



Situational Update

Myanmar

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Humanitarian Program Capabilities Branch

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November 2020 Election in Myanmar

This update provides information on the general election held in Myanmar on 8 November 2020, including background information on the electoral system, the lead up to the election, polling day, the election results, issues raised by rights groups and other commentators in relation to the election process, and post-election developments.

Summary

The general election held in Myanmar on 8 November 2020 was the country's second democratic election since the end of military rule in 2011. More than 90 parties contested the election, with 37 million people eligible to cast ballots, including 5 million first-time voters. In the previous general election held in November 2015, the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won in a landslide victory. The NLD was expected to do well in the November 2020 election, with Aung San Suu Kyi remaining very popular in Myanmar, although outside of the country, she has been criticised for failing to defend the human rights of the country's Muslim Rohingya minority. The election went ahead despite an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the country, and calls by opposition parties for the polls to be postponed. The day of the election was reported to be free of major incidents. The result was an emphatic victory for the NLD, with the party gaining 396 of the contested seats in the bicameral parliament, exceeding the 322 seats it needed to govern alone, and giving it nine more seats than it won in 2015. Rights groups and other commentators have raised issues in relation to the election process. Elections in several states did not proceed.

Electoral System

At the national level, 'Myanmar's 'constitution establishes a bicameral Union Assembly (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw)', comprising 'of a 440-seat lower house (Pyithu Hluttaw) and 224-seat upper house (Amyetha Hluttaw)'. The country also has fourteen subnational legislatures, one for each region or state.¹ At the union level, 168 of the 224 upper house members and 330 of the 440 lower house representatives are directly elected. The other seats are held by the military, with the defence services commander-in-chief appointing one-quarter of the members of each chamber at both the union and state/region

¹ 'Majority Rules in Myanmar's Second Democratic Election', International Crisis Group, Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°163, 22 October 2020, p.4, 20201027104924

level, allowing the military to prevent changes to the constitution.² Myanmar uses a first-past-the-post system for the election of members of both houses of the Union Assembly and the state and regional houses. The candidate with the highest number of votes in a constituency is elected.³ The elections held on 8 November 2020 were to elect three-quarters of the members of the two houses of the Union Parliament as well as of the 14 state and regional parliaments.⁴

Lead up to the election

The general election held in Myanmar on 8 November 2020 was the country's second democratic election since the end of military rule in 2011.⁵ More than 90 parties contested the election, with 37 million people eligible to cast ballots, including 5 million first-time voters.⁶ In the previous general election held in November 2015, the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won in a landslide victory.⁷ Under Myanmar's constitution, however, Aung San Suu Kyi could not become president as her children had foreign citizenship.⁸ The NLD is reported to have 'side-stepped' this constitutional obstacle by appointing a compliant president and creating the position of state counsellor for Suu Kyi, a position for which there is no provision in the constitution.⁹ The NLD used its parliamentary majority in April 2016 to establish the state counsellor role, despite objections by the military. Aung San Suu Kyi continues to hold this powerful position, which officially answers to the president.¹⁰

The NLD was expected to do well in the November 2020 election. Prior to the election, the International Crisis Group reported that Aung San Suu Kyi remained extremely popular with Myanmar's Burman Buddhist majority, who appeared 'likely to propel her National League for Democracy (NLD) to a second landslide victory'.¹¹ Another article, published in the week before the election and written by Ben Dunant, the managing editor of *Frontier Myanmar*, a fortnightly news magazine in Yangon, commented that Myanmar was 'about to have an election in which it feels little is at stake. Most expect continuity, with a National League for Democracy administration made in the image of State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi picking up from where it left off. This is despite more than 90 political parties competing for the votes of a hugely diverse electorate'.¹²

A report by *Reuters* indicates that the election on 8 November 'was seen as a referendum on the fledgling democratic government' led by Aung San Suu Kyi and her NLD, 'which remains very popular at home but has seen its overseas reputation battered by accusations of genocide against the

² 'Election Observation Mission: Myanmar, General Election, November 8, 2020: Preliminary Statement', The Carter Center, 10 November 2020, p.5, 20201111132812

³ 'Elections in Myanmar: 2020 General Elections: Frequently Asked Questions', International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 3 November 2020, p.1, 20201110195323

⁴ 'Election Observation Mission: Myanmar, General Election, November 8, 2020: Preliminary Statement', The Carter Center, 10 November 2020, p.5, 20201111132812

⁵ 'Majority Rules in Myanmar's Second Democratic Election', International Crisis Group, Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°163, 22 October 2020, p.1, 20201027104924

⁶ 'Suu Kyi's party claims to have won majority in Myanmar polls', Winn, P S, Associated Press, 10 November 2020, 20201110134143

⁷ 'Majority Rules in Myanmar's Second Democratic Election', International Crisis Group, Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°163, 22 October 2020, pp. 1 & 3, 20201027104924

⁸ 'Suu Kyi wins strong popular mandate in Myanmar election', Coppel, N, The Strategist, 13 November 2020, 20201113104140; 'Aung San Suu Kyi to become 'State Counsellor' of Myanmar', Cochrane, L, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) News, 5 April 2016, 20201104183741

⁹ 'Suu Kyi wins strong popular mandate in Myanmar election', Coppel, N, The Strategist, 13 November 2020, 20201113104140

¹⁰ 'Aung San Suu Kyi to become 'State Counsellor' of Myanmar', Cochrane, L, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) News, 5 April 2016, 20201104183741; 'Majority Rules in Myanmar's Second Democratic Election', International Crisis Group, Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°163, 22 October 2020, p. 12, 20201027104924

¹¹ 'Majority Rules in Myanmar's Second Democratic Election', International Crisis Group, Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°163, 22 October 2020, p.1, 20201027104924

¹² 'Myanmar's Election Marks a Step Away From Peace', Dunant, B, The Diplomat, 4 November 2020, 20201105134850

Rohingya Muslim minority, which it denies'.¹³ *Associated Press* reported that '[a] victory by the NLD had been widely expected, though it had been speculated that its deterioration of relations with ethnic minority-based parties, with whom it had cooperated in the last election in 2015, might cut its totals'.

