The British Academy

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

Global (Dis)Order
international policy programme

Peace process lite: when global fragmentation meets conflict fragmentation

Monalisa Adhikari, University of Stirling, Jennifer Hodge, University of Stirling and Laura Wise, University of Edinburgh

Abstract

The parallel phenomena of global fragmentation of peacemaking and conflict fragmentation in civil wars are fundamentally restructuring peace processes. Drawing on the example of Myanmar, we argue that such changes exacerbate collective action problems for conflict actors and external third parties, leading to the emergence of pragmatic and reductionist forms of conflict resolution that we term 'peace process lite'. Peace process lite is marked by four key features: 1) the primacy of stabilisation through ceasefires and local peace agreements rather than comprehensive peace plans; 2) a focus on immediate 'wins' such as humanitarian assistance rather than long-term conflict termination; 3) short-term and ad hoc institutional arrangements to bring actors into talks; and 4) transactional mediation relationships conditioned by the economic and security interests of regional powers. Peace process lite is reductionist in that it rearticulates liberal visions and practices of peacemaking in a minimalistic form, bringing both opportunities and risks.

Introduction

The parallel phenomena of the global fragmentation of peacemaking and conflict fragmentation in civil wars – as witnessed in Myanmar, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen – are fundamentally restructuring how peace processes are understood and delivered. Shifts in the global balance of power have accelerated a new age of global fragmentation marked by deep geopolitical competition, 'thin' multilateralism, competitive bilateralism, the contestation of established global norms, and weakened multilateral frameworks (Carothers & Samet-Marram 2015; Duncombe & Dunne 2018; Hurrell 2018). These shifts have implications for contemporary peacemaking in conflict-affected contexts where multilateral forums such as the United Nations (UN) are increasingly struggling to maintain primacy and legitimacy (Iji 2017).

Meanwhile, the engagement of an increasing number of states and multilateral organisations in conflict management – including notable non-Western states such as Qatar, Turkey, China, and Kenya – has brought distinct new norms and practices and elicited multiple mediation processes that are crowding the 'marketplace' of peacemaking (Adhikari 2023; Beaujouan 2024; Peter & Rice 2022). While the rising diversification of peacemakers has energised some peacemaking initiatives (Lanz & Lustenberger 2024), it has also made peacemaking more fragmented, competitive and transactional (Hellmüller & Salaymeh 2025), with conflict parties navigating the competing forums and interests of different external actors (Adhikari & Hodge 2024).

Such global fragmentation also contends with new levels of domestic conflict fragmentation marked by the increased splintering of armed actors, 'more active involvement of geopolitical conflict underwriters, and more fluid conflict landscapes' within and across borders (Bell & Wise 2022: 564). Conflict fragmentation interacts with global fragmentation and influences the nature of peace processes in two distinct ways. First, with an increased number of conflict actors comes a greater number of distinct agendas and political motives, making the task of successfully negotiating the end of violence by all parties more challenging. This is evident in complex conflicts globally: comprehensive peace agreements have become rarer (Badanjak et. al, 2025), replaced by localised peace processes that limit themselves to addressing specific issues, geographies, and actors within the wider conflict, reducing the primacy of

the national in peacemaking (Bell, Pospisil & Wise 2021). Second, in fragmented conflicts with multiple parties or sides, different conflict actors are likely to prefer the involvement of different third parties, due to factors such as pre-existing social or cross-border relationships with certain external states, views on the partiality of third parties, or the leverage that different mediators have in arming and logistical support (Adhikari et al. 2025).

While there has been widespread discussion of the changing landscape of peacemaking and the impacts of conflict fragmentation, what remains underexplored is a robust appraisal of what constitutes, and what the objectives are, of contemporary peace processes. In this paper, we introduce the idea of 'peace process lite', building on the scholarship on illiberal peace, authoritarian peace, and limited stabilisation (Lei 2011; Richmond 2025; Smith 2014), to highlight not only how non-Western states shape peace processes but the type of peace processes their engagement births. We use 'liteness' to describe contemporary peace processes in two ways. First, it is lite in temporal terms: relative to peace agreements of the 1990s that set out longer timeframes and envisioned a clear pathway from ceasefires to more substantive political negotiations, contemporary peace processes are limited to short-term or limited ceasefires that are disconnected from future, more explicitly political processes. Second, it is lite in ambition: unlike historic comprehensive peace processes which sought to undertake the deeper transformation project of redesigning the state – by committing in peace agreements to democracy, rule of law, and inclusive state structures – contemporary peace processes are largely focused on containing physical violence and limiting civilian harms.

...unlike historic comprehensive peace processes which sought to undertake the deeper transformation project of redesigning the state – by committing in peace agreements to democracy, rule of law, and inclusive state structures – contemporary peace processes are largely focused on containing physical violence and limiting civilian harms.

We draw on empirical evidence from contemporary dialogues in Myanmar as a representative case of both multi-mediation by diverse regional actors and highly fragmented, violent armed conflict. Whilst peace process lite is often contextually defined, the case of Myanmar highlights phenomena found in other contemporary conflicts, and supports analogous exploration of how peace process lite has functioned in Libya, Sudan, Syria (before the fall of Assad in December 2024), and Yemen. We demonstrate how peace process lite operates in practice, showing how it opens up opportunities such as localised violence reduction, maintaining dialogue even if a comprehensive settlement seems unlikely, and temporary humanitarian access, but also risks stalling discussion of core conflict issues, increasing transactionalism, and incoherent or counterproductive competition among interested third parties.

Global fragmentation and contemporary dialogues in Myanmar

Five years since the 2021 military coup in Myanmar, violence and displacement are rising, with at least 25 different groups controlling significant portions of territory, and alliances frequently shifting (ACLED 2024). While Myanmar has grappled with the twin crises of authoritarianism and civil war since the early days of its independence, the scale and intensity of the conflicts have multiplied since 2021. Multiple ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) have fought for decades against their exclusion at the hand of the Bamar Buddhist majority across the country's multiple borderlands; their resistance movements have intensified in many areas since the coup. Meanwhile, the coup has also led to heavy fighting in central Myanmar, home to the Bamar majority ethnic group and an area which historically has not witnessed violence; multiple People's Defence Forces (PDFs) have emerged in this region to fight the Myanmar military (Loong 2022). Nationally, an alliance of democratic opposition to the coup formed

the National Unity Government (NUG) as a parallel government, bringing together additional representation from EAOs, civil society, and ethnic and women leaders and challenging the Myanmar military's claim to power. A coalition of multiple groups against the Myanmar military has also engaged in dialogue to discuss the future institutional shape of the country as well as military coordination among them, forming groups such as KC3[1]. Dialogue between the Myanmar military and the wider opposition, however, remains a contested option due to a lack of trust and peace-process fatigue from previous failed dialogue processes, which is perceived to have only emboldened the military further (Adhikari & Hodge 2024).

