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Myanmar after 43rd ASEAN Summit: Quick Fixes but Questions Ahead

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Executive Summary

- From 5-7 September 2023, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) convened its 43rd Summit and other related summits in Jakarta under the chairmanship of Indonesia. During the first day of the regional bloc's summit, ASEAN leaders made an important decision on the ongoing crisis in Myanmar.
- The latest ASEAN decision on Myanmar represents an important step that the regional bloc took amidst growing frustrations of the lack of substantial progress of the 5PC implementation and the overall situation in Myanmar. The decision has 5 key points including (1) explicitly naming the Tatmadaw as a main violence perpetrator; (2) recognizing lack of substantial progress of implementing the 5PC; (3) committing to using 5PC as a reference point; (4) establishing ASEAN Troika on Myanmar; and (5) snubbing Myanmar of the 2026 ASEAN Chairmanship.
- These points, while focusing more on forms rather than substantive changes of ASEAN's approach towards Myanmar are quick fixes give a symbolic undertone that ASEAN commits to helping Myanmar any possible ways but ASEAN also wants to have ways out in order not to let the regional grouping be "held hostage" by the Myanmar crisis.
- However, ASEAN cannot escape the crisis in Myanmar, and these quick fixes will only temporarily address immediate issues, particularly the question of the ASEAN Chairmanship in 2026.
- ASEAN still has to make important reviews and decisions on how the regional bloc can move forward to implement the problematic 5PC or other alternative approaches to address the Myanmar crisis and its ramifications.

Introduction

From 5-7 September 2023, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) convened its 43rd Summit and other related Summits in Jakarta under the chairmanship of Indonesia. During the first day of the regional bloc's summit, ASEAN leaders made an important decision regarding the ongoing crisis in Myanmar.

A document was released shortly after the summit entitled “ASEAN Leaders’ Review and Decision on the Implementation of the Five-Point Consensus”.¹ It is a short document, consisting of only 2 pages with 19 points detailing ASEAN leaders’ latest review and decision of the implementation of the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus (5PC).² In essence, ASEAN concluded that there has not been substantial progress in the implementation of 5PC, and laid out next actions to deal with Myanmar which will be detailed in subsequent sections in this paper.³

The Myanmar Military Authority was swift to make an expected response. They rejected the above document, and called it “not objective”, “biased and one-sided”.⁴ They cited that “Myanmar was not represented at the 43rd ASEAN Summit as Myanmar’s rights for equal representation was denied contradicting Article 5 of the ASEAN Charter”.⁵ They also revealed that although “the ASEAN Chair consulted Myanmar on the draft document, the views and voices of Myanmar are not taken into account.”⁶

On another note, the National Unity Government (NUG) understandably has another take on the ASEAN leaders’ latest decision about Myanmar. They said that this decision is “a big blow to the junta as ASEAN decided not to allow Myanmar to take Chairmanship in 2026”.⁷ NUG also welcomed ASEAN leaders’ “specific naming of Myanmar army to reduce violence”.⁸ They contended that “ASEAN must take further punitive steps against the junta (such as barring SAC

¹ ASEAN. 5 September 2023. ASEAN Leaders’ Review and Decision on The Implementation of The Five-Point Consensus. Available at <https://asean.org/asean-leaders-review-and-decision-on-the-implementation-of-the-five-point-consensus>

² ASEAN 5PC is the ASEAN’s main reference in dealing with Myanmar. Those five points are: 1/ The immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar, 2/ Constructive dialogue among all parties concerned to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people, 3/ The establishment of a Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair to mediate the dialogue process, assisted by the ASEAN Secretary-General, 4/ Humanitarian assistance via the AHA Center, and 5/ The visit by the special envoy and delegation to Myanmar to meet all parties concerned.

