



Representatives of six Myanmar CSOs hold dialogue with Malaysian Foreign Minister Dato Saifuddin Abdullah

Foreign Minister expresses commitment to continue dialogue with Myanmar CSOs

7 September 2022: Representatives of six Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from Myanmar on Tuesday held a 90-minute-long dialogue with the Malaysian Foreign Minister Dato Saifuddin Abdullah and exchanged views on the multi-faceted crises in Myanmar. Present in the meeting were representatives from the Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN), Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG), Myanmar Cultural Research Society (MCRS), Progressive Voice (PV), and Women's League of Burma (WLB).

In his opening remarks, the Foreign Minister shared his views and the initiatives he has undertaken with respect to the current situations in Myanmar, including his recent communication to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretary-General requesting an update on the steps taken by ASEAN towards resolving the crises in Myanmar in the lead up to the upcoming ASEAN Summit in Indonesia in November. Expressing his concerns regarding the worsening humanitarian situation in Myanmar, the Foreign Minister said he recognized the need to directly support local civil society organizations working on the ground outside of the junta's control to provide life-saving humanitarian aid to the people. He reiterated his earlier [public statement](#) regarding the need for ASEAN member states to urgently decide on whether to continue working with or without the military junta regarding the provision of humanitarian aid in Myanmar.

Representatives of the civil society organizations, in turn, expressed serious concern regarding the senselessness of working with the military junta in providing humanitarian aid to the very people who are suffering and fleeing from the junta's atrocities. They stressed that current humanitarian aid delivery efforts being made with the focus on partnering with the military junta is completely ill-advised and counterproductive. They pointed out that the military junta, as the primary source of the crisis, cannot be trusted with aid delivery.

Taking the opportunity, participants of the meeting also thanked the Foreign Minister for his leadership in speaking out on the issue of the ongoing crises in Myanmar within the ASEAN membership and beyond the region. They urged him to continue to take a leading role in reaching out to other counterparts within ASEAN in forging a cohesive and coordinated response to the crises in Myanmar. At the same time, the CSOs noted the regional dimension to the Myanmar crisis, which has implications for the well-being and protection of refugees in Myanmar's neighboring countries, including many thousands who have sought sanctuary in Malaysia following the attempted coup of 2021.

In particular, the CSO representatives raised grave concerns regarding the recent signing of new agreements and the presenting of credentials to the illegitimate junta by some of the UN Agencies working inside Myanmar,

including the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN International Children's Emergency Fund and UN Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Foreign Minister noted these concerns with great interest. The CSO representatives emphatically reminded the Foreign Minister that such maneuvers not only embolden the junta to continue committing atrocity crimes, but also serve to legitimize an illegal junta at a time when it is desperately seeking for international recognition ahead of the UN General Assembly session, which is once again set to decide on who will represent Myanmar at the world body.

Foreign Minister Abdullah expressed his commitment to continue interacting with Myanmar civil society organizations, as well as broadening the discussion to include other interested members of ASEAN.

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