Such conflict fragmentation within Myanmar intertwines with simultaneous global fragmentation, as evidenced by the conspicuous absence of robust internationally-supported peacemaking initiatives. This absence has fostered multiple discreet peace processes largely convened by regional actors – a mosaic of bilateral and multilateral initiatives, some national level and others subnational, often including different constellations of conflict actors and focused on different thematic priorities. However, these have yet to crystallise into an agreement or forum that succeeds in bringing all key parties to the table. Instead, the rising peacemaking ambitions of various states with different practices, approaches to international norms, and motivations have brought forward diverse models of mediation and dialogue. The mainstreaming of violence by both the Myanmar military's State Administrative Council (SAC)[2] and the opposition points to the failure of such peacemaking initiatives, which have left a mixed legacy of continued repression by the Myanmar military, fragile ceasefires, and some subnational 'islands of agreement' – 'temporary and issue-specific conflict management agreements when a comprehensive peace process and deal are out of sight' (Wittke 2023: 6).

Post-coup, the dominance of regional mediation is even more prominent in peacemaking, with a conspicuous absence of Western states who have been occupied with conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, as well as a reduced presence of the UN.

In Myanmar, there is a visible difference in mediation practice between regional and non-regional actors. Myanmar demonstrates a regionalisation of international security due to: the absence of robust, coherent global engagement in conflict management; the rise of regional powers who seek greater power and influence in managing regional affairs; the inability of multilateral institutions to shoulder the entire burden of Myanmar's complex conflicts; and the prevalence of transborder economic linkages that have made historically regional dynamics more salient (Alagappa 1995). Throughout the 1990s, as authoritarianism and repression in Myanmar triggered a raft of Western sanctions, making it difficult for Myanmar to engage globally, economic and diplomatic engagement by Asian neighbours facilitated greater regional connectivity (Taylor 1998). Post-coup, the dominance of regional mediation is even more prominent in peacemaking, with a conspicuous absence of Western states who have been occupied with conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, as well as a reduced presence of the UN. Instead, discreet and disaggregated dialogue processes have emerged in Myanmar, brokered by different international third parties, including: regional organisations such the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); multilateral bodies such as the UN; and regional states such as India, China, Japan, and Thailand.

The shape of these disaggregated dialogue processes results from the third parties' varied objectives and motivations, with regional peacemaking initiatives visibly tied to the geostrategic and economic interests of the intervening states. Multilateral regional engagement in Myanmar by ASEAN, however, is limited. Unlike the African Union (AU), in which the African Peace and Security Architecture mandates certain peace and security roles for AU-recognised Regional Economic Communities (Coe & Nash 2020), non-interference is considered the core norm

1 K3C includes four of Myanmar's oldest ethnic armed organisations: the Kachin Independence Organisation, Karenni National Progressive Party, Karen National Union, and Chin National Front.

2 In July 2025 the SAC was effectively rebranded as the National Security and Peace Commission (NSPC). For consistency we use the term SAC throughout to refer to the leadership of the Myanmar military.

underpinning ASEAN regionalism (Acharya 2013). While seen as key to minimising interstate conflicts in the region, the principle of non-interference has paradoxically prevented ASEAN from effectively intervening in intra-state conflicts that are considered to be domestic issues of member states (Thompson & Chong 2020).

Despite ASEAN's normative principle of non-interference, its most prominent and comprehensive form of mediation in Myanmar has been the Five-Point Consensus (5PC) framework, focused on five priorities: the cessation of violence; dialogue among all parties concerned; the appointment of an ASEAN Special Envoy to facilitate dialogue; humanitarian assistance by ASEAN; and an ASEAN visit in Myanmar to meet all relevant parties (Caballero-Anthony 2022). Many Western states have supported the principle of 'letting ASEAN lead' on the resolution of the Myanmar crisis (Alexandra & Adhikari 2023). With an annually rotating ASEAN chairmanship, the 5PC has been steered by Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, and Malaysia, and the interests and ambition of these individual chairs has influenced its effectiveness. In the initial post-coup period, under the chairmanship of Brunei and Cambodia, dialogue attempts were focused on two primary actors, the SAC and NUG; but under the Indonesian and ongoing Malaysian chairmanship of ASEAN, talks have been held with multiple stakeholders to foster de-escalation of violence and dialogue.[3] By ASEAN's own admission, however, there has been a lack of substantial progress in implementing the 5PC (Bandial 17 October 2021): while the SAC has committed to a cessation of hostilities, it has continued to launch airstrikes throughout Myanmar (Rainsy 2022). Additionally, the delivery of humanitarian assistance to EAO- and NUG-controlled regions has been obstructed by the SAC in multiple occasions (Caballero-Anthony 2022), and the SAC has denied requests by the ASEAN Special Envoy to meet the National League for Democracy (NLD) leader Aung San Suu Kyi (Radio Free Asia 2022).

With the 5PC severely stalled and domestically-led comprehensive peace deals seemingly distant, regional actors – both within and outside of ASEAN – have started multiple overlapping initiatives focused primarily on protecting their own security and economic interests. These initiatives have been disaggregated across scales (focused on subnational or distinct territories), actors (focused on distinct constellations of conflict actors that do not include all), and themes (focused on specific issues of ceasefires or humanitarianism, rather than a comprehensive solution). As a comprehensive national-level settlement is unlikely to emerge in the near future, third parties may have greater incentives to selectively choose which armed groups to engage with, which discrete thematic aspects of the conflict to try to address, and which distinct subnational disputes to seek to resolve based on their core geostrategic and economic interests (Parlar Dal 2018; Sun 2017).

