



## **Women's organizations and network of Myanmar/Burma call on the UN Security Council and Human Rights Bodies to hold the military junta accountable for their continued violence against protestors and human rights defenders, especially women**

On February 1 2021, the Burma's military orchestrated a coup d'état, declared a one-year State of Emergency and detained democratically elected government officials and activists including the President, U Win Myint, and State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Since February 5, hundreds of thousands of peaceful protestors participating in the Civil Disobedience have packed the streets of Myanmar cities. The *22222 Spring Revolution* witnessed a record-breaking number of demonstrators come to the streets together to peacefully express their disapproval and dissent. The number of women demonstrators has been estimated to be 60% of the total protestors.

Peaceful demonstrators across the country have been met with violent crackdowns by the junta's security forces in which some young people have been killed. As of today, on February 25, 728 people have been arrested, charged or sentenced at one point in relation to the military coup ([AAPP database](#)). Arrests have been accompanied by the violent dispersal of demonstrators.

On February 9 2021, a 21-year-old young woman, Mya Thwet Thwet Khine, was shot during a peaceful demonstration in Naypyitaw and died ten days later. As of February 25, 122 women have been arrested as per the [AAPP database](#). One young woman with disabilities was brutally attacked and incidents of the forceful removal of women protestors from demonstration sites by male police have been well documented. Police brutality persists in Myitkyina. On February 19, teachers Aye Kyi Kyi Sein and Aye Chan May were beaten. They suffered broken bones, as did the young women who were forcefully dragged on the streets during the dispersal.

On February 20, the security forces' killing of peaceful protestors was recorded in Mandalay. On February 22, the General Strike day, 195 students and civilians who demonstrated peacefully in Naypyidaw Townships were arrested. Among them, 90 were female demonstrators who were subsequently released on the same day, 6 of whom will soon face charges. Pro-military thugs are now out using deadly weapons attacking the pedestrians and pro-democracy protesters. Women's lives are in grave danger.

Since women have the right to freely choose their representatives for elected office, they also have the right to exercise their agency through the Civil Disobedience Movement when the government they voted for was overthrown. Women human rights defenders in Myanmar/Burma are being criminalized for exercising their right to participate in various forms of public decision-making such as protests and civil disobedience movement, demanding the restoration of their democratically elected government chosen through the will of the people.

Meanwhile in the ethnic areas, specifically in Karen and Northern Shan states, the military offensive against ethnic communities has intensified resulting in an increased number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) fleeing active conflict sites. Women human rights defenders across the country are facing a multi- burden: lack of human security, loss of civil liberty rights due to the military's seizure of power, all compounded by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic concerns. Women human rights defenders in the ethnic areas face grievous risk where armed conflicts wreak havoc within the pandemic context. Like their sisters in urban areas, they see increased curtailment of civil liberty rights, and violence inflicted on them when they attempt to assert them.

The junta has been violating the country's obligations to the United Nations (UN) including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

It is reported that women human rights defenders are subject to sexual violence and harassment for exercising their right to participate in public demonstration. Without protection and preventative measures, all forms of insecurity at many levels lead to undermining women's equal and meaningful participation in political and public life. Furthermore, women's organisations are deeply concerned about the safety and security needs of women who are in CDM. Their lives are at risk owing to the lack of protection and preventative measures from harm. Other key challenges include guaranteed livelihood and employment opportunities in case of dismissal.

Collectively, we, the women's networks of Myanmar/Burma undersigned reiterate our calls to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to take concrete actions against the military junta of Burma/Myanmar.

We call upon the UN Human Rights Special Rapporteurs on Torture, on Violence Against Women, on Arbitrary Detention, on Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, on the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, the CEDAW Committee, and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to issue a strong statement to reject the military coup and support our following calls:

- To immediately stop all the assaults and abusive tactics against women protestors and release all those arbitrarily detained.
- To pressure the junta to respect the right to protest in adherence with democratic norms and human rights principles.
- To restore the democratically elected government by relinquishing power, releasing all detainees, lifting telecommunications and social media restrictions, and halting violent crackdowns.
- To pressure Burma's military to end their attacks against innocent civilians in ethnic states.
- To support the UN existing Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM), formed by the Human Rights Council to collect evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law happening since the military coup and in the ethnic areas, which will be referred to the ICC.
- To support our calls (the people of Myanmar/ Burma) to UNSC and the UN Human Rights mechanisms to take urgent actions against the junta for its continued atrocities.

- To immediately dispatch a well-equipped monitoring and intervention mission to Myanmar/Burma to end the state sponsored human rights violations being perpetrated against civilians exercising their rights to peaceful assembly.
- To institute a comprehensive global arms embargo on Myanmar/Burma, to end the direct and indirect supply sale or transfer of all weapons and other military equipment that may be used for training, intelligence and military assistance. Further, the embargo must guarantee monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.
- To move forward with targeted sanctions against the extended leadership of the Myanmar/Burma Army, including their family members and military conglomerates in order to usher a direct blow to the economic interests and opportunities of the Tatmadaw Commander in Chief and his affiliates.

### **1. Women's League of Burma (WLB)**

- WLB was founded in 1999 as an umbrella organization comprised of 13 grassroots women's organizations of different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds from Burma/Myanmar.
  - Burmese Women's Union
  - Karenni National Women's Organization
  - Kachin Women's Association Thailand
  - Kuki Women's Human Rights Organization
  - Karen Women's Organization
  - Kayan Women's Organization
  - Lahu Women's Organization
  - Pa-O Women's Union
  - Shan Women's Action Network
  - Ta'ang Women's Organization
  - Tavoy Women's Union
  - Women for Justice

### **2. Gender Equality Network (GEN)**

- GEN is a **diverse and inclusive network of 109 CSOs/NGOs, INGOs and individuals** working to bring about gender equality and the fulfilment of women's rights in Myanmar since May 2008.
  - Action for Society Holistic Development Organization
  - Good Shepherd Myanmar Foundation
  - Mandalay Yaung Sin
  - Myanmar Deaf Community Development Association
  - Ninu (Women in Action Group)
  - Thandaunggyi Women's Group
  - Tharthi Myay Foundation

- The Fifth Pillar
- Thingaha Gender Organization

### 3. Women Organizations Network (WON)

- WON is a **network of 37 organizations** set up to support community women's groups across Myanmar since 2008.
  - Women's Organizations Network of Kayin State
  - Women's Organizations Network (Toungoo)
  - Southern Shan State Women Organizations Network (SSSWON)

### 4. CEDAW Action Myanmar (CAM)

- CAM composed of **15 local organizations and interested individuals**, was organized and established in 2011 with the main purpose to monitor and encourage the Government of Myanmar to take into account its commitment on gender equality.

### 5. Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process (AGIPP)

- AGIPP is formed in August 2014 **with 7 networks and organizations** focusing on women's rights, gender justice and the peace process.