



Proposal for Panel Discussion at EuroSEAS 2021 Conference

1. Title: **Voices of the voiceless – Endemic Minority Issues in Myanmar’s Democratization**
2. Convener: Ye Hein Aung
3. Amidst the ongoing persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state which taints Myanmar’s democratic development, tens of thousands of Myanmar’s diverse ethnic and religious minorities face systematic discrimination by outdated and arbitrarily implemented citizenship laws and legal practices enforced by the corrupt Buddhist-Burmese bureaucratic hegemony and the still-dominant military. This discrimination not only contributes to the risk of statelessness of many minorities, but catalyses the political exclusion of minority voices that hinders discussion of any real reform of citizenship laws within the public-political discourse. Not only does this result in the denial of basic human rights to large swathes of the population, but represents one of the biggest barriers to the democratization of Myanmar.

This panel seeks to present and discuss these issues through exploration of research conducted by SMILE, other CSOs and NGOs working to uncover minority voices in Myanmar and articulate their challenges in relation to the legal and political landscape.

Presenters/panelists:

U Aye Win (DHRP) (Dismissed from Parliamentary Candidate in 2020 elections)
U Chit Lwin (Myanmar Attorney at Law)
Nickey Diamond (Fortify Rights)
Cherry Ohn (Women’s peace and security advocate)

Discussant: U Myo Win (Executive Director, SMILE Myanmar)

NB: The panelists and content of discussion are subject to change depending on availability and the result of ongoing research in the lead up to the EuroSEAS conference.