Regional hegemon China has engaged in subnational peacemaking with EAOs that focuses on cessation of violence, commitment to cross-border stability, and protection of Chinese interests. While some of these processes have led to final agreements, others have not. Between the coup and March 2024, China engaged in at least sixteen rounds of formal negotiations, notably with EAOs based in the Northern Myanmar-China borderlands.[4] However, China has also pledged support for the ASEAN's 5PC framework and was a formal observer to the multilateral 2011–2020 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) dialogue process (Roy 2020).

3 Interview with a Myanmar interlocutor engaging with ASEAN, Chiang Mai, February 2025.
4 Interview with EAO representative who attended one round of the formal negotiations, Bangkok, March 19, 2024.

Similarly, Japan has invested both in reviving the NCA process and a subnational ceasefire initiative in Rakhine state. In 2022, Japan's Special Envoy for National Reconciliation in Myanmar met representatives of the EAOs who had earlier signed the NCA (The Irrawaddy 2022). In Rakhine, Japan's Special Envoy facilitated an informal ceasefire in 2020 between the Arakan Army (AA) and the Myanmar military. Focused at the subnational level and on the cessation of violence, this fragile ceasefire lasted intermittently until October 2023 but lacked broader linkages to the wider conflict in Myanmar or to other priority issues for the AA such as federalism and self-governance (Adhikari et al. 2025). Despite its limited scope, this ceasefire demonstrated the potential of islands of agreement (Wittke 2023) to reduce violence in subnational localities, with a significant drop-off in violence in Rakhine (IISS 2024).

India and Thailand, in turn, have pursued their own bilateral processes, aimed at garnering stability and enabling delivery of humanitarian assistance. Both ASEAN Regional Forum members have engaged with the Myanmar military and started Track 1.5 forums.[5] Thailand has held a number of informal meetings among countries affected by the Myanmar crisis, including at least three at the ministerial level, with the objective of finding a way to resolve the crisis peacefully (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand 2023). At least one such recent meeting included representation from the SAC (Reuters 2024). In 2024, India convened workshops on constitutionalism and federalism which brought together EAOs from the India-Myanmar borderlands, including, the NUG and ethnic- minority rebels from the states of Chin, Rakhine, and Kachin, along with another session for SAC representatives (Lone & Ghoshal 23 September 2024).

The UN has also sought to meet all 'concerned parties', with dialogue focused on instituting an Inclusive Humanitarian Forum (IHF), to increase the operational space for delivery of humanitarian aid (Heyzer 16 March 2023). At the multilateral level, the UN's focus has been on condemning the use of force by the Myanmar military, calling for an end to the flow of arms into the country, urging restraint, seeking release of prisoners, and de-escalating tensions as per the UN General Assembly Resolution 75/287 in June 2021 and UN Security Council Resolution 2669 in December 2022 (Nichols 22 December 2022). In terms of dialogue, the current UN Special Envoy has not been given access to the imprisoned NLD leader, only meeting the SAC leader during their visits to Myanmar. Prior to the March 2025 earthquake, Thailand and India were not allowing large-scale deployment of aid via their neighbouring borders to Myanmar (Neelakantan 30 July 2022), further constraining the UN's cross-border engagement.

The diverse peacemaking initiatives at play in Myanmar point to a fundamental reset of the imagination, practices, and objectives of contemporary peace processes. The sheer number and variety of peacemaking attempts demonstrate a complicated crowding of the marketplace of peacemaking, in which domestic parties need to engage with multiple 'masters'. Further, with the UN adopting a marginal role while struggling to maintain its primacy and legitimacy and ASEAN institutionally constrained by the principle of non-interference and sovereignty, and differences among its member states, there is a notable absence of an international entity able to broker, connect, and cohere these multiple and overlapping discrete dialogue processes. The limited capacity of both ASEAN and the UN, despite their interest, has also encouraged individual states in the region to simultaneously convene peacemaking initiatives dictated by their own security and economic interests, without solely relying on regional initiatives. Such disaggregation of initiatives makes their incremental development into a comprehensive, cohesive process unlikely.

5 We refer here to Track 1.5 as mediation activities in which 'unofficial intervenors work [sic] with official representatives of the conflict parties' (Nan, Druckman, El Horr 2009).

In Myanmar, conflict actors differ in terms of which peacemaking forums they are willing to participate in and which external parties they are prepared to engage with. Northern EAOs such as the United Wa State Army (UWSA), Ta'ang National Liberation Army, and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) have formal and informal socio-economic connections to China and have received significant arms from China; in turn, they have been more responsive to China-facilitated forums (Ong 16 June 2021). In March 2023, the powerful Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee, which represents these and other EAOs, issued a statement welcoming mediation by China (Michaels 7 August 2023). The UWSA lobbied against an internationalisation of the peace process and the involvement of the US, UK, EU, or Japan during the NCA process (Institute for Security and Development Policy 2015). Similarly, in mediations in Rakhine in 2020, the Myanmar military preferred Japan as the intermediary over China, given its discontent with China for failing to prevent arms supplies to EAOs in the Northern borderlands (International Crisis Group 2020). Some EAOs such as the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and Karen National Union (KNU) are well-versed in human rights and democracy discourses and are often more comfortable engaging with Western states, with whom they have historic ties (Ong 16 June 2021). This was evident during the NCA process when the KNU expressed a preference for including Western actors like the EU and Norway as international witnesses (Institute for Security and Development Policy 2015).

In Myanmar and beyond, identifying a single mediator acceptable to all conflict parties is a significant challenge in the context of conflict fragmentation, given the diversity of relationships between different actors, the differences in views about the impartiality of specific external parties, and the range of influence exerted by various external parties over different domestic actors (Adhikari et al. 2025).

Peace process lite

Overall, as more conflict actors concurrently engage in contemporary conflicts, there are often a multitude of distinct preferences that need to cohere into a political settlement, which makes reaching comprehensive agreements more challenging. With a global order that is shifting from a world of hegemonic dominance to multi-order spheres of influence, international peacemaking initiatives are now increasingly investing in what are seen as more doable aspects of peacemaking in line with their strategic priorities (Adhikari et al. 2025). The scaling back of peacebuilding ambition by Western states and multilateral organisations, and their turn to more pragmatic peacebuilding (De Coning 2018; Pospisil 2019) can be attributed to more comprehensive processes seemingly being viewed as 'undoable' in contemporary conflicts, along with other domestic factors, such as growing populism in the West, which have reduced the penchant for liberal internationalism (Galston 2018). The resultant global fragmentation sees competing international motivations and interests underpinning the settlements that are being made today, leading to a more complex ecosystem for conflict actors to navigate – not only seeking agreement amongst themselves but also with the multiple, and diverse, external actors that seek to provide various forms of dialogue support. Cumulatively, the dual processes of global order fragmentation and domestic conflict fragmentation have made the collective action problem posed by conflict resolution more difficult to resolve. Consequently, contemporary peace processes have objectives that are less ambitious, more parochial, and limited in their focus, with settlements designed as a pragmatic response to the achievement of the narrow, often short- term, goals that are shared by the multiple actors involved.