ASEAN. 24 April 2021. “Chairman’s Statement on the ASEAN Leaders’ Meeting, 24 April 2021 and Five-Point Consensus”. Available at: <https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-on-the-asean-leaders-meeting-24-april-2021-and-five-point-consensus-2/>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar. 5 September 2023. Myanmar rejects the ASEAN Leaders' Review and Decision on the Implementation of the five-point consensus. Available at <https://www.facebook.com/mofamyanmar/posts/pfbid02UAu1cSQckvSCp5fh2F51KsMTHMhsV6BsLaaMHMimzKtCza3vd31DGfE4Ptm6Vudil>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Leong Wai Kit’s Tweet. 5 September 2023. Available at <https://twitter.com/LeongWaiKitCNA/status/1699209963997118854>

⁸ Ibid.

representatives at all ASEAN related meetings) for their failure to comply with the 5-point consensus”.⁹

By primarily relaying on ASEAN’s official documents and related sources, this analysis will discuss five key points resulted from the ASEAN’s latest decision on Myanmar: (1) specifically naming Myanmar Military Authority in causing violence; (2) lacking substantial progress of 5PC implementation; (3) 5PC as the main reference; (4) establishment of ASEAN Troika on Myanmar; (5) handing Myanmar’s 2026 ASEAN Chairmanship to the Philippines.

Specifically Naming Myanmar Military Authority in Causing Violence

ASEAN leaders “strongly condemned the continued acts of violence in Myanmar” and decided to “urge the Myanmar Armed Forces in particular, and all related parties concerned in Myanmar to de-escalate violence”.¹⁰

This is the first time that ASEAN specifically named the Myanmar Military Authority in causing violence in Myanmar. In the past ASEAN statements on Myanmar since 2021, the regional bloc only vaguely called for cessation of violence but never explicitly said who was a primary actor. In addition to the Tatmadaw, ASEAN also mentioned “all related parties concerned in Myanmar to de-escalate violence”.¹¹ Nevertheless, the fact that ASEAN explicitly named the Myanmar Military that caused violence is a hallmark position change for the regional bloc and has a symbolic meaning that ASEAN recognizes the ongoing violence is in large part perpetrated by the Myanmar Military Authority. This is significant as this position change can pave possible ways for ASEAN to approach the crisis in Myanmar, coordinating ASEAN and the regional bloc’s partners’ responses regarding what are the next steps to deal with the Tatmadaw, and opening more frequent channels of communications with the National Unity Government (NUG) and other ethnic armed organizations (EAOs).

Lacking Substantial Progress of 5PC Implementation

ASEAN leaders were “gravely concerned by the lack of substantial progress on the implementation by the Authority in Myanmar” despite their commitment to the Five-Point Consensus (5PC)¹² in April 2021. The “Authority in Myanmar” that ASEAN Leaders are likely to refer here is the military authority led by Min Aung Hlaing who attended the ASEAN Leaders’ Meeting in Jakarta back on 24 April 2021. The ASEAN 5PC was adopted at that meeting. Therefore, according to this statement, ASEAN Leaders view that Min Aung Hlaing agreed to 5PC.

The latest ASEAN decision on Myanmar reveals ASEAN leaders’ frustration of the continued lack of progress of 5PC due to in large part the lack of cooperation by the Tatmadaw. ASEAN Leaders are likely to signal to the Myanmar Military Authority that ASEAN does not want business

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ ASEAN. 5 September 2023. ASEAN Leaders’ Review and Decision on The Implementation of The Five-Point Consensus. Available at <https://asean.org/asean-leaders-review-and-decision-on-the-implementation-of-the-five-point-consensus>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

as usual with the Tatmadaw. The regional bloc might want to send a message to the military regime in Naypyitaw that the regime is held most accountable in lack of progress of 5PC, and that they should be more cooperative. Otherwise, ASEAN is likely to reconsider its position in engaging the Tatmadaw.

The Tatmadaw's uncooperative attitudes in implementing the 5PC have been evident since the beginning. It should be recalled that on 26 April 2021, only 2 days after 5PC was adopted, Min Aung Hlaing said that 5PC could only be implemented when Myanmar is peaceful, and instead to urge the regional bloc to follow its Five-Plan Roadmap for peace.¹³

