

12 February, 2020

An open letter from Myanmar civil society organizations to the UN Security Council

Dear President and Members of the Security Council,

We, the 177 undersigned Myanmar civil society organizations, call on the Council for urgent enhanced monitoring and intervention, including by dispatching a delegation to Myanmar to mediate between all parties concerned to respond to the political crisis and protect the people as the situation on the ground is quickly evolving. We appreciate the Council's statement expressing concerns over the declaration of the State of Emergency in Myanmar and call for release of those detained. We urge you to follow up with concrete actions to support the people of Myanmar and ensure the stability of the region and world peace.

The people of Myanmar unequivocally reject this military takeover. While the Myanmar military already wielded substantial political clout through the military-drafted 2008 Constitution, they now preside over all organs of power. A general strike is underway, with hundreds of thousands of people on the streets, peacefully protesting in defiance of the military coup. Despite 220 people being detained since the coup began according to the Assistance Association of Political Prisoners, people from all walks of life including workers, students, youth groups, LGBTIQ communities, religious and ethnic minorities, and public sector workers including health workers, teachers, airport staff, custom and police officers, among others are bravely joining their hands in peaceful protests. This nationwide peaceful movement is demonstrative of the people's vehement opposition in returning to the military rule of the past.

In spite of people exercising their right to peaceful assembly, we are deeply troubled that violence, intimidation, violent arrests, and threats are alarmingly on the rise. Live fire was aimed at one young woman, Myat Thwaet Thwaet Khaing, who was shot her head in Naypyidaw. She is now tragically in a critical condition and kept on life support. Rubber bullets have been shot at protesters at close range and water cannons have been deployed at close range, severely injuring peaceful protesters.

Frighteningly, pro-military counter-protesters and gangs of hired thugs are attempting to instigate violence. Martial law has been declared in at least 89 townships throughout the country, with a curfew restricting gatherings of more than five people. The military has proposed a Cyber Security Law that would allow sweeping new restrictions on internet providers, allowing the illegitimate military regime to ban content and intercept data. Those charged under the new law can be imprisoned for three years or fined approximately \$7,500 dollars or both.

The ethnic people of Myanmar, having experienced the civil war and the brutal and systematic human rights violations committed by the Myanmar military for decades, have also fearlessly taken to protests in towns, villages and in front of Myanmar military bases, to call for fundamental political change. Such calls are crucial for the conflict-affected displaced ethnic communities, as this military coup increased the likelihood of further restriction on humanitarian aid. This coming together of all people of Myanmar now to peacefully call for change of the military-drafted 2008 Constitution and establishment of a federal democracy have, for the first time, presented a rare and greater hope for the future of Myanmar.

However, the Myanmar military has *always* resorted to violence to crack down on mass demonstrations in spite of the fact that such demonstrations have always been fundamentally peaceful. The Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar military, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and the leaders of the military who have led the coup are the same leaders that have committed grave international crimes against Rohingya and other ethnic and

religious communities for decades with total impunity. The Security Council must not stand idly by as they continue to violate the people's fundamental rights and commit yet another crime against the people of Myanmar. The current situation is one of a standoff and we fear that the military will attempt to end the people's movement using unlawful and disproportionate violence. At the same time, the people are not ready stand down when faced with this fundamental turning point in our history. Your urgent and decisive action is imperative, not only for the people of Myanmar, but for the stability of the region and for world peace.

It is with great urgency, that we call on the UN Security Council to:

- Dispatch an urgent enhanced monitoring and intervention mission to Myanmar to monitor the fast-evolving situation on the ground and mediate between all parties concerned;
- Monitor humanitarian aid and COVID relief programs to ensure that it is being utilized to benefit the conflict-affected, vulnerable and marginalized communities in accordance with its intended use;
- Support Myanmar to achieve a roadmap that establishes a federal democratic union, ensuring a long-term sustainable peace, ethnic equality, and protection of the human rights of all peoples, and implements constitutional change that is in line with the will of the people.