Cumulatively, the dual processes of global order fragmentation and domestic conflict fragmentation have made the collective action problem posed by conflict resolution more difficult to resolve.

Closer analysis of dual global fragmentation and conflict fragmentation reveals four key features of contemporary peacemaking, which we term as 'peace process lite': 1) the primacy of stabilisation through ceasefires and local peace agreements rather than comprehensive peace plans; 2) a focus on immediate 'wins' such as humanitarian assistance rather than long-term stability and conflict termination; 3) short-term and ad-hoc institutional arrangements to bring actors into talks; and 4) transactional mediation relationships shaped by the economic and security interests of regional powers.

1. The primacy of stabilisation through ceasefires and local peace agreements rather than comprehensive peace plans

The objectives of the processes started in Myanmar since the 2021 coup have yet to go beyond ceasefires and localised peace settlements, even though such ceasefires have consistently failed to lead to political talks or concessions (Mon 2025). A comprehensive national-level peace deal is a distant prospect, with many EAOs and local PDFs publicly opposing the Myanmar military's inclusion in any form of dialogue to end the conflict, at least in the immediate period. Subsequently, international intervenors have pragmatically adopted a minimalist approach to peacemaking, aiming for stability rather than the grand ambition of inclusive comprehensive agreements prevalent in the 1990s and 2000s. Of all the contemporary peacemaking efforts, the ASEAN-led process is the most comprehensive in terms of its stated goals set out in the 5PC (ASEAN Secretariat 2021). However, even the 5PC neglects to specify what ASEAN's ambition of a 'constructive dialogue' to 'seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people' really means, as a 'peaceful solution' could involve different objectives depending on the perspective of the viewer, ranging from stabilisation and democratisation to transformative change in Myanmar.

Similarly, Japanese mediation in Rakhine began as a quest for stability after fighting between the AA and the Myanmar military disrupted the region, following the cancellation of voting for the 2020 elections due to security threats (International Crisis Group 2020). Likewise, despite their frequency, China-brokered peace talks have lacked ambitions beyond stability and the cessation of violence. As official Chinese sources acknowledge, the pattern of Chinese engagement has been to prevent spillover in the form of refugee flows, civilian casualties, or obstruction to cross-border trade from Myanmar (Xinhua 2016). Indeed, a temporary ceasefire in January 2024, facilitated by China between the junta and the Three Brotherhood Alliance in Shan State, enabled cross-border trade to resume following a four-month hiatus (Yumlembam 21 May 2024). China continued to pursue stabilisation in the northern borderlands throughout 2025, by brokering further ceasefire agreements between the Myanmar military and EAOs in Shan State (Romaniuk, Rejwan & Csicsmann 2025).

There are some benefits to limiting settlement objectives to the immediate cessation of violence. Longitudinal data analysis from conflict data and mapping produced by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) shows that in the months leading up to the first ceasefire between the AA and SAC, violence in Rakhine State was relatively high compared to Myanmar as a whole, but this situation reversed once the ceasefire regime was in place (IISS 2024). Aside from a flare-up of violence during a brief breakdown of the ceasefire in November 2022, this territory enjoyed relative stability in comparison to the rest of post-coup Myanmar until October 2023. Despite the emergence of local PDFs, conflict events in Rakhine remained consistently low in the three months following the coup, with only 13 attacks identified, compared to Myanmar's overall average of 151 attacks per state over the same period (ibid.) However, the fact that the ceasefire eventually failed and has had to be continually renegotiated reveals the fragility and limitations of agreements that centre solely

on local ceasefires without incorporating broader issues. Similar fragility is evident in the case of the Haigen Agreement, signed between the Myanmar military and the Three Brotherhood Alliance in January 2024, which collapsed within a year (Mon 2025). While such ceasefires can bring immediate stability to a specific locality, they are temporary and require continual renegotiation.

2. A focus on immediate 'wins' such as humanitarian assistance rather than long-term stability and conflict termination

Post-coup processes in Myanmar, including those led by the UN and ASEAN and in Rakhine, have all focused on immediate 'wins' such as humanitarian assistance rather than addressing the underlying causes of the conflict, revealing a scaling down of peace ambitions. Negotiated humanitarian access, while immediately impactful, can be detached from the broader political dimensions of a conflict. In Asia, where there are significant capacities and experience in delivering post-disaster humanitarian relief, humanitarian assistance is often accepted as an apolitical, uncontested arena in which external states can legitimately intervene. When the 2020 Japanese-mediated ceasefire in Rakhine broke down in November 2022, a further round of mediation led to what Japan's Special Envoy announced as 'not a military or political agreement, but rather a humanitarian ceasefire, and [it] is very significant because local residents will directly benefit from the fruits of peace' (The Nippon Foundation 2022). Similarly, as Myanmar was reeling from both Covid-19 and the 2021 coup, China offered the SAC and multiple EAOs in Northern Myanmar vaccines, medical workers, and construction materials for quarantine centres, which offset limited aid from Western states and multilateral bodies. Likewise, one of the first things that ASEAN sought to focus on within the 5PC framework was provision of vaccines and humanitarian assistance through a delivery arrangement framework (Adelina 2022). This reflects a broader pattern in which humanitarian spaces are increasingly fragmented and localised and must be continually renegotiated, either as part of subnational or local truces and peace or cooperation agreements or through ad hoc bargaining between humanitarians and armed actors (Kool, Pospisil & van Voorst 2021).

