



Special Advisory Council for MYANMAR

Why wait, Hun Sen?

18 February 2022: Hun Sen has given up on trying to resolve the gravest crisis confronting ASEAN – Myanmar’s junta-made crisis – only seven weeks into his term as ASEAN Chair. He must therefore resign from the ASEAN position immediately, says the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M).

Speaking to foreign dignitaries, Cambodian Prime Minister, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo (Lord Prime Minister and Supreme Military Commander) Hun Sen, said he would no longer make efforts to resolve the situation in Myanmar. He cited a lack of progress by the illegal Myanmar junta towards resolving the crisis it caused when junta leader Min Aung Hlaing attempted a coup in February last year.

For more than a year, Min Aung Hlaing’s forces have waged a brutal campaign of terror on the people of Myanmar that has caused a humanitarian, political and economic catastrophe in the country and threatened the stability of the region.

Having decided he is unable or unwilling to use his position to pressure the junta to end its violence and respect the democratic will of the Myanmar people, Hun Sen said he intends to simply wait out the remaining 10-months in his role as ASEAN Chair before passing on the responsibility to the President of Indonesia, who is next in line.

“Hun Sen has finally realised that junta leader Min Aung Hlaing cannot be trusted and cannot be reasoned with,” said Marzuki Darusman of SAC-M. **“Unfortunately, in the time it took the Cambodian Prime Minister to arrive at this realisation, many more people were murdered, detained, and tortured by Min Aung Hlaing’s forces. The Myanmar people cannot wait another 10 months with Hun Sen doing nothing as ASEAN Chair. Hun Sen must stop his self serving personal adventurism and erratic acts, and seek support from other better placed ASEAN members to do the job. Otherwise, make way and resign now.”**

Hun Sen’s admission of failure comes after a series of blunders since he assumed the ASEAN Chairmanship. Min Aung Hlaing exploited a visit made by Hun Sen to Nay Pyi Taw in January to gain legitimacy for his illegal junta, and has refused to release Sean Turnell, Australian national and economic advisor to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, despite Hun Sen announcing that he had. Hun Sen was forced to backtrack and apologise for the statement.

“We commend Hun Sen for his honesty in admitting his failure to make any headway at all with the junta in spite of his efforts,” said Chris Sidoti of SAC-M. **“We can understand his sense of failure when he has been treated so disrespectfully and insultingly by Min Aung Hlaing, undermining his position as ASEAN Chair. However, the crisis can’t wait till next year to be resolved and so we point out to Hun Sen that he has no alternative, now that he’s acknowledged that he can’t make any progress, but to hand over the chair to Indonesia at once.”**

Meanwhile, the Foreign Minister for the National Unity Government of Myanmar (NUG), Daw Zin Mar Aung, addressed counterparts at an ASEAN Foreign Minister’s Meeting this week, and called for a more coordinated ASEAN approach towards dealing with the crisis.

“The NUG Foreign Minister’s address to ASEAN stands in stark contrast to the belligerent junta,” said Yanghee Lee of SAC-M. **“ASEAN’s most constructive, necessary and rightful partner in responding to the crisis has always been the NUG. ASEAN must exert real pressure on the junta now and engage meaningfully with the NUG if it is to prove to the world that it puts the will of the Myanmar people above all else. If Hun Sen is not going to do that, he must step aside.”**