In addition, we call on the UN Security Council and the Member States of the UN to urge the Myanmar military regime to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release all those who have been arbitrarily detained;
- Immediately refrain from any use of violence, unlawful use of water cannons, use of live ammunition against protesters, and cease all arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances;
- Respect people's rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, including ensuring that the public and protesters have unfettered Internet access, and lift all restrictions on access to social media platforms, VPN as well as media sites and refrain from imposing further restrictions against use of Internet;
- End all violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in ethnic and ceasefire areas, and ensure that all civilians are protected, including by lifting all barriers to humanitarian assistance and ensuring the non-interference of aid to ethnic areas;
- Immediately halt all ongoing military offensives in ethnic areas.

Please accept the assurance of our highest consideration.

Signed by:

1. Action Committee for Democracy Development
2. Ahlin Tagar Rural Development Organization
3. All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress
4. Arakan CSO Network
5. Area Peace and Development Forward
6. Arr Marn Thit Social Development Organization
7. Assistance Association for Political Prisoners
8. Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters
9. AYY Farmers Union
10. Ayyar Pyo May Women Development Organization
11. Backpack Health Workers Team
12. Banmaw Youth Network
13. Bee House

14. Burma Human Rights Network
15. Burma Medical Association
16. Candle Light Youth Group
17. Child Prevention Network
18. Chin Agency
19. Chin Human Rights Organization
20. Chin MATA Working Group
21. Chin Resources Center
22. Chin Women Development Organization
23. Civil Health and Development Network
24. Community Association Development
25. Community Response Group (COMREG)
26. Dawei Development Association
27. Dawn Peace Foundation
28. Democracy for Ethnic Minorities Organization
29. Democracy, Peace and Women Organization
30. Doe Myae Civil Social Development Organization
31. Equality Myanmar
32. European Karen Network
33. Farmer Agricultural Network
34. Farmers and Land Rights Action Group
35. Farmers Development and Environmental Watch Group
36. Free Education Service Organization
37. Freedom and Labor Action Group
38. Future Light Social Development Organization
39. Future Star Youth Organization
40. Future Women Association
41. Generation Wave
42. Golden Future Social Development Organization
43. Golden Heart Organization
44. Helping Hands (Local Development Organization)
45. Hkumzup Development Committee
46. Hope for Children Development Organization
47. Htoi Gender and Development Foundation
48. Htum Thit Sa Rural Development Organization
49. Human Rights Foundation of Monland
50. IFI Watch Myanmar
51. International Karen Organisation
52. Justice Movement for Community (Innlay)
53. Justice Society
54. Kachin National Youth Network
55. Kachin Peace Network
56. Kachin State Women Network
57. Kachin Women's Association Thailand
58. Kachin Women's Union
59. Kachin Youth Network

60. Kachin Youth Organization
61. Kan Chay Arr Man Fishery Development Organization
62. Kanpetlet Land Development Organization
63. Karen Community in Norway
64. Karen Environmental and Social Action Network
65. Karen Grassroot Women Network
66. Karen Human Rights Group
67. Karen Organization for Relief and Development
68. Karen Organization of America
69. Karen Peace Support Network
70. Karen Refugee Committee
71. Karen Rivers Watch
72. Karen Student Network Group
73. Karen Swedish Community
74. Karen Teacher Working Group
75. Karen Women's Organization
76. Karen Youth Network
77. Karen Youth Rangoon
78. Karenni Evergreen
79. Karenni Human Rights Group
80. Karenni Legal and Human Rights Center
81. Karenni Mobile Health Committee
82. Karenni National Women's Organization
83. Karenni National Youth Organization
84. Karenni Refugee Committee
85. Karenni Social Welfare and Development Center
86. Kaung Myat Hnalonethar Health Care Organization
87. Kaung Rwai Social Justice and Development Organization
88. Kayah Baptist Association - Christian Social Service and Development Department (KBA-CSSDD)
89. Kayah Earthrights Action Network
90. K'Cho Land Development Association
91. Keng Tung Youth
92. Khumi Affairs Coordination Council
93. Kong Jor Shan Refugee Camp
94. LAIN Technical Support Group
95. Lamyang Farmers Network
96. LatButta Farmer Union
97. Legal Aid for Human Rights
98. Let's Help Each Other
99. Light Social Development Organization
100. Lin Lake Kyal Social Development Organization
101. Loka Ahlinn (Social Development Organization)
102. Magway Region Development and Justice Organization (MRDJO)
103. Maramagri Youth Network
104. Matu Women Organization
105. Muditar Organization

