

Committee: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (GA3)

Issue: Protecting Human Rights and Democratic Structures in Southeast Asia

Student Officer: Theodoros Dimitras

Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Theodoros Dimitras and I will have the honour of serving as one of the Co-Chairs in the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee of the 7th annual DSTMUN conference. I am looking forward to this conference for a couple of key reasons, the main one being the topics of the GA3 committee. I believe that this year, the issues you will be tackling are some of the most interesting and vital issues the world faces today. This conference will be an opportunity for all of us, delegates and chairs. An opportunity to expand our knowledge on international affairs and relations, to delve into and analyse complex political scenarios and engage in the problem-solving procedure that the world so desperately needs today. The aim of this study guide is to act as a general introduction and outline of the topic of "Protecting Human Rights and Democratic Structures in Southeast Asia", providing information in a condensed manner. However, I would advise you to not shy away from doing your own research to deepen your understanding of the topic. For any questions regarding the topic, rules of procedure or anything related to the committee, please contact me through my email at theodimitras@gmail.com.

I look forward to meeting you in person,

Yours truly,

Theodoros Dimitras

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asia is a distinct region for many attributes. Diverse political systems, ranging from one extreme of the political spectrum to the other, diverse cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds and a rich history. This diversity is positive on the surface but often presents itself as a barrier to unity and, consequently, order.

Despite the vast diversity between them, many Southeast Asian countries face similar fundamental problems. One of these problems is the continuing violation of human rights.

In 1948, the United Nations (UN) came together to all sign one of the most important documents in history: The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In this declaration, the UN established that each human being on this planet has a set of fundamental rights. For example, having freedom of speech, namely being able to express one's opinion without censorship or restraint, is a fundamental human right.

Human Rights violations are not infrequent in the region of Southeast Asia. Fundamental rights of the people, like the aforementioned freedom of expression, are constantly under threat and attack by the authoritarian governments of the region, whose policies and ideals clash with the principles set by the UN many years ago.

The issue of inadequate or non-existent Democratic Structures is another serious problem the region is facing. Democracy is an ideal held in the highest regard, due to its practicality in giving power to the general population in one way or another.

In Southeast Asia, authoritarian regimes are deeply rooted in history, and some remain in the present. Monarchies, Military Juntas and left extremist regimes, all are present in the area and make up , which is problematic.

Human rights are non negotiable. They are the fundamental building block of every society, and without them, progress towards a better future is severely limited if not impossible. For this reason, the region is in need of reforms and international help in order to tread forward, to a fair and just Southeast Asia.



Figure 1: Southeast Asia's Freedom Index ¹

The graph above showcases Southeast Asia's Freedom indexes. From it one can conclude that Southeast Asia is in desperate need of reforms. Southeast Asia's average freedom index is 37.72/100, while the global average is almost double at 67.48/100. The suffering of the people due to a lack of justice and rights is the most important and pressing issue there can be. ²

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Authoritarianism

"In politics and government, the blind submission to authority and the repression of individual freedom of thought and action. Authoritarian regimes are systems of government that have no established mechanism for the transfer of executive power and do not afford their citizens civil liberties or political rights." ³

Censorship

"the action of preventing part or the whole of a book, film, work of art, document, or other kind of communication from being seen or made available to the public,

¹ Sukoco, Rafa. "Southeast Asia's Freedom Index, 2023." *Seasia.co*, 1 May 2024, <https://seasia.co/infographic/southeast-asias-freedom-index-2023>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024

² Ibid

³ Encyclopædia Britannica, *Authoritarianism*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/authoritarianism. Accessed 26 Aug. 2024.

because it is considered to be offensive or harmful, or because it contains information that someone wishes to keep secret, often for political reasons”⁴

Corruption

“illegal, bad, or dishonest behaviour, especially by people in positions of power”

Criminal Code

“a systematic and integrated statement of the rules and principles pertaining to criminal offences.”⁵

Electoral rights

Electoral rights refer to the rights of an individual to legitimately participate in the electoral process.

Illiteracy

“A lack of the ability to read and write”⁶

Judicial Independence

“The ability of courts and judges to perform their duties free of influence or control by other actors, whether governmental or private.”⁷

Political Participation

“Political participation can be defined as citizens’ activities affecting politics. [...] the list of participatory activities has become virtually infinite and includes actions such as voting, demonstrating, contacting public officials, boycotting, attending party rallies, [...] posting blogs, volunteering [...]”⁸

Proxy War

“A military conflict in which one or more third parties directly or indirectly support one or more state or nonstate combatants in an effort to influence the conflict’s

⁴ “Censorship.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/censorship>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

⁵ “Criminal Code.” *Dictionary.com*, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/criminal-code>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

⁶ Cambridge University Press. “Illiteracy.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, 2024, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/illiteracy. Accessed 26 Aug. 2024.

⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica, *Judicial Independence*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/judicial-independence. Accessed 26 Aug. 2024.

⁸ Chhibber, Pradeep, and Ken Kollman. “Party Aggregation and Nationalization in Federal Systems.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, Oxford University Press, 29 Mar. 2017, <https://oxfordre.com/politics/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-68>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

outcome and thereby to advance their own strategic interests or to undermine those of their opponents.”⁹

Surveillance

The careful watching of a person or a place especially by the police or army.¹⁰

Urbanisation

“Urbanisation, the process by which large numbers of people become permanently concentrated in relatively small areas, forming cities.”¹¹

Whitewashing

“an attempt to stop people finding out the true facts about a situation”¹²

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical and Socioeconomic Context

Southeast Asia is historically one of the most troubled regions in the world and the most demographically damaged of all time. During the colonial era in the 16th century and onwards, European Settlers have been active in the region of Southeast Asia looking for opportunities. The Spanish colonised the Philippines, the Dutch colonised Indonesia, the British claimed Malaysia and Myanmar and the French took the whole of Indochina, comprised of Cambodia, Laos and of course Vietnam.

