**European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSEAS)**

**13th conference**

**University of Amsterdam, Roeterseiland Campus, the Netherlands,**

**23 July to 25 July 2024**

**Submission of Panel Proposal**

**Title: “Configurations, power dynamics, and prospects in Myanmar since the 2021 military coup**

**with a focus on the constitution and democratic state-building in Myanmar”**

**Convener:**

International IDEA Myanmar

Strömsborg, Stockholm, Sweden

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**Description:**

Following an unconstitutional military coup in Myanmar in 2021, with an illegitimate military regime in control of core state institutions that continues to be opposed by a determined resistance, the Spring Revolution’s democratic movement, which comprises elected representatives and a wide array of civil society and ethnic group actors, is reconfiguring the constitutional and governance framework for a future democratic and federal Myanmar.

Since the attempted coup, Myanmar’s political landscape has fundamentally changed with new levels of repression and contestation over power and legitimacy between various forces of armed resistance by People’s Defence Forces, Ethnic Resistance organisations (EROs), and Myanmar’s legitimate interim government institutions the National Unity Government (NUG), the Committee Representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) or interim parliament, and actors within the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC), which include actors within the peaceful civil disobedience movement (CDM), as well as EROs, state and regional institutions, and political parties. Resistance movements have been characterised by new levels of inter-ethnic solidarity, and women, youth, and other traditionally marginalized groups have taken on leading roles within the resistance. New inter-ethnic armed forces have emerged as a serious threat to the military in various ethnic states, particularly in the wake of Operation 1027. Military claims to power have been contested within Myanmar on all levels and in international fora, including the UN. The recent mass violence against the Rohingya has gained recognition inside the country among democratic forces and is being addressed by Myanmar’s interim government institutions in various international legal platforms.

The new political constellations and contestations hold promise for Myanmar’s future but also raise further questions regarding power dynamics in relation to territory as well as local and international legitimacy. The outcome of the ongoing resistance struggle remains uncertain, and the situation in Myanmar changes rapidly on a day-to-day basis. However, the situation also creates hope for a genuine future federal democratic society.

Any post-coup scenario requires innovation and efficiency to restore full and genuine democracy – and in the eyes of most Myanmar citizens, precludes power-sharing with the country’s military that has captured the state in various forms since 1962.

A widely shared goal among diverse stakeholders, including civil society, ethnic representatives, and the representatives duly elected in 2020, is to rebuild the state based on democratic and federal principles, drawing a clear line under the historic era of military domination. At the same time, the new state structure provides a large degree of self-governance to the constituent member states of a new federation.

In January 2022, the democratic movement agreed on a revised Federal Democracy Charter outlining a political roadmap towards a transitional and permanent constitution. The Charter represents an important trust-building document and is vital for developing an inclusive alliance between all stakeholders opposed to the coup. As expected during democratic transitions and constitutional beginnings, there are many questions about the emerging actors' legitimacy and sources of authority. There is also debate about the balance between continuity and revolutionary change, in particular the status of the legal framework and institutional arrangements that pre-dated the coup.

Against the background of Myanmar’s constitutional history and ongoing political crisis, this panel will explore developments in Myanmar since the coup focused on the various forms of resistance, power dynamics, and envisioned futures by pro-democracy actors inside the country and in exile, as well as the role of the international community. Conference participants are invited to share their analysis and perspectives on the prospects for a future democratic federal Myanmar and to discuss key questions on Myanmar’s constitutional journey based on the Federal Democracy Charter and drawing from Myanmar’s constitutional history.

**Panelists**

A gender balanced panel of 4-6 panelists representing Myanmar scholars and Myanmar’s national unity institutions mandated by the Federal Democracy Charter and their different perspectives on Myanmar’s post-coup dynamics and approaches to the constitution building process will be selected. The panelists will have time to present their perspectives and opinions with questions posed by the moderators to provide the context and framework for the discussion. The floor will be opened to the audience for questions.

Moderation: Nickey Diamond, Activist-scholar from Myanmar, Konstanz University and Marcus Brand, Head of International IDEA Myanmar

**Duration:** Double session of 2 x 90 Minutes