

# MYRIAD WOES: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON MYANMAR'S WAR WITHIN

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April 15, 2023 12:10 am | Updated 12:10 am IST

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Myanmar's military did it again. On Tuesday, the junta, notorious for its attacks on civilians, [carried out air strikes on an opposition gathering](#) in the rebel-held Sagaing region, killing over 100, including women and children. The National Unity Government (NUG), the parallel administration formed by opposition groups, as well as witnesses, said a fighter jet and a combat helicopter bombed the gathering, which was celebrating the opening of an administrative office of the NUG; the regime, led by Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, calls it a "terrorist entity". The junta later confirmed the strike, but said most of those killed were resistance fighters. The strikes actually show the junta's growing vulnerabilities rather than strength in the country's ongoing civil war. In the past, the main opposition that the military regimes had faced was the non-violent democratic movement led by Aung San Suu Kyi. But after the February 2021 coup, which toppled an increasingly popular Ms. Suu Kyi (her National League for Democracy had won back-to-back elections), the country slipped into a civil war between the regime and the NUG. The NUG and its armed wing, the People's Defence Force (PDF), have joined hands with ethnic militias to oust the military. The military has lost swathes of territories, mostly sparsely populated rural and jungle areas. Unable to recapture lost land, it has relied on air strikes to weaken the opposition.

The junta faces pressure from the resistance groups, but it still controls most of the country's population centres. The current approach of the generals is to hold on to territories under their control while continuing to use disproportionate force against opposition fighters and civilians in rebel-held areas. With the tacit support of Russia and China and silence from India, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing does not face any regional pressure either. [The Association of Southeast Asian Nations](#) (ASEAN) had earlier proposed a five-point peace plan, urging an end to hostilities and starting inclusive dialogue. But the generals have refused to talk to the opposition and are not ready to share power. The status quo, however, is unsustainable. Regional powers cannot look away when a thuggish regime keeps killing its people with impunity. A peaceful resolution in Myanmar is essential for the stability of Southeast Asia, and, hence, ASEAN and regional powers such as Russia, China and India should not see the civil strife as an internal problem of Myanmar. They should use their economic and political clout to force the generals to stop the violence and enter into talks with the opposition. The only sustainable, long-term and just solution for Myanmar's myriad woes is the restoration of its democracy under a federal constitutional order. The first step to achieve this goal is to end the violence.

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