The colonialist era was not a peaceful one for the aforementioned countries. Economic exploitation to the highest degree, systems of administration foreign and unjust to the locals, resistance and uprisings against colonial rule and disorder.

By the time the Second World War (1939–1945) plagued the world, resistance movements were getting increasingly bigger and more powerful, and other circumstances had weakened European control over the region of Southeast Asia. This allowed Japan to occupy a large part of the region, excluding most of Indochina.

After Japan’s defeat, which saw a power vacuum emerge due to the end of Japanese occupation in the region of Southeast Asia, national independence

⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica, *Proxy War*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/proxy-war. Accessed 26 Aug. 2024.

¹⁰ “Surveillance.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/surveillance>. Accessed 9 Sept. 2024.

¹¹ “Urbanisation.” *Britannica*, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/urbanization>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

¹² “Whitewashing.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/whitewashing>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

movements sprung up again, fought, and gained their independence. Most had to engage in conflicts with their colonizers, like the Vietnamese fighting the French and Indonesia's war on the Dutch.

The Cold War (1947-1991) was a turbulent time for the region, as it became a proxy battleground, full of conflict. Some examples of conflicts are the Vietnam War against America, the Cambodian Civil War (1967-1975), and the insurgencies in the Philippines and Malaysia. The struggle between capitalism and communism played a significant role in these conflicts and was the sole cause for some of them. The Era of the Cold War also marked the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967¹³, the first modern attempt at regional cooperation.

Today, the region's struggles are less related to foreign powers and factions waging war, and more towards the severe socio-economic problems most of the countries face.

For the last twenty to thirty years, the main threat to Southeast Asia has been China. Their advances, both economical and territorial, have the region of Indochina on high alert. One example of this is how their maritime claims of an increasingly large territory in the South China Sea threaten Vietnamese waters and Vietnam itself, or how the patron-client relationship they have with Cambodia and Laos is threatening the country's integrity and independence.

Human Rights Challenges

Freedom of Speech and the Press

One of the more important issues is freedom of speech and freedom of the press, issues every country in SEA faces, except for Singapore. Most of the nations in the area have had a history of authoritarian regimes, one-party Republics or monarchies and are slowly aligning themselves with democratic. However, most remain in regimes that encourage suppression of free speech and press, for example, Myanmar's Military Junta or Thailand's constitutional monarchy with military influence.

Since the military coup in 2021, Myanmar has enacted harsh and unjust laws, criminalising any form of dissent. Surveillance is part of everyday life, and censorship of books or even the internet is widespread. The press is heavily controlled, and independent media outlets are often raided, shut down and forced to operate "underground". State media is the main source

¹³ Khoman, Thanat. *ASEAN Conception and Evolution*. ASEAN, www.asean.org/the-founding-of-asean/asean-conception-and-evolution-by-thanat-khoman/. Accessed 26 Aug. 2024.

of information in Myanmar, and it is controlled exclusively by the military^{14 15}
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Electoral Rights and Political Participation

Political participation is a major problem in the region of Southeast Asia. Although the vast majority of countries operate with theoretically democratic systems, most are influenced by people in power. An example is Vietnam with its one-party system led by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), the highest legislative body, the National Assembly, is at least according to the legislation representative of the people and its members are selected by national vote. In practice, all possible candidates are approved or disapproved by the CPV before they are even allowed to run, leading to a situation where the majority of the National Assembly are dedicated party loyalists.

Vietnam's system is not one of a kind; Thailand operates in a similar way. The House of Representatives in Thailand is a body representative of the people. However, that doesn't amount to much when one considers the Senate, a body whose members are elected by the military and have significant constitutional power, more so than the body of representatives. The Senate also influences the selection of the prime minister, which effectively makes the system unrepresentative of the people of Thailand.

Some systems are less subtle than the two mentioned above. Brunei, for example, has been and remains a tight absolute monarchy ruled by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, who has been in power since 1967. He is head of state and head of government, has ultimate authority over the executive, legislative and judicial branches. He fills the role of King, Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Minister of Finance and Minister of Foreign Affairs. There are no political parties, no elections and the Sultan appoints all members of the government. Freedom of speech and press or any type or form of dissent is strictly prohibited, as the government controls and monitors all media.^{17 18}

¹⁴ **Freedom House**. "Freedom in the World 2023: Myanmar." *Freedom House*, 2023, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/myanmar/freedom-world/2023>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

¹⁵ **Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**. "Myanmar: One of the World's Worst Environments for Journalists." *RSF*, 2023, <https://rsf.org/en/myanmar>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

¹⁶ **Human Rights Watch**. "World Report 2023: Myanmar." *Human Rights Watch*, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/myanmar>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

¹⁷ **Human Rights Watch**. "Vietnam: Events of 2023." *Human Rights Watch*, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/vietnam>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

¹⁸ **BBC News**. "Brunei Profile: A Profile of the Sultanate of Brunei." *BBC News*, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-12990066>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

Rule of Law and Judicial Independence

The state of judicial independence and generally, the rule of law vary across Southeast Asia. Legal systems in the region are often not impartial and independent from other branches of government. The rule of law is undermined by powers like political influence.