Since the 5PC was adopted in 2021, the Tatmadaw has not reduced violence. Cases have been reported widely of violence perpetrated by the Military Authority.¹⁴ According to a report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released in March 2023, the Myanmar Military has employed "its so-called four-cuts approach - including through indiscriminate airstrikes and artillery shelling, razing villages to displace civilian populations, and denial of humanitarian access - to cut off non-State organized armed groups and other anti-military armed elements from access to food, finances, intelligence and recruits".¹⁵ For example, on 16 September 2022, in Let Yet Kone village, Tabayin Township, Sagaing located in the middle part of Myanmar, there were four military helicopters opening attacks on a school killing at least 6 children and injuring 9 others.¹⁶ On 20 October 2022, there was another airstrike on a hospital in another village in Sagaing, killing one woman and injuring 5 others.¹⁷

Moreover, the Tatmadaw has also continued to prevent ASEAN Envoys, starting from Brunei's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2021, Cambodia's in 2022 and Indonesia's in 2023, from inclusively engaging with all stakeholders in Myanmar, particularly Aung San Suu Kyi¹⁸, whose mission was to help foster conducive environment for dialogues as stipulated in the 5PC.¹⁹ Instead the Tatmadaw paved ways for Don Praudwinai, then Foreign Minister of Thailand, met secretly with Aung San Suu Kyi in June 2023, in an apparent attempt to wedge divisions in ASEAN.²⁰

¹³ Global New Light on Myanmar. 27 April 2021. Press Release on ASEAN Leaders' Meeting. Available at <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/27-april-2021/>

¹⁴ International Institute for Strategic Studies. 2023. Myanmar Conflict Updates. Available at <https://myanmar.iiss.org/updates>

¹⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 3 March 2023. A/HRC/52/21: Situation of human rights in Myanmar since 1 February 2022 – Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5221-situation-human-rights-myanmar-1-february-2022-report-united>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Him Raksmei. 2023. Indonesia's ASEAN Chairmanship: What will ASEAN do on the Myanmar Crisis?. Center for Southeast Asian Studies. Available at http://www.rupp.edu.kh/iispp/cseas/cseas_analysis/documents/CSEAS_Analysis_2_Indonesia%E2%80%99s_ASEAN_Chairmanship_What_will_ASEAN.pdf

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Al Jazeera. 12 July 2023. Thai foreign minister met Aung San Suu Kyi on secret Myanmar trip. Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/12/thai-foreign-minister-met-aung-san-suu-kyi-on-secret-myanmar-trip>

The Tatmadaw has also played parts in causing difficulties in distributing ASEAN humanitarian aids to those in need. According to the United Nations, the military authority restricted the aid delivery to victims of the Cyclone Mocha in Rakhine State during May and June 2023.²¹

5PC as the Main Reference

ASEAN leaders decided to “maintain the 5PC as the main reference to address the political crisis in Myanmar which should be implemented in its entirety.”²² Along the line, ASEAN continued to uphold the decision “regarding Myanmar’s non-political representation at the ASEAN Summit and the ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting”, and “tasked the ASEAN Coordinating Council to review this decision when there is concrete progress in the implementation of 5PC”.²³

By sticking to the 5PC, it reflects that ASEAN has not yet opened to any other alternative approaches to deal with Myanmar. It should be noted that the 5PC has its own issues since the beginning. To start with, 5PC was adopted by 9 ASEAN Leaders with Myanmar represented by only the Chief of the military authority, Min Aung Hlaing in April 2021, barely 3 months after the military coup in Myanmar. This showed the 5PC was conducted hastily with the lack of consultation from relevant stakeholders in Myanmar.

In addition, the wording in the 5PC is vague and without any clear timeline and goals. 5PC is vague because it does not have operationalized mechanism. More than that, the wording is redundant. For instance, Point 2, 3, and 5 are almost the same with one goal, which is to foster dialogue among stakeholders in Myanmar. This vagueness has been subject to interpretations by ASEAN member states, causing some disagreements on the implementation process.²⁴

There have been attempts to operationalize the implementation of the 5PC. In 2022, under Cambodia’s ASEAN Chairmanship, the regional bloc conducted a review of the 5PC, which instructed ASEAN foreign ministers to come up with an implementation plan of 5PC.²⁵ In earlier 2023, Indonesia claimed to construct the 5PC “Implementation Plan” to lay out roadmap on for implementing this consensus on Myanmar.²⁶ Nevertheless, until this day, such an implementation plan has not been publicly released yet. This could mean many things. It could mean ASEAN member states have not yet reached the consensus on this matter and further negotiations are

