

PANEL

Beyond Collapse: Armed Groups and the Reconfiguration of Governance in Post-2021 Myanmar

Convener

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Panel Description

Since Myanmar's military coup in 2021, armed actors have moved from the margins to the center of political life across much of the country. In many regions, questions of authority, regulation, and everyday order are now negotiated not primarily through the state, but through a diverse range of armed groups. This panel starts from a shared concern: how governance is actively reworked through armed actors in the post-coup period. The four papers in this panel examine post-coup governance across Kachin, Karen, and Shan contexts, focusing on how different armed actors—ethnic armed organizations, junta-aligned militias, and the military regime itself—exercise power through concrete governance practices. The papers explore processes of rebel re-governance in newly captured territory (Chu et al.'s article), contested governance along strategic infrastructure corridors (Saw Jonathan's article), the incorporation of illicit economies into border governance (Nyan Luu Aung's article), and overlapping regimes of conscription that reshape youth agency, moral reasoning, and political belonging (Jirattikorn's article). Taken together, the panel shifts attention away from narratives of state collapse or institutional absence. Instead, it highlights how armed governance operates through everyday practices such as taxation, mobility control, economic regulation, and coercive recruitment, often producing hybrid and unstable political orders. By bringing these cases into conversation, the panel emphasizes both variation and shared dynamics in how armed actors seek to stabilize authority under post-coup conditions.