An interesting example is Malaysia, which operates with a strong legal system based on British common law and was established in the years of colonization. The Criminal Procedure Code, based on the Indian criminal code, is also fundamentally strong. However, Malaysia's legal system fails to operate effectively and impartially. For example, complications in the area of freedom of religion have arisen. In many cases, the Federal Court of Malaysia has refused to allow individuals to change the religion indicated in their identity card. Instead, they ruled that it was a topic they were not fit to make decisions on and instead appointed the case to the Muslim court, the Shariah Court.

In many politically sensitive cases, the executive branch has unjustly interfered and exerted undue influence over the judiciary branch.

Judicial Independence in Malaysia is also controversial, with many critics pointing out that the appointment and selection of judges have been politically motivated, and that strings are being pulled to influence certain judiciary decisions.^{19 20}

In general, judicial independence is a fundamental cause of injustice in the region. The way most nations have set up the governing system allows for power in one sector to leak into another, benefitting the powerful and at the expense of the general population.

The way circumstances stand today, court decisions in the region of Southeast Asia are heavily influenced by the interests of the governing, effectively leading to injustice.

Rights to Education, Health and Housing

Southeast Asia is a region characterized by its lack of rights to education, health and housing. And although fluctuations occur and exceptions exist, for example Singapore, with its world-class education, famous healthcare system and

¹⁹ **International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)**. "Challenges to the Independence of the Judiciary in Malaysia." *ICJ*, 2019, <https://www.icj.org/malaysia-challenges-to-the-independence-of-the-judiciary/>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

²⁰ **Human Rights Watch**. "Malaysia: Events of 2023." *Human Rights Watch*, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/malaysia>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

innovative semi-public housing system, the region is generally characterised by inefficiencies and inequalities in the sectors.

Rights to Education

Education access is a significant problem in most countries. For example, according to a UNESCO report, only 67% of Cambodians and 77% of Laotians complete secondary education. Nations like Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia and the Philippines are facing problems with teacher training, quality and general infrastructure, mostly due to the lack of funding. These issues are exaggerated in rural and remote regions of the countries, where the government has issues exercising authority anyway due to multiple factors such as separatist groups and general denial of government authority on the outskirts.

The circumstances in Myanmar and Cambodia are even worse, providing significantly limited access to education in areas considered rural or remote. The school enrollment rates are also problematic, as they have been subpar for a long period of time. The underfunding of the sector and occasional political instability decreasing it even further are another major negative of the systems. Disparities in access to education caused by gender and ethnic background/religion are also not uncommon in countries like Thailand or Myanmar.²¹

Rights to Health

The healthcare systems in the area suffer from fundamentally similar issues as their respective education systems, with the main issue being access in areas away from the mainland. The governments of the region often find themselves in predicaments where they either do not have the funds necessary in order to improve the situation or where the existence of much more pressing issues takes focus away from the healthcare quality of the average citizen. In addition, certain countries have remote areas where transportation is a big issue, as the complex and often rugged terrain in Southeast Asia often presents itself as an additional barrier between the mainland and the outskirts. In these areas, the establishment and support of infrastructure becomes significantly more difficult, and many governments decide improvement in the sector is not worth the resources needed.

Vietnam, for example, has suffered from high child and infant mortality rates up until recently, and is working towards increasing maternal

²¹ Hutt, David. "Confronting Southeast Asia's Big Education Challenge." *The Diplomat*, 17 Oct. 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/10/confronting-southeast-asias-big-education-challenge/>. Accessed 9 Sept. 2024.

health. The rest of Southeast Asia suffers from similar problems, but admittedly, the situation there is much more dire. The public healthcare systems of Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar struggle with underfunding and a general lack of quality in infrastructure, especially in the rural areas. Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS) data from 2010 indicated that the rate of children under 5 with moderate to severe malnutrition or acute respiratory infection was more than twice as high for children living in rural areas.²²

In many Southeast Asian countries, including Cambodia, factors like the level of wealth, level of education and the living area play a big role in determining the quality of treatment given to an individual.²³

Urbanisation has led to a plethora of issues within the region of Southeast Asia, as most struggle to either provide housing to their citizens or stabilise the prices of the housing market. These inadequacies lead to the outskirts of cities being plagued by slums and informal settlements.²⁴

On the topic of housing, the same fundamental problem is found: the divide between Urban and Rural. Housing conditions in urban environments in countries like the Philippines are significantly better off than in rural and remote areas. Another fundamental problem is the unequal access to housing for ethnic and religious minorities.

Labor Rights and Working Conditions

Southeast Asia is a region where many, if not most, nations heavily depend on their manufacturing sector. That being said, labour rights and working conditions vary significantly across the region, with the determining factor being the government's policies on the topic, as well as the documentation of working conditions by international organisations.

Starting with the central issue of this topic, legal frameworks, their effectiveness and their enforcement. There is great variety in legal

²² National Institute of Statistics, Directorate General for Health, and ICF Macro. *Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2010*. National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, and Directorate General for Health, Ministry of Health, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2011. World Bank, <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/2011>.

²³ UNESCO. "Education for All: Achievements and Challenges in Southeast Asia." UNESCO, 2022, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379322>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

²⁴ International Labour Organization (ILO). "Urbanization, Housing, and Informal Settlements in Southeast Asia." ILO, 2021, https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/urbanization/WCMS_761121/lang--en/index.htm. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

frameworks across the region. Some, for example, Singapore and Malaysia, have focused on developing their framework in the area. Some others, such as Myanmar and Brunei, lack in the area. As for international standards, a big percentage of the Southeast Asian Nations are members of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and have ratified various ILO conventions. That, however, doesn't render them immune to issues, as strong legal frameworks do not function without adequate enforcement, something Southeast Asian countries are unable or unwilling to provide.