Agreements that centre humanitarian access do have benefits, such as the temporary alleviation of human suffering at the local level, but they also carry risks. Regional bodies such as ASEAN have struggled to go beyond short-term ambitions or engage with the political consequences of humanitarian assistance. For ASEAN, the modest starting points of the 5PC are the least common denominators among its member states, balancing states like Indonesia that call for a more interventionist approach with others who would resist anything more intrusive (Alexandra & Adhikari 2023). Further, in the context of political fragmentation and competing claims of legitimacy, continued engagement between the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre) and the junta's representatives risks humanitarian assistance being co-opted by the Myanmar military and compromising ASEAN's stated commitment to impartiality (Adelina 2022). Such appraisals come at a time when the principle of apolitical humanitarianism – rooted in neutrality, impartiality, and independence – is increasingly questioned by scholars and practitioners (Elnakib et al. 2024).

3. Short-term and ad hoc institutional arrangements to bring actors into talks

The lack of long-term institutionalisation of many contemporary processes reveals an ad hoc approach that prioritises current needs rather than the sustainable architecture that would be necessary to support comprehensive negotiations over time. While some criticize the liberal peacebuilding project for over-institutionalising peacemaking architecture, resolving complex conflict often requires coherence, consistency and resourcing that institutional peacemaking

architecture can provide (De Coning 2007). Although effective architecture varies across contexts, co-ordination across multilateral peacemaking mechanisms can prevent conflict parties from forum shopping (Goryayev 2001), whilst consistency of third-party involvement can build conflict parties' trust and confidence in a process. In recent years, however, institutionalised multilateralism has faced a crisis of both faith and funding, as ad hoc and competitive mediation initiatives become more common, whilst UN peacemaking bodies, such as the Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs, struggle to retain primacy as a lead institutional mediator.

ASEAN lacks institutional capacity and prioritisation to facilitate peace processes, in contrast to other regional organisations such as the AU, which has developed an extensive institutional architecture to resolve conflicts within and between member states (Coe and Nash 2023). Despite undergoing a process of institutionalising 'regional crisis response architecture', mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) 'still operate on ASEAN's principle of consensus-based decision-making' (Michaels & Laksmana 2025), limiting the bloc's ability to reach and enforce collective decisions in response to complex conflicts in which both member and non-member states have strategic interests. As the key regional architecture for addressing conflicts in Myanmar, the 5PC-mandated mechanism of the ASEAN Chair's Special Envoy has a term which expires with that of the Chair, with Myanmar thus continuously treated as a 'burning ball' to be passed on to the next Chair (Alexandra & Adhikari 2023). Limits to the power of Chair's Special Envoy have also become clear when they have struggled to access all relevant parties within Myanmar (Haacke 2023), whilst the strength of the Chair's approach to Myanmar can be conditional on the political character of whichever member state holds the position (Root 2024). Beyond the regional bloc, rising Asian states such as India and China do not have formal peacebuilding policies and largely rely exclusively on their diplomatic corps and other state institutions to engage with conflicts in the region. Such an institutional vacuum impacts the scale, pace, and continuity of peacemaking initiatives. It also limits the potential for different mediating actors in Myanmar to co-ordinate or cooperate across distinct processes to respond to diverse actors' priorities.

4. Transactional mediation relationships conditioned by the economic and security interests of regional powers

A key feature of peacemaking initiatives since the 2021 coup is the primacy of regional actors that have clear economic and security interests in Myanmar. China, the most visible peacemaker in Myanmar, is explicit in linking the objectives of dialogue processes with its own economic priority to protect its investments in Myanmar, which are threatened by the scale of instability in the country. For example, an agreement facilitated by China between the Three Brotherhood Alliance and the SAC in 2024 states that 'all parties ensure that China's interests in Myanmar are not harmed' (Northern Alliance 2024, unofficial translation). China's engagement with a key EAO in Northern Myanmar, the MNDAA, has focused on addressing cross-border scams following the junta's failure to stop illegal telecom fraudsters and gambling operations along the border that have scammed thousands of Chinese nationals. In response, the EAO has extradited Chinese nationals operating illegally from territories it controls (Shan Herald 2024). Similar transactionalism is also evident in India's engagement with EAOs operating across the India-Myanmar borderland, which only began when resistance forces gained territorial control across the approximately 1,000-mile border (Yumlembam 2024).

Prior to that territorial gain, India had only engaged with the SAC. While more detached than China and India, Japan's motivation for engagement in Rakhine includes countering China's entrenched investment and supporting Japanese businesses to invest in the state (Strefford 2021). Beyond Myanmar, transactionalism can be seen in contexts such as Syria, Libya and Yemen, where interest-based, exclusive mediations focused on short-term deals have triumphed over long-term work towards conflict transformation (Hellmüller & Salaymeh 2025).

The overt transactionalism and reductionism of contemporary peace processes in Myanmar have also led to a greater domestic demand for peacemaking initiatives by Western actors. A recent survey of 1,203 citizens in Myanmar commissioned by PeaceRep suggests that people are most likely to entrust the United States (27.9%) and the UN (22.53%) as facilitators, with regional states such as China (10.6%), Thailand (3.24%), and India (0.9%) scoring the lowest. This reveals that, contrary to narratives of the decline and death of liberal peace, recipients of peace process lite in conflict-affected contexts such as Myanmar advocate for more liberal forms of peacemaking (Roy 2020). It also underlines how China's dominance in the wider political economy has allowed it to leverage its transnational economic relations and shape the peace process in ways that reflects its interests, which has often reduced the space for Western actors to step in (Kumbun 2019).

Conclusion

Peace process lite is reductionist in that it rearticulates liberal visions of peacemaking in its most minimalistic form and points to how the substance and objectives of peacemaking endeavours are becoming less institutionalised and more piecemeal, parochial, and transactional. It is the result of conflict and global fragmentation, and the accompanying disaggregation of peacemaking processes across actors, scales, and themes departs from the heyday of comprehensive peace settlements in the 1990s and 2000s. Positively, such lite peace processes have the potential to enable islands of agreement amid broader conflict contexts (Wittke 2023) and fill gaps in humanitarian efforts. Lite peace processes also have the ability to keep parties engaged in a variety of dialogue fora, maintaining opportunities for agreement during periods when comprehensive settlements appear unthinkable. Yet, it also comes with risks. The prioritisation of short-term, localised violence reduction and piecemeal issue-based agreements may amplify the difficulty of cohering multiple actors into a more comprehensive peace process and distract from the longer-term thinking that is needed for sustainable peace and inclusion. The multiplicity of overlapping concurrent processes, involving distinct constellations of domestic and external actors driven by varying norms and motivations, also offers conflict parties and the external states that seek to support them the opportunity to forum shop – picking and choosing when to engage with different processes, actors, or institutions, if at all. In Myanmar, the demands of competing regional and international powers have led domestic actors to construct different sets of advocacy messages to suit these different audiences, with some parties shying away from committing to certain dialogue platforms as doing so might contravene the interests of competing powers. Peace process lite, thus, gives name to an approach to peacemaking that has emerged as an alternative to multilaterally-driven comprehensive peace processes and is contextually defined, localised, regionalised, and adapted, presenting both opportunities and challenges.