It was also the view of *Associated Press* that '[m]uch of the NLD's appeal is based on the popularity of its leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, who became the head of government with the title of state counsellor after the 2015 polls'.¹⁴ While '[h]er administration's record has been mixed at best', with economic growth falling short of expectations and no end to the decades-old armed conflict with ethnic minorities seeking greater autonomy, she is reported to have managed to retain the appeal she built up among her countrymen 'during decades of fighting for democracy against the military dictatorships that preceded her'. Outside of Myanmar, she has been criticised for failing to defend the human rights of the country's Muslim Rohingya minority following the 2017 counterinsurgency campaign by Myanmar's army that forced about 740,000 Rohingya to flee across the border to neighbouring Bangladesh. According to the *Associated Press* article, 'the issue was a matter of little concern to most voters, due to deep-seated prejudice against the Rohingya, whom many consider to be illegal immigrants from South Asia despite their families having lived in Myanmar for generations. Few have citizenship or civil rights, including the right to vote'.¹⁵ Suu Kyi is also reported to have 'projected a strong image of leadership in state media and in livestreamed social media appearances' in the past few months as Myanmar has battled a surge in coronavirus infections.¹⁶

The November 2020 election went ahead despite an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the country,¹⁷ most of which occurred following the commencement of a second wave of cases in mid-August 2020.¹⁸ The outbreak raised questions about the viability of the election, as the authorities focussed on fighting the virus, lockdowns left candidates unable to campaign as normal and international observers were unable to enter the country. The main challenger to the NLD, the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), and 23 other opposition parties called for the polls to be postponed. The NLD's Aung San Suu Kyi, however, said in a broadcast that the election was more important than COVID-19.¹⁹ The pandemic is reported to have worked to the NLD government's advantage, as it brought the need for a strong and stable government into sharper focus, and the restrictions may have limited campaigning efforts by other parties, while the NLD government was able to use all available media resources to reach voters. The ability of many small, new political parties to make inroads with voters was limited by the restrictions on campaigns.²⁰

There were precautions taken by the authorities in relation to COVID-19 for the election. In early August 2020, Myanmar's Union Election Commission (UEC) said it would set up voting protocols that took into account COVID-19 restrictions, using lessons from countries like Japan, South Korea and Singapore. The authorities increased the number of polling stations to 50,000, up from 40,000 in 2015, with the new polling stations required to be of a minimum size, with adequate air circulation. Voters were to be split into shifts, with a maximum of 1,000 people for each polling station. Leading up to the election, Myanmar increased its purchases of COVID-19 protective equipment from

¹³ ['Myanmar's army-backed party alleges 'contentious events' during election'](#), Naing, S, Reuters, 11 November 2020, 20201111091133

¹⁴ ['Suu Kyi's party claims to have won majority in Myanmar polls'](#), Winn, P S, Associated Press, 10 November 2020, 20201110134143

¹⁵ ['Suu Kyi's party claims to have won majority in Myanmar polls'](#), Winn, P S, Associated Press, 10 November 2020, 20201110134143

¹⁶ ['Suu Kyi's party claims to have won majority in Myanmar polls'](#), Winn, P S, Associated Press, 10 November 2020, 20201110134143

¹⁷ ['Strong turnout in Myanmar polls despite pandemic'](#), Yee, T H, The Straits Times, 9 November 2020, 20201109121034

¹⁸ ['Myanmar reports more than 2,000 daily coronavirus cases in new record'](#), Reuters, 11 October 2020, 20201013171949

¹⁹ ['Myanmar's COVID quarantine campaign raises questions over election'](#), Aung, T T, Reuters, 2 October 2020, 20201005113705; ['Myanmar rejects calls to postpone election despite virus surge'](#), Naing, S, Reuters, 21 September 2020, 20200929102647

²⁰ ['Commentary: Why Myanmar voted overwhelmingly for Aung San Suu Kyi again'](#), Kipgen, N, Channel News Asia, 14 November 2020, 20201116134930; See also: ['Myanmar Still Loves Aung San Suu Kyi, but Not for the Reasons You Think'](#), Zin, M, The New York Times, 23 November 2020, 20201124112622

China. In late-October, a week of early balloting was held for voters aged over 60, in a bid to protect this vulnerable group and to ease overcrowding on polling day. Mobile teams also went around the country that week to allow those who were too weak to vote at polling stations to cast their ballot from home. On the day of the election, it was compulsory for voters to wear masks and contact was minimised by having voters place documents in clear plastic folders before handing them over to officials for inspection. Provisions were also made for COVID-19 patients, including those in isolation. They were required to wear N95 masks and gloves while voting, and officials attending to them wore full personal protective gear.²¹ One article, however, refers to 'uneven enforcement of COVID-19 restrictions' by electoral officials at polling stations at the election.²² Another report indicates that most people 'maintained physical distance and donned the compulsory face masks' at polling stations, '[b]ut there were exceptions, typically at voting centres that were either too small or saw large turnouts'.²³

According to *The Economist*, '[t]he army may have given the NLD an unintentional fillip just days before the election, when Min Aung Hlaing, the commander-in-chief, impugned the integrity of the election and accused the government of making "unacceptable mistakes"'. This prompted fears that the army 'might repudiate the election result', but '[t]he general, perhaps realising his mistake, later said he would accept the outcome'. Moe Thuzar of the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, a think-tank in Singapore, suspects, however, that the commander-in-chief's 'intervention helped to turn out the vote'.²⁴

Polling day

The day of the election was reported to be free of major incidents.²⁵ International and local observers said the election went smoothly without major irregularities.²⁶ The People's Alliance for Credible Elections – PACE – one of the biggest election monitoring organisations in Myanmar, 'said that in almost one-third of the polling stations it monitored, a small number of people were unable to cast ballots because their names were not on the voting lists'. PACE described voting on the day of the election, however, 'as peaceful and said no major incidents were recorded'.²⁷ On 10 November 2020, the US-based Carter Center said that entry for observers was restricted in three centres where votes were being tabulated, but that voting was conducted positively in 94 per cent of the stations visited.²⁸

On the same day, however, the military-backed opposition said there had been 'many contentious events' during the parliamentary election, 'but offered no immediate evidence of violations'. Than Htay, the leader of the USDP, 'said in a video on the party's official Facebook page that it was

²¹ ['Myanmar voters cast ballot amid rise in COVID-19 cases'](#), Kit, L W, Channel News Asia, 8 November 2020, 20201109164235

²² ['Myanmar's smooth election disguises systemic failure'](#), Mathieson, D S, Nikkei Asian Review, 10 November 2020, 20201111183539

²³ ['In pictures: Myanmar votes in second election since emerging from military rule'](#), Kham, N, Channel News Asia, 10 November 2020, 20201117113207

