

Myanmar military should end its use of violence and respect democracy

The undersigned groups today denounced an apparent coup in Myanmar, and associated violence, which has suspended civilian government and effectively returned full power to the military.

On 1 February, the military arbitrarily detained State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and other leaders of the National League for Democracy. A year-long state of emergency was declared, installing Vice-President and former lieutenant-general Myint Swe as the acting President. Myint Swe immediately handed over power to commander-in-chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing (Section 418 of Myanmar's 2008 Constitution enables transfer of legislative, executive, and judicial powers to the Commander in Chief). Internet connections and phone lines throughout the country were disrupted, pro-democracy activists have been arbitrarily arrested, with incoming reports of increased detentions. Soldiers in armoured cars have been visibly roaming Naypyitaw and Yangon, raising fears of lethal violence.

"The military should immediately and unconditionally release all detained and return to Parliament to reach a peaceful resolution with all relevant parties," said the groups.

The military and its aligned Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) had disputed the results of the November elections, which saw the majority of the seats won by the NLD. The arrests of the leaders came just before the Parliament was due to convene for the first time in order to pick the President and Vice-Presidents.

Among the key leaders arrested, aside from Aung San Suu Kyi, are: President U Win Myint and Chief Ministers U Phyo Min Thein, Dr Zaw Myint Maung, Dr Aung Moe Nyo, Daw Nan Khin Htwe Myint, and U Nyi Pu.

The man now in charge of the country, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, stands accused of committing the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, raising alarms for the human rights situation, in particular for ethnic minority and Rohingya communities. Military rule also reverses the emerging political openness that occurred in recent years.

The military has remained an influential force in the government, despite changes in the previous decade. *"How the military has acted has proven it has never been committed to any democratic change. It has always been interested in preserving power,"* said the groups.

The organisations, comprising diverse CSOs and NGOs, call on the Myanmar military to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release all those currently arbitrarily detained;
- Immediately restore the Internet and all forms of communications; and
- Allow Parliament to resume and elected MPs to fulfil their mandate without impediment.

The groups also made the following demands to:

- The UN Security Council to convene an emergency meeting to respond to the situation including sending a delegation to Myanmar, the establishment of a global arms embargo and a referral of the situation in Myanmar to the ICC;

- The international community to urgently establish a comprehensive response, including targeted sanctions against the military and their partners' business enterprises; and conditionality on diplomatic, economic and security relations, in order to secure the immediate release of those detained, protection of civilians including those in conflict zones, handover of power to a civilian-controlled parliament, and irreversible reforms that put human rights and democracy at the core of governance and prevent recurrence of such power-grabs;
- Social media companies, in particular Facebook, to suspend the accounts of USDP and military leaders that have used their platforms to spread disinformation, fear, and psychological violence; and
- ASEAN leaders, to use all diplomatic leverage to ensure the rule of law is upheld and the will of the people are respected.

Endorsing organisations

1. Agora Society Malaysia
2. ALIRAN Malaysia
3. All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress (AASYC)
4. Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT), Cambodia
5. Alliance of Independent Journalists Indonesia (AJI), Indonesia
6. ALTSEAN-Burma
7. ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR)
8. ASEAN Youth Forum
9. Asia Democracy Network (ADN)
10. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
11. Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)
12. Asian Resource Foundation (ARF)
13. Association Human Rights Defenders and Promoters (HRDP)
14. Association of Women for Awareness and Motivation (AWAM)
15. Awaz Foundation Pakistan – Centre for Development Services
16. Backpack Health Workers Team (BPHWT)
17. BALAOD Mindanaw
18. Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM)
19. Bir Duino, Kyrgyzstan
20. Buddhist Humanitarian Project
21. Burma Campaign UK
22. Burma Center Delhi
23. Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)
24. Burma Medical Association (BMA)
25. Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK - BROUK
26. Bytes for All, Pakistan
27. Cambodian Civil Society Partnership (CSSP)
28. Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
29. Campaign Committee for Human Rights (CCHR)
30. Campaign for Popular Democracy (CPD), Thailand

