



## Situation Room

### **\*\* COUP D'ETAT IN MYANMAR \*\***

**Period under review: from 7 March 2021 to 12 March 2021.**

[This report is based on publicly available sources to describe a changing situation. Information subject to change.]

### **Situation analysis recap:**

- Two members of the National league for democracy (NLD) political party died as a result of torture during their detention. Meanwhile the death toll is said to have reached 70 as bloody protests continue.
- Military regime's security forces have occupied 20 government universities, schools and hospitals that now serve as their base camps.
- China stated it is prepared to establish a dialogue with all relevant parties in order to ease the crisis in Myanmar. At the press conference after the annual meeting of parliament, Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that China is not taking sides in the crisis. However, he also stated that China is willing to continue upholding good relations with Myanmar no matter how the situation changes.
- The military regime hired an Israeli-Canadian lobbyist and an ex-member of the Israeli military intelligence, Arij Ben-Menashe as a PR spokesman. In a statement for Reuters, he indicated that the West misunderstands the Myanmar military. "They [the generals] want to get out of politics completely," he said, "but it is a process." Furthermore, according to his statement, the regime seeks to improve relations with the United States and plans to distance itself from China.
- Australian federal government broke off its bilateral Defence Cooperation Program with Myanmar on March 8 as an answer to the ongoing bloody protests. Australia's Foreign Minister Marine Payne stated that her country condemns the Myanmar security forces' use of lethal force and violence against the civilians who are expressing their universal rights, including the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.
- On March 10, the United States imposed sanctions on two adult children of Myanmar's commander in chief Min Aung Hlaing and six companies they control.
- According to UN human rights investigator on Myanmar Thomas Andrews, the military regime is likely committing crimes against humanity, which include acts of murder, enforced disappearance, persecution and torture.

### **Sources/Further Reading:**

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UN fears 'crimes against humanity' in Myanmar; death toll at least 70. (11 March 2021). *The Strait Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/un-fears-crimes-against-humanity-in-myanmar-death-toll-at-least-70>

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