

# GLOBAL UP-TO-DATE

A Monthly Newsletter by Centre for Governance Studies



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## A CGS Publication

The world around us is changing rapidly. Wars, new turn in global politics, human rights issues are occurring every day, posing new challenges and concerns. Global Up-to-Date is an initiative by Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) which will work as a hub for explaining the contemporary global issues.

The regular briefs will focus and explain the issues related to International Politics, Economy, Security, Human Rights, and Development. There will be a monthly printed version newsletter containing briefs of all the contemporary global important issues. The online version contains regular updates of the pressing issues along with the PDF version of the news letter.

*Note: The views expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of CGS.*



# Myanmar's Junta to Hold Election Amid Ongoing Crisis

*Thain Shewe Kyaw*



After the 2021 Military Coup, Myanmar's military chief, General Min Aung Hlaing, for the first time has announced plans to prepare for an election to hold in December 2025 or January 2026. General Ming ended the state of emergency and dissolved the ruling State Administration Council (SAC), replacing it with the National Defense and Peacekeeping Commission (NDPC), an interim government that will run the country until a new parliament is formed. But critics say this is only a change in name. The cabinet remaining same, and General Min Aung Hlaing has made himself interim president, keeping full control in his hands.

Even though the state of emergency has officially ended, it is still active in 63 townships where heavy conflict continues with ethnic rebel armies. The Junta says it needs emergency law in these places to “keep stability,” but most of these areas are not under its control.

Since taking power in February 2021, the military has banned most major political parties, including the National League for Democracy (NLD), which won the last two elections with around sixty percent majority vote. Many independent media have been closed or forced to work from abroad, so people have very little access to information.

The Junta is still engaged in heavy conflict with ethnic rebel armies, and large areas of the country including much of Rakhine, Shan, Kachin, Karen, and Chin states, plus parts of Mandalay and Sagaing regions are under these ethnic rebellion armies' control. A nationwide pre-election census carried out last year could only be completed in 145 of Myanmar's 330 townships, according to the junta's own figures, highlighting how limited its reach has become.



Western media have criticized the planned election as a sham that only changes the regime's name while leaving power firmly in the hands of the Junta. Most popular political parties have been banned, and thousands of political leaders remain imprisoned. International election experts, including the Club de Madrid, have urged countries to maintain sanctions against Myanmar's Junta and refuse to recognize the regime politically. The United Nations (UN) has also warned that, given the current conditions, the election cannot be free or fair.

China, the Junta's most powerful ally, is backing the decision to hold the election but may not be supporting General Min Aung Hlaing himself. Analysts believe Beijing could prefer to see another General in power, leading a nominally civilian government that would still safeguard its interests. According to Guardian reports suggest the Chinese leadership views General Min Aung Hlaing as incompetent, particularly after a series of devastating battlefield losses to ethnic rebellion armies. The ASEAN group is sending a team to Myanmar to see the situation for themselves before the planned election. The visit will be led by Malaysia's foreign minister, with members from the Philippines and other countries. Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan says the priority

should be to stop the fighting so all sides can talk, not to rush into an election while the conflict continues.

Ethnic rebel armies have rejected the election plans. The Arakan Army (AA) has vowed to block the vote in the majority of Rakhine State, which it controls. Other ethnic armed organizations have issued similar statements, rejecting what they call a meaningless exercise that will only deepen the country's crisis.

With vast areas outside government control, millions displaced, and political opponents silenced, the junta's election plan appears less about restoring democracy and more about securing its own survival under a new political label backed by their trusted ally, China.



# Thailand and Cambodia: Southeast Asia's Fierce Frontier Dispute

*Depanjali Roy*



Thailand and Cambodia, they are neighbors and situated in Southeast Asia, specifically in the Indochina region. Both of the countries have similarities in their history, culture and cuisine because of their deep connection to Khmer culture. Although their political connections were not always healthy. As they have a similar belief system, they are always protective about their temples, especially in the borders. Temples of Preah Vihear and Ta Muen Thom were two main temples in the border of both countries and often tension arises surrounding these temples.

Conflict in the border escalated on July 15 2008, when the 50 Thai soldiers came close to the area of Temples of Preah Vihear. According to the Thai government the demarcation of the temple was not clear in 1962, ICJ verdict. Actually, Cambodia was under French rule before WWII. After the war, both of the countries appealed to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and Temples of Preah Vihear came under Cambodia according to a 1907 French map. However, Cambodia has only the temple but the surrounding of the temples are not distributed. And that's what Thailand claims.

