



February 2023 Lesson Plan: Burma

Things to prepare BEFORE the meeting:

- Send an email reminder a week before AND the day before the meeting with the location & time
- Make a Powerpoint or Google Slides presentation with this information to easily share it
- Familiarize yourself with the information to answer any questions your members may have

Objective: Give students an overview of contemporary atrocities in Burma, from the Rohingya Genocide to the 2021 Coup. Expand their knowledge about this core STAND issue, and encourage them to take action to support those impacted by these crises.

LESSON PLAN

I. Beginning of meeting

- A. It's helpful to have music playing and welcome people as they come into the room.
- B. Have a sign-in sheet ([example](#)), and make sure to send any new names to STAND national (info@standnow.org).
- C. Welcome people as they come in, and use this time to get ready by rearranging the chairs in the room and/or logging into the computer, etc.

II. Introductions

Introduce yourself and any other chapter leaders (name, position and favorite movie/song/book/other icebreaker).

III. Introduction to Topic With Activity: Kahoot- An Overview of the Coup's Impacts

- A. Present a [Kahoot quiz](#) with the following questions related to the impact of the coup on its civilians, in statistics. Feel free to share the notes after certain questions, as provided. At the end, ask the attendees if any of the facts surprised them or stood out to them and why.
- B. Goal: The purpose of this activity is mainly to give them some insight on Burma's current situation through numbers. It serves as a reminder of the various ways in which the people of Burma are affected by the military's inhumane acts.
 1. When did the Burma military commit the coup d'etat?
 - a) November 1, 2021
 - b) February 1, 2021
 - c) August 8, 2020
 - d) May 19, 2018

Note: February 1st, 2023 marked two years since the military coup in Burma.

2. How many people are living below the poverty line?
 - a) 22.3 million
 - b) 10 million
 - c) 800,000
 - d) 30 million

3. How many people have been arrested or detained by the Burma military?
 - a) 8,000
 - b) 13,763**
 - c) 20,000
 - d) 5,000
4. How many children have been out of school since the start of the coup?
 - a) 2.5 million
 - b) 1.9 million
 - c) 7.8 million**
 - d) 6.6 million

Many students continue their education in camps for displaced people with CDM teachers. Some students switched over to online courses provided by democratic activists. “Yan Aung’s (not real name) preference for online learning is influenced by his fear of the military. Walking to school poses a risk of being kidnapped and taken hostage.” (NHK World-Japan, 2022)

5. How many civilian properties have been burned or destroyed by the military?
 - a) 34,000**
 - b) 20,000
 - c) 30,000
 - d) 18,000
6. How many clashes have taken place across the country?
 - a) 7,000
 - b) 8,500
 - c) 15,000
 - d) 10,000**
7. How many individuals have been internally displaced?
 - a) 650,000
 - b) 1.5 million
 - c) 1.1 million**
 - d) 2 million

Note: Violence against civilians and the intensified armed conflict following the events of February 2021 caused tens of thousands of refugees to flee into neighbouring countries and displaced over one million people. (UNHR, 2023)

8. How many people have been killed by the military?
 - a) 2,502
 - b) 2,940**
 - c) 1,596
 - d) 1,850
9. How many people have been left unemployed?
 - a) 1.5 million**
 - b) 1.2 million
 - c) 3 million
 - d) 950,000
10. How many people have been sentenced to death penalties related to the coup?
 - a) 25
 - b) 106
 - c) 130

Note: Burma's secretive military tribunals have long shown complete disregard for basic human rights protections and failed to uphold international due process and fair trial standards. Those on trial before military tribunals face almost certain conviction regardless of the available evidence against them. Families, the public, and foreign diplomats have no access to trials. (Human Rights Watch, 2022)

Sources:

Mohinga Matters, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Human Rights Watch, NHK World-Japan

IV. Background on the Crisis in Burma

A. Historical Background

- Burma is home to 135 officially recognized ethnic groups and even more who are unrecognized, like the Rohingya.
- Colonialism worsened pre-existing ethnic tensions, and Burma's independence in 1948 was built on unstable foundations, setting the stage for atrocities today.
- The Rohingya have faced a long history of persecution, stemming from a 1982 law that barred them from citizenship and basic human rights and labeled them as illegal immigrants who came during British colonial rule.
- This has been used as justification for decades of oppression, culminating in the attacks in 2017. This was not the first military crackdown, but it was unprecedented in its size and impact.
- "Burma" was the name given to the country by the British; it was renamed "Myanmar" in 1989 by the military junta. Many Burmese diaspora and human rights organizations choose to use "Burma" in solidarity with the people still suffering at the hands of the government, but the names can be used interchangeably.

