

PANEL

Authority, Service Delivery and Representation in Post-Coup Myanmar

Convener

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Panel Description

Following the 2021 military coup, political authority in Myanmar has fragmented across much of the country, producing shifts in governance at multiple levels. As central state institutions withdrew or weakened, new and reconfigured governing bodies emerged while existing institutions adapted to rapidly changing political realities. Across contested and conflict-affected areas, these bodies exercise administrative, political, and service-delivery functions.

The displacement of prior state structures presents profound challenges, and does not, in itself, guarantee democratic responsiveness or equitable participation. The capacity to represent diverse constituencies depends on institutional design, political leadership, and the structural constraints under which governing bodies operate.

This panel brings together four field-based studies examining governance across local, territorial, and state-level institutions. One paper analyzes community-based administration reforms introduced by an Ethnic Resistance Organization (ERO) in Kachin State, focusing on minority-within-minority representation and local expectations of inclusion. The second paper examines the expansion of administrative control by an Wa ERO in Shan State, highlighting civilian experiences of militarized governance, fragmented services, and limited accountability. The third paper investigates the administration of an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp under Karen ERO control along the Salween River, exploring how long-term displacement governance manages scarce resources, service provision and institutional transition. The fourth assess minority rights and political participation within emerging revolutionary political institutions in Sagaing, Karenni, and Tanintharyi, analyzing gaps between federal democratic aspirations and lived experiences of ethnic and religious minority communities.

Treating these bodies as integral components of the country's evolving political order, the panel examines the patterns of representation, service provision, and institutional accountability across diverse contexts. The panel contributes to broader debates on human rights and political transformation, demonstrating how governance arrangements shape the practical conditions under which equity is pursued and/or constrained.