

*English translation of the original Japanese letter.*

27 April, 2026

To:

H.E. Sanae Takaichi, Prime Minister of Japan

H.E. Toshimitsu Motegi, Foreign Minister of Japan

**Request Letter: Calling on the Government of Japan not to recognize the new Myanmar military regime and provide concrete support to resolve armed conflict in the country**

Your Excellencies,

We are Japanese civil society organizations with serious concerns regarding the violence and turmoil intensifying in Myanmar following the military-led coup on 1 February 2021.

In Myanmar, between December 2025 to January 2026, what was called an “election” was held to select members of both houses of parliament, where only pro-military parties and military-aligned parties were able to field candidates. This was carried out by the Myanmar military in order to legitimize its rule through the appearance of a transfer to civilian government and was far from a free and fair election.

In this sham election, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) won more than 70% of the seats.<sup>1</sup> The Myanmar military’s propaganda newspaper reported that a parliamentary vote was held among members of the Union Parliament composed of these party members, and that former Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing was elected as the new president.<sup>2</sup> However, for the reasons set out below, the Japanese government must not recognize this new military regime as Myanmar’s new government.

The sham election was carefully orchestrated by the junta, which suppressed people’s freedom of speech and political participation through election-related laws and the “Election Protection Law” that includes the death penalty, dissolved the National League for Democracy (NLD) which had been the ruling party, and excluded all opposition parties.<sup>3</sup> In the end, voting was conducted in three phases across 265 townships, but this process was not carried out in 20% of the country due to “security reasons”.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, this sham election was carried out in a context where as of 1 December 2025, nearly 7,503 people had been killed and more than 22,000 people had been arbitrarily detained by the Myanmar military junta according to confirmed cases alone.<sup>5</sup> Since the coup, the Myanmar military

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<sup>1</sup> The Nikkei. “Myanmar General Election: Non-Military-Aligned Parties Receive Majority of Votes — Democratic and Ethnic Minority Parties” (2026/2/11) <https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOGM10BPL0Q6A210C2000000/>

<sup>2</sup> Global New Lights of Myanmar. “Senior General Min Aung Hlaing Elected as President” (2026/4/4) <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/senior-general-min-aung-hlaing-elected-as-president/>

<sup>3</sup> Progressive Voice. “Briefing Paper: Recent Developments Regarding the Myanmar Military Junta’s Sham Election Plan” (2025/11) <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2025/11/03/briefing-paper-recent-developments-regarding-the-myanmar-military-juntas-sham-election-plan>

<sup>4</sup> JETRO. “Myanmar holds first general election since the coup — military-affiliated party wins majority” <https://www.jetro.go.jp/biz/areareports/2026/c212001fc11a5fd2.html>

<sup>5</sup> Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. Daily Briefing in Relation to the Military Coup (2025/12/1) <https://aappb.org/daily-briefing-in-relation-to-the-military-coup-1242/>

has conducted 11,335 aerial attacks. These attacks have resulted in 5,478 confirmed deaths and 9,298 injuries, and reports indicate that 160 health facilities, 474 educational facilities, and 720 religious buildings have been destroyed (data through March 2026).<sup>6</sup> Many civilians, including children, have been killed and injured in these attacks.

The resolution on Myanmar adopted at the 61st session of the UN Human Rights Council,<sup>7</sup> which was held from February to March 2026, also strongly condemned the following:

- The Myanmar military's attempts to legitimize its coup of February 2021 through the conduct of elections that were neither free nor fair nor inclusive, the election-related aerial bombings and violence that killed and injured civilians and led to increased political imprisonment and the Myanmar military's so-called Protection of Multiparty Democratic General Elections from Obstruction, Disruption and Destruction Law, which has been applied to prevent and punish political expression and freedom of speech and has resulted in intimidation, arbitrary arrests, political imprisonment and torture and other ill-treatment.
- The lack of progress by the Myanmar military in the implementation of Security Council resolution 2669 (2022) and the five-point consensus of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).<sup>8</sup>

We welcome the statement made by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, Minoru Kihara during the 3 April 2026 Chief Cabinet Secretary Press Conference that the government will strengthen its efforts to improve the situation in Myanmar.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, we are concerned that he refrained from commenting on the selection of the "new president", stating that he would decline from commenting on the internal affairs of another country.

During the House of Councillors "Special Committee on Official Development Assistance, International Cooperation, Humanitarian Assistance and Related Matters",<sup>10</sup> held on 1 April, when a member of the House of Councillors, Michihiro Ishibashi, questioned the Japanese government about whether it recognizes Myanmar's "new government", Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi responded that Japan has not appointed an ambassador but instead has only a chargé d'affaires, and that Japan "has not sought the approval of agrément [the procedure by which the receiving state gives prior consent to the appointment of a diplomatic envoy]". This is not a clear rejection of the military regime in which the former Commander-in-Chief has become a "new president". We are concerned that, depending on how the situation develops, this leaves open the possibility of recognizing this military regime born of a fraudulent process.

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<sup>6</sup> National Unity Government, Ministry of Human Rights. Aerial Attacks by Military Junta Data Dashboard <https://mohr.nugmyanmar.org/en/aerial-attacks-by-military-junta-data-dashboard/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/L.24/Rev.1>

<sup>8</sup> ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus.

