

The elections will not lend any legitimacy to the military junta because everyone knows it's a silly election.

How we got here. The Australian government and various international actors misunderstood a number of factors and made a number of blunders that led to unwavering support for Aung San Suu Kyi. There is an idealized eurocentric misunderstanding of women and Buddhism being incompatible with ethnic cleansing. She turned out to be a buddhist nazi who's first course of action was to endorse a campaign of ethnic cleansing and in doing so she and her party lost all international credibility. This resulted in the junta considering the experiment in democracy a failure because democracy backfired. By comparison the military junta were moderates.

Further complicating the political sphere in Myanmar is that political parties are not understood in Myanmar to be oriented around policy but ethnic supremacy. There does not seem to be any impetus for democratic reform and the basis for democratic reform does not seem to exist in the country.

There's a lot of propaganda maps showing Red vs. Blue, trying to create the impression that the NUG has unity and universal support and is winning against the junta without explaining that the intraversable unarable boggy swamp hills are of no strategic value. It's like the NUG is declaring imminent victory despite hanging out in the mangroves where malaria, tuberculosis, gnathostomiasis and soil-transmitted helminths are endemic in Myanmar.<sup>1</sup> The International Institute for Strategic Studies has some more impartial maps. The military was never in control and large parts of the country were never fully unified and they didn't need to be in full control of the swamps. The country is in a state of all out chaos, lawlessness, ethnic conflict and disarray where the only constant is murder, vandalism, starvation and disease. There is no end in sight, even with the NUG or junta. Even the Chin agree that upon the end of the war, Chin must be ethnically cleansed from Chinland. The junta again sounds like the voice of reason.

India and China would probably object to military intervention in their geographic sphere of influence. this leaves the west grappling with the realization that Myanmar may simply not be ready for democracy and that we need to rethink our approach to Myanmar and the military leadership. First we need to consider a retirement plan for the military leadership. Right now the only option is holding on to power or the gallows. Perhaps we could do a deal and relocate them to France like Ali Bongo, Jean-BÃ©del Bokassa, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, Teodoro Obiang or Mobutu Sese Seko. Then we need to take seriously the vows of all the leaders of all the factions in Myanmar to engage in systematic campaigns of ethnic cleansing should they take power. This is why an international peace keeping force is absolutely required for a democratic transition. Such a peace keeping force needs to give primacy to the voice of the regional stakeholders, India, China and Thailand given the geographic reality of the situation. There is no Abel Muzorewa in this conflict.

1. Platt, S.G. et al. (2001) Man eating by estuarine crocodiles: The Ramree Island Massacre Revisited, The Herpetological Bulletin. Available at: <https://www.thebhs.org/publications/the-herpetological-bulletin/issue-number-75-spring-2001/2764-hb075-04> (Accessed: 06 December 2025).

Robert Heron