²⁴ ['Mother Suu does it again: Aung San Suu Kyi's party claims victory in Myanmar's election'](#), The Economist, 11 November 2020, 20201112123558

²⁵ ['Suu Kyi's party claims to have won majority in Myanmar polls'](#), Winn, P S, Associated Press, 10 November 2020, 20201110134143

²⁶ ['Myanmar's army-backed party alleges 'contentious events' during election'](#), Naing, S, Reuters, 11 November 2020, 20201111091133

²⁷ ['Suu Kyi's party claims to have won majority in Myanmar polls'](#), Winn, P S, Associated Press, 10 November 2020, 20201110134143; See also: ['What election observers are saying about Myanmar's election'](#), Palatino, M, Global Voices, 12 November 2020, 20201113095627

²⁸ ['Election Observation Mission: Myanmar, General Election, November 8, 2020: Preliminary Statement'](#), The Carter Center, 10 November 2020, p.2, 20201111132812; ['Myanmar's army-backed party alleges 'contentious events' during election'](#), Naing, S, Reuters, 11 November 2020, 20201111091133; See also: ['What election observers are saying about Myanmar's election'](#), Palatino, M, Global Voices, 12 November 2020, 20201113095627

pursuing legal options and urged viewers to send in evidence of “illegal acts”. The NLD said it was ready to cooperate if any reliable evidence of violations was provided.²⁹

Election results

Following the election, Myanmar’s election commission, the Union Election Commission (UEC), which had earlier said the count might take as long as a week, gradually released results,³⁰ with the final election results released on 14 November 2020. The result was an emphatic victory for the NLD, with the party gaining 396 of the contested seats in the bicameral parliament. That not only exceeded the 322 seats it needed to govern alone, but gave it nine more seats than it won in 2015.³¹ The NLD won more than 83 per cent of all constituencies contested.³² In addition, 11 ethnic parties won a total of 47 seats, while the military-affiliated USDP was successful in only 33 seats,³³ eight fewer than in 2015.³⁴ Fifteen lower house seats won by the USDP are reported to have been in areas controlled by military-backed militias in eastern and northern Shan State.³⁵ The NLD also won a majority of elected seats in 12 of the 14 subnational (or state and region) parliaments across the country.³⁶

On 11 November 2020, *The Economist* reported that while the UEC had released just under half the results of the election at that stage, an NLD spokesperson claimed the NLD had won enough seats ‘to form a government and name the president’. The NLD appeared ‘to have once again trounced its biggest opponent’, the army-backed USDP, and it had ‘beaten expectations in states dominated by ethnic minorities’.³⁷ *The Economist* commented that ‘the scale of the NLD’s victory’ was ‘surprising. Its record in office has been lacklustre. Economic growth has been disappointing. Efforts to end the civil wars simmering in the country’s periphery are flagging. Discontent with the NLD has been mounting, especially among ethnic minorities’. But “Mother Suu” remained ‘hugely popular in Myanmar, especially among the ethnic-Bamar majority, but also with some minorities’. It helps the NLD that it ‘tends to field candidates from the dominant ethnicity in each constituency’. Salai Jimmy Rezar Boi, the secretary of the Chin National League for Democracy (CNLD), an ethnically based party, noted that the NLD also ‘controls government budgets... He says that in Chin state, the NLD, having promised to build schools, bridges and the like, took 35 out of 39 seats in the state parliament, up from 28 in 2015. The CNLD won just one’.³⁸

An article in the *Nikkei Asian Review* by David Scott Mathieson, an independent analyst based in Yangon, states that ‘[t]he real surprise in the election was the uneven showing of Myanmar’s minority ethnic-based parties’. There was a lot of attention ‘directed at Rakhine State, where nine townships were deprived of their representation, along with large swathes of other townships’. In that state, the Arakan National Party (ANP) ‘won seven state assembly seats, with the NLD picking up four, and the army’s reserved seats falling from 12 to five’. Mathieson reported that ‘[m]inority-ethnic parties also

²⁹ [‘Myanmar’s army-backed party alleges ‘contentious events’ during election’](#), Naing, S, Reuters, 11 November 2020, 20201111091133

³⁰ [‘Suu Kyi’s party claims to have won majority in Myanmar polls’](#), Winn, P S, Associated Press, 10 November 2020, 20201110134143

³¹ [‘Aung San Suu Kyi, NLD Win Second Landslide Election in Myanmar’](#), Peter, Z, Voice of America, 15 November 2020, 20201116130942; See also: [‘UEC confirms final results, NLD wins absolute majority’](#), Mizzima, 16 November 2020, 20201117091657

³² [‘New Parties Gain Little Traction in Shadow of Myanmar Ruling Party’](#), Radio Free Asia, 19 November 2020, 20201120174655

³³ [‘Suu Kyi’s NLD confirms 396 seats, surpassing 2015 landslide victory’](#), Diamond, C and Nitta, Y, Nikkei Asian Review, 14 November 2020, 20201116133658

³⁴ [‘Aung San Suu Kyi, NLD Win Second Landslide Election in Myanmar’](#), Peter, Z, Voice of America, 15 November 2020, 20201116130942

³⁵ [‘In Myanmar’s Election, Military Proxy Party Fares Better in Militia-Controlled Areas’](#), Toe, H P, The Irrawaddy, 17 November 2020, 20201118155827

³⁶ [‘Myanmar’s military-backed opposition party stares into political abyss’](#), Hopkins, D, The Interpreter, (Lowy Institute for International Policy), 26 November 2020, 20201126171342

³⁷ [‘Mother Suu does it again: Aung San Suu Kyi’s party claims victory in Myanmar’s election’](#), The Economist, 11 November 2020, 20201112123558

³⁸ [‘Mother Suu does it again: Aung San Suu Kyi’s party claims victory in Myanmar’s election’](#), The Economist, 11 November 2020, 20201112123558

fares unevenly in other areas. In Mon and Shan states, minority ethnic-based parties achieved modest gains, but in Kayin, Kachin and Chin states, support for local parties all but collapsed'.³⁹

Another article in *The New York Times* by Min Zin, the executive director of the Institute for Strategy and Policy-Myanmar, a think tank in Yangon, indicates that '[t]he ethnic minority parties did not perform well at the national level, even though they had merged or forged alliances to avoid splitting the vote. (Some did, however, make modest gains that will give them some influence in state legislatures, including in Shan, Rakhine and Kayah States.)'⁴⁰ Min Zin also comments that '[s]ome ethnic voters seem to have voted for the N.L.D., a strong and established party, rather than their real first choice – a small ethnic party – because defeating the military's proxies remained an absolute priority'.⁴¹

