

Brief: Myanmar & Canadian Universities

Author: Napas Thein

Date: May 19, 2024

Issue

Following a 2021 military coup, the number of Myanmar students coming to Canada has increased significantly. How can universities better support these applicants?

Background

- A military coup in February 2021 plunged Myanmar into civil conflict. [More than 5,000 people have been killed by the junta and over 20,000 detained since then.](#)

Myanmar's Education System is in Crisis

- Out-of-school children numbers have [doubled in Myanmar.](#)
- Only [22%](#) of eligible children are enrolled at the high school level.
- University enrolment has [plummeted 90%](#) since the beginning of the coup.
- Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) teachers have tried to work outside of the military system, but [struggle with limited resources, surveillance and repression.](#)

The number of Myanmar International Students has increased since the coup.

- 300 international students arrived to Canada in 2021-2022.
- The number is likely higher in the following year intake.

What Has UofT and other Canadian Schools Done?

1. Wilfred Laurier's [International Students Overcoming War Program](#)
2. Ontario-Ukraine Scholarship through [University of Toronto](#)
3. Scholar's At Risk at [UofT](#)

Why is [Canada's SEED Program](#) Insufficient?

- The Canada-ASEAN Scholarships and Educational Exchanges for Development (SEED) program offers short-term study and research opportunities for students in ASEAN countries to Canada.
- However, it requires that students are already enrolled in university in Myanmar and are expected to return. This is unrealistic as most who would be studying are no longer able to do so, and would also not want to return.

Myanmar at UofT

- [Tea Circle](#) is a blog of new perspectives on Myanmar, housed at the Asian Institute
- The [Postcor \(Post-Conflict Reintegration\) Lab](#) includes scholars focused on Myanmar.
- The [Myanmar Policy and Community Knowledge \(MyPACK\) Hub](#) is funded by the IDRC to do policy research on Myanmar.
- The student-led Myanmar Culture Club was founded in 2022 and has a membership that engages in Myanmar-related events on social, cultural, and political topics.
- Myanmar-based Professors: Matthew Walton; Jacques Bertrand; Christoph Emrich.

Charts

Chart 1: Refugees, IDPs, Asylum Seekers in/leaving Myanmar ([Source: UNHCR](#))

