

# The republic of the union of myanmar



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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar was formerly known as Burma until 1989 when its military government changed its name to Myanmar (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). However, the United States government has not yet adopted the name (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). The country of Myanmar is located in Southeast Asia bordering China to the north and northeast, Laos and Thailand to the east and southeast, Bangladesh and India to the west, and the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal to the south (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). Myanmar covers an area of around 421, 600 square miles which is slightly smaller than the United States’ state of Texas (“ Myanmar.”, 2014). The population of the country consists of over 47. 37 million people made up of about 135 ethnic groups (“ Myanmar.”, 2014). The official language of the Union of Myanmar is Burmese (“ Myanmar.”, 2014). Still, the various other minority ethnic groups speaks their own languages (“ Myanmar.”, 2014). Since 1989, the capital of Myanmar was Yangon but was recently changed to Naypyidaw in 2005 (“ Myanmar.”, 2014).

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many Burmese minority ethnic city-states and kingdoms inhabited the country’s present borders (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). In 1824, Great Britain conquered Myanmar into its Indian Empire (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). Myanmar was considered and managed as a province of India until it became a self-governing colony <https://assignbuster.com/the-republic-of-the-union-of-myanmar-essay-samples/>

in 1937 (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). The country of Myanmar gained independence from the commonwealth of Great Britain in January 4 1948 (“ Myanmar.”, 2014). Myanmar’s independence was gained by General Aung San who is now known as the “ Father of Burma” (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013).

In 1962, General Ne Win took over the Burmese government as the first military ruler and self-appointed president beginning the country’s ruling by a military junta (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). Until 2011, the military junta held absolute power in the country and began the policies of international isolation (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). For over 49 years, Myanmar was a military dominated country full of human rights abuses (“ Myanmar.”, 2014). In the multiparty legislative elections of 1990, the National League for Democracy (NLD) ran as the main opposing party to the military junta (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). NLD won a landslide victory and the junta placed Aung San Suu Kyi, NLD leader and the daughter of General Aung San, under house arrest for over 15 years (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). In 2007, the ruling junta brutally killing at least 13 people arrested thousands in response to protests over increased fuel prices led by Buddhist monks, (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). Throughout the year of 2008, a series of bombings took place in the country. Many minority rebels and terrorists were blamed for the events (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). In November 2010, Myanmar held its first general election in 20 years (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). Yet, Constitutional votes and Parliamentary elections held under the junta rule were considered manipulated and flawed by many in the international community (“ East &

Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). After the election, Burmese Parliament met in January 2011 and elected a former prime minister of the previous military government, Thein Sein, as president (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). Presently, the president of Myanmar is Thein Sein along with Vice President Nyan Tun (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). Since the election, Thein Sein leading the Burmese government has initiated various political and economic reforms directed to the opening of the long-isolated country (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). Thein Sein’s reforms consisted of permitting Aung San Suu Kyi to resume her political activities by allowing her to run in the parliamentary election in April 2012 (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). As a result, she now currently serves as an elected Member of Parliament and chair of the Committee for Rule of Law and Tranquility (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). For 2014, Myanmar is the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013).

Myanmar’s Armed Forces consists of Army, Navy, and Air Force (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). In February 2013, the military formed a new task force to deal with forced child recruitment, which reportedly continues (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013).

In Addition, President Thein Sein has released the hundreds of political prisoners, passed laws protecting basic human rights, and gradually reduced restrictions on freedom of the press and expression (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). Along with the restrictions on freedom of expression, Myanmar’s domestic media has been strictly controlled since 1962 (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). The whole of the media has been censored, ranging from government dissent to most bad news such as reports of

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natural disasters (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). In 2012, Thein Sein lifted pre-publication censorship for the press (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013).

In June 2012, Myanmar declared a state of emergency in Rakhine State where at least 17 people were killed in religious violence between Buddhists and Muslims (Mullany, 2014). This incident began a series of attacks on Rohingya Muslims across the country to the present (Mullany, 2014). The United Nations reported in January 2014 that rampaging mobs in Rakhine had killed at least four dozen people, mostly Muslims (Mullany, 2014). In March 2014, Myanmar government was reported to have denied the Rohingya Muslims citizenship as well as persecuted them (Mullany, 2014). Following the government’s ban of Doctors without Borders (MSF), approximately 750, 000 Rohingya Muslims have died in Myanmar as a result of being deprived of medical services (“ Myanmar.”, 2014). The Burmese government ordered halt to MSF’s work after some officials accused the group of favoring Rohingya Muslims over Rakhine Buddhists (“ Myanmar.”, 2014).

Many now hope that along with these new reforms, the decades of international isolation could be coming to an end (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). In December 2011, United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Burma to meet both President Thein Sein and Aung San Suu Kyi (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). This event was seen as a “ milestone” in the country’s history and the country’s return to the world stage (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). In 2013, President Obama met President Thein Sein in Washington D. C. offering development aid (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013).

President Obama praised the political and economic progress, but criticized the violence against Rohingya Muslims (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013).

Since the transition to a parliamentary government in 2011, Myanmar has begun an economic repair aimed at attracting foreign investment and reestablishing into the global economy (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). In April 2012, The European Union followed the United States’ lead and lifted all non-military sanctions as well as offered Myanmar more than \$100 million in development aid (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). With government’s commitment to reform and the following lifting of most Western sanctions, the Burmese economy accelerated in 2012 and 2013 (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). The European Union, United States and Canada passed economic sanctions on Myanmar, and China (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). The country’s abundant natural resources and young labor force have attracted foreign investment such as India and South Korea in many industries (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). Myanmar is currently moving past its isolationist policies with China as its main ally (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013).

The currency of Myanmar is known as Kyat (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). 965. 728 Kyat is equal to 1. 00 USD (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). Due to its under-developed economy and government corruptions, Myanmar is considered one of the poorest countries in Asia (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). However, the country of Myanmar is full of valuable natural resources (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). The natural resources are petroleum, timber, tin, antimony, zinc, copper, tungsten, lead, coal, marble, limestone, precious stones, natural gas, and hydropower (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, <https://assignbuster.com/the-republic-of-the-union-of-myanmar-essay-samples/>

2013). Myanmar is an agriculture based country with highly fertile soil growing rice, pulses, beans, sesame, groundnuts, and sugarcane (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). This rural country is also known to be the world’s largest exporter of teak, jade, pearls, rubies and sapphires (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013). Myanmar’s other exports consist of oil, gas, wood products, pulses, beans, fish, rice, and clothing (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). The country’s export partners are Thailand 40. 7%, India 14. 8%, China 14. 3%, and Japan 7. 4% (2012) (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). Myanmar also import fabric, petroleum, fertilizer, plastics, machinery, cement, construction materials, and crude oil from China 36. 9%, Thailand 20. 2%, Singapore 8. 7%, South Korea 8. 7%, Japan 8. 2%, Malaysia 4. 6% (2012) (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). However, little of this wealth reaches the actual population (“ Myanmar Profile.”, 2013).

Despite these improvements, living standards have not yet advanced for the majority of the people inhabiting the rural areas (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). Myanmar remains one of the poorest countries in Asia with more than one-fourth of the country’s 47. 37 million people living in poverty (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013). The previous government’s isolationist policies and economic mismanagement have left Burma with poor economy and government corruption, which will take great efforts to mend (“ East & Southeast Asia: Burma”, 2013).

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