31. Center for Cambodian Civic Education
32. Center for Conflict Resolution
33. Center for Human Rights and Development (CHRD)
34. Centre for independence journalism (CIJ)
35. Centre for the Sustainable Use of Natural and Social Resources (CSNR)
36. Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO)
37. Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)
38. Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS), Indonesia
39. Community Resource Centre Foundation (CRC)
40. Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Economicas y Sociales (CRIES)
41. Covenants Watch
42. DAKILA - Philippine Collective for Modern Heroism
43. Dalit Foundation
44. Dignity-Kadyr-kassiyet (KK)
45. East Bago- Former Political Prisoners Network (EB-FPPN)
46. Foundation for Tolerance Intl, Kyrgyzstan
47. Free Burma Campaign (South Africa)
48. Future Light Center (FLC)
49. Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)
50. GPPAC Southeast Asia
51. GPPAC Caucasus Network Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflicts
52. GPPAC Central Asia
53. GPPAC Eastern and Central Africa
54. GPPAC in the Middle East and North Africa, MENAPPAC
55. GPPAC Latin America and Caribbean
56. GPPAC South Asia
57. GZO Peace Institute
58. Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
59. Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)
60. Human Rights Working Group (HRWG)
61. Ichan Malik Center for Peace and Dialogue (IMC)
62. Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI), Indonesia
63. Indonesian Human Rights Monitor (Imparsial), Indonesia
64. Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association (PBHI), Indonesia
65. Info Birmanie (France)
66. INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre
67. Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC)
68. Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID)
69. Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM), Indonesia
70. Inter Pares (Canada)
71. International Center on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN)
72. International Legal Initiative Public Foundation (ILI Foundation), Kazakhstan
73. International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP)
74. Jagriti Child and Youth Concern Nepal (JCYCN)
75. JANANEETHI
76. Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT)
77. Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT)

78. Karapatan Alliance Philippines (KARAPATAN)
79. Karen Environmental and Social Action Network – Kaw Thoo Lei
80. Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)
81. Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN)
82. Karen Student Network Group (KSNG)
83. Karen Teacher Working Group (KTWG)
84. Karen Women's Organization (KWO)
85. Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law (KIBHR)
86. Korean House for International Solidarity (KHIS)
87. Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA)
88. Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN)
89. National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP)
90. Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma (ND-Burma)
91. Norwegian Helsinki Committee
92. Peace and Human Rights Resource Center (PHRC)
93. Peace Boat
94. People's Empowerment Foundation
95. People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)
96. People's Watch, India
97. Permanent Peace Movement (Lebanon)
98. Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA)
99. Programme Against Custodial Torture in India (PACTI)
100. Progressive Voice
101. Pusat KOMAS
102. Radio Rakambia, Timor Leste
103. Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS)
104. Salween Peace Park (SPP)
105. Social Democracy Think Tank (SDTT), Thailand
106. Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFENET)
107. Southeast Asian Conflict Studies Network (SEACSN)
108. Stefanus Alliance International
109. Stiftung Asienhaus (Germany)
110. Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)
111. Swedish Burma Committee
112. Taiwan Association for Human Rights (TAHR)
113. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP)
114. Teoh Beng Hock Trust for Democracy
115. The Relatives Committee of May 1992 Heroes, Thailand
116. Think Centre
117. TRANSCEND Pilipinas
118. Women's Peace Network
119. Working Group for Peace (WGP), Cambodia
120. Yangon Youth Network
121. Yayasan Sekretariat Anak Merdeka Indonesia (SAMIN), Indonesia
122. Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP), Cambodia
123. Young Peoples for Social Democracy (YPD), Thailand

Endorsing Individuals

1. Abel da Silva, Member of Parliament, Timor-Leste
2. Aykan Erdemir, member of the The International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPPFORB) Steering Group
3. David Anderson, member of the IPPFoRB Steering Group
4. Farahnaz Ispahani, former Member of Parliament, Pakistan
5. Fernanda San Martin, member of the IPPFoRB Steering Group
6. Kasit Piromya, former Member of Parliament, Thailand
7. Kasthuri Patto, member of the IPPFoRB Steering Group
8. Natrah Ismail, Member of Parliament, Malaysia
9. Tian Chua, Vice president the People's Justice Party, former member of Parliament, Malaysia

About FORUM-ASIA:

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) is a Bangkok-based regional network of 81 member organisations across 21 Asian countries, with consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and consultative relationship with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. Founded in 1991, FORUM-ASIA works to strengthen movements for human rights and sustainable development through research, advocacy, capacity-development and solidarity actions in Asia and beyond. It has sub-regional offices in Geneva, Jakarta, and Kathmandu.

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