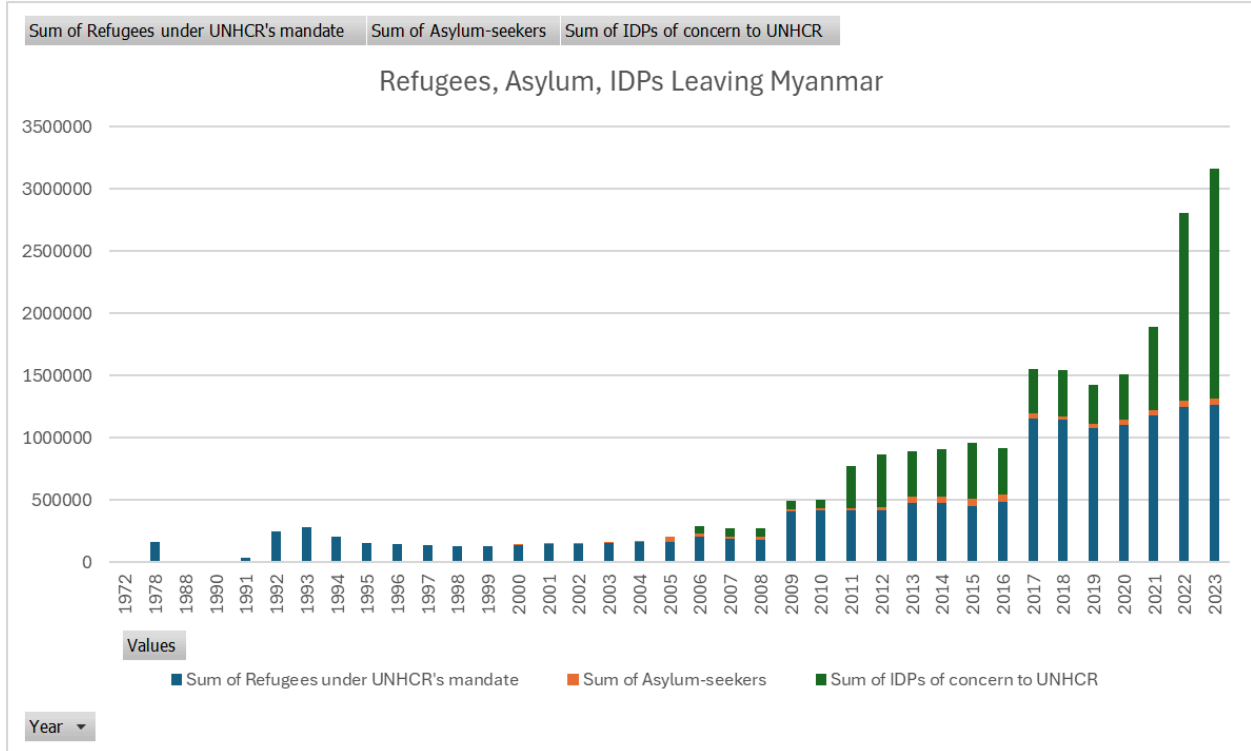


Chart 2: Refugees, Asylum Seekers Entering Canada from Myanmar ([Source: UNHCR](#))

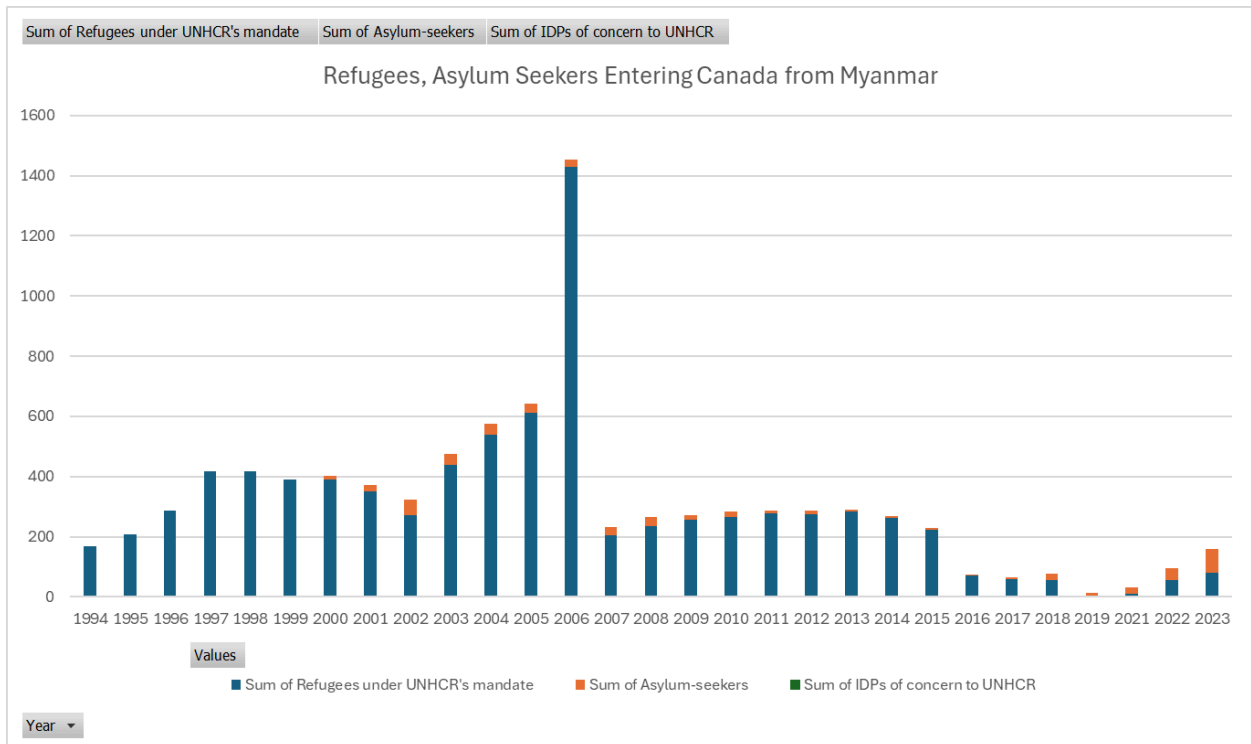


Chart 3: International Students from Myanmar ([Source: Statscan](#))