<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/Chairmans-Statement-on-ALM-Five-Point-Consensus-24-April-2021-FINAL-a-1.pdf>

1. First, there shall be immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar and all parties shall exercise utmost restraint.

2. Second, constructive dialogue among all parties concerned shall commence to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people.

3. Third, a special envoy of the ASEAN Chair shall facilitate mediation of the dialogue process, with the assistance of the Secretary-General of ASEAN.

4. Fourth, ASEAN shall provide humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre.

5. Fifth, the special envoy and delegation shall visit Myanmar to meet with all parties concerned.

<sup>9</sup> Press Conference by Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Sato (Apr. 3 - Afternoon)

[https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/tyoukanpress/202604/3\\_p.html](https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/tyoukanpress/202604/3_p.html)

<sup>10</sup> The recording can be viewed on the "House of Councillors Internet deliberation relay" site <https://www.webtv.sangiin.go.jp/webtv/index.php>

The Japanese government has repeatedly expressed its support for the Five-Point Consensus on Myanmar announced at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on 24 April, 2021.<sup>11</sup> However, ASEAN member states have not been aligned in their response to the sham election. Cambodia and Vietnam have dispatched election observers,<sup>12</sup> and it has been reported that Thailand has sent a congratulatory message on the inauguration of the "new president".<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, this year's ASEAN chair, the Philippines, clearly stated at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in January that ASEAN has not yet endorsed the election at this stage.<sup>14</sup>

Japan has consistently emphasized the importance of cooperation and coordination with ASEAN in the Foreign Minister's statements on the situation in Myanmar issued on 1 February every year since the coup. However, it is not possible to realize the Five-Point Consensus if ASEAN lacks a unified approach. When Myanmar began its transition to civilian rule in 2010, Japan was actively involved in reducing Myanmar's debt and subsequently supported the country's economic growth through official development assistance (ODA). Japan should also have good diplomatic relations with ASEAN member states, grounded in more than 50 years of friendship and cooperation with ASEAN.

In light of these situations, we call on the Japanese government take the following actions:

- Publicly declare to the international community that Japan will not recognize the sham government claiming to have established itself on the basis of the election results as the legitimate government of Myanmar.
- Urge ASEAN member states not to recognize Myanmar's sham government as the country's legitimate government.
- Cooperate with ASEAN to ensure the cessation of violence as required by ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus.
- Strongly urge the Myanmar military to swiftly and effectively implement ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus.
- Urge all countries to comply with the UN resolutions and halt the transfer and diversion of weapons, ammunition, and arms equipment to Myanmar.
- Strengthen humanitarian assistance through Myanmar and Japanese civil society.

We would also like to add that in order to lead these actions convincingly on the international stage, the Japanese government itself must immediately suspend ODA projects and publicly funded projects connected to the Myanmar military's business interests.

Yours Sincerely,

**The Undersigned,**

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<sup>11</sup> ASEAN Leaders' Meeting (Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs MOTEGI Toshimitsu) (2021/4/27)

[https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/danwa/press6e\\_000285.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/danwa/press6e_000285.html)

Chairman's Statement, the 25th ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting (Vientiane, Lao PDR, 27 July 2024)

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100709373.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> JETRO. "Myanmar holds first general election since the coup — military-affiliated party wins majority"

<https://www.jetro.go.jp/biz/areareports/2026/c212001fc11a5fd2.html>

Global New Lights of Myanmar. "International and embassy observers monitor 2025 multiparty general election in Nay Pyi Taw" (2025/12/29)

<https://www.gnlm.com.mm/international-and-embassy-observers-monitor-2025-multiparty-general-election-in-nay-pyi-taw/>

<sup>13</sup> The Nikkei. "Thai PM Congratulates Military Regime Leader — Myanmar Presidential Selection — Sign of Full-Scale Relationship Improvement?" (2026/4/9)

<https://www.sankei.com/article/20260409-ESJFOG3LVBZGZPAYZBKI3U5NYE/>

<sup>14</sup> AP. "ASEAN does not recognize Myanmar's elections, which military-backed party claims to have won" (2026/1/29)

<https://apnews.com/article/asean-philippines-international-law-conflict-c1651405c9f7883970ec26f02cd388>

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

**Endorsing Organizations:**

Atutu Myanmar  
Act with Our Constitution  
Africa Japan Forum  
Asia Japan Women's Resource Center  
Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (HURIGHTS OSAKA)  
Asian Health Institute  
Burmese Relief Center Japan  
EarthTree  
Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines  
Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society (JACSES)  
Japan Overseas Christian Medical Cooperative Service  
Japan Tropical Forest Action Network (JATAN)  
Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP)  
Meeting to hear the appeals of citizens of Myanmar (Burma)  
minparen  
Music Dream Creation  
Myanmar International Assistance Organization  
Myanmar News Now  
Network for Indonesian Democracy (NINDJA)  
Nipponzan Myohoji  
Peace Boat  
Religious Network for Building Peace  
Services for the Health in Asian & African Regions (SHARE)  
The Takagi Fund for Citizen Science  
Women's Active Museum on War and Peace(WAM)  
Women's Democratic Club, Femin

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