If we see the recent activities on the border of Thailand and Cambodia, the tension rose on May 28, 2025 when a 10 minutes skirmish continued on the border between the two forces, and one Cambodian soldier was killed. After that series of incidents happened in June, 2025 when military officials of two sides sat for bi-lateral talks. Although it went into vain and both of the countries closed their borders, Cambodia also banned imports of Thai fruits and soap operas. It became controversial when Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra got suspended from her position as Hun Sen, Cambodian President of the Senate, leaked their conversation over a phone call. On



the call the Shinawatra addressed Hun Sen as “uncle” and herself as his “niece”. Moreover, she also mentioned the commander of the Second Army Region, Boonsin Padklang, as the “a man of the opponents” and “not beneficial for the country” and he wanted to fight than make peace. Hun Sen shared this recording with twenty other Cambodian officials and later on facebook as proof. Paetongtarn Shinawatra later confirmed the authenticity of the recording and tried to defend herself by saying it was “of the record approach” and private conversation with Hun Sen. This is very obvious to say that Cambodian President of the Senate, Hun Sen took full advantage of the situation and played dirty to gain popularity, rather than solidify diplomatic connections with Thailand with a peaceful approach.

In the course of all controversy, she showed her frustration by saying it was a breach of diplomatic trust by Cambodia. On July 1, 2025 she was suspended from her position and Phumtham Wechayachai appointed as acting prime minister of Thailand. As the border security got strict, on July 13, three Thai soldiers were injured by landmines. Later it was reported that those landmines were not from WWII, but “new and ready to deploy conditions” and planted by Cambodia in the borders. Although Cambodia denied all the allegations and accused Thailand for spreading misinformation. The situation got heated up when on July 23, five Thai soldiers were again severely injured by landmine. After this incident the Thai government criticised Cambodia by saying its attack on sovereignty and against human rights, recalled its ambassador and closed all the checkpoints for Cambodia. From 24-27 July, military conflict took place on the border and as a result civilians and soldiers were killed from both sides. Civilians got displaced because of this sudden conflict.

Both the countries of Southeast Asia felt they needed a solution, and Malaysia came forward to help as a mediator. The negotiation process started on July 28, 2025 where both of the countries agreed on unconditional ceasefire. The meeting was followed by border committee meetings with defense officials of Thailand and Cambodia. The meeting was also attended by the officials of Malaysia, the US, and China as observers. Now two of the countries can only hope that their conflict can be solved with the intervention of the ASEAN Summit in the month of August. Here Malaysia played a crucial role in the reconstruction process between Thailand and Cambodia. This year ASEAN Chairmanship was held by Malaysia and they took the initiative to attend the meeting between these countries to strengthen the unity of this region. Malaysia understood that the South east region needs to be together, as the tariff from the USA can pressure its people to lose their livelihood by going through a declining economy. However, it's better late than never to strategize and work according to the changing scenarios.

In the end, it is commendable how Southeast Asian countries and its organization ASEAN will come forward to resolve the border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia. It took time but all of the countries understood the importance of unity in this crucial point when strengthening the economy of this region should be the main focus. This incident is an example of prioritizing long term stability over ignoring petty fights.



# Recognition of Palestine and the Turning Point in Global Diplomacy

*Roman Uddin*



France, Malta and Canada along with Luxembourg and several other European partners announced during July 2025 that they would move toward the recognition of the State of Palestine. France confirmed its decision for September, Malta and Canada expressed readiness provided conditions are met, and Luxembourg declared that it considered recognition unavoidable. These announcements, coming in the middle of an extraordinary three-day United Nations conference in New York from 28 to 30 July, were remarkable because they showed that the idea of Palestinian statehood is no longer confined to rhetorical solidarity but is entering the sphere of practical diplomatic commitments. For decades, recognition had been debated but delayed. The fact that multiple Western governments, often aligned with Washington, publicly committed to recognition marked a visible shift in the international consensus.

The background of the conference is as urgent as it is tragic. By July 2025, the Gaza war had entered a devastating stage, with civilian deaths mounting beyond sixty thousand and essential infrastructure collapsing. Hospitals were without fuel, children were malnourished, and famine warnings came from humanitarian agencies. The broader regional context was equally dangerous, with Israel's confrontation with Iran threatening to open new fronts. This created a severe need for a multilateral mechanism that could offer more than short-lived ceasefires. France and Saudi Arabia, supported by Egypt and Jordan, stepped forward to convene this high-level meeting under the authority of the UN General Assembly. Their aim was to provide a political horizon that connected the immediate crisis in Gaza with the long-deferred two-state solution.



