Burma Immediately Release Monks Detained as Part of Coup

5 February 2021 -- London, UK -- BHRN calls on the Burmese Military to immediately release Ashin Ariya Vansa Bivansa (Myawaddy Sayadaw), Ashin Sobitha, and Shwe Nya War. The three monks were detained on 1 February in Mandalay and Yangon as part of the sweeping arrests that led to the military’s coup d’etat. Ashin Sobitha has reportedly been sentenced to two years in prison. Myawaddy Sayadaw has been disrobed and is scheduled to appear in court again on 9 February. BHRN has not yet found an update on Shwe Nya War. The three monks are peaceful figures known for standing against toxic religious nationalism. Their arrests were part of the military’s early efforts to imprison activists, artists, and religious figures who would have stood against the coup government.

“While the world is rightly outraged by the detainment of the NLD’s political leadership, they must not overlook the activists and religious leaders who have also been imprisoned. Burma’s military has long fostered a relationship with violent nationalist monks and silenced those seeking peace and harmony in the society. Monks have played a vital role in promoting fairness. The Sangha has played a vital role in Burma’s progression towards a more democratic and peaceful society, and for this reason, the military has repeatedly infiltrated, attacked, tortured, and imprisoned them. We must not forget them in our calls for freedom and justice,” Said BHRN’s Executive Director Kyaw Win.

BHRN has received reports of other religious leaders and activists being questioned and harassed since the military seized full control of the country. Many are going into hiding fearing they too will be imprisoned. With the recent failure of the UN Security Council to condemn the coup in Burma, individual nations must take steps independently to counteract it. ASEAN nations, the EU, the UK, and the US must all put maximum pressure on the Burmese military to release all imprisoned in the coup and to relinquish power and allow the parliament to proceed with the members elected in the 2020 election. Targeted sanctions should be put in place as soon as possible against the military and their cronies and these nations should begin making serious plans for further actions if the military continues to refuse to relinquish power.

Organisation’s Background
BHRN is based in London, operates across Burma and works for human rights, minority rights and religious freedom in Burma. BHRN has played a crucial role advocating for human rights and religious freedom with politicians and world leaders.

Media Enquiries
Please contact:
Kyaw Win, Executive Director
Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)
E: kyawwin@bhrn.org.uk
T: +44(0) 740 345 2378