²¹ United Nations. 30 June 2023. Myanmar: Military’s obstruction of humanitarian aid could be international crime. Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1138262>

²² See footnote number 1.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Some ASEAN Member States viewed that it is needed to engage with the military authority to tackle the Myanmar Crisis, while some viewed that the military should be pressured to implement the 5PC. For more details, see Thomas Andrews. 31 January 2023. “Illegal and Illegitimate: Examining the Myanmar Military’s Claim as the Government of Myanmar and the International Response”. United Nations Office of High Commissioner on Human Rights. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/mm/2023-01-27/crp-sr-myanmar2023-01-31.pdf>

²⁵ ASEAN. 2022. ASEAN Leaders’ Review and Decision On The Implementation Of The Five-Point Consensus. Available at https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/06-ASEAN-Leaders-Review-and-Decision-on-the-Implementation-of-the-Five-Point-Consensus_fin.pdf

²⁶ Agence France Presse. 2023. ASEAN ministers urge Myanmar junta to implement agreed peace plan. France 24. Available at <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230204-asean-ministers-urge-myanmar-junta-to-implement-agreed-peace-plan>

needed. Alternatively, it could also mean the momentum to generate such plan might not be there in ASEAN since there is the so-called “Myanmar-fatigue”.²⁷

Should ASEAN not explore any alternative options, it is expected that ASEAN’s response towards Myanmar is going around in circle. What it has been doing is just expressing frustration about the lack of progress of the 5PC implementation because the fundamental aspects related to the problematic nature of the 5PC mentioned above not addressed.

Establishment of ASEAN Troika on Myanmar

The regional bloc also agreed to create an informal ASEAN troika on Myanmar, consisting of past, current and future ASEAN Chairs although more details on how this troika works is subject to further negotiations by ASEAN members. On this point, ASEAN leaders decided:

“Ensure sustainability of ASEAN’s on-going efforts and other relevant approaches led by the ASEAN Chair, through an informal consultation mechanism that may consist of current, previous and incoming Chairs of ASEAN, and any effort by ASEAN Member States in coordination with the ASEAN Chair, to address the crisis in Myanmar, in line with 5PC.”²⁸

The idea of ASEAN Troika on Myanmar is not new. It was floated during the Bruneian ASEAN Chairmanship in 2021, and later on during the Cambodian Chair in 2022.²⁹ The idea was rejected due to the participation of Myanmar military authority within the working group meeting, but in 2023, the idea went through as it was decided in the summit, where there was no Myanmar representative.³⁰

ASEAN Troika, although it sounds good, would be difficult to chart forward. It is understood that the intention of this approach is to maintain the continuity of ASEAN’s approach in dealing with Myanmar. Troika is an important step but for it to be effective, the basis of the ASEAN’s approach, particularly 5PC that the Troika will rely on, has to be well defined to address its problematic nature described in the preceding section. It also should be noted that the ASEAN member states collectively have limited realistic leverage such as political and economic matters on Myanmar, particularly on the Tatmadaw.³¹ Nevertheless, details concerning the ASEAN Troika on Myanmar

²⁷ Edna Tarigan and Jim Gomez. 11 May 2023. ASEAN leader: No progress in ending Myanmar’s deadly civil strife. Associated Press. <https://apnews.com/article/association-of-southeast-asian-nations-myanmar-china-94ea4be51a6393a36d76838d2f0b984d>

²⁸ See footnote number 1.

²⁹ Leong Wai Kit Tweet. 5 September 2023. Available at <https://twitter.com/LeongWaiKitCNA/status/1698947104117526923>

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Given that ASEAN is an intergovernmental organization with the modus operandi of consensus, each member state has a dominant voice on all agendas in the regional bloc. Regarding the Myanmar crisis, while ASEAN has the 5PC as the main referencing point, ASEAN members has the prerogative to continue to interpret 5PC differently. With different interpretations on how to implement 5PC in particular and the overall Myanmar Crisis, ASEAN has not been able to form a unified political and economic force in order to effectively lead any regional and international coalitions to respond the Myanmar crisis. That is why after nearly 3 years of the adoption of 5PC, ASEAN has not been able to substantially achieve its key objectives stipulated in 5PC namely cessation of violence, fostering inclusive political dialogues and channeling humanitarian aids to those in need in Myanmar. For more details of ASEAN members’ interpretations on the Myanmar Crisis, See: Thomas Andrews. 31 January 2023. “Illegal and

are still under negotiations by the regional bloc. Therefore, it remains to be seen how ASEAN will approach such Troika arrangements.