A December 2020 article by Pradip Phanjoubam, the editor of the Imphal Review of Arts and Politics, also notes that while the NLD has made inroads into Myanmar's ethnic states, many think their 'victory by the first-past-the-post system may be deceptive, for though losing out on the number of seats, support bases of the defeated ethnic parties can still be very large'.⁴²

Issues raised in relation to the election process

While the NLD comfortably won the election, there has been criticism of the Myanmar government and the election process by rights groups and other commentators. In early October 2020, Human Rights Watch reported that 'Myanmar's electoral process is undermined by systemic problems and rights abuses that will deprive people of their right to fairly elect their government'. While it was a milestone for Myanmar to be holding a second multiparty election, Human Rights Watch stated that electoral problems included 'discriminatory citizenship and other laws that bar most Rohingya Muslim voters and candidates; reservation of 25 percent of parliamentary seats for the military; criminal prosecutions of government critics; unequal party access to government media; and the lack of an independent election commission and complaints resolution mechanism'.⁴³ Looking at those issues one by one:

Disenfranchisement of the Rohingya

Most Rohingya are reported to have been denied the right to vote in the election.⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch states that the Myanmar government was 'using the discriminatory 1982 Citizenship Law and the Election Law to disenfranchise Rohingya and prevent them from running for office, even though most Rohingya families have lived in Myanmar for generations'.⁴⁵ The US-based non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Carter Center, which monitored the election, also said in an interim statement on the elections that '[c]itizenship requirements based on the 1982 Citizenship Law continue to lead to unwarranted restrictions of fundamental political rights. Former temporary citizenship certificate holders who were disenfranchised prior to the 2015 elections – the majority of whom are Muslim Rohingya – have not had their voting rights reinstated. In addition, most prospective Rohingya candidates have been denied registration as candidates on citizenship grounds'.⁴⁶ According to the

³⁹ ['Myanmar's smooth election disguises systemic failure'](#), Mathieson, D S, Nikkei Asian Review, 10 November 2020, 20201111183539

⁴⁰ ['Myanmar Still Loves Aung San Suu Kyi, but Not for the Reasons You Think'](#), Zin, M, The New York Times, 23 November 2020, 20201124112622

⁴¹ ['Myanmar Still Loves Aung San Suu Kyi, but Not for the Reasons You Think'](#), Zin, M, The New York Times, 23 November 2020, 20201124112622

⁴² ['Suu Kyi stronger after Myanmar poll surprises'](#), Phanjoubam, P, The New Indian Express, 4 December 2020, 20201207122636

⁴³ ['Myanmar: Election Fundamentally Flawed'](#), Human Rights Watch, 5 October 2020, 20201015120523

⁴⁴ ['Majority Rules in Myanmar's Second Democratic Election'](#), International Crisis Group, Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°163, 22 October 2020, p.7, 20201027104924

⁴⁵ ['Myanmar: Election Fundamentally Flawed'](#), Human Rights Watch, 5 October 2020, 20201015120523

⁴⁶ ['Carter Center Interim Statement on Myanmar General Elections - October 13, 2020'](#), The Carter Center, 13 October 2020, p.1, 20201014165912

International Crisis Group, of the thirteen candidates put forward by Rohingya parties, six were disqualified on citizenship grounds, as were a further two Rohingya who had applied as independent candidates.⁴⁷

An *Associated Press* article published on 10 November 2020 refers to rights groups being critical of the government over the manner in which it had conducted the election, with a focus on the disenfranchisement of the Rohingya minority. Ismail Wolff, the regional director of Fortify Rights, said in a statement following the election that '[a] core principle of elections under international law is universal and equal suffrage and that is not what took place yesterday'. The group called on the international community to 'unequivocally condemn the disenfranchisement of Rohingya and other ethnic nationalities or risk paving the path for future violations'.⁴⁸ The group also expressed concerns about 'the government's continued crackdown on the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, including the arbitrary arrest and detention of civil society actors and activists'.⁴⁹

Reservation of 25 per cent of parliamentary seats for the military

Human Rights Watch notes that the reservation of 25 per cent of parliamentary seats for the military means '[a]ny party not affiliated with the military must win over two-thirds of the remaining seats to form a majority in the parliament, while military-affiliated parties need to win just over one-third of the seats to obtain an effective majority'.⁵⁰ In its 2015 landslide victory, the NLD won 86 per cent of all eligible seats in the lower house of parliament and was able to form government. Despite this, although the NLD campaigned on a platform of constitutional reform, it was unable to amend the constitution as this required 75 per cent support in parliament. Efforts since then to remove the military's veto had failed.⁵¹ In an article dated 13 November 2020 on the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's commentary and analysis site, *The Strategist*, Nicholas Coppel, a former diplomat who served as Australia's ambassador to Myanmar from 2015 to 2018, comments that the military-drafted 'constitution remains the biggest obstacle to free and fair elections. The intention of the drafters was to keep the military in de facto control under the guise of a civilian-led, popularly elected government'.⁵² While Myanmar's president chooses most ministers and the chief ministers of the 14 administrative regions and states (irrespective of the outcome of regional elections), the commander-in-chief chooses the ministers for defence, border affairs and home affairs. He 'is not answerable to any civilian or other authority and holds a monopoly on the coercive power of the state. The military also has extensive and opaque business interests. The military sees itself as the praetorian guard of national unity and stability, and the civilian side governs constrained by a fear of military reintervention'.⁵³

Criminal prosecution of government critics and unequal access to government media

In September 2020, 14 student protesters who had handed out pamphlets criticising the government and the military or taken part in small demonstrations against the conflict in Rakhine state were arrested. Another 30 students went into hiding to avoid arrest. A student group said some of the

⁴⁷ ['Majority Rules in Myanmar's Second Democratic Election'](#), International Crisis Group, Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°163, 22 October 2020, p.7, 20201027104924

⁴⁸ ['Suu Kyi's party claims to have won majority in Myanmar polls'](#), Winn, P S, Associated Press, 10 November 2020, 20201110134143; ['International Community: Condemn Mass Disenfranchisement And Irregularities In Myanmar's Elections'](#), Fortify Rights, 10 November 2020, 20201110132012

⁴⁹ ['Suu Kyi's party claims to have won majority in Myanmar polls'](#), Winn, P S, Associated Press, 10 November 2020, 20201110134143; ['International Community: Condemn Mass Disenfranchisement And Irregularities In Myanmar's Elections'](#), Fortify Rights, 10 November 2020, 20201110132012

