

177 Myanmar civil society organizations call on the UN Security Council for urgent enhanced monitoring and intervention amid increasing violence by security forces

[14 February 2021] 177 Myanmar civil society organizations (CSOs) jointly called 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 parties. On 1 February, the Myanmar military grabbed power through an illegal coup that has sparked nationwide peaceful protests, which is nearing its second week with increasing momentum.

“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,” said 177 Myanmar CSOs in a joint open letter that was sent to the UN Security Council on 12 February.

“While there are grave concerns regarding the safety of the peaceful protesters, this coming together of peaceful protesters from all walks of life to peacefully call for change to the military-drafted 2008 Constitution and establishment of a federal democracy is a rare and great hope for the future of Myanmar,” said Daw Khin Ohmar of Progressive Voice. “That is why the international community must act now to support the calls for monitoring and mediation between parties.”

The security forces have increasingly become violent in their responses to the peaceful protests. In Mawlamyine, Mon State, security forces shot rubber bullets into crowds of peaceful protesters at close range. One woman was seriously injured, and four sustained injuries throughout their bodies. In the capital city Naypyidaw, a young woman was shot by live ammunition and according to Radio Free Asia, later died in the hospital. Despite the incidents of violence, the peaceful protests have gained momentum, while the military has stepped up their night-time raids in order to arbitrarily detain peaceful protesters. According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, 220 people had been detained in relation to the coup by 10 February. Over one hundred people were detained in just two days, as the number climbed to 384 by the end of day on 13 February.

“Such violence against peaceful protesters exercising their fundamental right to freedom of assembly and expression as well as night time raids and arbitrary arrests of civil servants, activists and human rights defenders must not be tolerated,” said Nai Aue Mon of Human Rights Foundation of Monland. “As the world continues to watch the despicable acts of the military, the UN Security Council must take urgent and decisive action against this illegitimate regime and ensure that they are held to account.”

The raids have targeted civil servants, activists and others who have bravely joined the peaceful protest and civil disobedience movement. People in neighborhoods are banging pots and pans to alert neighbors and to drive away police and setting up night-time patrols to protect each other from arbitrary arrests.

“The violence and arbitrary arrests being endured by the peaceful protesters is all too familiar to ethnic people who have experienced civil war and the brutal and systematic human rights violations committed by the Myanmar military for decades,” said Naw Htoo Htoo of Karen Human Rights Group. “The military will only become more violent as they grow frustrated by the standoff between them

and the peaceful protesters, but we will not back down from our core demands of a peaceful federal democratic Myanmar.”

The joint open letter also expressed concerns over increased likelihood of further restrictions on humanitarian aid to conflict-affected displaced ethnic communities as a result of military rule.

“This coup will have the deepest impact on those who are already marginalized and disenfranchised due to the decades of civil war and ongoing human rights violations perpetrated by the Myanmar military before the coup,” said Moon Nay Li of Kachin Women’s Association Thailand. “Humanitarian aid must be closely monitored to ensure that it benefits the conflict-affected ethnic communities and not the military.”

The joint open letter also urged the Council to “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.”

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Editor’s note:

Please see the open letter from Myanmar civil society organizations to the UN Security Council [here](#).