

## “Myanmar’s Uphill Battle and Prospects for Federal Democracy”

Linked sessions: single roundtable and laboratory

Co-organizers: Dr. Chosein Yamahata; Dr. Catherine Renshaw and Dr. Terese Gagnon

### Session I: Roundtable

- 1. Title:**  
Myanmar’s Uphill Battle and Prospects for Federal Democracy: Local and International Perspectives
- 2. Joint-Conveners:**  
Dr. Chosein Yamahata (Professor, Aichi Gakuin University, Japan)  
Dr. Catherine Renshaw (Professor, Western Sydney University, Australia) in coordination with Dr. Terese Gagnon (Postdoctoral Researcher, NIAS and the University of Copenhagen)
- 3. Description of the chosen format:**  
The roundtable opens an important, timely discussion on Myanmar a year after the coup d’état. The session covers Myanmar’s uphill battle, or in other words, the many obstacles in ending the continued violence terrorized by the junta. It focuses on what the future holds for Myanmar in terms of building a federal democracy. The roundtable promotes discussions on how past and current struggles inform solutions for the future, just as how discussions on the prospects for democracy require looking into previous shortcomings. The session is designed to enable local and international scholar-practitioners from diverse backgrounds to come together in participating in fruitful dialogue as well as encourage the audience from around the world to engage in this process.
- 4. Description of the roundtable:**  
Continuing violence, arbitrary arrests, and lawlessness inflicted by the military junta has been causing community atrocities, increasing trends of IDPs, refugee outflows, disruption of economic fundamentals, and unwanted humanitarian crises amid the global coronavirus pandemic. While the consensus of the Myanmar people is to rid the military at any cost, the military junta refuses to yield to the domestic and international demands to respect the results of the election; in fact, its actions till date inform the military’s likely intention to wipe any prospects for democracy.  
The roundtable discusses the divergent aims by the people and the military to establish a new order in Myanmar. As the turning point towards this goal nears, the roundtable also recognizes that the people of Myanmar has shown an unprecedented level of unity: established ethnic armed organizations, the National Unity Government (NUG), NUG’s PDF and other local/community PDFs across the country, Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) workers, and the general public share the same mission to “free” the nation from the military’s actions that have been violating fundamental human rights and other international norms.  
The roundtable also discusses the gap in the local actors’ priorities highlighted above and the international actors’ interests. The organizers and participants of the roundtable therefore find ways in which any external/internal facilitation activities, including mediation dialogue, preventive diplomacy, humanitarian intervention, punitive measures, reconstruction, and transitional justice mechanisms, could sensitively consider this gap.
- 5. Presenters**
  - (1) Phwe Yu Mon (Independent Researcher, Myanmar)
  - (2) Pseudonym Xx (Independent Researcher, Myanmar)
  - (3) Mon Mon Myat (Payap University, Thailand)
  - (4) Saw Chit Thet Tun (Myanmar Research Center, Australia)
  - (5) Terese Gagnon (Postdoc, NIAS and the University of Copenhagen)
  - (6) TBA

## Session II. Laboratory

**1. Title:**

Myanmar's Uphill Battle and Prospects for Federal Democracy: Pressing Issues for Engaged Research

**2. Format:** Laboratory

**3. Convener:** Dr. Terese Gagnon, (Postdoctoral Researcher, NIAS and the University of Copenhagen, Denmark) in coordination with Dr. Chosein Yamahata (Professor, Aichi Gakuin University, Japan) and Dr. Catherine Renshaw (Professor Western Sydney University, Australia)

**4. Description of the chosen format:**

The focus of the laboratory will be an interdisciplinary discussion towards creating a space of collaborative, engaged scholarship on the prospects for federal democracy in Myanmar. Special emphasis will be placed on shifting dynamics within and between different heterogenous groups and stakeholders in the county in the wake of the February 1, 2021, coup. The aim of this laboratory is to bring together scholars and scholar-activists conducting research with diverse groups in Myanmar, to facilitate ongoing engaged scholarly collaboration and the transfer of knowledge.

In the wake of the coup in Myanmar and the ongoing struggle for political legitimacy, the important political role of ethnic minorities and Indigenous groups, religious minorities, women, LGBTQ individuals, and other socially marginalized groups has come into clearer focus. The struggles and aims of these diverse and internally heterogenous groups are crucial to the prospects for foraging federal democracy in Myanmar. The inclusion of perspectives and experiences from these groups is also a pressing issue for engaged research in Myanmar. As such, potential topics addressed in this laboratory include gender, religious groups and institutions, land and the environment, the peace process, ethnic armed organizations, civil society, young people, refugees and IDPs, military and police defections, humanitarian aid and international development, border politics, COVID 19, and more.

**5. Description of the laboratory:**

The format of the laboratory will be made up of two parts. In the first half, participants will become familiar with one another's research and its context through short presentations. Each participant will have ten minutes to provide a brief research overview including any engaged aspects of their work. The second half will be dedicated to free discussion, intended to generate productive dialogue and open the door to ongoing scholarly collaboration. The laboratory format—in-depth and in a closed setting—is ideal for facilitating this work. Some of the participants in the laboratory will also be presenters in the connected roundtable of the same name. This will allow key takeaways of the laboratory to be shared with the larger group and will enable a sustained conversation about “Prospects for Federal Democracy in Myanmar” throughout the EuroSEAS 2022 conference.

\*Up to eight participants will be selected based on the fit of their research with the laboratory theme and with consideration for reflecting a broad variety in national/regional backgrounds and home institutions among the participants. Four spots in the laboratory are reserved for the co-conveners of the linked roundtable and two roundtable participants.