

## **Consolidation of Democracy and Isolation to End Coup**

On February 1st, 2021, the Myanmar military staged a coup against the democratic government and declared a year-long state of emergency. The military took control of infrastructure, stopped television broadcasting, grounded domestic and international flights, and shut down internet and telephone services (Cuddy, 2021). This makes people's lives in Myanmar difficult. The democratic government that the Myanmar people had just obtained for about ten years was again controlled by the military. Coups that occur in a country can only be ended by the people of the country itself (Pevehouse, 2002). International organizations such as ASEAN can only assist in the process of consolidating democracy by being a mediator between all parties involved.

Consolidation of democracy can be interpreted as a process of combining several elements of democracy to unite together in facilitating political democratization (Nugroho, 2001). When the military took over the democratic government in Myanmar, the strength of democracy there decreased. To strengthen it again, there would need an agreement between the parties involved, namely the military, National Unity Government of Myanmar (NUG), protest leaders, parliamentarians, and the party of elected political leaders. ASEAN can play a role in helping these parties to reach an agreement by being a mediator in the meetings held.

On April 24, 2021, the ASEAN leaders met with the Myanmar military leader through the ASEAN Leaders Meeting which was held in Jakarta. The ASEAN leaders present and the Myanmar military leader have agreed on the five consensus discussed at the meeting. The consensus contained a request to immediately stop the violence, hold a dialogue between all parties involved to find a peaceful solution facilitated by ASEAN, provide humanitarian assistance by ASEAN, and visit a special envoy from ASEAN to meet all relevant parties. But the meeting was deemed a failure by the NUG and activists in Myanmar. The results of the consensus agreed at the meeting were seen as favoring the Myanmar military junta. The NUG demands that ASEAN participate in inviting all relevant parties in various talks and discussions regarding the Myanmar issue (Kusumo, 2021).

Dialogue and discussion with all related parties to find the best solution for Myanmar can continue to be carried out with the assistance of ASEAN as the regional organization that oversees Myanmar. Regional organizations that oversee a country can persuade and convince

the military to acknowledge and restore democratic government by providing externally supported guarantees and helping to redirect the interests of the military leadership in politics in the country. In addition, ASEAN parties who act as mediators must also hear what other relevant parties want. Although the assistance that can be provided by ASEAN is very limited due to the principle of non-intervention in the country's internal problems which is agreed upon by all ASEAN member countries.

If the discussions have not reached an agreement and the situation in Myanmar is not conducive, then ASEAN can take more aggressive steps to fight the military coup. ASEAN can follow the example of the suspension of relations or isolation as carried out by western countries against countries that experienced a coup. One example is when the Organization of American States (OAS) assisted Haiti in completing a coup and restoring democratic rule there. The OAS seeks to resolve the conflict in Haiti itself by taking steps to isolate Haiti diplomatically and economically. The OAS minister of foreign affairs advised all OAS member states to suspend economic, financial, and commercial relations with Haiti and suspend all technical assistance except humanitarian assistance. With this move, the OAS urged the military regime to step down the coup in Haiti (Poast & Urpelainen, 2014).

The initial step that ASEAN can take to assist Myanmar in dealing with the coup is to become a mediator between the parties concerned to find a solution so that democracy can work again. Then if the military still does not want to end the coup and the state of the country has not changed, ASEAN can take steps to suspend diplomatic and economic relations with Myanmar. These steps can be applied by ASEAN to overcome the coup that occurred in Myanmar so that it is hoped that the democratic government in Myanmar can run again.

## **Reference**

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