

**DVB Debate** is produced by DVB Multimedia Group Ltd. Co. The debate is recorded every Saturday morning in Yangon with a live audience, which is invited to join the discussion as well.



**DVB TV timetable**

Sun	19:15	21:00	night repeat
Mon	10:15	15:15	21:00
Wed	10:15	15:15	21:00
Fri	10:15	15:15	21:00

DVB Debate aims to contribute to a new culture of open debate, in which anyone can participate and agree to disagree, in order to exchange ideas, create better mutual understanding and find solutions for societal issues to improve the future of Myanmar.

The team invites fellow media and debating clubs to join this initiative for open debate. A weekly press release, press picture and cartoon are available shortly after the recording. DVB Debate also has a modest budget to support local debating initiatives.

For any inquiries, remarks or questions, please call 01292743 (office hours), leave a comment on facebook.com/dvb.debate or email [debate@dvb.no](mailto:debate@dvb.no).

# DVB DEBATE



Welcome to DVB Debate, Myanmar's 1st open debate program. This week's debate question is:

***"Who listens to ethnic voices?"***

If you have any remarks, suggestions or questions, please ask a team member,

call 01292743 (office hours) or email [debate@dvb.no](mailto:debate@dvb.no).

## **This week's topic is ETHNIC VIEWS**

### ***Historical context:***

Burma is an ethnically diverse nation with one third of the population represented by various different ethnic groups, most of whom live in the resource-rich border areas and hills of Burma. The government formally recognises 135 distinct ethnicities, however, the inaccessibility of these areas means reliable demographics are hard to come by and no one knows exactly how many ethnic groups there are. For decades the ethnic minorities in Burma have felt marginalised and persecuted by the country's rulers and the majority ethnic Burman. Poor infrastructure and a challenging terrain make ethnic regions difficult to access and many of these areas are suffering from a lack of health care and education. Education under the military government was heavily politicised and since the 1960s ethnic people have not been allowed to learn their own language and culture in government-run schools. Civilians in ethnic areas have also suffered under decades of civil war and a repressive military dictatorship. Many have been forcibly removed from their homes by the former military government either through military strategy or land confiscation for development projects and resource exploitation.

### ***Facts & figures:***

- The government officially recognises 135 different ethnic groups.
- According to the 1983 census, the majority Burman ethnic group accounts for 69 percent of the population.
- About 66.2% of Pyithu Hluttaw MP's identify themselves as the majority ethnic group Burman. Shan accounts for 8.6%.
- Out of more than 30 registered political parties in Burma, over half are ethnic-based parties.
- There are more than 17 different ethnic armed groups in Burma

- 500,000 people are thought to live in Chin State, described by the United Nations as the poorest of Myanmar's 14 regions and states

### ***Points of view:***

"The international community largely ignores what happens in ethnic areas, even though the denial of ethnic rights is at the root cause of the problems in Burma"  
(Zoya Phan, Campaigns Manager at Burma Campaign UK)

"My friends and I can't follow the school lessons because we don't understand Burmese. Then the teacher beats us. So many of us stopped going to school."  
(Ji Pan, 8 year old Kachin school student)

"We want to be ruled by our own people and that's what people wanted before and now,"  
(AungTein Myint, Karen State Democracy and Development Party)

"The situation of ethnic minority groups in the border areas presents serious limitations to the government's intention to transition to democracy,"  
(Tomas Ojea Quintana, Former UN Special Rapporteur)

### ***Information links:***

[www.shanwomen.org](http://www.shanwomen.org)  
[www.burmacampaign.org.uk](http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk)  
[www.culturemyanmar.org](http://www.culturemyanmar.org)  
[www.minorityrights.org](http://www.minorityrights.org)  
[www.thisismyanmar.com/myanmars/people](http://www.thisismyanmar.com/myanmars/people)  
[www.dvb.no](http://www.dvb.no)