

Press Statement: Myanmar CSOs meet with the UN Special Envoy

Reiterates CSOs rejection of power-sharing with the military junta, offers recommendations to UNSE

On 21 February, representatives of 20 Myanmar civil society organizations (CSOs) met with the UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar.

The meeting followed a joint [statement issued](#) by 247 CSOs in response to the UN Special Envoy's (UNSE's) [interview](#) with the Channel News Asia (CNA).

While reiterating concerns expressed in their statement, the representatives assured the UNSE that the Myanmar people's revolution presents an unprecedented opportunity for a peaceful Myanmar, as the people themselves have come to identify their collective vision for a new Myanmar that is based on federal democracy.

The calls have been clear: a new vision of Myanmar does not include the military in politics.

The representatives expressed concern over possible UN and governments attempts to convince political entities in Myanmar to enter into power sharing settlements in the lead up to the military junta orchestrated August 2023 elections. During the meeting, the representatives stated that it is extremely crucial for the UN to understand that the current political crisis is not between the National League for Democracy and the junta or between the National Unity Government (NUG) and the junta, but it is the junta staging a war against the nation and committing violence and atrocities against the people.

In addition, the representatives emphasized the need for justice and accountability. They emphasized that the terrorist military junta, who have committed grave crimes – genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes – must be held accountable, and not offered more power, a seat at the table or legitimacy from the international community.

The representatives also reiterated their concern regarding the UNSE's comment that "the military is in control at this particular time", stressing that such comment is a misinterpretation based on misconstrued understanding of the realities on the ground. Myanmar people have resisted the brutal and sadistic tactics of the illegal terrorist military junta and successfully prevented it from gaining territorial, political or economic control over the country for over a year - the representatives urged the UN to acknowledge this historic feat.

Moreover, the groups emphasized that the mandate of the UNSE has been historically ineffectual. The groups urged the mandate to be transformed from its traditional approach of peace brokering to center on accountability and moves to achieve transitional justice, to strengthen relevance of the role that reflects the current realities on the ground. The groups also urged that the mandate should ensure that stakeholders engaging in Myanmar comply with UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions relevant to the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, including UNSC resolutions on Women Peace and Security.

In addition, the representatives urged the UNSE to put in place necessary measures to ensure Myanmar people's voices are given priority and ensure that procedures include a robust and inclusive engagement with Myanmar civil society organizations. In this regard, the groups expressed their readiness to continue to engage with the UNSE.

Finally, the groups called on the UNSE to bring several recommendations put forward by the people of Myanmar and CSOs to the UN, ASEAN and the wider international community. These include the following;

On humanitarian aid, the UN, ASEAN and international humanitarian aid organizations must:

- Disengage from partnering with the junta in the provision of humanitarian assistance, preventing them from weaponizing humanitarian aid in their campaign of terror against the people or for the junta to use humanitarian assistance as leverage to gain legitimacy.
- Direct humanitarian aid through cross-border channels, local humanitarian and medical networks, ethnic service providers, community-based and civil society organizations, regardless of their registration status.
- Ensure the development of a holistic strategy in addressing the human rights and humanitarian crisis guided by the principles of “do no harm” and non-discrimination, and take effective measures to ensure that all engagement in Myanmar is subject to rigorous and ongoing human rights, security risk, and mitigation assessments.
- Conduct transparent dialogue and consultations with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and CSOs to ensure communities are included in the process of decision making and in the distribution of aid, including how funds and aid is being allocated and to identify immediate and most urgent needs on the ground.
- Consult and sign MoUs with the NUG and Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs)/Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) to address the deepening humanitarian crisis across the country.
- Reduce restrictions and complex funding requirements for Community-based Organizations and CSOs, working in conflict-related humanitarian service provision.

To ASEAN:

- Recognize and formally engage with the NUG, National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) and EAOs/EROs.
- Recognize that ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) does not have the mandate, capacity or the independence to tackle the dire humanitarian situation and deliver aid to the people of Myanmar in a way that does not lend tactical and political advantage to the junta and seek the support of a UN-led humanitarian response.
- Stop inviting the military junta and their representatives to meetings, forums and summits and allowing the military to play a part or hold chairmanship in different ASEAN institutions.

To the UN Security Council:

The UNSC must adopt a resolution on Myanmar that includes the following:

- Impose a global arms embargo and prevent the provision of weapons and dual-purpose equipment to the junta.
- Impose targeted sanctions against Myanmar military-linked businesses, their partners and associates as well as their network of arms dealers. Member States must also sanction the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise.
- Immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and those who have been arbitrarily detained as well as to drop all warrants against the people.
- Denounce, in the strongest terms, the indiscriminate airstrikes by the Myanmar military against unarmed civilians, civilian objects, villages, internally displaced persons camps, and buildings and structures including religious buildings, schools, hospitals, and historic monuments.
- Immediately sanction aviation fuel in order to stop the military from further inflicting violence using aerial strikes and impose no-fly zones in conflict areas, particularly along the border areas.
- Refer the situation of Myanmar to the International Criminal Court.

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