⁵⁰ ['Myanmar: Election Fundamentally Flawed'](#), Human Rights Watch, 5 October 2020, 20201015120523

⁵¹ ['Myanmar: Election Fundamentally Flawed'](#), Human Rights Watch, 5 October 2020, 20201015120523

⁵² ['Suu Kyi wins strong popular mandate in Myanmar election'](#), Coppel, N, The Strategist, 13 November 2020, 20201113104140

⁵³ ['Suu Kyi wins strong popular mandate in Myanmar election'](#), Coppel, N, The Strategist, 13 November 2020, 20201113104140

students had been charged with offences that carry up to two years in jail.⁵⁴ In November 2020, *Reuters* reported that a campaign by activists of the All Burma Federation of Students Union (ABFSU), which had been behind anti-government protests and leaflet campaigns across the country in recent months and had urged a voter boycott of the election, had 'been met with a sharp crackdown. Nine have been sentenced, two of them to five years in prison, for causing public mischief among other charges, while 10 others are in police custody and more than a dozen are in hiding'.⁵⁵ Following the election, on 18 November 2020, two student anti-war protesters were sentenced by a court to a year in jail. Kyaw Ye Thu, president of the Student Union of Pyaw University, and Htet Aung, vice president of the ABFSU, had led protests against the conflict in Rakhine state.⁵⁶

An article in *The Economist* refers to the government repeatedly attempting to muzzle its critics in court, and the NLD suing critics of Ms Suu Kyi. The article also indicates that the 'government's litigiousness has had a chilling effect', with Zeya Thu, the editor of *The Voice Journal* saying that '[t]he press is less free now than it was during the final years of military rule'.⁵⁷

In early November 2020, Reporters without Borders condemned 'the many press freedom violations' that had marked the election campaign, and said press freedom had 'been treated with contempt by the current government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, in the run-up to these elections'. The group was critical of Myanmar's Union Election Commission for imposing 'prior censorship on all candidates seeking to broadcast campaign speeches on state-run media outlets, effectively barring opposition parties. They were told their speeches would be vetted in advance and could not contain content that "disrespects existing laws and the constitution," "defames (...) or tarnishes the image of the nation," or "defames the [armed forces]".'⁵⁸ Reporters without Borders said '[t]his censorship is all the more shocking because many privately-owned media outlets have been prevented from publishing or broadcasting during the Covid-19 pandemic because the government decided they were not "essential business" and journalists face up to three [sic] in prison if they violate the lockdown measures currently in force'. This had resulted in Myanmar's voters having 'been largely denied the media pluralism that should accompany an election campaign'.⁵⁹

Lack of an independent election commission and complaints resolution mechanism

Myanmar's election commission, which is appointed by the president, was criticised in the run-up to the election 'over alleged errors in voter lists, censorship of broadcasts by opposition parties, and the cancellation of voting in areas affected by insurgencies'.⁶⁰ According to Fortify Rights, monitors had raised 'questions about the impartiality of the Union Election Commission (UEC) and rulings that censored opposition political parties and facilitated the disenfranchisement of voters based on their

⁵⁴ ['Myanmar Accelerates Arrests of Student Anti-War Protesters'](#), Strangio, S, *The Diplomat*, 2 October 2020, 20201005121242; ['Campaigners say Myanmar students face jail over anti-war pamphlet protest'](#), *Reuters*, 30 September 2020, 20200930100244; ['Myanmar Arrests 14 For Anti-War Protests. While 30 More Remain in Hiding'](#), *Radio Free Asia*, 30 September 2020, 20201001103050; ['Myanmar: Stop Prosecuting Peaceful Protesters'](#), *Human Rights Watch*, 23 September 2020, 20200929184434; ['Myanmar police detain student protesters in Rakhine state'](#), *Reuters*, 10 September 2020, 20200915134831

⁵⁵ ['A crushed student movement and shrinking hope ahead of Myanmar's election'](#), Aung, T T, *McPherson*, P, *Reuters*, 5 November 2020, 20201106095714

⁵⁶ ['Two Myanmar Students Sentenced to Year in Prison For Rakhine War Protest'](#), *Radio Free Asia*, 19 November 2020, 20201120171930; See also: ['Myanmar: Release Arbitrarily Detained Student Protesters and Cease Further Prosecutions'](#), *Amnesty International*, 23 November 2020, 20201124122535

⁵⁷ ['False start - Aung San Suu Kyi was supposed to set Burmese democracy free'](#), *The Economist*, 7 November 2020, 20201109095743; ['Two Reuters reporters freed in Myanmar after more than 500 days in jail'](#), *Lewis*, S, *Naing*, S, *Reuters*, 7 May 2019, 20201110094446

⁵⁸ ['Press freedom missing from Myanmar's parliamentary elections'](#), *Reporters without Borders*, 4 November 2020, 20201105145714

⁵⁹ ['Press freedom missing from Myanmar's parliamentary elections'](#), *Reporters without Borders*, 4 November 2020, 20201105145714

⁶⁰ ['Myanmar's army-backed party alleges 'contentious events' during election'](#), *Naing*, S, *Reuters*, 11 November 2020, 20201111091133

ethnic and religious identity'.⁶¹ An article in *The Economist* refers to the election commission as 'an easy target' in relation to claims that the poll was unfair. The commission 'is appointed by the president, an NLD stalwart. It did not publish the final number of registered voters until after voting started. It disqualified candidates well into the campaign. Citing security worries, it did not hold elections in several states, disenfranchising 1.5m voters, mainly from ethnic minorities'. The article also notes that yet, on the day of the election, the Carter Center 'found "no major irregularities"'.⁶²

In its preliminary statement on the election, the Carter Center comments that '[t]he UEC exercised wide discretionary powers to regulate the process and has undertaken laudable efforts to update the voter roll, train election officials, and adapt procedures for voters vulnerable to COVID-19. However, the UEC's decision-making lacked transparency and openness in some instances, and it did not provide public access to timely election data'. Decisions by the UEC 'on election cancellations and postponements, which disenfranchised some 1.4 million voters and will leave 22 seats in the national parliament vacant, were not supported by transparent criteria set out in advance'.⁶³