The United States and Israel chose not to attend. Washington described the timing as premature and argued that the event risked undermining efforts to secure hostage releases. Israel dismissed it outright, claiming that the conference ignored Israeli security concerns and rewarded violence. Their absence was significant because it highlighted both the limitations of the initiative and the growing impatience of much of the international community with the lack of progress.

Despite this, the conference produced a set of significant outcomes. The New York Declaration was adopted as a detailed roadmap. It called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the release of hostages, and the phased withdrawal of Israeli forces. It laid out plans for the Palestinian Authority to take over governance of Gaza under a transitional arrangement, supported by an international stabilization mission under UN mandate. The declaration also included commitments to establish a reconstruction fund, to revise the outdated Paris Protocol that governs economic relations, and to release withheld Palestinian tax revenues. Importantly, it contained explicit provisions against illegal settlement expansion in the West Bank and opened the possibility of restrictive measures against those undermining peace.

The recognition announcements were the most visible diplomatic development, but they were accompanied by the creation of a nineteen-member oversight committee co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia to follow up on the implementation. Delegates also agreed that the September 2025 UN General Assembly high-level week would serve as the next milestone for securing recognition pledges and for reviewing progress on the roadmap.

The responses from Middle Eastern and Western countries during the conference underscored how the global narrative is diverging from that of Washington and Jerusalem. Saudi Arabia's foreign minister emphasized that Palestinian statehood must be guaranteed within a clear timeframe if regional stability is to be achieved. Egypt and Jordan both pressed for a unified Palestinian Authority presence in Gaza and the West Bank, warning that indefinite Israeli military control would only perpetuate instability. Qatar, while condemning the indiscriminate Israeli attacks in Gaza, joined Egypt and Saudi Arabia in calling for Hamas to disarm and exit Gaza to allow for a transition to legitimate governance. These positions showed that Arab states are simultaneously rejecting Israeli aggression and demanding that Hamas relinquish its armed dominance.

In Europe, France played the most active role, with its foreign minister presenting the recognition pledge as both a moral necessity and a pragmatic tool to break the deadlock. Malta, Luxembourg and Spain voiced similar positions, arguing that recognition is not a reward for violence but an essential step to preserve the two-state framework. Canada's statement was more cautious, linking recognition to conditions on governance reform, but it nevertheless marked a notable departure from its traditionally reserved position.

Together, these stances reflect a shift where governments are increasingly willing to challenge the monopoly of Washington in defining the boundaries of the debate. By recognizing Palestine, they are not endorsing Hamas but rather affirming the Palestinian Authority as the legitimate governing partner and insisting on reforms that will allow it to take responsibility in Gaza. The language from these states



showed a careful balance: condemning Hamas's violence and rejecting its control of Gaza, while equally condemning Israel's disproportionate military operations and settlement expansions.

The implications of this diplomatic shift are significant. For the first time in years, there is a multilateral framework that integrates humanitarian relief, governance reform, security arrangements, economic measures, and political recognition into one package. The recognition pledges, even if not universal, challenge the perception that Palestinian statehood can be deferred indefinitely. The involvement of Saudi Arabia signals that normalization with Israel is unlikely to proceed without concrete steps on Palestinian sovereignty. The participation of European states demonstrates that divisions within the West are widening, with some governments breaking ranks with Washington's caution.

The conference also revealed the enduring difficulty of implementation. Without Israel's cooperation, the roadmap cannot be fully realized. Without U.S. engagement, international pressure lacks enforcement power. Yet the fact that over one hundred fifty delegations gathered and that multiple Western and Arab states issued recognition pledges indicates that the international community is increasingly unwilling to accept the status quo.

The United Nations conference on Palestine was both a humanitarian response and a political signal. It addressed the severe need created by the devastation in Gaza, it challenged the narrative that Palestinian statehood is impossible, and it brought together a coalition of states ready to invest diplomatic capital in the two-state solution. Whether these steps will translate into concrete change remains uncertain, but the recognition of Palestine by France, Malta, Canada, Luxembourg and others marks a turning point in how the world is willing to act when Washington and Tel Aviv stand aside.