



ROHINGYA PRESS

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MYANMAR FORMS INTERIM GOVERNMENT BEFORE ELECTION BUT TOP GENERAL STILL IN CHARGE

Myanmar's military on Thursday nominally transferred power to a civilian-led interim government ahead of a planned election, with the junta chief remaining in charge of the war-torn country in his other role as acting president. An announcement in state media said a decree that granted power to the military after its 2021 coup had been cancelled and a caretaker administration had been formed alongside a special commission to oversee the election.

The move signals no change to the status quo in Myanmar, with coup leader Min Aung Hlaing holding on to all major levers of power as acting president while retaining his position as chief of the armed forces. A nationwide state of emergency in place since the coup, which was due to expire on Thursday after seven

extensions, has now been lifted, said Zaw Min Tun, a government spokesperson.

"The interim president and commander in chief said this upcoming six months are the time to prepare and host the election," he told state media. Myanmar has been in chaos since the coup against Aung San Suu Kyi's elected civilian government plunged the Southeast Asian nation into civil war, with the military fighting to contain a rebellion and accused of widespread atrocities, which it denies.

The election has been dismissed by Western governments as a sham to entrench the generals' power and is expected to be dominated by proxies of the military, with opposition groups either barred from running or refusing to take part. David Mathieson, an independent Myanmar-focused analyst, said the change in power was

cosmetic and those in charge would continue to be abusive and repressive. "They are just rearranging the same pieces and calling the regime a new name," he said. "This is part of preparations for an election which we don't know much about."

WAR RAGING

The extent of the civil war's impact on the planned election remains unclear. In an effort to create voter rolls, the junta held a nationwide census last year but was only able to conduct it in 145 out of Myanmar's 330 townships – reflecting its lack of control over swathes of the country.

At a meeting of defence officials on Thursday, Min Aung Hlaing said voting in the election would be held in different areas in December and January due to security concerns, state-run MRTV reported in its nightly news bulletin.

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Source: reuters.com

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"REFUGEES OR ILLEGAL ENTRANTS?": TOP COURT ON ROHINGYAS' STATUS IN INDIA

The Supreme Court on Thursday said the first major issue to be dealt with in cases concerning Rohingyas is whether they are refugees or illegal entrants.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta and N Kotiswar Singh said once that is decided, the other issues might be consequential.

The court observed this while hearing a batch of pleas concerning Rohingyas in the country.

"The first major issue is simple, are they refugees or illegal entrants," Justice Kant observed.

The bench took note of the broad issues that arise for its consideration in the pleas relating to Rohingyas. "Whether the Rohingyas are entitled to be declared as refugees? If so, what protections, privileges or rights they are entitled to?" the bench said.

It said the second issue is if the Rohingyas are not refugees and are illegal entrants, whether the action of the Centre and states in deporting them was justified.

"Even if the Rohingyas have been held to be illegal entrants, can they be detained indefinitely or they are entitled to be released on bail, subject to such conditions as the court may deem fit to be imposed?" it asked.

The court said the other issue raised in the petitions is whether the Rohingyas, who have not been detained and are living in refugee camps, have been provided basic amenities like drinking water, sanitation and education.

"If the Rohingyas are illegal entrants, whether the Government of India and the states are obligated to deport them in accordance with law," it noted. The bench segregated the pleas in three groups -- one relating to Rohingyas, another not pertaining to the issue of Rohingyas and one plea that it said pertains to a different matter altogether.

It said the three groups of matters would be determined separately and it would fix those for hearing on consecutive Wednesdays.

The bench indicated that on the point of those who were

found to be illegal entrants and on the question of the State's responsibility to deport them, it could only lay down the principles.

During the hearing, the bench asked why these petitions were tagged for hearing.

The counsel appearing for the petitioners said there were overlapping issues in the pleas and one of the core issues pertained to the detention of Rohingyas.

One of the lawyers said the Rohingyas cannot be detained indefinitely.

On May 16, the supreme court had rapped some petitioners who had claimed that 43 Rohingya refugees, including women and children, were dropped in the Andaman sea for deportation to Myanmar and said "when the country is passing through a difficult time, you come out with fanciful ideas". "Refugees Or Illegal Entrants?": Top Court On Rohingyas' Status In IndiaThe court said the other issue raised is whether the Rohingyas, who have not been detained and are living in refugee camps, have been provided basic amenities.

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