For example, an active member of the ILO, Brunei, has strict labour laws, leading to most workers enjoying decent working conditions.²⁵ However, partly due to its small population and the government's dominant role in the economy, trade unions are rare, and the right to strike is often suppressed and generally heavily restricted.

Another example is Cambodia. Cambodia has a vibrant and growing labour movement, especially in the leading industry of the country, the garment industry, partly due to international pressure.²⁶ However, despite the existence of the labour movement, government corruption and weak enforcement often undermine its attempts at improvement. There have also been instances of Union Leaders facing harassment and violence.²⁷

Cultural Rights and Minority Protections

Multi-ethnic and multilingual are traits that the vast majority of countries in the region of Southeast Asia possess. Undoubtedly being one of the most culturally diverse regions of the world, people of different cultures interact, work, and form relations with one another, positive and negative.

However, cultural diversity can be the cause of friction within a nation and the reason tensions come up. In many countries, the political instability or the authoritarian nature of the regime can lead to challenges when it comes to protecting each culture's rights.

An example of a nation facing such challenges is Myanmar, with over 100 different ethnic groups, some of them being separatist, meaning seeking

²⁵ "Brunei Darussalam." *International Labour Organization*, 2024, <https://www.ilo.org/asia/countries/brunei-darussalam/lang--en/index.htm>. Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

²⁶ "Cambodian Garment Factories Improve Conditions, but Rights Violations Continue." *Human Rights in ASEAN*, <https://hrasean.forum-asia.org/news/cambodian-garment-factories-improve-conditions-but-rights-violations-continue/>. Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

²⁷ "Brunei: Freedom in the World 2023 Country Report." *Freedom House*, 2023, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/brunei/freedom-world/2023>. Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

their independence from the central government. The main issue, however, lies in the situation occurring with the Rohingya, a Muslim minority group in the region. The Rohingya people have faced serious persecution, violent displacement and overall discrimination, leading to many experts labeling the array of incidents as genocide.²⁸ In 1982, the Citizenship Law²⁹ effectively rendered the Rohingya and many other ethnic minorities such as the Shan, Karen, Mon and many more as non-citizens, leading to a severe lack of legal protections. And although the government has officially signed many ceasefire and peace agreements with many of the factions in the nation have often been temporary and plagued with violations from both parties.^{30,31}

An example of a country successfully protecting cultural rights is Singapore. Singapore has multiple effective government policies on this matter. The two most prominent ones being the Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) and the Group Representation Constituency (GRC). The Ethnic Integration Policy operates on the following basis: for a culture to successfully integrate into another, regular interaction on all levels is required. Therefore, the program ensures that there is a balanced ethnic mix in public housing, avoiding the creation of housing sections based on ethnicity or culture, which often leads towards xenophobia. The GRC, on the other hand, ensures the representation of all in parliament. Each GRC is required to include a minimum of one minority candidate in order to be eligible, making sure that the interests of minority communities are taken into consideration in the national parliament. Apart from the aforementioned, Singapore's national

²⁸ "Humanitarian Crisis in Myanmar: The Rohingya Refugee Situation." *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*, United Nations, 12 Feb. 2024, www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2024/2/rohingya-refugee-situation.

²⁹ "Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law and Its Impact on Ethnic Minorities." *Amnesty International*, Amnesty International, 22 Sept. 2023, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/09/myanmar-citizenship-law-impact.

³⁰ "Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis: A Timeline." *Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera Media Network, 18 Jan. 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/18/myanmar-rohingya-crisis-timeline.

³¹ "Rohingya Crisis." *BBC News*, BBC, 25 Aug. 2023, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41012063

campaigns and programmes inform the people of the nation and ensure that diversity is celebrated.³²³³³⁴

Democratic Structures

In the last decade, researchers have noticed a democratic decline present in the region with deteriorating democratic governance, a rise in authoritarianism and authoritarian policies and a weakening of government branches' independence from one another in many nations of Southeast Asia.

Deterioration of Democratic Institutions

A significant concern of political experts studying Southeast Asia is the deterioration or the complete lack of Democratic institutions. The region generally suffers from government institutions that are easily influenced by those in power. Such institutions may be judiciary commissions, electoral commissions and legislatures. In some countries, there is no deterioration to be observed, due to the lack of any effective democratic institutions in the first place.

One example would be Vietnam or Laos. Both nations operate under one party rule, with the respective communist parties controlling all aspects of governance, disregarding independence of government branches. Due to these countries having never experienced democratic governance, with no political opposition to the parties historically and currently, there is no Deterioration of Democratic Institutions.³⁵³⁶³⁷

An example of Democratic Deterioration, and an extreme one at that, is the one of Myanmar. Since the 2021 Military Coup, military rule has returned to the nation. The military rule has reversed all attempts at

³² "Racial Harmony Day: Celebrating Unity in Diversity." *The Diplomat*, 21 July 2023, thediplomat.com/2023/07/racial-harmony-day-celebrating-unity-in-diversity-in-singapore/. "Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCCs): Building Trust and Understanding in Singapore." *Singapore Government*, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, 5 Mar. 2023, www.mccy.gov.sg/ircc.

³³ Tan, Kevin Y. L. "Group Representation Constituency: Ensuring Minority Representation in Singapore's Parliament." *The Straits Times*, 21 July 2023, www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/group-representation-constituency-ensuring-minority-representation-in-parliament.

³⁴ Lim, Lynette H. "Singapore's Ethnic Integration Policy: Balancing Diversity and Unity." *East Asia Forum*, 14 Oct. 2022, www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/10/14/singapores-ethnic-integration-policy-balancing-diversity-and-unity/

³⁵ Freedom House. "Laos: Freedom in the World 2023." *Freedom House*, 2023, freedomhouse.org/country/laos/freedom-world/2023.

