Joint statement: One year after the military coup in Myanmar**

On 1 February 2022, people in Myanmar will mark the first anniversary of renewed military dictatorship with protest and resistance. The coup prevented an elected government from taking office. The military extralegally detained its members, and embarked on a program of state violence reminiscent of the atrocities in 2017 that led hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims to flee to Bangladesh.

The military has met nationwide resistance. A civil disobedience movement that began in the days after the coup has persisted in its efforts to oppose military rule by strikes, boycotts and other kinds of non-cooperation. A people's defensive war has brought fighting to parts of the country that had for decades been without armed conflict.

The costs have been great. Many have lost their jobs and housing. Thousands have been detained and at least 1,499 civilians have lost their lives, according to the [AAPP](#). An estimated 406,000 people have been internally displaced since the coup and at least 32,000 have fled to neighbouring countries, according to [UNHCR](#).

The military coup has exacerbated efforts to combat the Covid-19 crisis, unnecessarily contributing to a high death toll. Military rule greatly complicates future efforts to control the virus, putting the health and safety of millions in peril.

The consequences of the coup on higher education are disastrous. After decades of debilitating dictatorship, universities and institutes in Myanmar were just beginning to find their feet when the military again seized control. The universities remain closed to students. With their shutdown go the hopes of another generation for quality education in Myanmar. Opposition groups, activists and engaged scholars are setting up alternative study programs, but these can fill only a small part of the demand.

As academics, students and professional staff working on Myanmar, we mark this anniversary by condemning the coup and the violent suppression of political opposition to military rule. We deplore the targeted killing and maiming of unarmed civilians, including via massacres during recent military offensives launched in many parts of the country.

To our friends and associates in Myanmar, and to alumni of Australian universities who are struggling against dictatorship, we extend our solidarity. We join with you and others around the world in demanding that the military retreat from politics, stop the killings and torture; release all political prisoners, including our colleague Professor Sean Turnell, and return government to those whom Myanmar's electorate chose to lead it.

***Joint statement issued on 31 January 2022 by:***

[Asian Studies Association of Australia](#), the peak academic association supporting the study of Asia in Australia

[Association of Mainland Southeast Asia Scholars](#), an academic association that promotes and advances research on Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam

[Australia-Myanmar Constitutional Democracy Project](#), a consortium of academics from the University of Sydney, UNSW, ANU, and Western Sydney University

[Australia Myanmar Institute](#), which works to create and strengthen sustainable, multi-sectoral, collaborative, applied research and partnerships between Australia and Myanmar

[Griffith Asia Institute](#), an internationally recognised research centre within Griffith Business School.

[Myanmar Research Centre](#), an academic hub for Myanmar-related activities at the Australian National University and beyond