



North South University

WEBINAR ON MYANMAR ELECTION 2020: IMPACTS ON ROHINGYA CRISIS



Organized by
Center for Peace Studies (CPS)
South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG)
North South University

Time : 11.00 am to 1:00 pm
Date: November 10, 2020

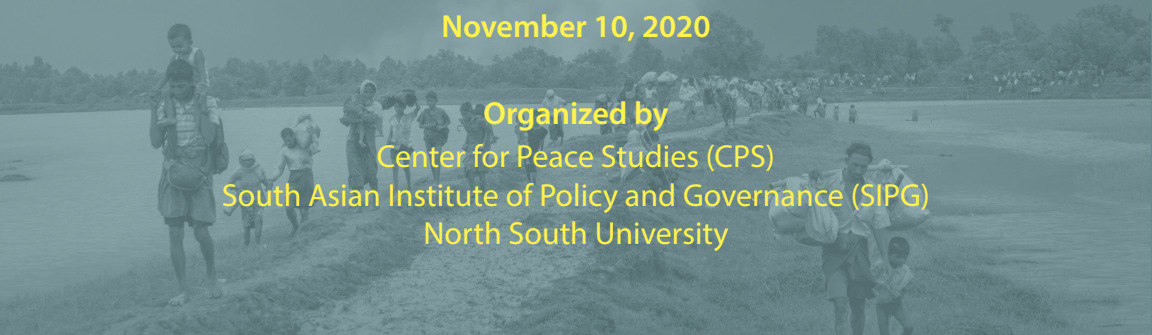




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Myanmar will hold the next general election on November 8, 2020. While the event will take place inside Myanmar, people outside Myanmar – particularly the Asian countries are curious about the implications of this event on bilateral and mutual relations among the neighboring countries of Myanmar. Their geopolitical and economic interests are widely known by now. For Bangladesh, this election is even more important, because Myanmar is one of Bangladesh's two closest neighbors and the burden of the Rohingya crisis carried by Bangladesh needs to come to an end.

The military has ruled Myanmar for decades. Since 1922, the country has had 16 general elections. Perhaps the election in 2015 was one of the most remarkable because of the situation Myanmar was going through and the people's desire to get back to democracy. Unfortunately, the indirect military rule has been evident in the country, which ultimately has questioned the leadership of the current State Counselor who was once known for her struggle for democracy. Based on facts and evidence, her government has been accused of genocide and ethnic cleansing in Rakhine since August 2017. Bangladesh is generously giving shelter to more than 1.2 million Rohingya compromising the economic and environmental loss of the country. Myanmar, however, sent the State Counselor to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague to defend the army against the allegations of rape, arson, and genocide although the ICJ formally accused Myanmar of committing genocide against the Rohingya in Myanmar.

Apparently, the power transition came with a fraud-free election, but Myanmar's political and electoral system have remained questionable. Militarism still exists behind democracy. Certain seats in Myanmar's parliament always remain reserved for the military. The army continues to wield enormous power under the constitution, which guarantees its control over key ministries, and 25 percent of parliament seats. As a result, there are questions about the representation of the people.

Besides, Myanmar has become an important country for the emerging

superpowers in Asia, namely China, Japan, Korea, and India, in terms of trade and commerce. On the one hand, the world has witnessed the violation of human rights committed by Myanmar. On the other, Asia, in particular China, is becoming stronger with the expansion of its networks of highways and businesses in which Myanmar has a significant role to play.

Therefore, the inevitable questions are: How will Myanmar's post-election situation shape the bilateral and regional issues of South and Southeast Asian countries? To what extent will the election results impact the indirect military rule in Myanmar and reduce the military influence in Myanmar? In what ways will the results of the poll have an impact on the Rohingya crisis?

Against this backdrop, the Center for Peace Studies (CPS), SIPG, North South University is going to organize a webinar titled "Myanmar Election 2020: Impacts on Rohingya Crisis" through Zoom on 10th November 2020. The webinar is intended to explore whether and how the upcoming general election results will affect the Rohingya crisis. The webinar will particularly seek answers to the following questions: Why, despite the verdict of the ICJ, have the political parties in Myanmar not addressed the Rohingya crisis in their election manifestos and campaigns? How does Bangladesh evaluate the Myanmar Election 2020? What would be the regional implications of the election result? How are China and other regional powers expected to react to the election results? How does the Rohingya community purview the election 2020? In what ways are the Rohingya optimistic about the new Myanmar government, if at all?

The webinar invites academic scholars, practitioners, and Rohingya diaspora representatives from different countries. The Chair of the session is Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of North South University. Ambassador Shahidul Haque, Senior Fellow, SIPG, and former Foreign Secretary, the Government of Bangladesh, will moderate the webinar and Dr. Ishrat Zakia Sultana, Coordinator of CPS, will coordinate the program.

The panelists are:



Professor Nehginpao Kipgen

O. P. Jindal Global University
India



Brig Gen Sakhawat Hussain

Senior Fellow, SIPG
North South University



Dr. A.S.M. Ali Ashraf

Professor
University of Dhaka



Dr. M Jashim Uddin

Associate Professor
North South University



Dr. Kawser Ahmed

Executive Director, Conflict and Resilience
Research Institute, Canada



Jaivet Ealom

Lead Strategy
Canadian Rohingya Development Initiative (CRDI)
Canada



Professor Atiqul Islam

Vice Chancellor
North South University



Ambassador Shahidul Haque

Senior Fellow, SIPG
North South University and
Former Foreign Secretary, the Government of Bangladesh



Dr. Ishrat Zakia Sultana

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