In this context, it is important that ASEAN finds ways to restructure and institutionalize its roles in dealing with Myanmar. Furthermore, the situation in Myanmar is complex and does not only affect to ASEAN and Southeast Asia, it has also implicated Myanmar's neighboring countries and other external actors.³² ASEAN approach on Myanmar, especially the effectiveness of the ASEAN Troika, would be further enhanced if the regional bloc has more room to engage meaningfully with ASEAN Dialogue Partners and Friends to Myanmar who have concerns on the country.

Handing Myanmar's 2026 ASEAN Chairmanship to the Philippines

ASEAN leaders also decided that there will be no Myanmar's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2026. According to the 2008 ASEAN Charter, the ASEAN Chair shall be rotated in alphabetical order of the ASEAN member states.³³ Therefore, Myanmar is supposed to take over as the ASEAN Chair in 2026. However, as the ASEAN leaders stated, "ASEAN Chairmanship in 2026 shall be assumed by the Philippines and, subsequently, the Chairmanship rotation continues based on alphabetical order, until a different decision is made."³⁴ This means that Myanmar's ASEAN Chairmanship would not be suspended for only one year, but Myanmar needs to wait 9 years at least or until ASEAN makes a different decision.

There was a precedent back in 2006 when Myanmar gave up its ASEAN Chairmanship due to the need for "both time and political space to deal with its many and complex challenges".³⁵ At that time, it was reported that Western countries such as the US and EU threatened to boycott ASEAN relevant meetings should Myanmar – who under the military government at that time – proceed to be the ASEAN Chair in 2006.³⁶ There were two demands from the US and the EU: (1) the military government went on to democratize Myanmar and released Aung San Suu Kyi; (2) relinquished its ASEAN Chairmanship in 2006.³⁷

The 2023 decision is different from the early 2000s. This time, according to the ASEAN leaders' statement, the ASEAN Summit, chaired by Indonesia decided to give the Chairmanship to the Philippines in 2026.

Illegitimate: Examining the Myanmar Military's Claim as the Government of Myanmar and the International Response". United Nations Office of High Commissioner on Human Rights. Available at

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/mm/2023-01-27/crp-sr-myanmar2023-01-31.pdf>

³² Rebecca Tan. 9 February 2023. One day. One city. Three lives in the shadow of Myanmar's military rule. The Washington Post. Available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/02/09/myanmar-military-coup-anniversary-yangon/>. Myanmar's neighboring countries are: Bangladesh, China, India, and Thailand. Countries that have been affected from the Myanmar Crisis are those who is engaging with the country. Those countries, include Australia, European countries, Japan, South Korea, the US, among others.

³³ ASEAN. 2008. ASEAN Charter. Available at <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/archive/publications/ASEAN-Charter.pdf>

³⁴ See footnote number 1

³⁵ ASEAN. 12 October 2012. Joint Communique of the 38th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting Vientiane, 26 July 2005. Available at <https://asean.org/joint-communique-of-the-38th-asean-ministerial-meeting-vientiane-26-july-2005/>

³⁶ The New York Times. 26 July 2005. Myanmar gives up 2006 ASEAN chairmanship. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/26/world/asia/myanmar-gives-up-2006-asean-chairmanship.html>

³⁷ Ibid.

This decision is crucial for ASEAN as it will relieve huge burdens, that is to deal with a question what if Myanmar was going to take the role of the regional bloc's Chair in 2026. Should that happen, there would not only be logistics nightmare since delegates would expose to many security risks and there would require a lot of complicated arrangements. What is more important is ASEAN under Myanmar's Chairmanship would risk boycotting the meetings from the Dialogue Partners.³⁸

ASEAN would still have time, at least another decade to deal with Myanmar. It could be argued that a lot would happen in these years, but as Myanmar is still an ASEAN member state, ASEAN still needs to recalibrate its approach to respond to the situation in Myanmar.