In relation to the cancellation of elections in several states, mainly disenfranchising voters from ethnic minorities,⁶⁴ the UEC had announced the cancellations of elections in 56 townships due to security concerns on 16 October 2020. In 15 of those townships, the elections were fully cancelled, while the remaining 41 townships had their elections partially cancelled.⁶⁵ The Carter Center notes that following the cancellations, which occurred in Bago Region and Kachin, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan states, the UEC's decisions were criticised 'as opaque by a range of political parties and stakeholders. Criticisms emphasized the failure to explain inconsistencies in the assessment of security conditions and the disproportionate effect on voters and contestants in ethnic minority areas'.⁶⁶ Subsequently, there were 'additional cancellations announced in 94 of Paletwa's 95 village tracts, while postponements were rescinded in one ward and nine village tracts within five townships. The cancellations and postponements resulted in 22 seats in the Union Parliament and 32 seats in Rakhine (20) and Shan (12) state parliaments being vacant, and an estimated 1.4 million voters being disfranchised, including up to 1 million in Rakhine State alone'.⁶⁷

An article in *Deutsche Welle* notes that while the UEC said the cancellation of the vote in certain areas 'was due to the dangers of ongoing combat between government forces and ethnic minority guerrillas', critics had 'suggested certain areas were singled out for cancellation because they were certain to elect lawmakers from parties hostile to the current government'.⁶⁸ Another article dated 11 November 2020 in *The Conversation* by Adam Simpson, the Program Director, Masters of Communication at the University of South Australia, and Nicholas Farrelly, the head of the of Social Sciences School at the University of Tasmania, notes that in Rakhine and Chin states, 'elections were able to be held in NLD strongholds less affected by the conflict between the military and the Buddhist ethnic Rakhine Arakan Army, while voting was cancelled in areas held by ethnic minority parties'. It is stated in the article that '[b]ecause the decision to call off the voting in these areas benefited the NLD, it called into question the independence of the Election Commission'.⁶⁹ The previously mentioned

⁶¹ ['International Community: Condemn Mass Disenfranchisement And Irregularities In Myanmar's Elections'](#), Fortify Rights, 10 November 2020, 20201110132012

⁶² ['Mother Suu does it again: Aung San Suu Kyi's party claims victory in Myanmar's election'](#), *The Economist*, 11 November 2020, 20201112123558

⁶³ ['Election Observation Mission: Myanmar, General Election, November 8, 2020: Preliminary Statement'](#), The Carter Center, 10 November 2020, p.2, 20201111132812

⁶⁴ ['Mother Suu does it again: Aung San Suu Kyi's party claims victory in Myanmar's election'](#), *The Economist*, 11 November 2020, 20201112123558

⁶⁵ ['Elections in Myanmar: 2020 General Elections: Frequently Asked Questions'](#), International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 3 November 2020, p.9, 20201110195323

⁶⁶ ['Election Observation Mission: Myanmar, General Election, November 8, 2020: Preliminary Statement'](#), The Carter Center, 10 November 2020, p.8, 20201111132812

⁶⁷ ['Election Observation Mission: Myanmar, General Election, November 8, 2020: Preliminary Statement'](#), The Carter Center, 10 November 2020, p.8, 20201111132812

⁶⁸ ['Myanmar election: Aung San Suu Kyi's party wins absolute majority'](#), *Deutsche Welle*, 13 November 2020, 20201116141639

⁶⁹ ['Aung San Suu Kyi wins big in Myanmar's elections, but will it bring peace — or restore her reputation abroad?'](#), Simpson, A, Farrelly, N, *The Conversation*, 11 November 2020, 20201112152601

article in the *Nikkei Asian Review* by David Scott Mathieson also comments that the deprivation of representation for a number of townships in Rakhine State, 'amounted to gerrymandering against the aspirations of the Arakan National Party, which won half of the state's seats in 2015 and was the NLD's main rival'.⁷⁰ According to the previously mentioned article in *The Diplomat* by Ben Dunant, regardless of whether the cancellation of voting in some ethnic minority areas amounted to gerrymandering, the deck was already stacked against ethnic parties due to the structure of Myanmar's winner-takes-all electoral system, 'in which smaller parties are easily sidelined from government regardless of how well they perform in certain areas of the country'.⁷¹ The International Crisis Group also comments that 'while the polls constitute an important step in consolidating electoral democracy in a country long associated with dictatorship, a first-past-the-post electoral system and a concentration of seats in the central Burman regions mean that minorities will again have limited representation'.⁷²

On 11 November 2020, the UEC had 'said it would hold elections in places where they had been cancelled once the areas became stable, though it did not explain how it would determine stability or when it planned to schedule the voting'.⁷³

Commentary

In summing up the result of the election, Nicholas Coppel, the former Australian ambassador to Myanmar from 2015 to 2018, in the previously mentioned article in *The Strategist*, comments that notwithstanding the imperfections of the elections, 'the results have been widely accepted as broadly reflective of the wishes of the people – other than their wish for Suu Kyi to be president'. He also states that '[t]he unambiguous NLD victory is a clear sign of the people's faith in the capacity of civilians to govern. This doesn't mean the military will now consent to constitutional reform, but the NLD is in a much stronger position to argue for it'.⁷⁴

Another article in *The Guardian* notes that '[m]any had hoped that Aung San Suu Kyi's election in 2015 would bring greater democratic freedoms, but her critics say she has failed to deliver on reforms or bring stability. While she promised to deliver peace, conflict in parts of the country, including Rakhine state, has only intensified, and anger among minorities has been heightened'. The article also refers to the comments of Richard Horsey, an independent political analyst based in Myanmar,⁷⁵ who says that '[a]fter five years in power the NLD is seen as a party of the Burman Buddhists in the centre – governing for them and in their interests'. Horsey also comments that while Aung San Suu Kyi is 'around things are pretty predictable. That means it is very bad for the Rohingya, and not too bad in terms of political stability at the centre of the country and relations between the military and the civilian government – which are tense and awkward [sic], but not mutually destructive'. Horsey says that '[i]f something were to happen to Aung San Suu Kyi, all bets are off'.⁷⁶ In an earlier article prior to the election, Richard Horsey said that 'in 2015 many ethnic minorities saw Suu Kyi's party as natural

⁷⁰ ['Myanmar's smooth election disguises systemic failure'](#), Mathieson, D S, *Nikkei Asian Review*, 10 November 2020, 2020111183539

⁷¹ ['Myanmar's Election Marks a Step Away From Peace'](#), Dunant, B, *The Diplomat*, 4 November 2020, 20201105134850

⁷² ['Majority Rules in Myanmar's Second Democratic Election'](#), International Crisis Group, Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°163, 22 October 2020, p.1, 20201027104924

