



## **KHRG's Statement on Myanmar's Permanent Representative to the UN HRC: Represent the People, Not the Tatmadaw**

February 18 2021

The Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) strongly condemns the statement made by U Myint Thu, Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations Office at Geneva, at the 29th Special Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC). We urge him to stand with the people of Myanmar, not the Myanmar/Burma Army (Tatmadaw).

The session, held on 12 February 2021, followed the coup which took place on 01 February. The message of the HRC was clear: the coup is a threat to democracy and has immense human rights implications. These implications are already unfolding across Myanmar, and nearly all representatives in attendance condemned the coup and the crackdown on the Civil Disobedience Movement that has followed. The HRC's condemnation of the coup was later confirmed with the passing of resolution A/HRC/S-29/L.1. The resolution calls for the restoration of the democratic government and urges the Tatmadaw to refrain from violence against protestors and respect human rights.

Nonetheless, U Myint Thu stood before the Human Rights Council, and the world, and defended the military's actions as necessary and lawful by saying, *"In light of the post-election irregularities and the following complex situation, Tatmadaw was compelled to take the State responsibilities in accordance with the State constitution."*

These allegations of fraud are unfounded and certainly do not justify a state of emergency and installation of a military government. Myanmar has seen dictatorship before and has only recently begun its transition towards democracy. KHRG condemns in the strongest possible terms the ambassador's suggestion that overthrowing that system is the only way to move forward.

The ambassador continued by committing to cooperation with the international community and promised to uphold international human rights treaties. He claimed the Tatmadaw does *"not want to stall the nascent democratic transition in the country."* To this, KHRG says, it is too late. The very act of implementing a coup and using violence against the people of Myanmar has brought the country's democratic transition to a standstill. The actions of the military have put years of progress toward democracy and peace at risk.

He followed this by asking for "better understanding of the prevailing situation in the country and constructive engagement and cooperation from the international community." In this request, rather than demonstrate a commitment to international standards of democracy and human rights, U Myint Thu essentially asked the international community to accept and cooperate with the military dictatorship.

The Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Nada Al-Nashif, began the session by saying *"To the people of Myanmar, we express our support for your rights to justice, to freedom, to*

*democratic participation, to personal safety and security, and to peaceful, sustainable and inclusive development.*

We call on U Myint Thu to represent the democratically elected government of Myanmar and its citizens truly and accurately. This is done not by justifying the actions of the Tatmadaw and their illegitimate administration, but by standing with the international community, which overwhelmingly condemns the coup and supports the Civil Disobedience Movement.

#### Media Contacts

Naw Htoo Htoo – +66 (0) 87-205-1856

Saw Nanda Hsue - +66 (0) 811- 297- 564