For mediation practitioners and funders, peace process lite presents a key dilemma. While these processes may be more attractive than waiting for a comprehensive bargain that might never appear, the potential for unintended consequences is high. Any international support

to such processes will need to confront difficult questions of how to incrementally build lite processes amid constraints posed by conflict dynamics and the international context, map how such lite processes relate to other initiatives within the multi-mediation ecosystem, and take note of what risks investing in lite peace processes could bring.

Multilateral bodies such as the UN are also constrained in their ability to engage with such lite processes given the issues of co-ordination, cooperation, and collective action engendered by global fragmentation and the diverse priorities of international intervenors. Such competing interests and peacemaking initiatives raise questions of the UN's role in contemporary peacemaking. If peace process lite creates a need for mediation between mediators (Bell 2024), is this where the UN could play a more central role? The case of Myanmar demonstrates the emergence of a 'regionalised lottery' in which the regionalisation of conflict management can be uneven and drastically different based on the normative values and institutional capacities of regional organisations. Could greater UN involvement mitigate the emergence of piecemeal mediation in regions that are averse to intervention? In today's fragmented climate, the phenomenon of 'minilateral' peacemaking initiatives that complement multilateral mediation, such as the International Contact Group for Mindanao and the Troika for Sudan, is gaining renewed attention in policymaking, although such initiatives have a mixed record of efficacy (Whitfield 2025). As peace process lite highlights the tensions between norms that have underpinned peacebuilding as a policy framework, does the UN need to further shift towards engaging with minilateral mediation initiatives? It may be that the UN no longer holds enough sway to cohere parties that do not wish to engage, and its previous barometers of success and impact need to change.

Identifying the use of peace process lite in Myanmar does not suggest a blueprint for resolving these impasses: as lite processes are contextually defined, localised, regionalised, and adapted, so too must be any engagement with such processes in order to cohere competitive interests. However, characterizing peace process lite starts to help us understand the current nature of peace processes in an age of fragmentation and global disorder and devise policy responses that better fit the realities of contemporary conflict.

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to all partners in Myanmar who provided their valuable time and insights that informed this research, who we have chosen not to name due to security concerns. This research is supported by the Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (PeaceRep), funded by UK International Development from the UK government. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies. Any use of this work should acknowledge the authors and PeaceRep.

References

Armed Conflict Location Event Data (ACLED) (December 2024), 'Global conflicts double over the past five years.' https://acleddata.com/conflict-index/

Acharya, A. (2013), The Making of Southeast Asia International Relations of a Region / Amitav Acharya. (Reprint ed. Cornell Studies in Political Economy; Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies).

Adelina, K. (2022), 'Will ASEAN Take the Side of the Myanmar People?', ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Fulcrum- Analysis on Southeast Asia. https://fulcrum.sg/will-asean-take-the-side-of-the-myanmar-people/

Adhikari, M. (2023), 'Non-western engagement in peace processes and the rise of 'hedging' by elites in conflict-affected states', Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 37(3): 338–360.

Adhikari, M., and Hodge, J. (2024), Pathways Ahead for Myanmar: Assessing the Challenges and Opportunities. Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (Edinburgh: Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform, University of Edinburgh). https://peacerep.org/publication/pathways-ahead-for-myanmar-assessing-the-challenges-and-opportunities/.

Adhikari, M, Hodge, J., Bell, C., & Siwa, Z. (2025), 'Disaggregated mediation: the localisation of peace processes amid global and domestic fragmentation', European Journal of International Relations.

Alagappa, M. (1995), 'Regionalism and conflict management: a framework for analysis', Review of International Studies, 21(4): 359–87.

Alexandra, L., & Adhikari, M. (2023), The Role of ASEAN in the Myanmar's Post-Coup Crisis: Breaking the Stalemate? (Edinburgh: Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform, University of Edinburgh) https://peacerep.org/publication/the-role-of-asean-in-myanmar-post-coup-crisis/

ASEAN Secretariat (2024), 'Chairman's Statement on the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting', ASEAN, 24 April. https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/Chairmans-Statement-on-ALM-Five-Point-Consensus-24-April-2021-FINAL-a-1.pdf.

Badanjak, S., Amaya-Panche, J., Beaujouan, J., Epple, T., Farquhar, A., Henry, N., Wilson, R., & Wise, L. (2025), Peace Agreements in 2024: Insights from the PA-X Database (Edinburgh: Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform, University of Edinburgh) https://peacerep.org/publication/peace-agreements-in-2024/

Bandial, A. (2021), 'ASEAN excludes Myanmar junta leader from summit in rare move', Reuters, 17 October. https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/asean-chair-brunei-confirms-junta-leader-not-invited-summit-2021-10-16/

Beaujouan, J. (2024), 'Power peace: the resolution of the Syrian conflict in a post-liberal era of peacemaking', Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 19(3): 309–328.

Bell, C. (2024), '"Multimediation": adapting in response to fragmentation', in Whitfield T. (ed), Still Time to Talk- Adaptation and Innovation in Peace Mediation (London: Conciliation Resources), 27–31. https://www.c-r.org/accord/still-time-to-talk

Bell, C., Pospisil, J., & Wise, L. (eds.). (2022), Local Peace Processes (London: British Academy). https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/conflict-stability-local-peace-processes/

Bell, C., & Wise, L. (2022), 'The spaces of local agreements: Towards a new imaginary of the peace process', Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 16(5): 563–583.

Caballero-Anthony, M. (2022), 'ASEAN and the five-point consensus on Myanmar: a futile Exercise?' in Alexandra L. (ed) Seeking Strategic Options for Myanmar: Reviewing Five-Point Consensus and Anticipating the Future of Democracy in Myanmar (Jakarta: Centre for Strategic and International Studies), 2–11.

