Madam President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur for his report, and for the essential work of the mandate to protect and promote freedom of assembly and association around the world.

Across Asia, we have witnessed a resurgence of social movements and peaceful protests to defend or reclaim fundamental freedoms and democracy, and to hold governments accountable.

Today we remember and pay tribute to hundreds of people who have been killed in Myanmar for protesting the military coup, youth activists facing lese majeste charges in Thailand for demanding democracy and many others from India to Indonesia, from Singapore to Hong Kong in detention, facing criminal charges or forced to leave their homes for safety for standing up to authoritarianism, injustice, environmental destruction, and corporate greed.

Their persecution illustrates the overzealous and systematic use of broad and vague legislation and regulation by governments across the region to silence peaceful assembly and civil society.

Many such measures are designed to deny access to justice and due process or to render legal representation completely meaningless. For example, national security and counter-terrorism laws in Philippines, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Singapore, India, and many others allow detention of peaceful protestors and civil society members without access to lawyers or charges for prolonged periods of time.

The Special Rapporteur’s report provides important guidelines for states to guarantee access to justice in the context of freedom of assembly and association. We urge states to ensure their implementation.

Finally, we ask the Special Rapporteur for his views on possible international remedies for those who are denied access to justice at the national level.

Thank you.