In addition to handing the 2026 ASEAN Chairmanship to the Philippines, ASEAN leaders still continued with the decision to invite non-political representative to summits and foreign ministers' meetings.³⁹ This shows that ASEAN has not recognized the military authority or any stakeholders as the legitimate government of Myanmar.

Nevertheless, ASEAN will be questioned along the way as down the road, ASEAN will have to make some decisions determining the future of the region, like the ASEAN-Post 2025 Vision; mainstreaming the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP); or even perhaps concluding the Code of Conduct of the South China Sea without Myanmar's participation.

Therefore, it could be argued that stripping the 2026 ASEAN Chairmanship from Myanmar could only solve the immediate and difficult question of the possibility of Myanmar, a country currently without any legitimate government, chairing ASEAN in 2026, yet, it could not solve the modus operandi of ASEAN that requires participation from all of its members as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter. Along the way, ASEAN leaders would need to do serious reviews and make decisions regarding the regional bloc's membership and decision-making process that possibly could lead to the amendments of the ASEAN Charter. After all, the ASEAN Charter is a legally binding agreement among the 10 ASEAN Member States because the Charter has been "fully ratified (or accepted in Member States without Parliament or when such ratification can be done through a Cabinet decision) in all the 10 ASEAN Member States".⁴⁰

Conclusion

³⁸ Back in 2006, ASEAN Dialogue Partners, such as the EU and the US threatened to boycott ASEAN if Myanmar chaired the regional bloc. See more The New York Times. 26 July 2005. Myanmar gives up 2006 ASEAN chairmanship. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/26/world/asia/myanmar-gives-up-2006-asean-chairmanship.html>

³⁹ See footnote number 1.

⁴⁰ ASEAN. 2020. Significance of the ASEAN Charter. Available at <https://asean.org/asean-charter/>

In conclusion, the latest ASEAN decision on Myanmar represents an important step that the regional bloc has taken amidst growing frustrations of the lack of substantial progress of the 5PC implementation in particular and the overall situation in Myanmar in general. The decision has 5 key points including explicitly naming the Tatmadaw as a main violence perpetrator, recognizing the lack of substantial progress of implementing the 5PC, committing to using 5PC as a reference point, establishing ASEAN Troika on Myanmar, and snubbing Myanmar of the 2026 ASEAN Chairmanship. While focusing more on forms rather than substantive changes of ASEAN's approach on Myanmar, these deciding points are quick fixes that give a symbolic undertone that ASEAN commits to helping Myanmar any possible ways the regional bloc could. More than that, ASEAN also wants to have ways out in order not to let the regional grouping be “held hostage”⁴¹ by the Myanmar Crisis. However, ASEAN cannot escape the crisis in Myanmar, and these quick fixes will only temporarily address the immediate aspect, particularly the question of the ASEAN Chairmanship in 2026. ASEAN still has to make important reviews and decisions on how the regional bloc can move forward to implement the problematic 5PC or other alternative approaches to address the Myanmar crisis – which might not end any time soon given the complex natures and volatile situations on the ground of such crisis⁴² – on the one hand. On the other hand, ASEAN also has to seriously decide on how it wants to go forward to deal with other pressing regional affairs without Myanmar's participations in key decision-making mechanisms such as foreign ministers' meetings and summits. ASEAN have no quick fixes on these two-pronged dilemmas. These dilemmas question many existential aspects of ASEAN. ASEAN Leaders' renewed leadership, wisdom and political willingness are important for the regional bloc to address these inherent dilemmas and move forward.

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⁴¹ Cliff Venzon, Tsubasa Suruga and Lien Hoang. 11 November 2022. ASEAN aims to put Myanmar on peace clock, stop being ‘held hostage’. Nikkei Asia Review. Available at <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/ASEAN-aims-to-put-Myanmar-on-peace-clock-stop-being-held-hostage>

⁴² Lindsay Maizland. 31 January 2023. Myanmar's Troubled History: Coups, Military Rule, and Ethnic Conflict. Council for Foreign Relations. Available at <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>

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