



လွတ်လပ်သော နိုင်ငံအဆင့် လူ့အခွင့်အရေးဌာနဆိုင်ရာ
အရပ်ဘက်လူထုအဖွဲ့အစည်းများ အလုပ်အဖွဲ့(မြန်မာ)
CSO Working Group on Independent National
Human Rights Institution (Burma/Myanmar)

Joint Statement: SEANF Must Deny the Junta-controlled Myanmar Commission the 2027 Chairship to Protect Regional Credibility

[BANGKOK, 7 August 2026] We, the undersigned **146** Myanmar, regional, and international civil society organizations, express deep alarm and concern regarding reports that the junta-controlled Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) has [announced](#) its intention to assume the Chairship of the Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF) in 2027, following discussions during the second Technical Working Group [Meeting](#) of SEANF held in Malaysia from 21 to 23 July 2026.

We urge SEANF members to take a principled stand and prevent the MNHRC from assuming any leadership position within SEANF and to urgently review its continued membership in the Forum. Allowing the MNHRC to chair SEANF would not only seriously undermine the credibility, legitimacy, and integrity of a regional human rights mechanism established to advance human rights protection in Southeast Asia, but would embolden the MNHRC to further provide the criminal military junta with a shield from international accountability.

SEANF's credibility must be grounded in international human rights standards

SEANF's credibility as a regional network of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) depends on its commitment to the standards it seeks to promote. As a mechanism established to strengthen human rights protection in Southeast Asia, SEANF must ensure that its membership and leadership are consistent with the principles of independence, pluralism, and effectiveness enshrined in the UN Paris Principles.

Providing leadership roles to institutions that no longer meet these standards risks undermining confidence in SEANF among civil society organizations, human rights defenders, and communities affected by human rights violations.

MNHRC's failure to comply with the Paris Principles

MNHRC's continued membership and its boldness of seeking to assume the SEANF Chairship raise serious concerns regarding the Forum's commitment to international minimum NHRI standards.

Following a review by the GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA), MNHRC's "B" status accreditation was removed in December 2024 due to its [failure](#) to comply with the UN

Paris Principles. The SCA raised serious concerns regarding MNHRC's independence, its failure to effectively fulfil its mandate following the military's 2021 illegal coup attempt, inadequate engagement with civil society and the international human rights system, and concerns regarding its appointment process and being complicit in the military junta's human rights violations and atrocity crimes.

Following the removal of its accreditation, MNHRC's membership in GANHRI was formally [removed](#) in March 2025, and the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) subsequently removed MNHRC from its membership in May 2025.

These decisions clearly demonstrate that MNHRC no longer meets the standards expected of an independent and effective NHRI. Civil society organizations have [consistently](#) called upon SEANF to take similar action and [remove](#) MNHRC from its network in order to uphold the integrity of regional NHRI mechanisms and to avoid the risk of being complicit in the MNHRC's protection of the perpetrators.

MNHRC has failed to protect human rights in Myanmar

Since the 2021 illegal military coup attempt, MNHRC has [failed](#) to act as an independent institution capable of protecting victims and holding perpetrators accountable for widespread and systematic human rights violations committed by the Myanmar military.

Rather than independently investigating and addressing violations, MNHRC has [failed](#) to challenge the actions of the military junta or provide effective protection or access to justice to victims of serious violations, including arbitrary detention, torture, sexual violence, deaths in custody, enforced disappearances, massacres and airstrikes and ground attacks against civilians, including children.

Through its actions and omissions, MNHRC has [contributed](#) to efforts by the military junta to project an appearance of human rights oversight while [failing](#) to provide any accountability and protection for victims and survivors.

Increased public engagements cannot restore lost legitimacy

The undersigned organizations are further concerned that MNHRC has recently increased its public engagements and international outreach despite losing recognition within the international NHRI system.

Its reported engagements—including a meeting with the International Committee of the Red Cross ([ICRC](#)) on 17 July 2026 and with the [Commissioner for Human Rights of the Russian Federation](#) on 10 July—appear designed to increase its international visibility in the military junta's post-sham-election rebrand in civilian disguise. However, public engagements cannot substitute for genuine independence, accountability, and compliance with the Paris Principles.