³⁶ Vuving, Alexander L. "Vietnam: The Limits of Authoritarianism." *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 2019, pp. 397-416. www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/southeast-asian-affairs/saea-2019.

³⁷ Human Rights Watch. "Vietnam: One Party State Cracks Down on Dissent." *Human Rights Watch*, 12 Jan. 2022, www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/vietnam.

democratisation that have taken place in the last decade, and is a harsh authoritarian regime. Since the coup, a plethora of human rights abuse cases have sprung up, from extrajudicial executions, violent responses to protests to arbitrary detentions, and the continuation of the Rohingya genocide on a larger scale than before. Media censorship and overall propaganda are at an all-time high, with all press being government controlled. International condemnation and sanctions have taken place; however, that doesn't seem to deter the Myanmar government, as the measures have had limited impact on the military's control of the country. The situation in Myanmar has been dire for a long time, and despite international efforts, has not seen major change yet.³⁸³⁹⁴⁰

Suppression of Political Opposition

Suppression of Political Opposition comes in many shapes and forms, from official suppression like disqualification from elections to unofficial suppression, such as control of the media and suppression of protests. The governments of many Southeast Asian nations use the aforementioned as tools to either extend their time in power or to serve their own political interests at the expense of the general population.

An example of a nation using both official and unofficial suppression to achieve their goal is the Cambodian People's Party (CPP). Prime Minister Hun Sen has been in power ever since 1985, and cemented his place as one of the world's longest ruling leaders. However, this achievement was not accomplished entirely with legal means. The most prominent case of political opposition suppression took place in 2017, with the dissolution of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP). Experts say that the court was more than likely politically motivated and that the case was a clear display of the lack of judicial independence in Cambodia. However, the incident continues, as multiple CNRP leaders such as Sam Rainsy and Kem Sokha have been imprisoned or exiled for their supposed crimes, while others are under constant surveillance, occasionally being harassed by government officials. All

³⁸ Human Rights Watch. "Myanmar: Coup Leads to Crimes Against Humanity." *Human Rights Watch*, 31 Jan. 2022, www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/31/myanmar-coup-leads-crimes-against-humanity.

³⁹ Beech, Hannah. "Myanmar's Military Back in Charge: What to Know About the Coup." *The New York Times*, 1 Feb. 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/02/01/world/asia/myanmar-coup.html.

⁴⁰ International Crisis Group. "Responding to the Myanmar Coup." *International Crisis Group*, 8 Feb. 2021, www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/318-responding-myanmar-coup.

press associations in support of the CNRP have been shut down, and the remaining media outlets are strictly government controlled.^{41 42 43}

Thailand is a less extreme example of using suppression on political opposition. The key example of this is the government's response to the 2020 protests, which demanded constitutional reforms towards a government free of military influence. In addition, the protesters demanded a reformed monarchy system, which was a revolutionary demand. The protesters were met with water canons, rubber bullets, and tear gas, with particularly harsh confrontations in October of 2020. A plethora of arrests occurred, with most of the arrestees having violated laws that deem any insult to the monarchy illegal (Lese Majeste). Restrictions were also applied to media outlets wanting to report on the situation, some of which even got shut down.^{44 45 46}

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Thailand

Although Thailand was among the first to sign the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, they have had trouble upholding its stipulations. The aforementioned is evident, as many humanitarian organisations have reported findings that indicate the breach of human rights in Thailand remains prevalent. For example, Amnesty International reported an alarming amount of whitewashed cases from 1977 to 1988, which included forced disappearances, torture, extrajudicial killings, and arbitrary detentions. A Human Rights Watch (HRW) report in 2019⁴⁷ aimed to discover if the situation had taken a turn for the better shows no signs of

⁴¹ **The New York Times.** "Cambodia's Leader Takes Tough Stance as Opposition Party Is Banned." *The New York Times*, 16 Nov. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/11/16/world/asia/cambodia-opposition-party.html. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024.

⁴² **Human Rights Watch.** "Cambodia: CNRP Leaders Targeted in Crackdown." *Human Rights Watch*, 4 Sept. 2020, www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/04/cambodia-cnrp-leaders-targeted-crackdown. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024.

⁴³ **BBC News.** "Cambodia Dissolves Main Opposition Party Ahead of Elections." *BBC News*, 16 Nov. 2017, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41942045. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024.

⁴⁴ "Thailand's Political Crisis: Protesters and the Struggle for Democracy." *The New York Times*, 13 Nov. 2020, www.nytimes.com/2020/11/13/world/asia/thailand-protests.html. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024.

⁴⁵ "Thailand Protesters Demand Reform of Monarchy." *BBC News*, 16 Oct. 2020, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-54581743. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024.

⁴⁶ "Thailand: Protesters Face Brutal Crackdown." *Human Rights Watch*, 18 Aug. 2021, www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/18/thailand-protesters-face-brutal-crackdown. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024.

⁴⁷ "Thailand: Events of 2019." *Human Rights Watch*, 2020, www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/thailand. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024.

change, as cases like the ones mentioned above continue to come up in numbers, even today.^{48 49}

Thailand has been and is struggling with its democratic structures. One of the biggest issues is freedom of expression, and more specifically, freedom of press. There have been multiple cases of journalists reporting violent crimes and then being wanted by the state for allegedly spreading fake news.^{50 51}

The democratic structures in Thailand are complicated, as all procedures are conducted within a framework of constitutional monarchy, where the monarch is the head of state and the elected prime minister at the time is the head of government. The King of Thailand has little direct power over the constitution but often commands the respect of the general population, which helps in the endeavour to stabilise the country amidst political crises.

