

## **Civil Society and Myanmar People Issue Strong Condemnation of China's Support for Min Aung Hlaing's Coup**

10 June 2021

426 civil society organizations express their strongest condemnation of the actions taken by the People's Republic of China since June 5, 2021 to acknowledge Min Aung Hlaing and his so-called State Administrative Council (SAC) as the "leaders" of Myanmar.

By issuing public statements referring to Min Aung Hlaing as the "leader of Myanmar," inviting the SAC Foreign Minister to Chongqing to represent Myanmar at the China – ASEAN Special Foreign Minister's meeting, and by pledging to provide economic aid to the SAC as part of the solution to the current political crisis, China has grossly interfered in Myanmar's domestic affairs, posing a grave threat to the security of Myanmar and to regional stability.

As the National Unity Government of Myanmar noted in its letter to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi dated June 7th, Min Aung Hlaing attempted to take power in a coup on February 1, 2021. He is not the legitimate leader of the country, and his failed attempts to use violence to take de facto control have resulted in the deaths of thousands of Myanmar citizens as well as the displacement of over 100,000 people.

China claims that its efforts aim to stabilize the region and prevent violence. The reality is that any actions in support of the military only grant it space to continue its war against the people of Myanmar. Support to the military will further serve to provoke more intense violence between the military and the Ethnic Armed Organizations and cause a significant escalation of Myanmar's civil war. In addition to destabilizing Myanmar, these actions will aggravate the humanitarian crisis already engulfing South and Southeast Asia, as well as an ongoing explosion of transnational criminal activity.

The only way to address the current crisis is to respect the will of the Myanmar people and to reseat the elected government. China should require that Min Aung Hlaing immediately cease all violence, release all political prisoners, and engage in political dialogue towards a durable solution for the country's future.

Should China continue to interfere in Myanmar's domestic politics in support of Min Aung Hlaing's efforts to establish rule by violence, the China Myanmar Economic Corridor, and all of China's economic interests in country are certain to be engulfed in the chaos and violence that will ensue. As a means of protecting these interests, China should immediately engage the representation of the legitimate government, civil society and the ethnic armed organizations to identify a solution. It should further follow its own guidance issued by Foreign Minister Wang Yi on June 8, 2021 and ensure that all parties respect the spirit and principles of the UN Charter.

Actions of any state to support the military's rule by violence represent a serious violation of the principles of the UN Charter, and should be condemned by the international community.

Signed by:

426 civil society organizations

Note: Due to serious security concerns, names of the civil society organizations who endorsed and signed this statement cannot be disclosed. The signed CSOs work on range of human rights protection and rights based issues in Myanmar.

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