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MYANMAR’S DECEMBER ELECTION: ENGINEERING CONTINUITY THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL REDESIGN



On December 28, Myanmar will begin its long-delayed election process. The National Defence and Security Council (NDSC) — controlled by the military — is the only remaining body with constitutional legitimacy after the coup and has set the date as the first phase of a staggered process. However, under current conditions, only about one-third of constituencies are expected to participate in the elections.

This arrangement ensures that the State Security and Peace Commission (SSPC), a transitional body set up by NDSC, will retain its mandate and control beyond the polls through a supervisory role over subsequent phases, even if a new parliament and administration are formally installed. The Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces, or MAF) has redesigned the political process and structure to allow for its continued grip on power.

Institutional (Re)design
In the August 1 reshuffle, the Burmese military dissolved the State Administration Council and introduced an interim governance system to be in place until the election. In this system, NDSC sits at the top as the origin of authority for government institutions. Under NDSC, SSPC and the cabinet stand in parallel but retain very unbalanced duties and weights.

The cabinet, led by Prime Minister Nyo Saw, is tasked with managing day-to-day government administration. The SSPC, however, holds seniority, directing political strategy and electoral management.

The relationship between SSPC and NDSC is deliberately complex and tricky. On the surface, the SSPC and cabinet derive their legitimacy and mandate from the NDSC.

Source: stimson.org

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ROHINGYA REFUGEES & THE ROHINGYA CRISIS: WHAT TO KNOW AND HOW TO HELP

In 2017, Myanmar’s military launched a campaign against the Rohingya people, a persecuted ethnic minority. More than 700,000 Rohingya were forced to flee to neighboring Bangladesh—many escaping with only the clothes on their backs.



Today, over one million Rohingya refugees reside in overcrowded refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh. Without freedom to work or leave the camp, families rely almost entirely on humanitarian aid to survive.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is on the ground in Myanmar and Bangladesh, providing lifesaving support to Rohingya communities.

Who are the Rohingya?

The Rohingya are a predominantly Muslim ethnic group in Southeast Asia who have lived in Myanmar for hundreds of years. Despite this long history, in 1982 the Myanmar (then Burma) government passed a law that effectively stripped Rohingya of their citizenship. To this day,

the Rohingya continue to be deprived of citizenship, making them a largely stateless people.

This systemic discrimination has left the Rohingya vulnerable to violence, displacement and extreme poverty.

The Rohingya Crisis, explained

The Rohingya have endured decades of discrimination and attacks in Myanmar. In 2017, this persecution escalated into a full-blown humanitarian crisis.

After a Rohingya insurgent group attacked police outposts in Rakhine State, the Myanmar military launched a massive crackdown—not just on combatants, but on entire communities.

Thousands were killed and more than 700,000 Rohingya were forced to flee to neighboring Bangladesh. The U.N. special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar reported that “soldiers murdered, raped, and tortured Rohingya civilians and burned Rohingya villages to the ground.”

What do the Rohingya face today?

Nearly a decade after widespread violence erupted, the Rohingya refugee crisis is far from over. An estimated 200,000 Rohingya could flee to Bangladesh by the end of 2025, further straining an already underfunded and overstretched humanitarian response.

Source: rescue.org