⁷³ ['Groups Urge Elections in Myanmar Conflict Zones That Missed Nov. 8 Voting'](#), Radio Free Asia, 25 November 2020, 20201126175410

⁷⁴ ['Suu Kyi wins strong popular mandate in Myanmar election'](#), Coppel, N, *The Strategist*, 13 November 2020, 20201113104140

⁷⁵ Another article refers to Richard Horsey as a senior adviser on Myanmar for the International Crisis Group. See: ['Suu Kyi's godlike status drove her Myanmar election win. It threatens to rip the country apart.'](#), Mahtani, S and Diamond, C, *The Washington Post*, 18 November 2020, 20201119102035; See also: ['A crushed student movement and shrinking hope ahead of Myanmar's election'](#), Aung, T T, McPherson, P, Reuters, 5 November 2020, 20201106095714

⁷⁶ ['Aung San Suu Kyi's party returns to power in Myanmar'](#), Ratcliffe, R, *The Guardian*, 13 November 2020, 20201116124409

allies', but they had 'now come to see the NLD as an adversary, governing in the interests of the majority'.⁷⁷

The article in *The New York Times* by Min Zin, the executive director of the Institute for Strategy and Policy-Myanmar, indicates that while the incumbent NLD had benefited from various structural features created by the previous military regime, '[t]he N.L.D.'s resounding victory speaks to Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi's ability, still, to rally voters in opposition to the military and its political proxies, and in the name of democratic development'. According to the article, 'the civil-military divide remains the most important political issue for many people in Myanmar, whatever misgivings they might have about the N.L.D.'s governance'.⁷⁸ Min Zin also comments that '[s]ome ethnic voters seem to have voted for the N.L.D., a strong and established party, rather than their real first choice – a small ethnic party – because defeating the military's proxies remained an absolute priority'.⁷⁹

The previously mentioned article in *The Diplomat* by Ben Dunant states that '[i]f the election is to be considered a milestone, it is not in journey towards a liberal democracy that protects minority interests and tolerates dissent. Instead it marks the consolidation of a curious type of hybrid regime shared between a monolithic political party and the armed forces, both of which are dominated by the Bamar, the ethnic group that accounts for roughly two-thirds of the population. Under this arrangement, the military has autonomy and can wage war against ethnic minority militias as and when it likes'.⁸⁰ This arrangement had 'proven stable. And despite its very clear limitations, it has delivered personal and political freedoms and economic growth that few thought possible a decade ago'. Dunant also states, however, that 'to say that the gains in freedom and prosperity have not been evenly shared would be a gross understatement. To be a villager in northern Rakhine State in Myanmar's west, where the military and insurgent Arakan Army are locked in the heaviest fighting the country has seen in decades, is to be in a far worse plight than 10 years ago', while the ill-treatment of the Rohingya had 'increased in lockstep with the extension of democratic rights to the majority'.⁸¹ According to Dunant, '[t]he suffering of these minority groups is not evidence of Myanmar "backsliding" into dictatorship, but of its evolution into an illiberal, majoritarian democracy, in which the government is increasingly responsive to majority demands, but where the only protected minority interest is the military, which still controls key security ministries and retains a quarter of all parliamentary seats'.⁸²

Dunant, whose article was published in the week before the election, also notes that '[d]espite its deep flaws, we're approaching an election that will in all likelihood deliver a government with a strong popular mandate', and that 'the majority in Myanmar will be happy, having elected a government of their choosing. The unrepresented minority, meanwhile, will be ignored'.⁸³

The previously mentioned article in the *Nikkei Asian Review* by David Scott Mathieson also comments that for the majority of the population, who live in regions that strongly support the NLD, 'it was an election that consolidated democratic progress', while '[i]n ethnic-minority areas the near future will be different'.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ ['A crushed student movement and shrinking hope ahead of Myanmar's election'](#), Aung, T T, McPherson, P, Reuters, 5 November 2020, 20201106095714

⁷⁸ ['Myanmar Still Loves Aung San Suu Kyi, but Not for the Reasons You Think'](#), Zin, M, The New York Times, 23 November 2020, 20201124112622

⁷⁹ ['Myanmar Still Loves Aung San Suu Kyi, but Not for the Reasons You Think'](#), Zin, M, The New York Times, 23 November 2020, 20201124112622

⁸⁰ ['Myanmar's Election Marks a Step Away From Peace'](#), Dunant, B, The Diplomat, 4 November 2020, 20201105134850

⁸¹ ['Myanmar's Election Marks a Step Away From Peace'](#), Dunant, B, The Diplomat, 4 November 2020, 20201105134850

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⁸³ ['Myanmar's Election Marks a Step Away From Peace'](#), Dunant, B, The Diplomat, 4 November 2020, 20201105134850

⁸⁴ ['Myanmar's smooth election disguises systemic failure'](#), Mathieson, D S, Nikkei Asian Review, 10 November 2020, 20201111183539

Post-election developments

Following the election, the USDP demanded a re-run of the election, claiming it had not been held in a fair manner. It then dropped that demand, but requested a recount of votes. The military, after distancing itself from calls for a new election, subsequently announced it would review the electoral process for fraud. On 21 November 2020, a newly elected MP for the NLD was shot dead by an unidentified gunman in northern Shan state. In December 2020, the daughter of a medical assistant in the Myanmar military, who had claimed that she and her family were pressured to vote for the military-backed USDP in the November election, was sentenced to nine months in prison at hard labour.

On 11 November 2020, the USDP demanded a re-run of the parliamentary election and called for the military's help to ensure fairness. The party called on the 'authorities to hold another contest as soon as possible "in order to have an election that is free, fair, unbiased and free from unfair campaigning"'. The USDP alleged there were irregularities including poor-quality ballot boxes and envelopes, advanced voting problems and government cash handouts that it said amounted to NLD bribes. It also said celebratory gatherings by NLD supporters breached coronavirus restrictions. According to *Reuters*, the USDP's 'challenge comes after weeks of unverified content and disinformation spread on social media about electoral fraud or irregularities before the ballot'. The NLD had demanded proof of wrongdoing. The election commission said the allegations were from a minority of participants, with a commissioner saying there was 'no evidence that it was not a free and fair election'.⁸⁵ *The Economist* commented that the USDP's demand 'that the election commission "hold a new election again, co-operating with the military" ... will only strengthen Mother Suu's appeal'.⁸⁶