B. The Rohingya Genocide

- The Burmese military began a genocidal campaign of mass rape and murder in August 2017 against the Rohingya, a Muslim ethnic group in majority Buddhist Burma.
- More than 80 villages were attacked and set on fire in the Rakhine State, where the Rohingya mainly live, and over 700,000 fled to refugee camps in Bangladesh.
- Many today still live in poor conditions, while others are still displaced within the country, with no home to return to.
- Other ethnic minorities were also subject to crimes against humanity, human rights violations, and war crimes, including the Chin, Kachin, Shan, Karenni, Mon, Rakhine, Karen, and many others.
- The US formally recognized it as a genocide in 2022 after years of advocacy from diaspora groups and human rights organizations (including STAND!).
- Gambia filed a case in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) about the Rohingya Genocide in 2019.
- The ICJ ruled that they must prevent all future acts of genocide against the Rohingya, but with the 2021 military coup, atrocities have only continued.

C. The Military Coup

- In February 2021, the military took over in a coup, claiming that the 2020 election results were fraudulent.



- The same military leaders responsible for the Rohingya Genocide now run the government, but the ousted leaders were also active participants in the genocide.
- There has been a huge movement of civilian protesters standing up against the coup, joined by many diaspora members.
- In the cities, they have cracked down on protests and opposition by attacking people in the streets and raiding the homes of journalists, political figures, and anyone else publicly opposed to the military government.
- In rural areas, forces have burned homes and villages, attacked civilians, and committed sexual violence against women.
- Important people to know: Aung San Suu Kyi is the currently imprisoned former president, known for winning a Nobel Peace Prize and committing genocide against the Rohingya, and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing is the current head of the Burmese military and government who oversaw the campaign of genocide against the Rohingya.

V. Video

This is a short 2-minute video by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum that goes over the history of atrocities in Burma: [One Year after the Coup: Mass Atrocity Risks in Burma](#)

VI. Actions

General Action:

- Read a variety of third party news sources like Al Jazeera, CNN, Reuters, etc. instead of BBC Burmese and even Facebook due to the propaganda being released by the military.
- Keep up with STAND and read the Conflict Updates.
- Follow accounts and sites like @standnow, @jinghpawjj, @gm4md, and @usacm3
- Share information and news on social media using the hashtag #WhatsHappeningInMyanmar
- Call and email your local representatives and senators to encourage them to take action
 - <https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>
- Participate in roundtables, protests, and other events.

Petitions:

- The current petition we should promote:
<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/tell-congress-to-step-up-for-the-myanmar-people>
- More petitions: <https://www.gm4md.org/campaigns/global-petitions>

Main Idea:

- Now that the Burma Bill of 2021 has passed, it is now more important than ever to continue to pressure the U.S. government to implement it, help refugees and displaced people, and sanction the military government.
- Sign the petitions and try to reshare as much information on social media as possible!

VII. Conclusion

1. Conclude the meeting with a thank you, and ask about future meeting dates. Ask students about feedback about the meeting and some things they liked or didn't like to make adjustments in the future and make everybody feel engaged.
2. Make sure to mention the resources that were given and other topics that were discussed.



3. Follow up after the meeting to let people know about things you will be doing in the future and invite people to get more involved. Consider including a form for people to provide any other feedback or information about how they would like to participate.
4. Please send any pictures you took of activities or other parts of the meeting to info@standnow.org to be featured in our chapter newsletter or on our social media!

Extra Resources

- Rohingya Crisis explained: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/28/rohingya-crisis-explained-in-maps>
- International Court of Justice on the Rohingya Genocide: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/02/14/myanmar-rohingya-genocide-case-steps-toward-justice>
- Military coup explained: <https://www.nytimes.com/article/myanmar-news-protests-coup.html>
- Burma History: <https://www.cfr.org/background/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya#chapter-title-0-5>
- Global Movement for Myanmar Democracy: <https://www.gm4md.org>
- STAND page on Burma (pre-coup): <https://standnow.org/burma/>
- International Response to Burma <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/02/06/myanmars-junta-benefits-weak-international-response>
- More background on atrocities in Burma also has the video <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/blog/perpetrators-in-power>