



Australian National University Myanmar Research Centre

Myanmar Policy Forum 2025 - Armed resistance and rebel governance

Program booklet

4 April Friday 2025

The Forum is hosted by the Myanmar Research Centre at the Australian National University, in collaboration with the University of New South Wales (Canberra) and the University of Melbourne.



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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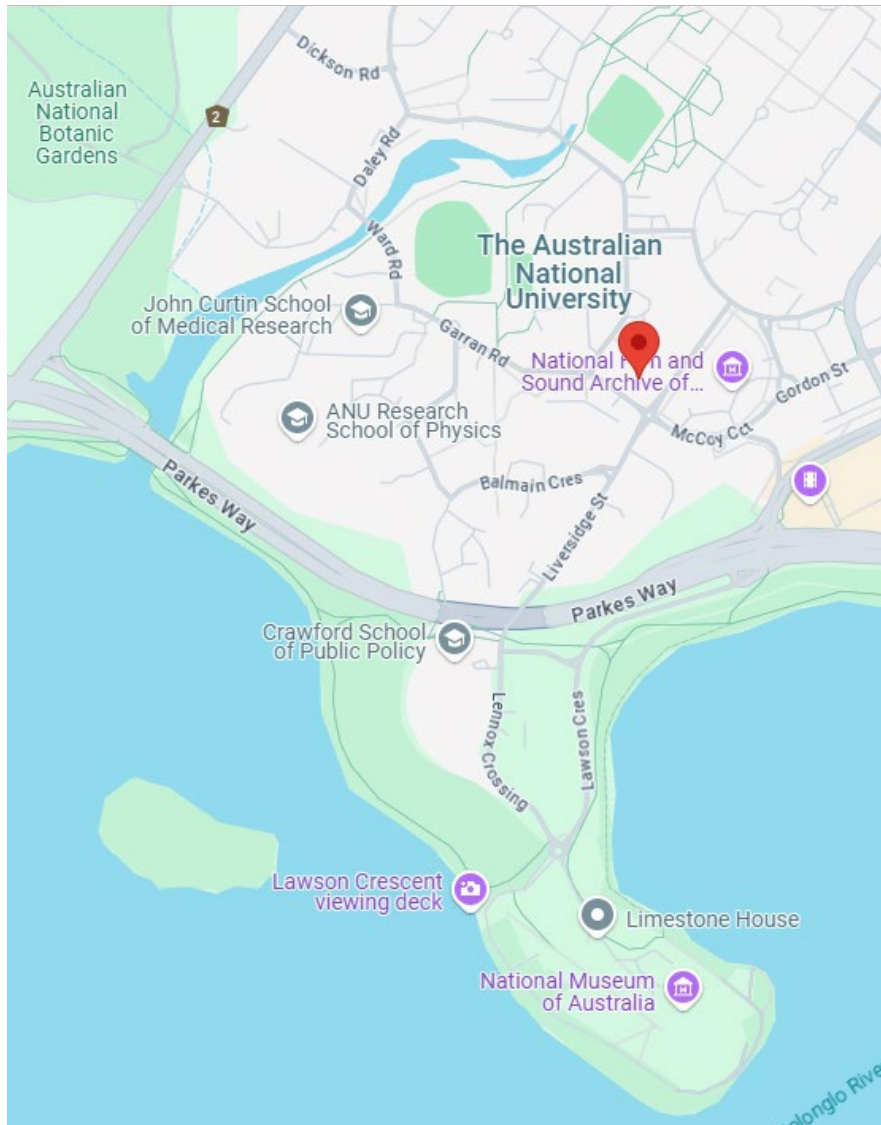
Contents

General information	3
Location	3
Program	4
Public Forum: Friday 4 April 9.00am-2.30pm.....	4
Wi-Fi details.....	4
Forum Speakers.....	5