On 16 November 2020, it was reported that a military spokesman had said the USDP's 'call for re-running the election in coordination with the military does not reflect the Tatmadaw's view'.⁸⁷ It was reported the next day that the USDP had filed over 600 complaints about alleged malpractice in the November election.⁸⁸ This number had increased to more than 1,000 complaints by December.⁸⁹

On 26 November 2020, it was reported that the USDP had 'dropped the demand for another election', but was demanding a recount of votes cast in the election. The USDP said that 'it and other opposition parties had sent an open letter to President Win Myint on Nov. 24, claiming electoral fraud'.⁹⁰ On 30 November 2020, Myanmar's military released a statement announcing it would review the electoral process to determine whether it was conducted in accordance with the law. The announcement came a few days after the USDP complained that its calls for a probe of the election and the UEC had been ignored.⁹¹ On 3 December 2020, it was reported that the UEC had instructed its sub-commissions not to hand out electoral documentation without its permission after the military had called for documents to be provided in its probe into claims of fraud in the election.⁹²

On 12 November 2020, the NLD had 'sent a letter to 48 ethnic political parties inviting them to join it in building a federal democratic union and "ending civil war."'⁹³ In the letter, the NLD had 'said it would

⁸⁵ ['Myanmar opposition demands vote re-run as Suu Kyi's NLD heads for victory'](#), Naing, S, *Reuters*, 11 November 2020, 20201112092716

⁸⁶ ['Mother Suu does it again: Aung San Suu Kyi's party claims victory in Myanmar's election'](#), *The Economist*, 11 November 2020, 20201112123558

⁸⁷ ['USDP's Call to Re-Run General Election Doesn't Reflect Military View: Spokesman'](#), Zaw, H N, *The Irrawaddy*, 16 November 2020, 20201117093206

⁸⁸ ['Myanmar's Main Opposition Party Files 630 Electoral Complaints'](#), Aung, S Y, *Irrawaddy*, The, 17 November 2020, 20201118154900

⁸⁹ ['Myanmar Military Launches Review of Election After Proxy Party Cries Foul'](#), Aung, S Y, *The Irrawaddy*, 1 December 2020, 20201216133438

⁹⁰ ['Myanmar military-linked opposition demands election recount'](#), Diamond, C, *Nikkei Asian Review*, 26 November 2020, 20201127183711

⁹¹ ['Myanmar Military Launches Review of Election After Proxy Party Cries Foul'](#), Aung, S Y, *The Irrawaddy*, 1 December 2020, 20201216133438

⁹² ['Myanmar's Election Body Rejects Military Moves to Seize Voting Documents'](#), Htun, H, *The Irrawaddy*, 3 December 2020, 20201207123346

⁹³ ['Myanmar Still Loves Aung San Suu Kyi, but Not for the Reasons You Think'](#), Zin, M, *The New York Times*, 23 November 2020, 20201124112622

give priority to the wishes of ethnic people and invited the parties to join in building a federal union. The NLD's central committee leaders also said the political overture is to include the ethnic parties in a future national unity government'.⁹⁴ The article in *The New York Times* by Min Zin comments that this was 'a welcome step, and it suggests that the N.L.D. is aware that even its apparently commanding mandate and ringing popularity have political limits in such a divided society. The risk, though, is that the party might only be gesturing at a government of national unity and will then try to co-opt the ethnic parties with various political rewards'.⁹⁵

The NLD condemned the killing on 21 November 2020 of a newly elected MP for the party, who was shot dead by an unidentified gunman in northern Shan state.⁹⁶ Myanmar political parties and ethnic armies were also reported to have condemned the shooting two weeks after a largely peaceful nationwide vote. It was not immediately clear if the killing was politically motivated.⁹⁷

On 4 December 2020, a Myanmar court sentenced Thinzar Than Min from Pakokku in Magway Region to nine months in prison at hard labour after she had claimed that she and her family were pressured to vote for the military-backed USDP in the November election. She had placed a post on Facebook in September 2020 in which she said she would vote for the NLD despite pressure from the military, where her father is employed as a medical assistant. She was convicted under Section 505(a) of the Penal Code, which makes it 'a crime to publish or circulate any "statement, rumor or report ... with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, any officer, soldier, sailor or airman, in the Army, Navy or Air Force to mutiny or otherwise disregard or fail in his duty as such."' She is also reported to face potential charges under sections 66(d) and 68(a) of the Telecommunications Law.⁹⁸

On 7 December 2020, it was reported that an informal ceasefire between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army in Rakhine State had held since 12 November 2020, when the Arakan Army had issued a statement requesting the government and the military to hold by-elections by the end of the year in nine townships in the north of the state where the UEC had cancelled elections. The Arakan Army had also pledged to observe a unilateral ceasefire to enable the vote to proceed. The military had welcomed the announcement and said it would do its best to ensure that the by-election would go ahead. There had been no indication from the UEC regarding possible elections.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ ['Myanmar's Ethnic Parties Cautiously Optimistic About Outreach From Victorious NLD'](#), Pwint, N L H, The Irrawaddy, 25 November 2020, 20201126172304

⁹⁵ ['Myanmar Still Loves Aung San Suu Kyi, but Not for the Reasons You Think'](#), Zin, M, The New York Times, 23 November 2020, 20201124112622

⁹⁶ ['Myanmar's ruling party denounces post-poll violence after MP-elect shot dead'](#), Reuters, 22 November 2020, 20201123092025

⁹⁷ ['Shooting Death of Newly Elected Myanmar Lawmaker Condemned as 'Lawless Act''](#), Radio Free Asia, 23 November 2020, 20201125110814

⁹⁸ ['Myanmar: Arrest for Alleging Voter Intimidation'](#), Human Rights Watch, 9 December 2020, 20201211114514; See also: ['Army Officer's Daughter Jailed for Claiming Pressure to Vote for Military Proxy Party'](#), Aung, S Y, The Irrawaddy, 7 December 2020, 20201208075839

⁹⁹ ['Ceasefire Raises Hopes of Elections in Myanmar's Rakhine State'](#), Strangio, S, The Diplomat, 7 December 2020, 20201208081318



Resource Guide 2020

Myanmar

Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS)

Effective from 20 April 2020

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[United States Institute of Peace](#)

7.5.2 Regional

[Asia Foundation](#)

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7.5.3 Domestic

[Assistance Association for Political Prisoners \(Burma\)](#)

[Burma Human Rights Network](#)

[Centre for Diversity and National Harmony](#) (See especially their 'State of Social Harmony' and 'Citizen Voices' reports)

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