The Russian Commissioner for Human Rights has also faced [serious scrutiny](#) within the international NHRI community, including the removal of its accreditation following GANHRI-SCA

findings concerning its compliance with the Paris Principles and its response to serious human rights violations in the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

SEANF members must ensure none of their engagements are used to normalize MNHRC's role within regional and international human rights spaces without addressing the fundamental concerns that led to the removal of its accreditation and memberships.

SEANF must act to protect its integrity

Allowing MNHRC to assume the SEANF Chairship would cause a public outcry and severely damage the credibility and public trust required for the Forum to function effectively. Civil society organizations and human rights defenders cannot meaningfully engage with a regional mechanism that provides leadership to an institution acting as a smokescreen for a criminal military junta. This junta has been found by the international NHRI community to be non-compliant with the Paris Principles and has failed to protect the human rights of Myanmar's peoples.

We therefore call upon SEANF members to prevent MNHRC from assuming the Chairship of SEANF in 2027 and to take immediate steps towards its formal removal from the Forum. SEANF must ensure that its membership and leadership positions are held only by institutions that demonstrate independence, credibility, and genuine commitment to human rights protection, while taking concrete measures to safeguard its integrity as a credible and effective regional platform for human rights cooperation and advancement.

For more information, please contact:

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- Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions Secretariat, FORUM-ASIA; anni@forum-asia.org

Signed by 146 civil society organizations, including one organization that has chosen not to disclose its name:

1. 5/ Lapantang Strike Column
2. 5/ of Zaya State Strike Committee
3. A New Burma (ANB)
4. Action Committee for Democracy Development (ACDD)
5. Activate Rights, Bangladesh
6. Akila India Kattida Thozilalargal Madhya Sangam (AIKTMS) INDIA
7. All India Network of NGOs and Individuals Working with National and State Human Rights Institutions (AiNNI)

8. Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (ALTSEAN-BURMA)
9. Anti-Junta Alliance Yangon – AJAY
10. Anti-junta Forces Coordination Committee – Mandalay (AFCC – Mandalay)
11. Anyar Pyit Taing Htaung Lay Myar Strike Committee
12. Asia Democracy Network (ADN)
13. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
14. Asia Human Rights and Labour Advocates (AHRLA)
15. Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD)
16. Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI)
17. Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)
18. Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters (HRDP)
19. Athan – Freedom of Expression Activist Organization
20. Awaz Foundation Pakistan: Centre for Development Services (AwazCDS-Pakistan)
21. Ayadaw Strike Committee
22. Bali Legal Aid (YLBHI/LBH Bali)
23. Bhawan Nirman Karmakar Majdoor Union (BNKMU)
24. Budalin Strike Force
25. Building and wood Workers Trade Union Federation of Cambodia (BWTUC)
26. Building and Woodworkers International (BWI)
27. Burma Action Ireland
28. Burma Campaign UK (BCUK)
29. Burma Human Rights Network
30. Burma Monitor
31. Burma Solidarity Philippines (BSP)
32. Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK)
33. Burmese Women's Union (BWU)
34. Bytes For All, Pakistan
35. Campaign for Popular Democracy
36. CDM Medical Network (CDMMN)
37. Centre for Human Rights and Development, Mongolia
38. Chindwin Riverside Villages Strike Committee
39. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW)
40. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
41. Civil Information Network (CIN)

42. Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)
43. Civil Society and Human Rights Network, Afghanistan (CSHRN)
44. Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS), Indonesia
45. Construction Workers Union of NTUF (CWU-NTUF)
46. Creative Home (CH)
47. CSO Working Group on Independent National Human Rights Institution (Burma/Myanmar)
48. Dagon University Student's Union (DUSU)
49. Defence of Human Rights, Pakistan
50. Dignity, Kazakhstan
51. Educational Initiatives Prague
52. Equality Myanmar (EQMM)
53. Ethnic Youth General Strike Committee (Mandalay)
54. Federation of Basic Education Worker Unions (FBEWU)
55. Federation of Free Worker (FFW)
56. Future Light Center (FLC)
57. General Strike Collaboration Committee (GSCC)
58. General Strike Coordination Body – GSCB
59. Generation Wave (GW)
60. Greater Equitable Measures (GEM), Malaysia
61. Hpakant Hmawlae Strike Force
62. Human Rights Alert, India
63. Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)
64. Humanitarian Solidarity for the People of Myanmar (SKRM)
65. IMPARSIAL, the Indonesian Human Rights Monitor.
66. Independent Educators Union (INERU Indonesia)
67. Indonesian Airport Workers Union Federation (FSPBI/ITF)
68. Info Birmanie
69. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
70. Joint Action for NHRI and OP in Japan, Japan
71. Judicial System Monitoring Program, Timor-Leste
72. Justice & Equality Focus (JEF)
73. Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT)
74. Kalay Township People's Strike Steering Committee -KPSSC

75. Kani Township Strike Steering Committee
76. Kantbalu Township Strike Force
77. Karapatan Alliance Philippines
78. Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)
79. Karen Women's Organization (KWO)
80. Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG)
81. Karenni National Women's Organization (KNWO)
82. Keng Tung Youth
83. Korean House of International Solidarity
84. Koreksi.org (independent media)
85. Kyae Lak Myay
86. Latpadaung Anti-coup Strike Force
87. Latpadaung Region Strike Committee
88. Law & Society Trust (LST), Sri Lanka
89. LGBT Alliance Myanmar
90. Loka Ahlinn
91. Madhya Pradesh Theka Shramik Mazdoor Congress (MPTSMC)
92. Magway People's Revolution Committee
93. Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN)
94. Mandalay Medical Family (MFM)
95. Mandalay Strike Force (MSF)
96. Marsinah.Id (independent media)
97. MayMyo Strike Force
98. Metta Campaign Mandalay
99. Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee
100. Monywa-Amyint Road Strike Committee
101. Myanmar Labour Alliance (MLA)
102. Myanmar People Alliance (Shan State)
103. Myanmar Women, Peace and Security (M-WPS)
104. Myaung People Strike Steering Committee
105. Myingyan Civilian Movement Committee
106. National Union of Building and Construction Workers (NUBCW)
107. Network for Human Rights Documentation – Burma (ND-Burma)
108. Odhikar, Bangladesh

109. Pale People's Strike Steering Committee
110. People's Empowerment Foundation, Thailand
111. Politics for Women Myanmar
112. Progressive Voice (PV)
113. Pusat KOMAS, Malaysia
114. Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), Bangladesh
115. Rohingya Maiyafuinnor Collaborative Network (RCMN)
116. RW Welfare society (RWWS)
117. Sabah Timber Industry Employees Union (STIEU)
118. Shan MATA
119. Shwebo Strike Force
120. Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), Thailand
121. Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)
122. Surabaya Legal Aid (YLBHI/LBH Surabaya)
123. Sushil Pyakurel, Nepal
124. Synergy – Social Harmony Organization
125. Ta'ang Women's Organization (TWO)
126. Taiwan Association for Human Rights
127. Tamilnadu Congress Thozhilalar Union (TCTU), India
128. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines
129. Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma (TACDB)
130. The Awakening, Pakistan
131. The Federation of people union (SERBUK) Indonesia
132. Union for Forestry Employees Sarawak (UFES)
133. University of Medicine Mandalay Student Union Revolutionary Front – UMMSURF
134. University Students' Unions Alumni Force
135. US Campaign for Burma
136. Uttar pradesh Gramin Mazdoor Sangthan (Upgms)
137. Wetlet Strike Committee
138. White Coat Society Yangon (WCSY)
139. Women Advocacy Coalition – Myanmar (WAC-M)
140. Women Alliance Burma (WAB)
141. Women's Peace Network
142. Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC), Nepal

- 143. Yadanabon University Students' Union (YDNBUSU)
- 144. Yinmarbin-Sarlingyi All Villages People Strike Leading Committee
- 145. Youth Resources Strike Committee - Chaung U Township