106. Mung Chying Rawt Jat
107. Myanmar Muslim Youth Association (Kachin State)
108. Myanmar People Alliance (Shan State)
109. National Network for Education Reform
110. NeT Organization
111. Northern Shan State Women Peace and Security Network
112. Northern Spectrum Youth Association
113. Olive Organization
114. Open Development Foundation
115. Pan Thi Kyo LGBT Organization
116. Pa-O Women's Union
117. Pa-O Youth Organization
118. Paung Ku
119. Paungsee Arr Institute
120. Paungsee Myittar Organization
121. Peace World Gender Organization
122. Phyu Sin Myittar Social Development Organization
123. Pone Yate Sit Regional Development Organization
124. Progressive Voice
125. Rule of Law Watch Group
126. Rural Social Development Organization
127. Salween Peace Park
128. Sarnar Kyi Phyu Social Development Organization
129. SarPhyu Farmer Network
130. Saytana Shaesaung Youth Organization
131. Shan MATA
132. Shan State-Kachin National Network
133. Shan Women Development Network
134. Shwe Nathar Farmar Development Organization
135. Shwechinthae Social Service Group (ShweBo)
136. Social Care Volunteer Group
137. Southern Youth Development Organization
138. Summer Shelter Library
139. Swam Su Ti Rural Development Organization
140. Synergy – Social Harmony Organization
141. Ta'ang Students and Youth Union
142. Ta'ang Women's Organization
143. Tai Youth Network
144. Taunggyi Youth Center
145. Tawwin Thazin Women Group
146. The Khumi Institute (TKI)
147. The Seagull: Human Rights, Peace & Development
148. Thukhuma Khayeethe Team (TKT)
149. Thwee Community Development Network
150. Transparency Accountability Network Kachin State
151. TRIP NET

152. Waingmaw CSO Network
153. Waingmaw Women CBO
154. Women's Peace Network
155. Worker Development Organization
156. Yai Ywal Yar Youth Development Organization
157. Yatanar Youngyi Social Development Organization
158. Young Ni Oo Women Social Development Organization
159. YOUNITY
160. Zinlum Committee (Tanphaye)
161. ခြေလှမ်းသစ်လူမှုဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေး
162. ညီမော်ဒူ
163. တို့တောင်သူလယ်သမားအသင်း
164. ပညာပါရမီစာကြည့်တိုက်
165. ဒို့မြေကွန်ရက်
166. ပွင့်ဖြူလယ်မြေကွန်ရက်
167. မကွေးတိုင်းဒေသကြီးလူငယ်ကွန်ရက်အဖွဲ့၊ ပညာပါရမီ ကုသိုလ်ပြုအဖွဲ့
168. မကွေးဒေသဖွံ့ဖြိုးတိုးတက်ရေးစင်တာ
169. မရွှိမနှလုံးသားလူငယ်အဖွဲ့
170. မြေလတ်မျိုးဆက်အင်စတီကျု
171. မိတ္ထီလာခရိုင် အလင်းတန်းအဖွဲ့
172. ရွှေခြင်္သေ့တောင်သူကွန်ရက်
173. ရွှေခြင်္သေ့တောင်သူကွန်ရက်(ရွှေဘိုခရိုင်)
174. ရွှေတြိဂံတောင်သူလယ်သမားအဖွဲ့
175. ရွှေတောင်တိုက်နယ်တောင်သူအားမာန် ဝမ်းတွင်းမြို့နယ်အဖွဲ့
176. ဝိုင်းမော်မြို့နယ်လုံးဆိုင်ရာ သျှမ်းလူငယ်များစည်းလုံးညီညွတ်ရေးအဖွဲ့
177. ပန်းပျိုးလက် ဗန်းမော်လူမှုရေးအဖွဲ့