Carothers, T., & Samet-Marram, O. (2015), The New Global Marketplace of Political Change. (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace).

Coe, B., & Nash, K. (2020), 'Peace process protagonism: the role of regional organisations in Africa in conflict management', Global Change, Peace & Security, 32(2): 157–77.

Coe, B., & Nash, K. (2023), Regionalized Governance in the Global South (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

De Coning, C. (2007), Coherence and Coordination in United Nations Peacebuilding and Integrated Missions (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs). https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/46185/2007_Coherence_Coordination_UN_Peacebuilding.pdf.

De Coning, C. (2018), 'Adaptive peacebuilding', International Affairs, 94(2): 301–17.

Duncombe, C., & Dunne, T. (2018), 'After liberal world order', International Affairs, 94(1): 25-42.

Elnakib, S., Aly, S., Asi, Y., & Shawar, Y. (2024), 'The humanitarian system: Politics can not be avoided', The Lancet, 404 (10458): 1105–6.

Galston, W. (2018), 'The populist challenge to liberal democracy,' Journal of Democracy, 29 (2): 5–19.

Goryayev, V. (2001), 'Architecture of international involvement in the Tajik peace process' in Abdullaev, K and Barnes, C (eds), Politics of Compromise: The Tajikistan Peace Process (London: Conciliation Resources) 32–37. https://www.c-r.org/accord/tajikistan/architecture-international-involvement-tajik-peace-process

Haacke, J. (2023), 'ASEAN and conflict management,' in Dosch, J, and Kliem, F. (eds) The Elgar Companion to ASEAN (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited), 76–92.

Hellmüller, S., & Salaymeh, B. (2025), 'Transactional peacemaking: Warmakers as peacemakers in the political marketplace of peace processes,' Contemporary Security Policy, 46(2): 312-342.

Heyzer, N. (16 March 2023), 'Remarks by Noeleen Heyzer, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar at the General Assembly,' United Nations Myanmar, https://myanmar.un.org/en/223582-remarks-noeleen-heyzer-special-envoy-secretary-general-myanmar-general-assembly

Hurrell, A. (2018), 'Beyond the BRICS: Power, pluralism, and the future of global order', Ethics and International Affairs, 32(1): 89–101.

International Institute for Strategic Studies (2024), 'IIS Myanmar Conflict Map'. at: https://myanmar.iiss.org/dashboard

Iji, T. (2017), 'The UN as an international mediator: From the post–Cold War era to the twenty-first century', Global Governance, 23 (1): 83–100.

Institute for Security and Development Policy (2015), 'Myanmar's nationwide ceasefire agreement'. https://www.isdp.eu/publication/myanmars-nationwide-ceasefire-agreement/

International Crisis Group (2020), 'From elections to ceasefire in Myanmar's Rakhine State'. https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/b164-elections-ceasefire-myanmars-rakhine-state

Kool, L.D., Pospisil, J., & van Voorst, R. (2021), 'Managing the humanitarian micro-space: the practices of relief access in Syria,' Third World Quarterly, 42(7): 1489–1506.

Kumbun, J. (2019), 'Myanmar needs more engagement from the West, not China', The Irrawaddy, 13 December. https://www.irrawaddy.com/opinion/guest-column/myanmar-needs-more-engagement-from-the-west-not-china.html

Lanz, D., and Lustenberger, P. (2024), 'The evolution of innovation in international mediation,' in Whitfield T. (ed), Still Time to Talk- Adaptation and Innovation in Peace Mediation (London: Conciliation Resources), 12-15. https://www.c-r.org/accord/still-time-to-talk

Lei, Z. (2011), 'Two pillars of China's global peace engagement strategy: UN peacekeeping and international peacebuilding', International Peacekeeping, 18(3): 344–62.

Lone, W., & Ghoshal, D. (2024), 'India extends unprecedented invite to Myanmar's anti-Junta forces, sources say,' Reuters, 23 September. https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/india-extends-unprecedented-invite-myanmars-anti-junta-forces-sources-say-2024-09-23/

Loong, S. (2022), 'Post-Coup Myanmar in Six Warscapes', International Institute for Strategic Studies, 10 June. https://myanmar.iiss.org/analysis/introduction

Michaels, M. (2023), 'What China's Growing Involvement Means for Myanmar's Conflict', Institute for Strategic Studies, 7 August. https://myanmar.iiss.org/analysis/chinas-growing-involvement

Michaels, M, and Laksmana, E.A. (2025), 'ASEAN needs a regional crisis-response architecture', International Institute for Strategic Studies, 21 May. https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2025/05/asean-needs-a-regional-crisis-response-architecture/

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand, (2023), 'Thailand Hosts an Informal Meeting among Countries Affected by the Situation in Myanmar', 18 June. https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/informal-discussion-myanmar-2?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c306000683e

Mon, S. (2025), 'Q&A: Will the ceasefires after the earthquake bring peace to Myanmar?' ACLED, 24 April. https://acleddata.com/2025/04/24/qa-will-the-ceasefires-after-the-earthquake-bring-peace-to-myanmar/

Nan, S.A, Druckman, D, & El Horr, J. (2009), 'Unofficial international conflict resolution:Is there a track 11/2? Are there best practices?', Conflict Resolution Quarterly, 27(1): 65-82.

Neelakantan, S. (2022), 'Malaysia's top diplomat broaches junking ASEAN consensus on Myanmar', Radio Free Asia, 30 July. https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/consensus-07302022162946.html

Nichols, M. (22 December 2022), 'U.N. Council Demands End to Myanmar Violence in First Resolution in Decades', Reuters, https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/un-council-demands-end-myanmar-violence-first-resolution-decades-2022-12-21/

Northern Alliance (2024). "The Kokang Troops of the Jingpo Dadi Coalition reached a consensus with the Burmese side", 3 March. http://www.northernalliance.cn/news/14574.aspx.

Ong, A. (2021), 'Ethnic armed organisations in post-coup Myanmar: New conversations needed', ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Fulcrum- Analysis on Southeast Asia, 16 June. https://fulcrum.sg/ethnic-armed-organisations-in-post-coup-myanmar-new-conversations-needed/

Parlar Dal, E. (2018), 'Rising powers in international conflict management: An introduction', Third World Quarterly: Special Issue: Rising Powers in International Conflict Management: Converging and Contesting Approaches, 39(12): 2207–21.

