



Burma's Election and Possible U.S. Revocation of Temporary Protected Status

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Against the backdrop of ongoing conflicts across much of Burma (also known as Myanmar), the country's military government conducted a three-phase national election for national and regional parliaments that concluded on January 25, 2026. Military-backed parties, headed by the [Union Solidarity and Development Party \(USDP\)](#), won an overwhelming majority, according to state media. Reports indicate that a new, purportedly civilian, government [could be seated by April](#). With most opposition parties barred from taking part and voting impossible in parts of the war-torn country, the United Nations (UN) special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar described the elections as [“illegitimate.”](#) Other international observers have described the process as a [“sham.”](#)

Burma has been under military rule since a February 2021 coup d'état, which prevented the seating of a democratically elected Parliament. The coup brought to an end a decade-long period in which Burma was led by a hybrid civilian-military government. In the five years since the coup, decades-long conflicts between the military and numerous ethnic armed organizations have continued, and new conflicts with anti-military militia have emerged throughout the country and displaced [an estimated 3.6 million people](#), over 6.5% of the overall population, according to the UN. As of January 2026, the military reportedly controls [less than half the country's overall land area](#). Polling stations covered only parts of Burma, and the military [reportedly conducted](#) offensives to secure some areas in the weeks ahead of the polls.

Some international observers have argued that the polls are aimed primarily at garnering some degree of international recognition for a military-dominated government. Burma's leading opposition party, Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD)—the winner of the most recent elections in 2020—was banned from taking part, as were other opposition parties. (Aung San Suu Kyi, 80, has been in prison since the 2021 coup.) According to media reports, state [violence, including military airstrikes](#), took place ahead of the elections, and the junta made [numerous public arrests of peaceful protesters opposing the polls](#). The junta's Election Commission reported turnout of around 55%, below voting rates in the past three elections.

Burma's current military government, known as the State Administration Council (SAC) and led by military leader Min Aung Hlaing, has been isolated internationally since it took power in 2021. The United States and other nations have imposed a range of sanctions on the regime, its backers, and

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numerous military-linked companies. The UN Security Council has passed a series of resolutions, including [UNSC Resolution 2669](#) in December 2022, which condemned the coup and called for a cessation of violence and dialogue among all stakeholders in Burma. Burma's neighbors in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—of which Burma is a member—have sought, largely unsuccessfully, to lessen violence and mediate between stakeholders, and have not invited the junta's leaders to official ASEAN summits for the past five years.

International reactions to the elections have been varied. [Australia](#), [the United Kingdom](#), and [Canada](#) issued statements that the elections fell short of conditions to deem them free and fair. Following the elections, the foreign minister of ASEAN's current chair, the Philippines, reportedly said at a regional meeting that ASEAN does not recognize the elections “as of now.” On the other hand, Thailand's foreign minister reportedly called for a “[calibrated re-engagement](#)” with Burma following the voting. Nine countries, including the People's Republic of China (PRC), India, Russia, and Vietnam, sent observers to the election.

In the leadup to the elections, the Trump Administration [announced](#) on November 24, 2025 that it would terminate the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations for Burmese citizens who were in the United States at the time of the 2021 coup, effective January 26, 2026. TPS is granted by DHS to eligible individuals and allows them to live and work legally in the United States when conditions in their home countries are deemed unsafe because of conflict or disaster. These individuals are not subject to removal from the United States during the period in which such status is in effect. One of the Biden Administration's first actions following the 2021 coup was to make Burmese citizens in the United States eligible for TPS, and this designation was extended twice.

In an [announcement](#) on November 26, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said Burma has made “notable progress in governance and stability, including the end of its state of emergency, plans for free and fair elections, successful ceasefire agreements, and improved local governance contributing to enhanced public service delivery and national reconciliation.” Some Members of Congress have [made statements](#) and introduced legislation opposing the move, including H.R. 7014, which calls for the continuation of TPS status for Burmese citizens in the United States, as of November 25, 2025, for an 18-month period. A federal district court judge on January 23, 2026 issued a [ruling](#) postponing the January 26, 2026 effective date for terminating TPS status for the [approximately 3,670 Burmese citizens](#) who are eligible. The postponement is in effect pending resolution of the case, and protections and benefits previously conferred to eligible Burmese citizens remain in effect.

In the 119th Congress, some Members of Congress have introduced legislation to encourage the Administration to take action on specific U.S. policies toward Burma. The Brave BURMA Act ([H.R. 3190](#)), if adopted, would call on the Administration to name a special coordinator or special representative for Burma policy, among other actions. The Burma GAP Act ([H.R. 4140](#)) would call on the Secretary of State and special coordinator to support humanitarian relief for the country's Rohingya minority, seek accountability for crimes against humanity committed against them, and require a report on the status of the Rohingya and U.S. efforts to address their situation. The No New Burma Funds Act ([H.R. 4423](#)) would call on the U.S. representative to the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development to block new financing for projects in Burma.

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