
The Tug of Power Without a Judge that Happened in Myanmar

Peace and freedom are things that every person wants to feel, regardless of their nationality. Unfortunately, both of these are not easy to achieve, because every person has their own interest that they prioritize for the sake of their ideal "peace" and "freedom". The effects of prioritizing self-interest are not only felt and experienced by those around them but can also be felt and experienced by the entire community in a country, as happened in Myanmar. Myanmar's military opposition staged a coup after Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) Party won elections on February 1st, 2021. The military said the victory was a fraud and demanded a re-vote, although there is no evidence to support this claim, which led to the majority of people in Myanmar protesting over the military coup. Myanmar, which is an ASEAN country, immediately attracted the attention of the surrounding countries and efforts to defuse conflict in the country were carried out.

¹The current Myanmar coup is not the first time this has happened. In 1962 or fourteen years after Myanmar's independence from British colonialism, the Tatmadaw under the leadership of General Ne Win overthrew the civilian government due to military fears that the civilian government had failed to crack down on ethnic minority movements and armed groups.

²The ongoing political shocks in Myanmar make the country vulnerable to foreign policy pressures that can blackmail authoritarian countries. The coup also strengthened the trend of authoritarianism in ASEAN countries and the concern for other issues was dwindling. Not only politics, the economy in Myanmar is also deteriorating. Foreign countries are hesitant to invest in Myanmar. ³The latest World Bank figures show that the economy will grow slowly, at 2% this fiscal year, while the poverty rate is expected to increase from 22.4% at the end of 2019 to 27%. Around 70 percent of the companies admitted that they experienced a decline in production because their factory operations were hampered. The decline in production caused the company to be forced to lay off workers. In other words, if the situation in Myanmar is

¹ <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20210202175514-106-601458/junta-militer-dan-budaya-kudeta-di-myanmar>

² <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2021/02/06/093000565/myanmar-alami-kudeta-militer-adakah-dampaknya-bagi-indonesia-?page=all>

³ <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia-55898703>

ignored, many new problems will arise. Therefore, the people of Myanmar who have had previous coup experiences will easily and bravely fight those who try to destroy the democratic climate. Of course with that experience, they have more knowledge about how to fight coups with or without weapons. (Sari & Arifin, 2020)

To help defuse the conflict in Myanmar, the first action ASEAN should take is to conduct dialogue between stakeholders in Myanmar and representatives from ASEAN. Dialogue is needed to get mutual agreement from the parties involved so that the conflict can be defused. Although this is an internal matter for the state of Myanmar, intervention must be carried out in order to maintain peace, security and stability in Myanmar, even in ASEAN. This intervention is not an activity to undermine Myanmar's integrity as a sovereign country but aims to control the situation so that nothing worse happens. Moreover, the intervention that must be carried out is not interference with violence but by holding mediation.

In Myanmar's deteriorating economic situation, the second action ASEAN can take in the short term is to provide emergency food stocks for conflict-affected people. Then ASEAN must ask the Myanmar government to carry out economic reforms. Myanmar's deteriorating economy, not only has an impact on its people but can also have an impact on other Southeast Asian countries.

The conclusion is, ASEAN must swiftly find a solution to the conflict in Myanmar and intervene if necessary. Dialogue or mediation with the parties involved and assisting the affected communities is a priority. The mediation must also be able to persuade the Myanmar government to carry out economic reforms and ASEAN must provide temporary assistance to the Myanmar people in the form of emergency food stocks. What should be noted is that Myanmar is a country owned by every citizen, not just the government. Each stakeholder must put the common welfare first and not prioritize their personal interests. With fast and appropriate action, ASEAN will show its concern for the independence and human rights of the Myanmar people.

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