Thailand's judiciary and electoral systems have often been accused of being subject to corruption, government, and military influence. Overall, it lacks the independence needed from the other branches of government. However, Thailand remains active politically, with vibrant political participation by the citizens and a press that, although often under threat, is mostly free. Additionally, the active civil society groups that periodically stage mass protests calling for amendments to the constitution and democratic reforms bring a breath of fresh air to the democratic landscape of the country.

Vietnam

Vietnam, since its reunification in 1975, has operated under a one-party system, led by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). Democratic structures in Vietnam are distinct from the rest of the world's multi-party democracies. The National Assembly is the nation's highest legislative body, and is representative of the people. In practice, the CPV approves each candidate before every election, which leads to most of them being party loyalists, and generally does not leave any room for political opposition. The President and Prime Minister, heads of State and Government respectively, are elected by the National Assembly, under the influence, of course, of the CPV.

⁴⁸ "Thailand: 1977-1988: Human Rights Violations and Political Repression." *Amnesty International*, 1 Nov. 1988, www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa39/002/1988/en/. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024.

⁴⁹ "Thailand: Human Rights Under Siege." *Amnesty International*, 10 June 2021, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/06/thailand-human-rights-under-siege/. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024.

⁵⁰ "Thailand: Lèse-Majesté Law Harshes in the World." *Human Rights Watch*, 21 Feb. 2018, www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/21/thailand-lese-majeste-law-harshes-world. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024.

⁵¹ "Thailand's Lèse-Majesté Law: The World's Harshes Defamation Law." *BBC News*, 6 Dec. 2021, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-59236746. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024.

Civil liberties and human rights are often repressed and restricted by the CPV. Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Press and the assembly are heavily restricted with harsh surveillance and censorship laws. Protests are not common, and when they occur, violent scenarios often break out. For example, the large-scale public protests of 2018 due to the new proposed laws on cybersecurity and special economic zones were met with a major crackdown, deployment of security forces and a multitude of arrests. The crackdown of the protests sent a clear message to the citizens of Vietnam: dissent is intolerable and will be met with punishment. Since then, surveillance of the internet has significantly increased within the country, limiting political pluralism online. Additionally, Human Rights Organisations like Human Rights Watch (HRW) have often raised concerns about the situation in Vietnam.

Cambodia

Cambodia operates under a constitutional monarchy with a multi-party system. The king of Cambodia has very limited power and is mostly a symbolic figure, with most of his duties being ceremonial. In reality, the supposed multi-party system is dominated by the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and the head of the party, Prime Minister Hun Sen, who has been the Prime Minister of Cambodia since 1985. The Prime Minister is typically appointed by the King.

Since 2017, which marked the dissolution of the Cambodia National Rescue Party, Cambodia has seen a steady democratic decline towards authoritarianism. The CPP has effectively made it impossible for political opposition to exist, making Cambodia an authoritarian regime where the public holds no political power.⁵²

2018 saw a major breach of the Cambodian people's land rights, as large areas have been allocated to corporations for Economic Land Concessions (ELC). The aforementioned often led to forced evictions of small communities, and were often plagued by violence, inadequate monetary or other compensation, lack of due process and lack of judicial processes.⁵³

⁵² Human Rights Watch. "Cambodia: Opposition Party Threatened with Dissolution." *Human Rights Watch*, 6 Sept. 2017, www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/06/cambodia-opposition-party-threatened-dissolution. Accessed 10 Sept. 2024.

⁵³ Amnesty International. *Eviction and Resistance: Cambodia's Struggle for Land Rights*. Amnesty International, 2018, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/02/eviction-and-resistance-cambodia-struggle-for-land-rights/. Accessed 10 Sept. 2024.

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) is mainly an investigatory organisation, fighting for people's human rights around the world. They have made significant contributions to all regions of the world over the years, including in Southeast Asia, where their extensive research, acting as a torch, has shed light on the violations taking place and effectively played a key role in the action against them.

For example, their numerous reports on the injustices the Rohingya face in Myanmar have brought attention to the inhumane way these people are treated by the Myanmar government.⁵⁴

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a global human rights organisation whose aim is to protect human rights and promote international justice and equality. Amnesty International has played a key role in the Humanitarian situation of Southeast Asia, mainly through their extensive research and Reporting. The documentation of human rights abuses in many countries of the Southeast Asian region have drawn attention to the humanitarian situation and even been used in the International Court of Justice as evidence. Their Monitoring of political repression, support of Ethnic and Religious minorities and their overall active role has been of great importance overall.

BLOCS EXPECTED

The bloc supporting an autonomous approach to the improvement of the situation

This bloc does not deem accepting foreign intervention as a valid approach to the improvement of the situation in Southeast Asia, and instead advocates for each state to have complete internal sovereignty. This would mean that all efforts made to amend and improve democratic structures or improve the humanitarian situation would be government issued, with little to no help from outside the borders of the nation.

