



To: Honorable Chair and Members of the Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institution Forum (SEANF)

**Honorable Chairperson Dato' Seri Mohd Hishamudin Yunus
Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)**

**Honorable Chairperson Ms. Anis Hidayah
National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM), Indonesia**

**Honorable Provedor Mr. Virgilio da Silva Guterres
Provedor de Direitos Humanos e Justiça (PDHJ) , Timor-Leste**

**Honorable Chairperson Atty. Richard Paat Palpal-latoc
Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP)**

**Honorable Chairperson Ms. Pornprapai Ganjanarintr
National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT)**

21 April 2026

[Open Letter] SEANF must remove membership of junta-controlled Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

We, the CSO Working Group on Independent National Human Rights Institution (Burma/Myanmar) (Working Group), the Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI), and the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) respectfully urge the Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institution Forum (SEANF) to take decisive steps toward the formal removal of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) from its membership.

As SEANF convenes its first Technical Working Group Meeting under the leadership of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) from 20–22 April 2026, we encourage meaningful progress, including necessary amendments to the Rules of Procedure, to enable the removal of the junta-controlled MNHRC.

This action is essential to uphold SEANF's integrity, credibility, and commitment to accountability.

MNHRC's alignment with the military junta

Since the attempted coup in 2021, the Myanmar military junta has perpetrated widespread and systematic human rights violations against civilians. In this context, the MNHRC has failed to act independently and has instead reinforced the junta's narratives, thereby undermining its mandate and legitimacy.

For over five years, the MNHRC has remained silent in the face of grave violations. It also openly defended the junta against criticisms.

The MNHRC's 15 January 2026 [statement](#) criticizing SUHAKAM—following SUHAKAM's [concerns](#) over the junta-led sham election held between 28 December 2025 and 25 January 2026—further [illustrates](#) its unwillingness to engage constructively and its continued failure to maintain independence as required under the Paris Principles, the minimum international standards expected of national human rights institutions.

Such conduct reflects a fundamental lack of independence, credibility, and meaningful engagement with regional human rights mechanisms.

Recent escalations further underscore the severity of the crisis. [Reports](#) of continued airstrikes targeting [civilian areas](#), including attacks in Sagaing Region and Karen and Kachin States, have resulted in significant [civilian casualties](#) and [destruction of homes, hospitals, schools, and places of worship](#). These incidents reflect a pattern of increasing atrocity crimes by the Myanmar military and reinforce the urgent need for accountability, contradicting the junta's narratives portraying a transition to civilian governance.

Myanmar's illegitimate junta Chief, now self-appointed president, Min Aung Hlaing, also remains subject to international accountability efforts, including proceedings before courts in [Argentina](#) and the [International Criminal Court](#), as well as universal jurisdiction cases initiated in [Timor-Leste](#) and [Indonesia](#).

On 10 April 2026, Min Aung Hlaing [re-appointed](#) the Commissioners of the MNHRC shortly after assuming the self-appointed presidency. The lack of independence of the MNHRC is again evident, as the Commissioners are selected by the military, reflecting continued military control over the entity and falling short of the independence and pluralism required by the Paris Principles.

This sustained non-compliance has resulted in the MNHRC's expulsion from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) in [March 2025](#) and the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) in [May 2025](#).

To preserve its standing as a credible regional human rights body, SEANF must follow suit without further delay.

Safeguarding SEANF's credibility

Continued inclusion of a dis-accredited institution risks undermining the SEANF's collective integrity. The removal of the MNHRC, alongside full disengagement from the junta-controlled body, is essential to promoting accountability.

We recognize the ongoing efforts of SEANF members—including its Chair, SUHAKAM—in demonstrating solidarity with the people of Myanmar. We also acknowledge current initiatives to amend the Rules of Procedure to clarify membership and procedural standards, with a view to strengthening accountability and safeguarding the integrity of SEANF.

ANNI and the Working Group extend our support to these efforts and to members actively advancing accountability, while respectfully encouraging timely and concrete progress.

GANHRI's decision sends a clear message that non-compliance with the Paris Principles cannot be tolerated. We respectfully call on SEANF to act with similar resolve. Doing so would reinforce regional commitment to human rights standards and principled institutional leadership. The removal of the MNHRC also presents an opportunity for SEANF to strengthen its institutional coherence and renew its collective efforts to advance human rights, justice, and accountability across Southeast Asia.

We further encourage SEANF to publicly announce the removal of the MNHRC's membership and to promptly update all relevant official platforms. In parallel, all forms of engagement with the MNHRC should cease without delay. Transparency in this process will be critical to maintaining public trust.

We look forward to confirmation of the MNHRC's formal removal from SEANF and remain ready to engage constructively in support of independent and accountable national human rights institutions in the region.

Sincerely,

**CSO Working Group on Independent National Human Rights Institution
(Burma/Myanmar)**

Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI)

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

For more information, please contact:

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About the Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI)

The Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI) was established in December 2006. It is a network of Asian non-governmental organisations and human rights defenders working on issues related to National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). ANNI currently has 33 member organisations from 21 countries or territories. ANNI members work on strengthening the work and functioning of Asian NHRIs to better promote and protect human rights as well as to advocate for the improved compliance of Asian NHRIs with international standards, including the Paris Principles and General Observations of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the Global Alliance of NHRIs (GANHRI). The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) has served as the Secretariat of ANNI since its establishment in 2006.

More information at: <https://forum-asia.org/anni/>

About the CSO Working Group on Independent National Human Rights Institution (Burma/Myanmar)

The CSO Working Group on Independent National Human Rights Institution (Burma/Myanmar) advocates for the establishment of a new NHRI—tentatively named the Union Human Rights Commission—to replace the illegitimate MNHRC which has aligned itself with the illegal military junta. The Working Group was previously known as the ‘CSO Working Group on MNHRC Reform.’ Currently, it consists of 21 Myanmar civil society organizations. From its founding in 2019 until the attempted coup in February 2021, the Working Group consistently advocated for an effective MNHRC that demonstrates a commitment to the international standards set forth in the Paris Principles.

More information at: <https://www.facebook.com/WGonNHRIBurma>

Twitter: @WG_MMNHRI