General information

Location

Hedley Bull Building
130 Garran Road, ANU
Acton ACT 2601



Program

Public Forum: Friday 4 April 9.00am-2.30pm

All sessions: Lecture Theatre 1 (HB1), 130 Garran Road & Online on Zoom

TIME	PROGRAM
9.00am	Opening remarks Associate Professor Nick Cheesman, Director, ANU Myanmar Research Centre Professor Helen Sullivan, Dean, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific Justin Whyatt, Assistant Secretary, Southeast Asia Mainland Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Dr Morten Pedersen, Forum Convenor, UNSW
9.20am	Myanmar's post-coup crisis in numbers Su Mon Thant, Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)
9.40am	Keynote address - Tracking Myanmar's civil war: What to expect in 2025? Morgan Michaels, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)
10.40am	The junta's elections: Do they matter? Michael Lidauer, Senior elections expert
11.20am	The Federal Democracy Charter: Viable pathway to peace? Dr Michael Breen and Soe Htet, University of Melbourne
12pm	<i>Coffee break (Atrium)</i>
12.15pm	Panel on rebel governance Tony Neil, London School of Economics and Political Science James Davies, Independent analyst Su Mon Thazin Aung, Myanmar Studies Programme, ISEAS-Yusuf Ishak Institute, Singapore Zaw Tuseng, Myanmar Policy Institute
1.45pm	<i>Lunch (Atrium)</i>
2.30pm	End of Forum

Wi-Fi details

For the Myanmar Policy Forum at Hedley Bull, please connect to the following Wi-Fi:

- **Wi-Fi:** ANU-Secure
- **Username:** MRCPolicyForum
- **Password:** ANU2601!

Forum Speakers

Opening remarks

Associate Professor Nick Cheesman

Director, ANU Myanmar Research Centre

Nick Cheesman is a scholar of the politics of law and policing in mainland Southeast Asia, in particular, Myanmar (Burma). His work is concerned generally with how language animates actions, how categories determine meanings, and how ideas constitute practices. Presently, he holds an Australian Research Council grant to document where, when and how torture occurs in Myanmar and Thailand. Through this research, he aims to reinterpret the relationship between violence and the state.

Professor Helen Sullivan

Dean, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

Helen Sullivan is a public policy researcher, teacher, advisor, and senior university leader. A political sociologist, she was educated in the humanities and social sciences and holds degrees in Modern History and Political Science (BA Comb. Hons, University of Birmingham, UK), Women's Studies (MA, University of York, UK), and Public Policy (PhD, University of Birmingham, UK). She currently serves as Dean of the College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University.

Justin Whyatt

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Justine Whyatt is the Assistant Secretary of the Southeast Asia Mainland Branch at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Dr Morten Pedersen

Forum Convenor, UNSW

Dr Morten Pedersen is Senior Lecturer in International and Political Studies at the University of New South Wales Canberra (Australian Defence Force Academy) and a former senior analyst for the International Crisis Group in Myanmar. In addition to teaching and research, he has worked as a policy advisor on Myanmar politics and development affairs for the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Commission, the Australian government, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Martti Ahtisaari, among others.

Myanmar's post-coup crisis in numbers

Su Mon Thant

Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)

Su Mon Thant is an expert in conflict dynamics and democracy in Asia. She works as Asia-Pacific Senior Analyst for international organisation Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) where she has worked since 2021. She holds an MA in Politics and International Relations from Keele University (UK) and has researched Myanmar's politics and society for over a decade, including as an accredited observer of the 2015 and 2020 Myanmar elections.

Keynote address - Tracking Myanmar's civil war: What to expect in 2025?

Morgan Michaels

International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)

Morgan Michaels is the Research Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence at the IISS-Asia. His work examines armed violence and non-traditional security risks across Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on Myanmar. He has substantial experience implementing conflict monitoring systems and is the editor of the Myanmar Conflict Map, a data visualisation and analysis platform developed by the IISS. Morgan also studies ASEAN's conflict prevention architecture and the international diplomatic responses to armed conflict in the region. Prior to joining the IISS, Morgan worked as a researcher at the Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security (MIPS), a local think-tank in Yangon.

The junta's elections: Do they matter?

Michael Lidauer

Independent elections expert

Michael Lidauer, a Social Anthropologist by training, is a scholar-practitioner in the areas of electoral support and election observation with more than twenty years of professional experience. He provides training and mentorship for peers and conducts external evaluations for international organisations. Michael has worked on elections in over 20 countries across Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and in particular South and Southeast Asia, with a specialisation on Myanmar. He followed Myanmar's electoral processes since 2010 and served as IFES Senior Elections and Conflict Advisor 2014-2016 as well as EU elections expert in 2012 and 2020.

