



1 September 2025

To: H.E. Takeshi Iwaya, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

**Open letter: Myanmar civil society welcomes Japan's rejection of junta's sham election, urges further principled action**

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned Myanmar and Japanese civil society organizations, welcome Your Excellency's [statement](#) of 1 August 2025, expressing grave concern regarding the worsening crisis in Myanmar and the Myanmar military junta's plan to hold a so-called election in December 2025. We particularly appreciate Japan's recognition that any election conducted under current conditions—without the release of political prisoners and amid escalating junta attacks on civilians, including airstrikes—will only fuel stronger public resistance and further hinder prospects for peace.

This clear statement from Japan sends an important message to the military junta that the international community will not acquiesce, endorse, or be complicit in accepting its fabricated legitimacy. It is well established that the junta has neither the legal right nor the political legitimacy necessary to conduct any election in Myanmar; it further lacks the effective territorial and administrative control to do so.

Your Excellency's statement also shows the people of Myanmar that Japan is clearly responding to their voices, as the people have repeatedly called for the unequivocal rejection of the junta's sham election by the international community. The junta's recent lifting of the state of emergency is not a genuine step toward progress, but rather a move to pave the way for its sham election. Despite the formal lifting of state of emergency, the junta has extended martial law in 63 townships and significantly escalated airstrikes and artillery shelling in various areas where it has lost effective control to the democratic resistance movement. These intensified attacks aim to further devastate civilian populations—who have suffered severe junta attacks, particularly since the earthquake in March—as well as to suppress resistance forces ahead of the sham election. Likewise, the junta's corresponding name change from "State Administration Council" to "State Security and Peace Commission" is a calculated attempt intending to disguise the military junta as a civilian institution and deceive the international community. Placing hope in the military's sincerity—as expressed in your statement—will not lead to meaningful change.

We recognize Japan's longstanding engagement with ASEAN, and welcome Japan's alignment with [ASEAN's principled position](#) that the junta's sham election is not a solution and will only prolong

Myanmar's crisis and deepen the suffering of its people. By reinforcing this unequivocal consensus, Japan has the opportunity to take a leadership role within the wider international community to reject the junta's attempts to manufacture legitimacy as it has continued to commit atrocity crimes against Myanmar's people with complete impunity. We urge the Japanese government to actively collaborate closely with other democratic nations to ensure the junta's sham election does not occur and to robustly support the Myanmar people's ongoing efforts to build genuine federal democracy.

In the coming months, we expect that Japan will continue to match its strong words with sustained and principled action. We urge Japan to take concrete actions to strengthen global opposition to the junta's sham election, diminish the junta's capacity to commit atrocity crimes against the Myanmar people, and ensure humanitarian assistance reaches the most vulnerable communities through border-based channels. We further call on Japan to immediately cease all engagements with and support to the military junta, and to instead engage formally and meaningfully with Myanmar's democratic stakeholders and legitimate representatives in support of the people's democracy-building efforts. Moral leadership and principled diplomacy from Japan will be critical in preventing the illegal junta from advancing its sham election that would only deepen violence and instability in Myanmar and the region.

While Japan's public rejection of the junta's sham election plan is a step in the right direction, we remain deeply concerned that the junta may be benefiting from the Japanese government's other engagements including Official Development Assistance (ODA) and public funds. The receipt of these funds could further enable the junta's sham election and its atrocities against the people. We therefore reiterate the [calls](#) of civil society organizations urging the Japanese government to suspend all ongoing yen loan projects.

Today, the people of Myanmar are making immense efforts and sacrifices to build a genuine federal democracy and sustainable peace from the ground up. As such, we sincerely appreciate Japan's recognition of the Myanmar people's democratic aspirations in the face of the junta's relentless violence against them. Going forward, we trust that Japan will sustain a principled approach and firm commitment to democracy, human rights, and peace in Myanmar by heeding the Myanmar people's calls and supporting their efforts to end military tyranny and establish a genuine federal democracy.

Yours sincerely,

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Friends of the Earth Japan  
Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)  
Network Against Japan Arms Trade (NAJAT)  
Mekong Watch  
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