The bloc supporting an approach of international cooperation to the improvement of the situation

This bloc welcomes foreign intervention and assistance into the area, believing it to be a more effective approach than complete autonomy. The nations of this block are supporters of international cooperation. This means that international

⁵⁴ Human Rights Watch. "Rohingya." *Human Rights Watch*, 2024, www.hrw.org/tag/rohingya. Accessed 26 Aug. 2024.

organisations as well as foreign nations willing to help will have some portion of control over the developing situation.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
10 December, 1948	United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights ⁵⁵
8 August, 1967	Formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), also the first attempt at international regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. ⁵⁶
15 October 1982	Myanmar passes the Citizenship law, effectively rendering the majority of ethnic minorities in the region as non-citizens
3 April 2006	United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/251 ⁵⁷
2017	Cambodia's main opposition party was dissolved by the Cambodian People's Party (CCP), eliminating the CCP's main political opposition. ⁵⁸
2017-2019	UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar ⁵⁹
2018	Large-scale public protests in Vietnam due to the new proposed laws on cybersecurity and special economic zones, met with a major crackdown, deployment of security forces and a multitude of arrests, causing humanitarian organisations' investigations ⁶⁰

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United Nations. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." UN, www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights. Accessed 1 Sept. 2024.

⁵⁶ ASEAN. "About Us." ASEAN, www.asean.org/about-us. Accessed 1 Sept. 2024.

⁵⁷ United Nations. "Resolution 60/251: Human Rights Council." UN, www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/60/251&Lang=E. Accessed 1 Sept. 2024.

⁵⁸ United Nations Human Rights Council. "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar." UN, 28 Aug. 2018, www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/report-detailed-findings-independent-international-fact-finding-mission-myanmar. Accessed 1 Sept. 2024.

⁵⁹ United Nations Human Rights Council. "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar." UN, 28 Aug. 2018, www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/report-detailed-findings-independent-international-fact-finding-mission-myanmar. Accessed 1 Sept. 2024.

⁶⁰ Human Rights Watch. "Vietnam: Violent Crackdown on Protests." Human Rights Watch, 13 June 2018, www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/13/vietnam-violent-crackdown-protests. Accessed 1 Sept. 2024.

24 May 2018	The United Nations Resolution A/RES/60/251 was the resolution which realised the establishment of the Human Rights Council. The Human Rights Council is an organ of the UN that specializes in human rights. Its main objectives are the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide ⁶¹
October 2020	Large scale, student organised Pro-Democracy protests occurred in Thailand, demanding constitutional reforms and being met with harsh and violent responses by the government. ⁶²
1 February 2021	The Myanmar Military coup, where the Tatmadaw, the Myanmar military, deposed the members of the countries democratically elected ruling party, the National League for Democracy. ⁶³

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/251

The United Nations Resolution A/RES/60/251⁶⁴ was the resolution that realized the establishment of the Human Rights Council. The Human Rights Council is an organ of the UN that specializes in human rights. Its main objectives are the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. It has addressed issues in Southeast Asia mainly through its Universal Periodic Reviews (UPRs) that include the region.

However, due to the inconsistent compliance by Southeast Asian governments, the resolution has had limited effect on the situation. The resolution's call for action and adherence has not been enforced in Myanmar. Nevertheless, its existence alone has drawn attention to the crimes of the Myanmar government and

⁶¹ United Nations Security Council. "Resolution 2417 (2018): Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict." UN, 24 May 2018, [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2417\(2018\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2417(2018)). Accessed 1 Sept. 2024.

⁶² Human Rights Watch. "Thailand Protests: Why People Are Demanding Reform." Human Rights Watch, 15 Oct. 2020, www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/15/thailand-protests-why-people-are-demanding-reform. Accessed 1 Sept. 2024.

⁶³ "Myanmar Coup: Military Takes Power in Myanmar." *BBC News*, BBC, 1 Feb. 2021, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55882489.

⁶⁴ United Nations General Assembly. "Resolution 60/251: Human Rights Council." *United Nations*, 15 March 2006, www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/60/251&Lang=E. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

military, giving humanitarian organizations a stronger mandate to demand access to remote areas and deliver humanitarian aid.⁶⁵

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2417

The United Nations Security Council Resolution S/RES/2417(2018)⁶⁶ was a resolution on the topic of protecting civilians in armed conflict. One of the main points in this resolution is the condemnation of starvation as a warfare tactic, and is particularly relevant in the region of Southeast Asia, where conflict against ethnic minorities, Myanmar, for example, often includes such methods.

Despite the resolution, and perhaps due to a lack of adequate enforcement mechanisms, the use of starvation has been used multiple times in the region of Southeast Asia, especially in Myanmar, against the Rohingya. In addition to that, the documentation of these crimes has been difficult for regional and international sources, as access for the purpose of inspection and/or documentation is often denied by the Myanmar Government.^{67,68}

UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar

The Human Rights Council established this investigative mission with the goal of extensive documentation of the human rights violations taking place in Myanmar. It took place between 2017 and 2019 and was the main point of research highlighting the violations by Myanmar's military efforts towards a Rohingya genocide.

The mission succeeded in its goal to provide a general assessment of the human rights violations taking place. Testimonies, physical evidence and extensive investigations lead to a detailed account of the human rights violations occurring in the area.

⁶⁵ Jarman, Ian. "The United Nations Human Rights Council: Criticisms and Achievements." *Global Policy Forum*, 5 June 2022, www.globalpolicy.org/human-rights-council-criticisms-achievements.html. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

⁶⁶ United Nations Security Council. "Resolution 2417 (2018): Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict." *United Nations*, 24 May 2018, [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2417\(2018\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2417(2018)). Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

⁶⁷ Amnesty International. "Myanmar: Human Rights Violations and Access Issues." *Amnesty International*, 15 September 2023, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/09/myanmar-human-rights-violations-access-issues/. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

⁶⁸ Galić, Miloš. "UN Resolution 2417: The Fight Against Starvation in Conflicts." *International Crisis Group*, 12 June 2018, www.crisisgroup.org/global/un-resolution-2417-fight-against-starvation-conflicts. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

The mission also brought international attention to the topic. But its most important contribution was the legal and diplomatic action taken. The findings of the mission were used as evidence in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the case examining the alleged violations of the Genocide Convention happening in Myanmar.

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PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Association of Southeast Asian Nations Dialogues and Summits

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has organized multiple summits and dialogues in response to the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, some of them being emergency summits after the 2021 coup. The goal of these summits is to peacefully resolve the crisis in Myanmar, and also look for volunteer nations willing to help the overall situation.

As for their effectiveness, critics have argued that ASEAN summits take place too late, which leads to inadequate responses to crises. By the time the summit is taking place, the situation will be completely different, and the representatives of the ASEAN nations will be discussing past circumstances. This diplomatic approach's ultimate aim is to respect each nation's sovereignty, which is positive on the surface but leads to limited practical overall impact. In addition, the ASEAN principle of non-interference, meaning the idea of resolution with no direct action other than dialogue, makes the summits more theoretical than practical, which is not what the area needs.

Sanctions on Myanmar's Military leaders

The European Union (EU) has imposed sanctions in response to the humanitarian crisis in the country, trying to target military associated organisations, leaders and entities. Travel bans, asset freezes, business restrictions and even extra tariffs on specific products were imposed. After the 2021 coup, a new set of sanctions were imposed by the European Union as well as other western countries.

⁶⁹ United Nations Human Rights Council. *Report of the Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar*. Human Rights Council, 28 August 2018, www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/report-detailed-findings-independent-international-fact-finding-mission-myanmar. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

⁷⁰ BBC News. "Myanmar Rohingya: UN Report Accuses Military of Genocide." *BBC News*, 28 August 2018, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-45313767. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

⁷¹ United Nations Human Rights Council. "Resolution 34/22: Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar." *United Nations Human Rights Council*, 24 March 2017, www.ohchr.org/en/documents/resolutions/resolution-3422-situation-human-rights-myanmar. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

This time, it was not just military leaders or associates of the military. Any individuals or entities remotely involved with the coup were imposed the aforementioned sanctions.

The effectiveness of the sanctions has been limited at best. Myanmar was a state isolated from the rest of the world for a long period of time, and it seems that they have kept a large part of their autonomy. Experts even believe that the economic implications caused by the sanctions of the aforementioned western countries might hurt the average citizen more than the established military leaders and cooperations, as Myanmar's economy is not in the best state.^{72 73 74}

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Human Rights Court Establishment

The establishment of an ASEAN human rights court, operating in the wider region, would be a big step in the right direction for the protection of human rights and democratic structures in SEA. It could operate similarly to the European Court of Human Rights, and act as an unbiased beacon of regional law. It would serve as a refuge for the people whose governments operate under corrupt and ineffective judicial systems.

If an individual is not satisfied with the state of the judicial system in their respective nation, they will have the right to take the case to the ASEAN human rights court. This could be performed either as a first solution or after a trial in the judiciary system of the individual's home country for a secondary trial.

The challenge would be the cooperation and legal harmonisation needed for a system this complex, attempting to align itself with so many different policies at once. A robust and well-designed legal framework would need to be established, taking into consideration the intricacies of each legal system in the Southeast Asian region, a task of great difficulty.

⁷² "Myanmar: The Sanctions Dilemma." *International Crisis Group*, 4 March 2021, www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/myanmar-sanctions-dilemma. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

⁷³ "Myanmar: U.S. Imposes New Sanctions in Response to Violence Against the Rohingya." *U.S. Department of the Treasury*, 22 September 2017, home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm0157. Accessed 31 Aug. 2024.

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Promotion and Assistance in Political Reforms

There is no doubt that Southeast Asia is in need of reforms. However, many of the SEA countries do not have adequate resources to facilitate efficient and effective reforms towards a better future. The provision of advisory services in political, economical and social systems in countries of the region could make the difference the Citizens of Southeast Asia need.

Organisations like the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and possibly the world bank could engage in cooperation and suggest certain reforms in their respective area of expertise, in every respective country of Southeast Asia, in a programme aimed at increasing the improvement of government institutions in the general region.

Although this solution is possible, there are some key issues that are likely to arise with its implementation. Firstly, many of the nations will not have the will to implement the reforms that the aforementioned organisations will provide, as there is a large prejudice against western interference in the area due to historical and alliance reasons, such as with Cambodia, Laos or Vietnam.

Another aspect is that certain governments profit from the lack of efficiency or justice in their respective systems, and therefore will not be willing to change it. In order to bypass this unfortunate truth, the policymakers of the aforementioned organisations have to carefully select changes that would improve the situation but not reduce the government's grip on power. An unpleasant compromise on one hand, a small step towards a just Southeast Asia on the other.

Support and Funding of Humanitarian Efforts in the Area

Humanitarian based missions are not uncommon in the region of Southeast Asia. Whether from an international, recognised body or from local volunteers, many individuals try to help the situation in one way or another. In order to ensure the continuation of these endeavours, funding and general support is needed.

One way the UN could support these organisations is diplomatically. As mentioned before, humanitarian and other organisations are often denied access to conflict zones, where they are also most needed. These organisations do not have the resources to engage in legal battles with the respective governments in pursuit of access to each area. Assigning a legal or diplomatic body to help with such issues would be helpful to these organisations, letting them focus on improving efficiency and reaching more people.

Another diplomatic endeavour the assigned legal or diplomatic bodies could engage in is the creation of safe zones in active battle grounds. This way, the humanitarian aid organisations could provide to those in need without the fear of violence and arm conflict, resulting in a positive outcome for both parties.

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