The Federal Democracy Charter: Viable pathway to peace?

Dr Michael Breen and Soe Htet

University of Melbourne

Michael Breen is a Lecturer in Public Policy (MECAF) at the School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne. After completing his PhD at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Michael was a McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Melbourne. Michael's research focuses on federalism, political parties and electoral systems in Asia, and the management of ethnic diversity. Michael's research also explores the role of deliberative democracy and the use of deliberative polling in constitution-making and conflict management. Prior to academia, Michael was a policy maker, negotiator and project manager in various government departments in Australia and international organisations including the United Nations Development Programme.

Soe Htet is a PhD candidate in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne and a member of the Myanmar Steering Committee. He holds a Master of Political Studies from the University of Mandalay (2020) and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Thai Chamber of Commerce (2016). Prior to his PhD studies, he worked as a civic educator at the Institute of Political and Civic Engagement. Soe has also taught in the online research certificate program offered by the Regional Centre for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD), Chiang Mai University. His research interests include nation-building, federalism, participatory action research, political discourse, and discourse analysis.

Panel on rebel governance

Su Mon Thazin Aung

Myanmar Studies Programme, ISEAS-Yusuf Ishak Institute, Singapore

Su Mon Thazin Aung is a visiting fellow with the Myanmar Studies Program at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. She is also an adjunct assistant professor at the Department of Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore. Dr. Aung holds a PhD in Politics and Governance Studies from the University of Hong Kong. She also earned an M.Sc. in International Political Economy from the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, MBA from the University of Newcastle, Australia, and BA in Southeast Asia and Pacific Studies from the University of Yangon. Her research interests encompass regime transitions and governance dynamics, focusing on territorial self-governance, elite politics, core executive studies, and socio-economic studies, primarily in Myanmar and Southeast Asia.

Zaw Tuseng

Myanmar Policy Institute

Zaw Tuseng is the President of the Myanmar Policy Institute (MPI), an independent, non-profit organisation committed to strengthening democratic coalition-building in Myanmar/Burma. MPI fosters dialogue and collaboration among key stakeholders, including the National Unity Government (NUG), the Sagaing Federal Unit Hluttaw led by NLD lawmakers elected in 2020 elections, the Sagaing Forum, civil society organisations, and emerging regional coalitions. With a focus on governance, community-building, and conflict analysis, MPI advances informed policymaking and local empowerment through research and advocacy. Zaw holds an Executive Master of Public Administration from Columbia University (2015) and a B.A. in Political Science from Delhi University (2003).

Tony Neil

London School of Economics and Political Science

Tony Neil is a PhD candidate in the Department of International Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science and a Visiting Fellow at the Australia National University. He co-runs the Myanmar programme for the Centre on Armed Groups, a Swiss-based non-government organisation. His current research examines the relationship between armed authorities and civilians in situations of ongoing conflict in southeastern Myanmar. Tony has been working on Myanmar for the last fifteen years and lived in the country between 2010-2020. During that time, he worked with civil society organisations in different border areas of Myanmar on environmental governance and conflict economies. In the aftermath of violence against the Rohingya in 2017, he worked in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh collaborating with Rohingya on research on atrocity crimes. He subsequently worked as a political officer at the FCDO on the Rohingya crisis.

James Davies

Independent analyst

James Davies is an independent analyst working on issues related to governance, armed conflict and humanitarian aid in Myanmar, with a particular focus on Rakhine State. He has worked on Myanmar since 2012 in academia, research, and humanitarian and development assistance, with numerous Rakhine, Myanmar and international organisations. James' work mostly focuses on research and contextual analysis for diplomatic and international aid audiences, in addition to Monitoring and Evaluation projects. Between 2019 and 2022, James managed an analytical unit which aimed to improve understandings of Myanmar's complex political, conflict, and socio-economic setting among humanitarian aid stakeholders in Myanmar. He holds a PhD in International and Political Studies from the University of New South Wales in Canberra.