Peter, M. & Rice, H. (2022), Non-Western Approaches to Peacemaking and Peacebuilding: State-of-the-Art and an Agenda for Research (Edinburgh: Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform, University of Edinburgh). https://peacerep.org/publication/non-western-approaches-to-peacemaking-and-peacebuilding-state-of-the-art-and-an-agenda-for-research/

Pospisil, J. (2019), Peace in Political Unsettlement Beyond Solving Conflict, Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies. (Cham: Springer International Publishing, Imprint: Palgrave Macmillan)

Radio Free Asia (2022), 'Myanmar's NUG, analysts criticize Thailand for hosting Junta foreign minister', 23 December. https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/asean-thailand-122320221833312.html

Rainsy, S. (2022), 'ASEAN's impotence in Myanmar can be traced to Hun Sen', 2 August, Nikkei Asia. https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/ASEAN-s-impotence-in-Myanmar-can-be-traced-to-Hun-Sen

Reuters, (2024). 'Thailand to host two regional meetings focused on Myanmar this week', 16 December. https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-host-two-regional-meetings-focused-myanmar-this-week-2024-12-16/

Richmond, O. (2025), 'Peace in an authoritarian international order versus peace in the liberal international order,' International Affairs, 101(4): 1381–1401. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaf076

Romaniuk, S, Rejwan, K.T. & Csicsmann, L. (2025), 'Cold peace at China's doorstep: The frozen war and the return of great power rivalry in Myanmar – Analysis,' Eurasia Review, 2 November. https://www.eurasiareview.com/02112025-cold-peace-at-chinas-doorstep-the-frozen-war-and-the-return-of-great-power-rivalry-in-myanmar-analysis/

Root, R. (2024), 'International community beyond ASEAN must come together to resolve conflict in Myanmar,' International Bar Association, 2 September. https://www.ibanet.org/international-community-beyond-asean-must-come-together-to-resolve-conflict-in-myanmar

Roy, C. (2020), 'China's grand strategy and Myanmar's peace process', International Relations of the Asia-Pacific, 22(1): 69–99

Shan Herald. (2024), 'MNDAA Reopens Chinshwehaw Border Trade After Agreement with Junta', 13 March. https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/mndaa-reopens-chinshwehaw-border-trade-after-agreement-junta

Smith, C. (2014), 'Illiberal peace-building in hybrid political orders: Managing violence during Indonesia's contested political transition,' Third World Quarterly, 35(8): 1509–28.

Strefford, P. (2021), 'Japan's Response to the Coup in Myanmar,' East Asia Forum, 17 April. https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/04/17/japans-response-to-the-coup-in-myanmar/

Sun, Y. (2017), China and Myanmar's Peace Process (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace)

Taylor, R. (1998), 'Myanmar: military politics and the prospects for democratisation', Asian Affairs, 29(1): 3–12.

The Irrawaddy (2022), 'Japanese envoy's talks with Myanmar EAOs offer little hope for peace, experts say', 9 March. https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/japanese-envoys-talks-with-myanmar-eaos-offer-little-hope-for-peace-experts-say.html

The Nippon Foundation (2022), 'Japanese government representative Yohei Sasakawa achieves humanitarian cease-fire between Myanmar military and Arakan army', 29 November. https://en.nippon-foundation.or.jp/news/articles/2022/20221129-82042.html

Thompson, D., & Byron, C. (2020), 'Built for trust, not for conflict: ASEAN faces the future,' United States Institute of Peace Special Report, no.477. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/20200826-sr_477_built_for_trust_not_for_conflict_asean_faces_the_future-sr.pdf

Whitfield, T. (2025), Minilateral Mechanisms for Peacemaking in a Multipolar World: Friends, Contact Groups, Troikas, Quads, and Quints (New York: International Peace Institute). https://www.ipinst.org/2025/05/minilateral-mechanisms-for-peacemaking-in-a-multipolar-world-friends-contact-groups-troikas-quads-and-quints

Wittke, C. (2023), Creating "Islands of Agreement and Civility" Through Humanitarian Negotiations: A Conflict Management and Disaster-Mitigation Strategy in Russia's War against Ukraine (Edinburgh: Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform, University of Edinburgh). http://peacerep.org/publication/islands-of-agreement-conflict-management-russia-ukraine/

Xinhua. (2016), 'Chinese Ambassador Urges Immediate End of Conflicts near China-Myanmar Border', 22 November. https://en.people.cn/n3/2016/1122/c90000-9145449.html

Yumlembam, O. (2024), 'As Myanmar's resistance makes headway, India should reconsider its realpolitik strategy,' South Asian Voices, 21 May. https://southasianvoices.org/geo-f-in-n-myanmars-resistance-makes-headway-05-21-2024/

The Global (Dis)Order international policy programme is a joint initiative of the British Academy and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to generate fresh insights and creative thinking for the awareness of and uptake by policymakers and practitioners. Today's international system is in flux and fragmenting, with the need to navigate competing power aspirations and nodes of order. The programme focuses on understanding the history, current nature, and potential future trajectories of global orders, aiming to examine the diverse and often contested understandings of orders and disorders.

About the British Academy

The British Academy is the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences. We mobilise these disciplines to understand the world and shape a brighter future. From artificial intelligence to climate change, from building prosperity to improving wellbeing - today's complex challenges can only be resolved by deepening our insight into people, cultures and societies. We invest in researchers and projects across the UK and overseas, engaging the public with fresh thinking and debates, and bring together scholars, government, business and civil society to influence policy for the benefit of everyone.

About the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace generates strategic ideas and independent analysis, supports diplomacy, and trains the next generation of scholar-practitioners to help countries and institutions take on the most difficult global problems and advance peace. In addition to its offices in Washington, DC and California, Carnegie has established global centers in Asia, Beirut, Berlin, Brussels, and New Delhi. As a uniquely global think tank, Carnegie leverages its network of over 170 experts to better understand the threats and opportunities affecting global security and well-being, and to prepare the next generation of foreign policy leaders through training and mentorship.

The British Academy
10–11 Carlton House Terrace
London SW1Y 5AH

Registered charity no. 233176

thebritishacademy.ac.uk

Published February 2026

© The British Academy and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. This is an open access publication licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 Unported License

doi.org/10.5871/global-disorder/9780856727160

The British Academy | CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE