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Myanmar: UN Security Council must focus on concrete action

Amnesty International welcomes today's statement from the Security Council on Myanmar which "strongly deplores" the use of violence against peaceful demonstrations in Myanmar. The Security Council also stresses the importance of the early release of all political prisoners and remaining detainees.

"Obviously, we wish the Council had spoken out much stronger and had called for the immediate unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other prisoners of conscience. Clearly such releases are essential if there is to be any progress on the 'genuine dialogue' and 'national reconciliation' the Security Council seeks. The Council should also have stressed accountability for the grave human rights violations committed," said Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

"But it is the first formal statement from the Security Council on Myanmar, it addresses crucial human rights issues, and for the first time ever, welcomes a resolution recently adopted by the Human Rights Council," said Irene Khan.

"We have new reports from Myanmar that the military government is continuing a 'witch-hunt' against those suspected of involvement in demonstrations. This clearly flies in the face of the commitment the government has made to work with the United Nations," said Irene Khan.

"The Security Council has called for concrete actions and tangible results. We call on the Council not only to keep the human rights situation under close and constant review but also to set a clear timetable and benchmarks for progress. A first test will be whether the Council's call will result in the immediate release of the thousands of people recently detained for participating in peaceful protests, as well as Aung San Suu Kyi and other long-standing prisoners of conscience. Another test will be whether the government will now allow the United Nations human rights expert Sergio Pinheiro prompt and unhindered access to the country as the Human Rights Council urged him to do," said Irene Khan.

Amnesty International has urged the Security Council to immediately impose a comprehensive and mandatory arms embargo on Myanmar. The organization also called on the principal suppliers of arms to Myanmar – China, India, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine and ASEAN nations - to prohibit supply of military and security equipment to Myanmar.

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